

**The Greatest Universal Sureties:
The Creator's Existence
and The Creature's Function**

**By Imam:
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Creator's Existence
and The Creature's Function**

**(Kubrā Al-Yaqīnīyyāt Al-Kawnīyyah:
Wujūd al-Khāliq wa Wazīfat al-Makhlūq)**

**Translated by:
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In the Name of Allah, the All Merciful, the Most Merciful

Introduction to the Eighth Edition

All praise is to Allah, praise that complies with His blessings and compensates His abundance. Our Lord, for You is all praise as befits the majesty of Your countenance and the might of Your authority. May blessings and peace be upon our Master Muḥammad, who was sent as a mercy to all of creation, and upon his family, his companions, forever and ever until the Last Day.

To proceed; this is another of the steps of revision, verification and addition that Allah has given me success in with respect to serving this book, in its publication and its revision, so that as much effort as possible can be invested towards its perfection.

In one of the previous editions, under the discussion on proving the existence of Allah, may His majesty be manifest, I added a brief demonstration to prove the incoherence of materialistic philosophy and how it leans on the precepts of science and the principles of logic, in both its materialistic principles and its historical branches. That was before the Lord, Mighty and Majestic, favoured me to publish my book *Refuting the Illusions of Dialectical Materialism*, which I devoted to this subject.

Then, in a subsequent edition, I added a detailed study that included a presentation of the most important modern theories that postulate that human beings have evolved from lower animal forms. This was followed by a discussion of its scientific proofs which revealed its disarray and falsehood, and showed that it is nothing more than fragmentary suppositions that lack scientific evidence with no firm grounding in science or even scientific research.

After that, this book was printed offset many times, without any addition or alteration, and it was only time constrictions that prevented me from reviewing and re-examining the text and filling in any gaps and adding further discussions.

As for now, indeed Allah has strengthened and prepared me, with His favour and grace, with a few moments of time and allowed me to examine the discussions of this book once again, seeking to be more meticulous this time in the discussions which are certainly the most serious of things that the human being can devote his intellect to from the issues of existence and its sciences.

I expended all of my efforts so that I would not pass over an expression that needed more clarity than my faculties had achieved except after replacing it with an expression that was more indicative and illustrative, and that I would scrutinize any word that may be misconstrued (in the sphere of accurately expressing something from the attributes of Allah the Exalted and his actions) and does not befit His Absolute Perfection, Mighty and Majestic, and does not proclaim Him above every equal and counterpart, so I exchanged them for that which is more accurately indicative of the desired meaning and further from meanings that are customary for the creation.

There is no doubt that the scope of expression is tiny in front of the human being when

he wants to talk about Allah and His attributes and actions and delve into the intricacies of divine matters. Therefore, many terms are not suitable for expressing in this situation because they are formulated to indicate limits, dimensions and biases, which are from the conditions of the creation.

Then I expended more effort in additions and details that I was asked to make for the necessity of clarification and the removal of ambiguity. Some of this appeared in the body of the book and some of it I presented as additional material in its appropriate place.

One of the most important of these necessary additions was an examination of apostasy and its causes, for I felt that an extreme necessity calls for a continuation of this research and its affirmation, in detail, in the body of this book.

If my concern has been lacking in previous editions then the quality of lacking is my affair, and because this necessity had not emerged in society before. Once again I began moving about the ideas of some of the rising generation, false concepts that have no foundation in apostasy and its causes, and perhaps their awakening is a response that is stirred up by emotions and was in need of the precepts of science and knowledge.

One of the most important reasons that call the researcher to expand on what he has written are the unforeseen intellectual and social circumstances which themselves are imposed upon society for various reasons.

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Nonetheless, I have expended new effort in serving this book, and I hoped that it would take another step towards the perfection it aspires to. I hope that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, protects me from everything that may thwart my actions and nullify my reward, begging him, Mighty and Majestic, to protect me from the evil of my own soul and to favour me with the blessing of sincerity for His noble countenance.

Likewise, I turn to every Muslim brother to have sincere advice for the sake of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, hoping that He will not be sparing towards me with his notes and that he will not hesitate to remind me of any slip that may have escaped me. And Allah, Mighty and Majestic, is the One Whose Help is sought to gather us upon the truth and to liberate us from the evil of our own souls and our passions, and we ask Him to make all of us soldiers for the Truth and servants of its people.

Damascus, 19 Rabī‘ Al-Ākhir, 1399/18 April, 1979

Doctor Muḥammad Sa‘īd Ramaḍān Al-Būfī

Introduction to the Second Edition

All praise be to Allah ...

All praise be to Allah, the Possessor of every success, the One who inspires every goodness and guides to every truth.

All praise be to Allah ... I say it in a loud voice and with all of my sensory organs and my heart ... the Truth has indeed inspired me and made me aware of the way to indicate Him and He has burdened me with a pen to defend Him. I would not be suited for anything of this were it not for the abundance of His benevolence and the magnitude of His favour. Indeed from Him and to Him is every grace. For Him and by Him is all praise.

About two years ago I wrote what Allah inspired me to write regarding the evidences for His necessary and eternal existence and the evidences for man's slavehood to Him and his commitment to a momentous and great responsibility towards Him.

I made it clear that these evidences are not hard for the intellect to comprehend; they are not a barricade that requires deep penetration or a long distance that requires great effort to traverse. Rather, it is the fabricated veils motivated by objectives, passions and hatred; they are what gives the illusion of an obstacle and they are what has made some of them believe that there is hardship ... so the matter must arise for the one who indicates that the obstacle is illusory. The hardship is far from my imagination and the Truth is presenting Himself to the eyes and is close to the intellects.

My work was in what I had written, drawing attention to the clear, close and apparent evidences, not the invention of remote and unknown proofs. All my efforts were spent in working with those scientific proofs that are common amongst intellects and in all places and times, not with one specific type from amongst them that may

only be understood by a specific category of people or not dealt with except by those of a distinguished civilization in a confined historical epoch.

Indeed Allah, Mighty and Majestic, wanted—and for Him is the praise that my tongue is incapable of giving—for this work to be given its fruits. The coming generation have turned towards it from every class and direction and many researchers and educated people have considered it, despite their differing opinions and backgrounds.

As for the believers it has increased them in faith and with it they have persisted in their tireless effort to call to the Truth.

As for the freethinkers, those who in their hearts faith has not prospered but rather some sort of passion or goal, and likewise their intellects have not enslaved or held sway over their consciousness, so many of them have found in it what they were looking for. They said that they would often study it and they would end their confused intellectual journey amongst wandering trends of theories and delusions, and come to the tranquillity of faith in Allah the Exalted and guidance regarding their own true nature, shading themselves in the shadow of conclusive scientific proofs and not relying on some incense from feelings and soothing fantasies. Amongst these people were those who called to the doctrines of dialectical materialism, satisfied with the various atheistic theories.

As for other people, they place their psychical desires as a priority before their thinking and intellectual lives, so there is no doubt that this book was for them a futile attempt, because the one who only attaches second or third rank importance to scientific and intellectual values in his life, it is of no benefit to him to deal at all with these values. Rather, it is foolish and useless to bind him to them when he has already submitted completely to his desires and his prior aspirations and hopes! It is only natural that one of these people will not speak frankly to you about this action of his, and if he did so there would be no value or meaning left for his subjugation of the intellect.

Many of these people used to oppose this book, after a phase of jockeying for position, with silent indignation ... just silent indignation! I believe that this silent indignation is nothing but greater evidence than the clear evidences that this book of mine draws attention to. It suffices us regarding these people that they finish at this silent indignation and stop there. Indeed it is the most profound expression of the reality of their state and their excuse ... it suffices us that this silent state of theirs be a decisive proof against them.

Some of these people were opposing it recently, by declaring their doubts regarding all the judgments of the intellect! They are in need—in what they claim—of something that will confirm for them that the rules of the intellect have no deceit in them.

The response of these people is plain and clear. You are able to extract the reality of their behaviour and their lives with ease.

Indeed the one who is not confident in the intellect's judgments does not value the way he lives his life or his various worldly relations with others based upon the more accurate suggestions of the intellect and its rules. The one who is not confident in the intellect's judgments will not govern his thinking life according to various philosophical principles claiming that by them he has followed the insight of the intellect and the evidences of science. If someone is not confident in the intellect's judgments, the intellect will not co-operate with him in all of his interests and various social affairs, such that when he himself comes face to face with the evidences for having faith in Allah and what follows from that, he declares all of a sudden his lack of confidence in the intellect and he cuts the intellect off saying, 'I do not know you and I will not co-operate with you!'

Indeed the one who is not confident in the judgments of the intellect and does not see good in following it, he is only a man who has completely cut off his intellect during his worldly journey ... and he does not seek guidance from it in establishing a livelihood or gaining some benefit or delineating the way he behaves ... and a person like this, in the words of all people, is called "mad"! The Dīn⁽¹⁾ graciously accepts the excuse of a person like this; let him disregard the realities of the universe for as long as it suits him and let him disbelieve in them for as long as disbelief suffices him. No blame is attached to the madman.

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Have I changed anything from the book's discussions or added to them?

I have not made any radical changes to the contents of the book, but I have checked two things for the sake of further clarity and to further reveal the truth.

First of all, I simplified some points that are part of the method for researching the truth, and I touched upon a few complicated problems and this was stressed to me by some brothers who read the text and gave me their notes. I simplified the discussion regarding the manner of “circumstantial evidence” and “the proof of analogy based on the cause”. I tried to remove from the discussion regarding them, as best I could, the dry, scientific terminology and style and I opened the horizons of their relationship to human thought with more diverse examples that are connected to various aspects of life.

Secondly, I provided more detail on dialectical materialism and its scientific value, and that was done in the course of discussing the proofs for Allah’s existence, Mighty and Majestic is He. It is detail that I failed to provide in the first edition.

But in addition to that I did change a few words and sentences that failed to clearly convey their intended meaning, or which brought to mind notions that do not befit His Majesty—from either the formal literary standpoint or the objective standpoint—about the perfection of Allah the Exalted and His divinity, and which included a tendency away from the desired scientific examination.

Most of these sentences that I have changed are only because of the virtue of some Muslim brothers who shared their comments with me regarding things I had missed and drew my attention to them, and I truly thank them in this life and I ask Allah, Mighty and Majestic, to reward them for it in the next.

Out of all the comments that I received, there was a proposal that I should include in the second edition of the book a detailed scientific refutation of that person from Lebanon who wrote some senseless drivel couched in some slogans from the expressions of the people of science and its terminology⁽²⁾. Then some simple souls from amongst the people refused not to raise it in their strange way, which they had used to criticise it, to the level of researchers, revolutionaries and heroes.

I examined the book and I found that in all of its discussions that it brought up there were three branches. As for the first branch, its conversation therein was restricted to old, oft-repeated words about religion and science, and torrential scientific progress has left no place in the intellect for faith in Allah!

As for the second branch, it deals with the subjects of fatalism and choice along with free will and divine decree, and that represents a problem that is embodied in the story of Iblīs.

As for the third and final branch, it deals with a demonstration of what they see as a genuine scientific explanation for the story of this existence and what it contains, and it is a dialectical materialist explanation of history.

I do not think that there is a way for a book to refute all three of these branches that is better than reprinting the book *The Greatest Universal Sureties* as it is.

The subject of compulsion and choice—and it is an ancient clumsy window that the proponents of heresy and its passions still seek refuge in—is explained in this book of ours in a clear, detailed and scientific fashion. Based on what I gathered from my experience with my students in the university, there is no need to add anything or explain anything. I also do not need to add anything in order to refute the one who wrote

that senseless drivel in those three branches of his, other than for me to say to him:

Indeed the realities of compulsion and choice are not taken from the escapades of al-Hallāj or some of the Sufis or weak and fabricated traditions and narrations. All we have in this regard is the way of scientific research based on sound narration and transmission which you should have studied beforehand.

As for the subject of dialectical materialism and its explanation of history according to its foundations, it is not appropriate that I occupy the mind of the reader with this in this introduction. Rather, I have assigned it to the proper place for this subject in the book.⁽³⁾ The free reader will not find any need for more explanation in order to use it to refute the scientific drivel that is presented by those who have scientific criticism.

As for his discussion regarding the first division (and it is the division from which the remaining chapters of the book are spread out) and his repeated habitual speech about the Dīn ... and science ... and the scientific renaissance ... which we say, after moving the reader to the natural place for this discussion in this book of ours, that it is:

It is upon this “scientific” critic—and he is the man who does not want science to diminish his right nor betray his scientific conscience—to place us, before everything, in front of a scale or a method of research with which to disclose for us the difference between the path of scientific research and that of haphazard research. The distinguishing factor is between the result with which science will break a law that cannot be refuted and the result which science sees as nothing more than theoretical or hypothetical or fantasy.

And if not, then how can the “scientific critic” make us nod our heads in approval when he bundles together all the varying opposing ideas from the various researchers and then calls all of it science and precision and describes all of its proponents as being the well-versed pillars of modern science?

How can Bertrand Russell, Descartes, Pavlov, Marx and Freud be the authorities and the pillars of modern science when they have differed amongst themselves in many different ways? How can we understand that all of their opinions and theories are true science that the intellect must submit to when they are opinions and theories that vary and contradict one another?

Did Darwin, the proponent of the theory of evolution, believe in dialectical materialism, which is insisted upon by the advocates of historical materialism? What is the value of that theory of his from a scientific perspective knowing that he died and had not finished researching the matter, without taking anything away from it? Where is there a place for the hundreds of scholars who have composed long writings in criticism of his theory and have taken it to pieces and ridiculed it?

Did Marx believe in this theory of Darwin’s? Did both of them believe in Freud’s theory?

Did the proponents of dialectical analysis for historical events believe in the same thing as the proponents of mechanical analysis?

Indeed, all of these varying gloomy opinions and theories, they only exist in the scientific orbit that the researcher desires. They travel with his protection and seek

guidance from his guidance, and their authors are—in the words of this scientific charlatan—the authorities and pillars of modern science.

Which of these theories is considered science that agrees with reality and which of them is considered ignorance that deviates from it? Or are they all considered science, despite their contradictions and disagreements, and are their proponents, in spite of that, considered to be the authorities and those firmly-grounded in science?

What is required of the man who believes in Allah? Is it required of him to choose a stipulated theory from amongst all these theories, and upon what basis should he choose? Or does it suffice him to disbelieve in Allah and then close his eyes and support whichever one he wants?

And why is it that this scientific charlatan does not inform us, before anything else, what science is and its reality until we are, as has been proved, following the “science” that he wants?

Indeed the believers in Allah finished analysing this phenomenon of existence when they said that the series of creations in their entirety must rely, for their existence, on an essence that exists by necessity and from which existence proceeds and it does not proceed from anything else, and He is Allah, Mighty and Majestic. Based on this, none of the impossibilities, such as circular reasoning, infinite regression, and something being preferred without anyone preferring it,⁽⁴⁾ are mentioned. We see it as a scientific analysis that cannot be afflicted with any incoherence or disparity. So, what is the scientific analysis for the phenomenon of existence according to those who deny the existence of Allah?

The scientific charlatan gave an answer when he said, ‘Indeed the source of all existing things is the primordial mist.’ But when it was said, ‘What is the source of the primordial mist and what is the secret of its existence?’, he responded by saying that he did not know!!!

Then it became resolved that this ignorance is the best scientific reason upon which to base the secret of existence!! We have threatened that we will not accept this reason, so he will throw the same questions at us and attack us by saying, ‘Who created Allah?’!

This is how the man being tested with the word of science and in need of its content imagines! He thinks that Allah and the primordial mist are the same thing in their existence. Only the believers have chosen “arbitrarily” to deify the latter and abandon the former. If the meaning of existence for both of them is the same then it is absolutely just as valid to ask about the creator of Allah, Mighty and Majestic as it is to ask about the creator of the mist!!

We say to this scientific charlatan: indeed the absolute inertia is something that is contingent,⁽⁵⁾ and the existence of all contingencies can only be due to the effect of something besides them. If not, then how does one of the two sides of possibility be preferred? As for Allah, Mighty and Majestic, He is the One who exists by necessity, i.e. His existence is from Himself and it does not proceed from nor is it affected by anything else, and this is the meaning of Him being a deity. For that reason, this question is not mentioned at all in respect to the Essence of Allah if the questioner is a believer in His Divinity. As for the person who does not believe in it, then the question is futile,

because the import of the question differs between the questioner and the one who answers.

We then say to this man: indeed one of the Muslims who believe in Allah and His Messenger with true faith does not abandon any of the requirements of believing in Allah, Mighty and Majestic, for any motive or reason. They are not those who grant a legal⁽⁶⁾ quality to everything that the claimers claim is science and reality, which would force the winds of civilization upon us along with its modern trends.

He knows very well that those who do this are people who are other than the Muslims who believe in Allah and His Messenger with true faith, as he knows very well that Islam is not the religion that stood in the face of the scientific renaissance and felt disgusted by it.

All that we want from this scientific charlatan, who accuses Muslim researchers of inadequacy and scientific ignorance, is to put down a scientific and fixed definition of the word “science” and to then put down for us a precise scientific method which we would consider as exemplary steps that lead to exact “science” and avoid stumbling into “ignorance”!

There is another thing that I must clarify in this introduction; and I direct it to some of the esteemed brothers from amongst the readers:

In anything of the Islamic creed that we have presented in this book, have we relied on Greek philosophy or fallacious logic? We have absolutely not done that. In what we have presented, the reader will only be shown those decisive proofs and evidences that carry their own confirmed scientific value, wherever you may look in the phases of history or whatever you may change from one language to another.

Indeed the axiom of the invalidity of circular reasoning, infinite regression, something being preferred without anyone preferring and the coming together of opposites, all of these are well-known throughout the world, and there is nobody who possesses an intellect or logic that does not know them or deal with them, whether he feels they are established scientific laws or not.

Indeed ... indeed Greek philosophy was used for some of these laws as proofs and evidences for their method, such as that which they call “absolute naturalistic proof” with regards to the invalidity of infinite regression, but we have not turned towards any of these and avoided them completely in favour of that which is simpler, easier and closer to general intellectual life.

Regarding the method of research that we have put down as a standard between ourselves and the readers, we have not taken from its foundations or its conventions other than the general scientific and logical values that every intellect is familiar with, even though we know that that which has been firmly fixed as a scientific law for study and research is only Islamic thought at the inception of its history.

Some people may imagine that looking for circumstantial evidence in its various kinds, or analogy based on the general cause, is something strange and unfamiliar, and therefore must certainly be part of Aristotelian logic!

But the affirmed reality is that Greek logic does not know anything about general

indications and especially circumstantial evidence⁽⁷⁾. The same goes for analogy based on the cause.

As for comparative and derivative analogy that is based on similarities, which is taken from Greek logic, we have not relied on any of that in our book.

Despite that, we remind the reader that not all of Greek philosophy and Aristotelian logic is dreadful and unsound. We do not wish to completely turn away from it. Rather, there is much in it that is useful and beneficial and in it there is much that the philosophers of the Muslims and their scholars have disapproved of. Those who want to establish their ideas permanently on a scientific foundation must become accustomed to choosing what the truth is from what others bring to them instead of being negative and completely shunning it.

Another thing I say to my reading brothers:

Indeed some have become uneasy because of our defence—in commenting on the following introduction—of *‘ilm al-kalām*⁽⁸⁾ and the imams whose circumstances compelled them to write about it, and this defence of ours was comprehensive—without a doubt—and a critique of those who accuse them in what we see as unjustified.

We then say: there is never a cause for this constriction, for indeed this book is nothing other than an example of what has been written in *‘ilm al-kalām*, including the difference of opinions in many of the discussions and in method. This is because *‘ilm al-kalām* applies to the scientific discussions which have and continue to revolve around the principles of the Islamic creed, regardless of the type of specious argument and the method of research and discussion. Indeed all of that, by its nature, is differed over and it develops from one age to another.

Have I acted improperly in what I have undertaken in compiling this book? Am I permitted, in the field of unveiling the realities of faith in Allah, Mighty and Majestic, in front of the proponents of various doubts and specious arguments, not to discuss with them based on the general logical foundations that they understand and believe in?

Some of them talk about the methodology of the Qur’ān ... and the necessity of replacing all of this with the methodology of the Qur’ān.

We say to these brothers: do not make the two methodologies mutually exclusive, and do not negate one at the expense of the other.

We need to present the methodology of the Qur’ān regarding the one whose heart is focused on the principles of faith in Allah and His Messenger but still needs to strengthen it and preserve it and establish the true Islamic image in his mind without any falseness or deviation from it. We sincerely advise the like of this person not to waste his time pondering over these intellectual discussions that hover around studying specious arguments that he has no need of other than to instruct others and teach them.

But we do need the general intellectual, logical methodology that has been used by the scholars of *kalām* regarding the one who has not yet thought about the realm of faith in Allah and His Messenger and the Book that He revealed to His Messenger.

If it is futile to present to these people verses of the Qur’ān and its admonitions when they do not yet believe in what is called the Qur’ān, and it is futile to turn to the one

who has one of these specious arguments engrained in his head, which we were discussing previously, and then treat it with that which some people understand of the meaning of the methodology of the Qur'ān.

I say, 'with that which some people understand' ...and I do not say, 'the methodology of the Qur'ān', because the methodology which most of the scholars of *kalām* used in their time and that we are using in this book is not outside of the methodology of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān commands us not to devote our thoughts and our doctrines to that which we have no knowledge of. It commands us to make the

intellect and its standards the arbitrators in everything that we come across in life. The Qur'ān discusses with the idol-worshippers according to the standard of "the final cause" appearing in the cosmos. The Qur'ān awakens the thoughts of the idol-worshippers to negate a partner for Allah the Exalted according to the proof of "mutual restriction" as it awakens to the necessity of Allah's existence, Mighty and Majestic, demonstrating the axiom of the invalidity of circular reasoning, infinite regress and the axiom of the invalidity of something being preferred with anyone preferring it⁽⁹⁾, so what constitution do you want from the Qur'ān that is more than this, in order to be certain that discussing with the proponents of specious arguments in conformity with the evidences and proofs that they are dealing with is from the core of the Qur'ān's methodology?!

It does not concern me, if what I have said is true, if some thinkers or sincere callers to Islam wish to differ with me. It is not a condition, for the majesty of the callers to Allah the Exalted and their exalted station and the radiance of their ideas, that they do not make mistakes in some issues, or that the research does not mislead them from being able to investigate a matter from all sides.

If this condition were true then it would require infallibility, and no-one has been described with infallibility after the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

That, then, is a summary of the ideas and notes that I wanted to establish in this introduction. I ask Allah the Exalted not to charge me in anything that I do, write or say, and not to make my portion from this book something that will negate the reward for it on the Day of Judgement, and I ask Him to encompass me in His mercy and to benefit me with the supplications of the righteous for me in the unseen realm.

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Introduction to the First Edition

All praise is due to Allah, the Originator of the Heavens and the Earth. He has made the creation articulate the signs of His Existence, and with it He has unveiled the majesty of His authority. He created man and honoured him with the trust of bearing an intellect, to be the attentive ear listening to the signs in the creation and then the embracing vessel for the evidences and admonitions that He reveals. He sent the Messengers and the Prophets, continuously throughout the ages, to every nation, place and domain: to remind man of the responsibility of the intellect that He had entrusted him with and the

honour of leadership and mastery in creation that He had raised him to. It is therefore not suitable for the most noble of all creatures to be the first to reject and be ignorant of the Truth.

Glory be to Him. He has made knowledge of the hidden things in His creation the path to faith in His existence and He has made the keys to the knowledge of all that the authority of the intellect alone, so that with this man would know that there is no religion without knowledge, and there is no knowledge without intellect.

Blessings and peace be upon the Seal of the Prophets Muhammad, blessings and peace be upon him, who was sent with the same religion that all the Prophets before him were sent with: that there is no god but Allah alone so worship Him. He was sent with the universal Revealed Law that abrogates all the laws revealed before it, suitable for every time and place, sufficient for benefiting every individual and group from amongst humanity.

To proceed: indeed the foundation of Islam is its creed, and the essence of the creed is nothing other than faith in the existence of Allah and His uniqueness. There is no desire to carry out any of the rulings of the Islamic Revealed Law if the creedal principles regarding it are not implanted in the heart, and there would be no desire to implant any of these principles in the heart until after having faith in the existence of the Creator, may His majesty be manifest.

Had man been left alone with his intellect, without there being between them any barrier from the inclinations of the ego or the desires of this life, or the whispering from the devils amongst mankind and the jinn—nothing would have hindered him from having faith in Allah. He would have found the entire universe to be laden with proofs articulating His existence. Then he would have found the Qur'ān alone to be the staircase to the highest levels of faith and certainty, and at that point he would not have needed a proof, a discussion, evidence or a debate. He would live without needing to think about intuitive evidences and the premises of necessities.

But Allah, Mighty and Majestic (His Wisdom willed for human beings to test one another and then He tests them to see which of them is the best in action, in order to reward them afterwards for the actions they have done and not for what He knew they would do from His pre-eternal divine knowledge) put misleading passions and desires into the guiding intellect that is in man and He made faith in the Truth and following it burdensome while making faith in falsehood and following it light and easy.

As a result, phoney arguments emerged and different veils became condensed. The bigotry of the ego came to have more power than the power of the intellect that is in people's heads. Then, all of this came together to distort the clear vision of the self-evident Truth, such that some people came to think that this truth was some sort of secret philosophy or delusional fantasy.

Because of that, this necessary reality must be reckoned in accordance with theoretical issues, in that the researcher imagines (if he is a believer who is certain of the guidance of his intellect) all the causes of confusion and doubts that can emerge from around these theories and then he places them, with all seriousness, on the scale of scientific

research. Then he imposes upon them the rays of the reflective, free intellect until it reveals their falseness, and one of two results will come of that: either its proponents will desist from embracing them and they will fight against them, so that the veracity of their research and the freedom of their intellects is made manifest, or they will continue being devoted to them and propagating them and the falseness of their intentions will be manifested and the slavery of their ideas will be revealed.

It is not appropriate for the believing researcher to feel uneasy, and this is because of the fact that he demonstrates the self-evident truths that do not need, by consensus of the intelligent, a proof; because this self-evident truth itself has transformed, in the imaginations of many people, into theories that are subject to research, reflection and discussion. We have not yet said that it is the foundation of the remaining divine commandments for mankind. If it were the case that the foundations of these commandments was faith in the existence of the shining sun in the middle of the sky there would still be people who would deny it and oppose it, and as a result a thick barrier would be set up between them and the delusions of many people.

Because of this, those before us, may Allah have mercy on them, compiled various exhaustive works and short expositions that mentioned scientific proofs and evidences for the existence of Allah, and they were happy to lower their intellects to the level of those who imagined the existence of Allah to be an obscure theory that needed many premises and explanations. They spread all of these premises and explanations and brought forth the scales of absolute intellectual thought and the scales of Greek philosophy, so that a biased researcher would not put confusion on one of the scales and then fight against it and seek a decision from it. If it were not for these pedantic, biased people the Muslims would have been increased as the Companions were increased by spontaneous thought, freedom of the intellect and the proofs of the Qur'ān and the universe⁽¹⁰⁾.

Then time passed, and today we are facing a new kind of confusion even though it is clear that it is related to the confusion that passed before through the relationship of a strong brotherhood, since they give warning of having only one mother and it is: bigotry that dominates the person and the ego and the passions that carry away one's thought and one's intellect.

This new confusion is what is called the materialistic theory for the origin of things, the story of evolution and the new ideologies for interpreting thought and existence, as well as the state of being dazzled that scientific discoveries have left in the minds of some.

It is a confusion that has no authority in the scales of science and its proofs. Its only source of authority is the source of "anticipation", "guesswork" and "retrieval"⁽¹¹⁾. It seems that the factors of bigotry, passions and desires said to these three things, 'Be the scales of scientific certainty', so is that the case?

But whatever the case, the one who desires to show people the truth must negotiate the ways and problems that render the path to it difficult, regardless of how weak these confusions and problems are, and regardless of the falseness and fabrication that

manifests from them. You must confront it based on the same appearance in which it claims to be acceptable to you, even if it has the appearance of science and certainty. Rather indeed, you must not laugh at all at the appearance of this masquerade, regardless of whether it is a contradictory or strange phenomenon.

Therefore we must do what those before us did, and put these modern confusions under the microscope of pure science and the pure intellect in accordance with the intellectual standards that the proponents of these confusions recognize. That will ultimately reveal either the falseness of these confusions and the falseness of whoever fabricated them or their return to the truth and their liberation from falsehood.

But slowly, for this too is insufficient.

Indeed the result is not rushing to turn (with a large group of dubious people) in an empty ring! You put the Dīn in front of one of them and they ask you for the evidence. You present him with the evidence and he says that it is taken from the Dīn! You move away from the Dīn in order to talk about the intellect and science alone, and he says to you that science only believes in experience⁽¹²⁾ and observation.

For that reason, when looking at both, we find that most of what is written by the defenders of the Truth on the one side and most of the prejudiced or atheistic minds on the other; none of it contains any of these proofs or evidences.

What is the reason? The reason is the lack of there being a complete methodology with which to search for reality, before going into any discussion about reality itself. How can one desire to go with one of them along a path of knowing the truth when the truth is hidden at the end of it if he does not have with him any map of this path nor any knowledge of its stages and its twists?

What is truly strange is that we find a group of those who have studied a portion of every discipline and then claiming that they have become specialists in philosophy, logic and the methods of research—making judgements regarding many of the facts of the creed regarding the Prophets and the Last Day as they imagine and as they wish, without mastering the basic text of any method of research. Rather, you find them leaping towards it while they have blinded their eyes and their thoughts, and none of them know if they are sinking into the mazes of ignorance or into the middle of the fields of fantasy and guesswork!

Moreover, what is more strange, is that you find them declaring this leap of theirs to be science and declaring the point of departure of the Muslims and their method as dogma. The scientific reality of religion, according to these “hotheads”, is a series of ideas that began initially with soothsaying and astrology. Then it developed into magic and then it developed into prophecy, which sucked up many of the traditions and commemorations and that gave it a specific spiritual sanctity. As for the Dīn, as it is known by its Prophets, those who believe in it and those who research its evidences and proofs, it is only based on dogma.

For that reason, before looking into the assets of the Islamic creed and its proofs, we must disclose the method of looking into it so that certainties are not mistaken for conjectures and assumptions, and so that we can know: is it actually true that the source

of the Dīn amongst ourselves is merely dogma while these “hotheads” derive their ideas from science and proof?

If we look at it in that way, i.e. as they say, then we must hurry and rid ourselves of a creed that has no business in our lives other than to steal our intellects and take us away from the field of science and certainty. If we look at it in the opposite way then we have made it clear for those who know well the movements of jumping and hot-headedness that this movement, if it does not break a man who advocates it or bruise his neck, it will never turn into a proof or a science.

* * *

This was running throughout my mind while I was teaching the Islamic creed at the University of Damascus, and circumstances were not yet allowing me to write down these discussions: I used these thoughts as a plan for my research. I felt that I should initially begin with a detailed preface about the method of researching reality according to Islamic thought and according to Western thought. Indeed, I felt that all of my knowledge and research would be useless unless it was backed up by this important preface.

I then followed it with another preface in which I explained the human need for a sound and true creed regarding existence and life, and then adherence to the meaning of slavehood to the One who necessarily exists, Mighty and Majestic is He. I also clarify the connection between the existence of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and the need for man to be guided by a specific way of thinking and acting.

After that I felt that I should begin, as many researchers have done before, by dividing the discussions of the creed into four parts:

Divinity, Prophethood, the Universe and Matters of the Unseen

Beginning with Divinity, I present the scientific evidence for the existence of the Creator, Mighty and Majestic is He, according to the clear methodology in the preface. I begin with the fundamental point of creed, in a way that combines between the persuasion of both ancient and modern thinkers, and then proceed to talk about the divine attributes in detail, explaining what is connected to each of them and responding to every potential argument against them.

I then move on to speak about Prophethood and explain the meaning of ‘Prophet’ and ‘Messenger’ and the particular characteristics of Prophets. In the course of this discussion the phenomenon of revelation must also be explained and analysed as well as the meaning of miracles and their reality and how they should be understood by science and the intellect.

I then turn to discussing aspects of the Universe, speaking about human beings, angels, jinn and the law of causality in the universe. At that juncture it will be necessary to compare the reality of human beings and their story as detailed in the Qur’ān and how they are seen by the theory of evolution. Likewise it will be necessary to have a detailed discussion about causality and occasionalism in the Universe that gathers between the requisites of science and the need for clarity.

When talking about matters of the Unseen I begin by explaining its meaning and

reminding the reader of the scientific method for arriving at certainty regarding its nature. I then enumerate these matters one by one in chronological order, i.e. starting with the signs of the Hour, then death, then the punishment in the grave, then the gathering, then the reckoning, then the scales, then the bridge and then finally Paradise and the Fire. I hope that Allah gives me success to solve every problem and refute any doubts that may hinder the path of scientific research in any way.

The following issues compelled me to write down these discussions:

1. Avoiding delving into the reality of the divine attributes and analysing them and whether they are the essence itself or other than it, and what is subordinate to both of them, while being content with the doctrine of the majority of Muslims in that regard. This is because the intelligent Muslim has the capacity not to think about that at all and to only cling to the attributes of perfection that Allah has attributed to Himself on the condition that there is no confusion in the faith in Allah that cannot be refuted unless one plunges into this discussion that has no benefit.
2. Lack of preoccupation with many of the differences that exist between the Mu'tazilah and the majority of Muslims from Ahl us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, as they are matters in which resolving them does not end in one of the two positions being disbelief, in order to make plain the confusion and probability in its evidences. Then they are not connected to any confusion regarding faith that any group of people may have today. It suffices us to adopt what the majority of Muslims from Ahl us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah have agreed upon after knowledge and evidence.
3. Lack of verbosity in mentioning the issues that do not have a decisive evidence or indisputable proof established for them. Indeed, perhaps I will not raise objections to many of them. This is because the domain here is specific to those matters that are established upon decisiveness and certainty, and moreover they are the assets of the creed that no Muslim can deny or be ignorant of. It is known that certainties have a method that is particular to them that cannot be exchanged for anything else in order to arrive at them.

With this I ask Allah the Exalted to grant success to myself and the reader, as he is about to read this book, that we only have an open and objective mind and that He rids us of every bigotry and every evil inclination or desire. We begin, as I said previously, from the point of non-existence and from there we will go, step by step, judging by the scrupulous scientific standard, and whatever finish this path leads us to is where we will stop and hold firm its position.

Indeed it would be worthwhile for the person whose life is like a train that keeps going until death without any peace to research into that obscure ending, and what is beyond it and what is attached to it, objectively and with only the guidance of the intellect. I have not seen anything stranger than the phenomenon of a man mounting a riding animal and hastening towards an unknown destination and he is so happy with it that he

does not try to ask himself, not even for a single moment, about the destination that he will arrive at and what the consequences may be.

Nonetheless, I have written down these discussions and I only desire to unveil reality and I only desire that I am rewarded by the Creator of this reality. After that the reader may desire what he likes.

Dr Muḥammad Sa‘īd Ramaḍān Al-Būṭī

1st of Shawwāl, 1388 AH

Preface

- 1. The Scientific Method for Researching Reality according to Muslim Scholars and Others.**
- 2. What Makes Man Need Authentic Theology Regarding the Universe and Life and its Requirements**
- 3. The position of creed in relation to the entire Islamic structure.**

1. The Scientific Method for Researching Truth According to Muslim Scholars and Others

Introduction

If realising the truth as it actually is, is science, as they say, then the method that is used to achieve this realisation should—without a doubt—also be scientific, i.e. the method this is used should be none other than a series of true realisations in and of themselves that remove the veil from the reality that is being sought.

This is because science is not the product of anything but another science like it. Conjecture can never arrive at knowledge, and if this were not the case then two conjectural premises could bring about a definitive result, and this is clearly impossible.

Therefore, everyone who searches for the truth must use a scientific method that is not corrupted by whims and fancies. He must cling to this method and not deviate from it in any way.

This is a clear axiom that nobody can dispute.

However, it is very likely that we can ask: to what extent do Islamic thought and Western thought apply this axiom and pay attention to it?

Maybe the word “objective research” is a quick answer, a well-known and widespread phrase that is commonly associated, amongst some people, with the research of orientalists, so does it answer this question?

However, relying on the renown of this “objective research” alone to arrive at a judgement is a way to truth that is tumultuous and not scientific. There is no doubt that it causes us to deviate from the truth while at the same time deluding us into thinking that we have actually found it.

It would be good for us to look for the answer to this question by looking at the actual path that is taken by both Muslim and Western scholars to arrive at some truth, whether it is normative (as they say) or historical.

We must—before anything else—establish an important truth in this regard, and it is that the primary factor in subjugating Islamic thought to an exact and scientific method of research, as we will see, is nothing other than the religion. If it were not for their religious belief, Muslims would not burden themselves with the difficulty of such a method that requires time and effort and does not bring about any specific material gain, and then ardently cling to it until it becomes a standard methodology for all of them, which they mutually recognise and study together.

This religious objective is exemplified in many passages in the Book of Allah the Exalted, one of them being His saying, Glorified and Majestic: **“And do not concern yourself with anything that you have no knowledge of. Indeed the ears, the eyes and the hearts will all be brought to account”** [Al-Isrā’ 17:36]. This saying of His, Glorified and Majestic is He, is a rebuke of people who have plunged their intellects into the obscurities of whims and conjectures which, by their very nature, cover the

truth and do not reveal it.

“For most of them follow nothing but conjecture: conjecture can never be a substitute for truth. Verily, Allah has full knowledge of all that they do” [Yūnus 10:36].

You can see how embodied in this motive is the prohibition against adopting any idea, even the religion itself, from being the outcome of anything other than a path established by an intellect that readily accepts definitive proofs that by their nature reveal the truth that is sought.

It is because of this that the scholars of *tawhid* have stipulated as a condition for a believer’s faith that it be based on objective proofs of intellectual conviction and not the flawed method of following someone else.

This is because scientific truth—in the ruling of the religion⁽¹³⁾—is the pinnacle and fountain of all intellectually sacred things. It is that which thought must turn to in humility and revolve around. Is there a stronger evidence in this regard than the fact that the religion itself is not satisfied with its existence and its sanctity being based on anything other than knowledge and its proofs, and it is not pleased to take a judge for itself from anywhere else?

All of this means that Islam grants a religious significance to searching for the truth with the light of objective knowledge and thought. If a non-Muslim, by his nature, engages in intellectual enquiry because of his curiosity and love for research, then indeed the Muslim is motivated to the same enquiry because he feels that it is an obligation that he is rewarded for discharging and punished for neglecting.

And this is how Islamic thought found itself in front of a religious duty: the necessity of searching for the truth, whether it [the nature of the truth] is transmitted information or intellectual contentions. It is self-evident that fulfilling this duty will require the laying down of a method of research. It is obvious that if the objective is clear and sound and only determinable by the intellect, then the method of attaining the objective will be equally clear and sound, laid out only by the intellect.

But despite that we are not writing this study so that we can rush and make a judgement that the scientific method that the Muslims have is clear and sound and is only governed by the intellect. Rather, our intention is to study this method and we will subsequently judge it after that.

The Method of Research according to Muslim Scholars:

The scientific method of research according to Muslim scholars can be summarized in the great and glorious maxim that is unparalleled among other people, and it is their statement:

‘If you are transmitting, then [you need to] authenticate, and if you are claiming [something then you need] evidence.’

This means that the topic of research will always either be a piece of information that has been transmitted or a claim that has been made (or theory proposed). As for that which may be a transmitted piece of information, research into it must be restricted to verifying the link between it and its source, because the link is the object of possible perversion and doubt. If the possibility is eliminated and the obscurity dispelled, then the result of the transmitted information is a specific scientific truth, on the condition that it is definitive in its implication (its meaning is clear).

As for that which is a claim, research into it must be directed towards scientific proofs that are compatible with it and which by their nature will reveal the extent to which this claim is true.

For every type of claim (or hypothesis) there is a type of scientific evidence that is compatible with it and cannot be substituted for anything else. Claims that are related to the nature of material things and their essence can only be connected to scientific proofs that are empirical and experiential. Claims that are connected to abstract matters like numbers, the mind and logic can only accept their own legitimate and well accepted proofs. Claims that are connected to civil rights and affairs can only be served by proofs and arguments about which there is agreement that they are necessarily applicable. In this way a claim does not become an established scientific truth unless it is presented with the appropriate evidence. Evidence that may be presented to back up a claim does not have any scientific value unless there is conformity between them in terms of nature and type.

Bearing that in mind, what, then, is the scientific method that the scholars of Islam have laid down in order to verify the relationship between the piece of information and its source and to verify the scientific value of a claim according to what we have just mentioned?

The method adopted to verify a piece of information:

This method has given rise to a number of specific sciences that cannot be found in history outside of the Islamic library, and they are: the Science of *Hadīth* Terminology (*muṣṭalaḥ al- ḥadīth*), the Science of Criticism and validation (of narrators) (*al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl*), and the Science of Biographies of Men (*tarājum al-rijāl*). These three sciences intersect in order to lay down a precise standard for distinguishing a true piece of information from what is otherwise, and the difference between a rigorously authentic piece of information that brings about probable conjecture and that which brings about certainty.

A piece of information reaches the highest level of authenticity when it is firmly established, by way of analysis and research, that the chain of transmission is joined from the one who carries the piece of information all the way back to its source, by way of upright and reliable narrators from other such narrators all the way to the source of the chain without any anomaly in its content and subtle defect in its narration. If the narration does not reach this level, because a link in the chain of transmission is missing because we do not know who it is, or there is lack of confidence in his uprightness, or

a lack of certainty regarding his memorisation and his precision (in recording information), or the actual text that is being transmitted does not agree with an approved narration from someone else, then it is not rigorously authentic.

But the rigorously authentic itself has different levels, starting from strong probability to certain knowledge. If the chain of transmission that carries all the essentials of rigorous authenticity is comprised of single narrators who transmitted the information between themselves, then it is inevitable that it will be, by judgement of reason, be deemed probable conjectural information. If the links in the chain of transmission are comprised of two or three narrators (at each level) then it is still probable conjectural information but conveys stronger probability that is close to certainty.

If each link in the chains, happen to be such a large groups of narrators that the intellect is satisfied that they cannot be colluding in a lie, then the narrated information acquires the attribute of certainty, and it is what is called mass-transmitted (*mutawātir*) information⁽¹⁴⁾.

As for rigorously authentic information that is probable conjecture, the Islamic ruling does not consider it in matters of creed, because it is only probable conjecture. The Qur'ān has prohibited (in the field of studying creed) the following of conjecture. This is as you have seen. However, it is considered authoritative in the scope of practical laws, because mass-transmitted and decisive evidence exists that the Muslim—with regards to practical conduct – is legally obligated to depend on the rigorously authentic that is conjectural. For this reason, it is valid for legal rulings to be based on rigorously authentic *aḥādīth* even if they are from a singular chains of transmission (*āḥād*), and this is based on caution and prudence in the matter.

As for the rigorously authentic that is certain, what is called the mass-transmitted narration, it alone is what is authoritative when establishing the creed and indisputable concepts. This means that a person will not be required to believe in something transmitted unless it is based on mass-transmitted proof. If the evidence is from a single chain of transmission then certainty in it depends on one's own personal satisfaction and contentment.

You may ask me: How does the researcher know the conditions for a narration to be rigorously authentic? Let us assume that he hears the chain of transmission, how can he learn about the connectivity of these narrators to one another, and that they are all trustworthy, upright and precise (in recording)?

The answer: indeed both the Science of Criticism and Validation, and the Science of the Biographies of Men have been founded to facilitate the path of this study and make easy the examination of the information that needs to be found.

In our Islamic library, there are many works that present details about the men whose names are found in any of the chains of transmission that we have. You can stop and look at the biography of whomever you wish in order to criticise or validate him and determine the age in which he lived, and thereby you will know his contemporaries whom he may have come into contact with. What is extraordinary is that those imams

who concentrated on the gathering of the biographies of men – and they are trustworthy imams each one whom is considered to be an authority in this regard – were not worried, whilst looking for the truth and respecting the scientific standard, that any corruption would tarnish it. They put the dots on their letters to provide a very exact description of each person regardless of whether they would conclude that such a person was unreliable and to be avoided or he was to be trusted and relied upon.

And so forth, for in our Islamic library there are dictionaries of a different kind that have been compiled... dictionaries that accurately describe individuals and men; from them you can learn about what is false and not connected to the subject with the same ease that allows you to learn the accurate definition of a word and its explanation in the known dictionaries and lexicons of language.

As we have in our library a specific discipline that has been compiled in this regard, and it is what is called the discipline of ḥadīth terminology, and this technique includes all the various essentials for substantiating transmissions and pieces of information in accordance with a unique scientific method.

This is a brief summary of the scientific path that the scholars of Islam possess for substantiating transmissions and pieces of information, and there is no desire in these brief words to go into further detail and explanation, but whoever wishes to go further must apply himself to the sciences that we have pointed to in order to find the amazing, inimitable effort that was expended for the sake of extracting the scientific value from the transmitted “word”.

The path taken in order to substantiate claims:

This path differs, as we have said, according to how claims differ, and thus that which is connected to some material existence is dealt with by way of analysis and designation. It is inevitable that in such cases one relies on evidences and proofs from the five senses, i.e. on that which is called in modern parlance “experimentation and empiricism” which is the natural means of arriving at certainty in these kinds of matters.

Islam does not hesitate to adopt anything that has been definitely established by this means.

On the other hand, science cannot present to us, even today, any scientific reality that contravenes any particular of Islamic theology.

Furthermore, nothing in the Book or the Sunnah has made us legally responsible for any clear, specific information connected to the material things in existence around us. Rather, the Book and the Sunnah have given us expressions that indicate them and prompt us to think about them and reflect on them, more so than giving us information about them, and this is by relying on the means and apparatuses that Allah has provided man with and which are the natural tools for removing the veil of ignorance from every material reality in existence.

This is the secret behind the Qur’ān not going into great detail with regards to the scientific laws that are connected to that which is tangible and observable. If the Qur’ān

had done that, it would have thus become obligatory upon people to believe in these details, and that in turn would have burdened human minds with having to adopt scientific realities without arriving at them by way of the proofs that are compatible with them, i.e. experimentation and empiricism. The Qur'ān has not burdened anyone with this task, and this is in order to honour the intellect and give it the freedom to use its natural method of unveiling tangible realities.

This is why, in these matters, you find the Qur'ān doing no more than pushing those endowed with intellect towards exploring and investigating by using their scientific, means of investigation. As for what it contains by way of information about the unseen, it has undoubtedly gone into great detail, because there is absolutely no way for experimentation and empiricism to arrive at that information. The only way to arrive at certainty in these matters is through Allah's Book, Mighty and Majestic is He, or the mass-transmitted Sunnah.

This is the case for claims that are connected to tangible matters.

As for claims that are connected to the unseen and are not subject to any of the outward senses, there is that which you find in the Book or the mass-transmitted Sunnah by way of a clear text and there is that for which you do not find in either of them any clear account.

As for that which is found in clear texts, this comes within the scope of indisputable established concepts.

The path of certainty is either by way of the transmission of the Book or the transmission of the Sunnah, going back to the certainty of a mass-transmitted piece of information, which we have already discussed. Thus, the Qur'ān is the words that were revealed to Muhammad, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, and they have come to us by way of mass transmission. Thus, there is absolutely no doubt that its words are Qur'ānic, and like the Qur'ān the same goes for the Sunnah if it has reached us by way of mass-transmission.

As for the veracity of what the Qur'ān itself contains, beyond the fact that it is Qur'ān and has reached us from the Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, with certainty, that is another scientific matter that falls under the second category of claims connected to abstract issues or unseen matters. Know that the underlying cause of that goes back to verifying the phenomenon of revelation in the lifetime of the Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, and verifying the matter therein, which is based on proofs of certainty that rely on complete induction and clear correlation, as we will show later in our study.

In other words, the decisive and established texts in the Book give us certainty regarding their contents, and this is after passing two stages of investigation: the first stage is verifying the chain of transmission of the Qur'ān from our master Muhammad, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, to us. The second stage is verifying his, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, informing that the Qur'ān is from Allah.

If the second stage is verified in light of the principles that we shall mention shortly, then the texts of the Book become a source of permanent certainty. This is the meaning

of what we said before: (As for that which is found in clear texts, this comes within the scope of indisputable established concepts).

After that there is no difference between the intellect having a means of digesting and understanding these unseen matters in its own way and not having those means, just like those unseen matters that we only know about because we have been veraciously informed of them, such as the establishment of the Hour, the gathering of the bodies, and the existence of Paradise, the Fire and the Angels. It is sufficient for these things to be realised with certainty by the fact that they have been informed of and dealt with by a clear text from the Book of Allah or a mass-transmitted ḥadīth from the Sunnah.

Despite the nature of the Qur'ān in this regard, it still presses us to reflect and investigate everything that it informs us of and have certainty in it, namely those unseen matters that the human intellect can go around and sense the reality thereof, such as the existence of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, the occurrence of that which is possible⁽¹⁵⁾, certain things being made the means for other things⁽¹⁶⁾, and similar matters.

The scholars of scholastic theology (*'ilm al-kalām*) have gone deep into researching these matters by way of objective reasoning and thought, without relying upon authentic transmission as an intermediary between them and these matters. They did not do that because it is the only means but rather for the sake of opening another path of research towards certainty alongside the path of authentically transmitted information.

Thus, Islamic thought arrives at faith in Allah's existence and His oneness, along with that which follows from it, by travelling along two paths, both of which are an exact and scientific method without any defect:

The first path begins with the stage of researching the phenomenon of revelation, and once that has been passed, one moves on to the stage of researching the veracity of what has been transmitted and the essentials of certainty abundantly present therein. Once that has been passed, one can be certain of the matter and its veracity because of the veracity of its preliminary criteria.

As for the second path, it is shorter. One researches the matter based on guidance from nothing but thinking and rational proofs, without moving too far away from prophecy and its reality and the Qur'ān and its veracity.

In the end, both paths lead the researcher to the truth. Indeed, they eventually meet and strengthen one another.

As for that which is not mentioned by a certain, mass-transmitted piece of information, without any clear or obvious text, then the means of knowing the truth therein are restricted to rational investigation alone, which is realised by way of two paths:

The First Path: To follow what is called *dalālat al-iltizām* (proof by association or correlation)

This means to find a direct connection between two things, such that when you think about one of them you imagine the other.

This only works when complete inductive reasoning testifies to it. This is when all the various states and circumstances are studied to see if the two things exist, and one finds that they are always connected to each other.

For example, the weakness of the body demonstrates illness, minarets in a town signify the presence of Muslims, the sound of the siren that is specific to fire trucks signifies that there is a fire, and a man in a drunken state signifies that he drank some intoxicant.

The indicator in all of these examples is not the cause of what is being indicated, such that we can say that the fact of something indicating something else is that thing causing the other. Therefore, having a weak body is not the cause of the illness. A minaret is not the cause of people in a town being Muslim. The siren is not the cause of a fire, and a man being in a drunken state is not the cause of him having drunk an intoxicant.

While you may witness the indicator in each of these examples, you do not see or witness that which is being indicated, such that you can say that the proof is seeing and observation. Rather, it is something hidden from your observation and your perception.

Therefore, how do these things indicate what they indicate, and how can we believe in them without seeing them?

Indeed the indication is because the indicator is always connected to that which it indicates, and this is repeated continuously without exception and as such the induction process is completed. Thus, out of this permanent association, an effective link of indication is formed between them.

The way to benefit from this proof is to reflect on some phenomenon that you witness in front of you. If you see—by way of inductive reasoning—that this phenomenon necessitates a specific reality, then it is natural, in the balance of the intellect, to believe in it, even though you do not find it appearing in front of you. Indeed a person who sees an ambulance racing with an unceasing siren will not doubt that there is a sick person who is suffering in a life-threatening situation, even though he cannot see him. Indeed, perhaps he is not aware of the reality of the ambulance passing in front of him to the extent that he would be aware of the state of the patient, which rapidly comes to mind.

When someone presents a claim to you, very often you are able, with the means of proof by association, to determine whether it is true or false. That is done by way of looking for the necessary consequences of this claim. If you see these necessary consequences in front of you then that is proof of the veracity of the claim. If they are not there or it is the opposite, then that is proof of the falsehood of the claim.

Thus, if a man who lives in the suburbs of a town tells you that all its inhabitants are Muslims, it is not possible for you to believe what he is saying if you contemplate and find nothing above its buildings but crosses on churches, despite the fact that you have not met any of its people and you have not discovered what their theology or religion is by way of experience and observation. If someone claims to you that the source of thought and intellect in man is his feeling the need for food, you cannot believe his

claim if you reflect on all other animals that share with man the feeling of needing food but do not, as a result, possess thought and intellect.

The Types of Associative Evidence:

Associative evidence does not always lead to certainty, as the matter is dependent on how clear the connection is between the two things and to what extent further proof is needed. This is why the scholars have divided associative evidence into three types, ascending in strength from the lowest to the highest:

The first is called *al-luzūm ghayr al-bayyin* (unclear correlation/association), which is when the believing the existence of an association is dependent upon additional proof, such as the evidence for the corners of a triangle having at least two angles. The intellect does not automatically come to this conclusion for every triangle unless it has come across another proof that affirms it, such as imagining a circle and knowing its degrees. Thus, this evidence alone is not considered a proof because it, in and of itself, needs other proofs and evidence to indicate it. However, it is considered partial proof, which is completed by being supplemented with other proofs.

The second is called *al-luzūm al-bayyin bil-ma'nā al-a'amm* (a clear connection by a general factor) which is when the connection between two things is dependent upon conceiving both of them and contemplating the matter for some time, such as the evidence for something being merely possible based on the fact that it is *ḥādith* (temporal), or Allah existing by necessity based on the fact that He is *qadīm* (eternal). Indeed, you would not understand the connection between things that are possible and the attribute of temporary existence unless you had carefully studied the meaning of possibility⁽²³⁾ and realised that it is anything that is not impossible for the intellect to imagine not existing, and its existence has occurred (*tarajjaha janibul wujood*) due to a contingent cause (*limurajjih tari'*). Then you will have carefully studied the meaning of temporary existence and imagined the connection between it and everything that is possible, which, by their nature, exist because of something else affecting them.

In any case, you do not need to imagine another proof (as is the case with an unclear association) in order to establish this connection.

The third is *al-luzūm al-bayyin bil-ma'nā al-akhāṣ* (a clear connection by a specific factor). This is when thinking of the associated thing alone is sufficient for the connection to come to mind and for one to decisively believe it, such as the ambulance indicating the patient in the previous example, or groaning in pain indicating an ailment in natural matters, or a voice coming from someone in the dark indicating the presence of a living being in rational matters. Indeed, the strength of the association between each of these matters makes the intellect imagine the illness by merely imagining the groaning, and imagine the living being by merely hearing the voice coming from the dark without needing to reflect on the connection between the two.

This third type is the strongest of them in terms of indicating and in terms of the strength of proof, followed by the second type. As for the third type, the unclear

association, it cannot be considered as independent proof. Rather, it can only be considered proof when there is an additional proof that reveals the veracity of the connection, as we have mentioned.

The Second Path: Analogy (*qiyās*):

What is meant here is not the logical analogy (the syllogism) that is adopted from Greek philosophy, which is based on premises and perceptual forms (major and minor premises), but rather the meaning of analogy according to the scholars of *uṣūl al-fiqh*⁽²⁵⁾ and the scholars of *uṣūl al-dīn (al-mutakallimīn)*⁽²⁶⁾ after they took inspiration from the Book of Allah, Mighty and Majestic.

This is a method that can be summarised as extracting a cause (*‘illah*) for something or its reason (*sabab*), then to look for it (the cause) in what might resemble it from amongst unknown matters until the researcher is certain that both the known and the unknown share one cause, and thus an analogy is made from the former and its ruling that is taken from the effect of that cause is applied to the latter.

The concept of analogy is based on two principles, both of which are intellectually accepted truths that require no proof.

The first principle is the law of causation, i.e. everything caused has a cause and every effect has something that influenced it.

The second principle is the law of harmony and order in the world, i.e. the particular manifestations of the universe, even though they are of different shapes and forms, are connected by universal causes (or laws) which by their nature establish harmony and symmetry between all of them, and no matter how closely you examine the natures of these reasons you will see, eventually, that they all have a minimal number of causes and reasons.

Analogy based on these two principles, is also demonstrated by means of inductive reasoning (*istiqrā’*) as it is that which informs the researcher of the reality of the cause. Furthermore, it is also the means by which it is possible to know the universal connections between things that are outwardly different. In this way we can see that induction is an indispensable requirement for the both proofs: proof by association and analogy.

The method of induction here is that you follow the particular examples of what you claim is the cause behind a specific matter, and you find that it consistently produces the effect.

This is done by contemplating the relationship between the cause and the effect, and finding that there is the phenomenon of action and reaction therein, i.e. every time the cause is found the effect is found, and every time the cause is absent the effect is absent. Then you look further into the cause and you find that it influences the effect with indisputable proof, as this action and reaction between the two could merely be due to coincidence or some other factor.

From that you know that for analogy to work, (i.e. in building one’s theology and

matters of certainty) the condition is that the cause must be active in the effect, and that action and reaction are present, and this is clearly consistent without disruption.

If the cause does not meet the level of this condition, such as the influence therein not being obvious and there only being some apparent consistency with the effect, then this is a conjectural analogy (*qiyās zannī*), which is not accepted in theological or rational judgments. It can however, be accepted in practical, legal issues, because of the decisive evidence that probable conjectural evidences suffice for worship and rulings of the Revealed Law, as we have mentioned before. So it suffices in the analogy of practical rulings of the Revealed Law that the cause is active and reactive, but it is not necessary for it definitely bring about the effect. Rather, it is sufficient for it to be loosely agreeable in the personal reasoning (*ijtihād*) of the researcher in order to build the ruling on top of it. Thus, analogy in practical legalities of the Revealed Law actually differs greatly from the nature of analogy and its conditions in theological matters.

An example of this would be to see houses or tents from afar in which people live, for that would make you certain of the existence of water in that place.

The path to certainty therein is that you have quickly called to mind, every other place you know in which people live, and you see that one of the most important reasons behind a place being suitable for people to inhabit it is the availability of water. This notion does not change under any circumstances, as you also know the influence of the cause (*sabab*), which is the water, upon the thing caused, which is subsistence and the feasibility of life.

At that point, you can draw an analogous conclusion from those other places and apply it to this place that appears before you at a distance and decisively affirm the existence of water therein even though you have not seen it with your own eyes.

If this same example were reversed, such that you saw a small amount of water from a distance and then understood from that that people were living there, it would be merely conjecture with no possibility of being elevated to the level of certainty.

This is because the causality of water for human life is an established fact based on the evidence of influence, for water must be present wherever people are present. As for the causality of water for the existence of people around it, this is merely something that is loose correlation and conformity⁽²⁸⁾.

Another example of this is everything that possesses the appearance of being made and planned being proof of someone making it and planning it. The cause and effect here are consistent by necessity.

From here you know that Muslim scholars only pursue the method of inductive reasoning when they come across anything that cannot be subject to experimentation and empiricism, and in the shadow of this method both associative evidence and analogy come together. As you can see, this is as far removed as can possibly be from the metaphysical conclusions and abstract contemplations that Greek philosophy delved into ever so deeply.

Indeed, anyone who reflects on the Islamic method of research knows that the scholars of Islam cannot establish any rational or creedal ruling unless it is upon the

foundations of reality, in which all the elements of certainty exist together.

As for those other realities that remain hidden behind the veil of doubts and have not been grasped except by the hand of speculative inference, such as those that have emerged in the course of historical studies or discoveries of relics or ancient fossils—Islamic history does not know of some fact of certainty that was established upon them or that they were ever adopted as a basis of criticism, demonstrative proof (*istidlāl*) or the basis of an idea. Rather, they have remained as disconnected research and doubtful matters around which every possibility revolves, and a path that calls upon people to traverse it to its end based on a method that is at odds with the correct inductive method.

* * *

This has been a very quick summary of the scientific method of research according to the Muslims. We have taken it from what is found in their actual studies, not from mere abstract theories that are contained in their libraries. After that, we want to ask about the method of research according to others, according to the scholars of the West, such as the thinkers and the orientalist, those whose studies are famously associated with the word “objectivity”. Indeed, this is at the core of what pushed us to write this introduction.

There is no doubt that it has been made clear to the reader, by looking at the first section of this discussion, that I am not seeking to study both methods of research, the Islamic and the Western, in an analytical fashion that would make it subject to an exposition of different schools of thought that may exist therein, or historical phases or a critique of the theories themselves. Rather, what I intend is to clarify two facts.

The first: explain the extent to which Islamic thought relies on systematic, objective methods in its study, and then explain the extent to which Western thought enjoys its share—more or less—of the same.

The second: the extent to which there could be cohesion and concomitance between the methods of research (in that they are specific, intellectual studies and conventions) and between the various scientific studies, according to both Muslims and others, i.e. the extent of the share that these methods possess of reality and correct scientific application.

We—for the sake of elucidating this fact—do not want to derive the scientific method of research according to Muslim scholars from anything apart from that which is found in their own studies, so that in the end we can merely know that there is an independent discipline in the Islamic library connected to the method of research, but rather along with that—and this is what is most important in this discussion—we can know the extent to which this method is applied to the Islamic sciences themselves.

The Method of Research According to Westerners:

We will conclude this discussion of ours by following the same path that we started out on, and thus we ask:

What is the scientific method that Western thought follows in all the various sciences

that it comes across?

There is no escape from going back and dividing the subject of knowledge, whatever its type, into two sides: a report that needs to be verified and a claim whose veracity needs to be ascertained.

We will start with the first of them and say:

The method of testing transmissions and reports:

We do not need to exert much thought in reflecting on the answer, for the reality is that the Western method is devoid, until now, of any objective standard for verifying anything connected to narrations and transmissions.

There is what they call the retrieval method (*al-minhaj al-istirdādī*) or the method of anticipation, the first pillar of which is whatever the researcher may possess by way of depth of perception, precision of sentiment (*wijdān*) and broadness of imagination. The tools that the researcher uses, his perception, his sentiment and his imagination, and everything he may come across by way of relics, events and documents; the manner of research is for the researcher to focus on the relics or events that he has gathered in front of him and impose his perception, sentiment and imagination upon them in order to derive on the back of that whatever puts him at ease by way of principles, judgments and factual findings⁽²⁹⁾.

It is—as you can see—a method that in the end, regardless of how many tools and documents are gathered, only has one path, which is the path of speculative derivation, or indeed purely unseen. Derivation that is stripped of experience and observation thorough investigation and true narration is nothing but a synonym for fancy and doubt or weak, unstable conjecture. That is with the exception of relying on historical documents that contain evidence of certainty, in consideration of what is between them and their source by way of a relationship of cause and thing caused, or something necessitating and something being necessitated.

Let the researcher ask: what has prevented Western thought, until today, from adopting a scientific method with regards to verifying transmissions, despite that importance of the matter and despite the fact that it constitutes half the distance towards verifying many various scientific issues.

The answer is that being concerned with verifying transmissions and reports demands arduous and strenuous effort for there being, outwardly, any material return. To exert such effort cannot be unless there is a motive behind it that is stronger than the intensity of the effort that is to be exerted.

The motive exists in abundance with Muslim scholars, while not a speck of it exists in others. Muslim scholars believe in the existence of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and in the Prophethood of Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and that they are legally responsible for basing their lives upon the way that has been explained to them in Allah's Book and His Messenger's *Sunnah*. Thus, there is no doubt that they are legally responsible for knowing that the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, has left behind, by way of teachings and instructions. They must

strive to their utmost to ensure that the factual certainty that is attached to his life, his biography and his statements is not mixed with anything that would discredit it, such as guesses, lies and inventions.

This is how their certainty made them arrive at this arduous, accurate method that they have laid down as a standard for the veracity of every narration and date, and it was an obligation upon them not to underestimate the huge burdens they were responsible for bearing in applying this method. If it were not for this certainty and this motive, you would not have seen a single scholar of ḥadīth travelling hundreds of miles, far from his homeland, in hard, difficult conditions for nothing other than meeting a Shaykh who can narrate a ḥadīth from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. The one coming to him may already know it and have memorised it but he wants to take it from him as well and ask his permission to narrate it from him so that he can possess more paths of the ḥadīth and know all the chains of transmission that it has.

It is very easy for you to read the chain of transmission of any ḥadīth of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in a book such as *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and you are reclining on your couch or sitting behind your desk, but what is important is that the illustration of that amazing effort that was generously expended in order to get just those two lines of a chain of transmission, which is of almost no importance today, is made clear.

This is about the motive that has pushed Muslim scholars to establish a comprehensive method for verifying narrations. What could possibly make this motive push others to do the same? There is absolutely nothing, as long as the effort that should be expended in order to acquire it is far greater than the material gain or even the knowledge that is sought.

At this juncture, you will notice that many scientific subjects have been treated by both Islamic and Western thought by way of inquiry using two differing paths in which discussion and criticism are of no benefit. This is because, for Muslims, the method of verifying narrations is one of the sources of expounding them, while for others the opposite method for doing so is nothing more than deduction.

As an example of this, let us look at the phenomenon of revelation in the life of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

The method that Muslim scholars have followed in this matter is the following:

First of all, there is the verification of the narration and accuracy of the wording and the chain of transmission. All Muslim scholars have reached the conclusion that the ḥadīth of revelation is authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) and has come through so many various paths that it has surpassed the threshold of *mutawātir*⁽³⁰⁾ *ma'nawī*⁽³¹⁾.

The second is thorough investigation, which has placed them in front of both associative evidence and analogy of the first⁽³²⁾ (and the reader should not wait for me to explain this method that the scholars followed in this regard here, for that will inevitably drag us in another chapter that we are not concerned with right now)⁽³³⁾.

The conclusion that Islamic thought arrived at was: conviction that revelation is him, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, receiving an essential, independent reality that is outside of his being and his internal feelings and far removed from anything he has acquired or his intellectual or scientific demeanour.

As for the method that Westerners have followed regarding the same, it is as follows:

The first step is to take the word “revelation” (*wahī*) and consider it a relic or vague event that history has left behind.

Secondly, using guesswork and estimation to derive whatever anticipation, sentiment and imagination can comprehend from this word.

After that, the conclusion that they have arrived at with regard to revelation is that they have differed and split up into different schools. There are those amongst them who have concluded that revelation is nothing more than an internal, mental exercise or type of psychical inspiration. Then there are those who claim that it is a spiritual illumination that has come by way of gradual unveiling. And then there are those who have found nothing wrong in affirming that revelation is nothing more than epileptic fits that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was afflicted with from time to time.

There is no expectation that these people and the thinkers of Islam will come together on one path of understanding this matter, because these people have eliminated from their consideration the matter of narrations and reports and their scientific value, whether negative or positive. In other words, they have deemed it permissible for themselves to ignore authentic, *mutawātir* narrations just as they have, at the same time, deemed it permissible to invent an explanation that is not supported by any report or authentic narration.

Likewise, they absolutely do not adhere to the method of investigation and what is established by the law of associative evidence and analogy of the first. This has allowed them to imagine that Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him, from the moment in which he received revelation, had a personality that completely contradicted the personality he had beforehand, and indeed contradicted the ongoing events of his life. It has allowed them to make him, peace and blessings be upon him, the greatest liar in the sight of Allah after he was by far the most trustworthy and honest of people. They have made him the greatest actor, deceiver and charlatan, who feigned fear and the yellowing of his face in front of Khadījah because of something he had seen of revelation while at the same time he actually did nothing more than apply himself to mere internal thoughts and inspirations.

* * *

The method of testing scientific claims:

After the above, let us move to the other side of the scientific topic and ask: what is the scientific method that follows verification with regards to a claim from amongst all other claims or a hypothesis from amongst all other hypotheses that scholars of the West come across?

We say: As for those hypotheses that are connected to the natural sciences, Europe has been able, since the age of the Renaissance, to contrive a method for itself, based on experience and observation, that possesses in abundance all the elements of perplexity and precision, and it is not just this. Rather, European thought has been able to use invention as a means of supporting scientific experience, backing it up and benefitting immensely from it⁽³⁴⁾.

There is no benefit in you saying, as some are pleased to do so, that Europe only inherited this method from us, we the Muslim, during the Middle Ages and its well-known historical events. The reality is that Europe, to the extent that it is rich today with this inheritance, we are thoroughly impoverished in terms of the glory we once had in days gone by...and therefore we must, as Arabs, or Muslims, open our eyes properly and look at the clear reality, which is:

History, always, only belongs to the time period in which it was born. It does not bequeath glory or decline but only bequeaths one thing, which is the lesson.

However, Europe, to the extent that it has developed in the field of natural sciences and its methods, has gone backwards in the field of other indisputable, fixed notions, such as that which falls under the category of abstract and unseen matters.

It was incumbent upon their scholars and thinkers, in view of these fixed notions, to travel one of two paths:

Either firmly closing the door of research and reflection between themselves and these matters and regarding what they have acquired from the other, material sciences as freeing them of the need to spend any intellectual effort in anything besides them:

Or approach them with a method of objectivity and pure scientific examination, as they cannot turn away from them.

However, the reality is that they did not do this or that but rather they were happy to adopt a method of studying them and researching them that could, in the very least, be described as strange and curious.

They started their research with the premise of whatever theories and postulates in their minds pleased them; everything was according to what was appealing and according to the inspiration of the environment, the society and the study in whose shadow they grew up in. Then they were pleased to extract suitable, inferred evidences for what they had already presumed and relied upon just as they were pleased, as an equivalent, to declare false the evidences that defy what they rely upon, with no motive other than the desire to do so.

In order not to wrong the minority of researchers who have turned away from their desires and allowed their thoughts to receive a portion of free, pure research, we should say that this description applies to the mentality that is found in the majority of Western thinkers, and in the majority of scientific issues that have the same, abovementioned imprint.

There is no doubt that one of the clearest repercussions of this reality and most obvious of its illustrated indications is those schools of thought that have emerged

claiming that theology can follow psychical desire and be subject to it.

Thus, it suffices you, in order for you to believe in something with firm conviction, that your desire direct itself towards that and that you feel the need for it. At the same time, your desire or your need will not be able to extract the evidence for you that follows the other according to what you prefer to believe in.

At the forefront of those who have adopted this method and means of research is the famous American thinker William James and his famous book *Pragmatism* is one of the most important sources which explain this method and advocate it.

The strangest manifestation of this method, which has attracted a large group of Western researchers, materialises as James divides the necessary intellectual tendencies into two: living and dead, and he explains the dead tendency as being that which the researcher has no inclination towards, and he strikes an example of this tendency: if it is said to someone, 'Be a Sufi', or 'Be a Muslim', as opposed to being told, 'Be a Christian' or 'Be an agnostic'; the first half of the research has already been judged as false because the tendency towards it is absent and the desire is to turn away from it⁽³⁵⁾.

There is no doubt that this method, which is advocated by others besides William James, has been opposed (from the theoretical standpoint) by several others. However, the factual evidences of the various researches articulates, even with regards to these opponents, the very same method and it calls out with a raised voice that theology, whether positive or negative, must be based on a large portion of mere desire, if we do not say desire alone. This means that it is folly for you to look for any semblance of objectivity in their researches, except for a rare minority from amongst them, and especially because the path of inference—which is the sole path for their verifications in this domain—is extremely malleable as it responds to every desire and tendency.

What James and other Western thinkers have in common is that they create the fabric of religious belief in their thoughts from the fibres of the various worldly interests that exist, which people long for in their lives and livelihoods. There is no doubt that it is not their religious doctrines that emanate from their thoughts and intellects and into their lives but the other way around: they emanate from the actuality of their lives and daily affairs and into their thoughts and intellects.

Look at how the British thinker Bentham illustrates this method with the clearest illustration. He says,

'Religion must be in accordance with what benefit requires. The influence that religion has is based on punishment and reward, and thus its punishment must be directed at those actions that only harm the social condition, while its reward should be restricted to actions that benefit. The only way for governance to be in accordance with religion is to look at it from the angle of political good for the nation only. Anything besides that should not be looked at'⁽³⁶⁾.

When they found that the nature of the intellect differs completely from this method in research and examination, and they saw that abandoning the intellect's bridle,

letting it think about unseen and abstract matters as it wants, would lead to many of their intellectual principles and rules, which they had established upon this method, falling into ruin, they could not be bothered to establish another intellectual school based on scorning the intellect and denying its proofs and evidences, and warn one another about the dangers of the intellect to religion (i.e. to the religion that they understand according to their method that we have clarified) using the slogan: ‘Saving Religion from the Intellect’.

You know that the course of this strange path, just as it requires from them not to look at the pure intellect, for the sake of conscripting general intellectual values behind the various interests and benefits that they had agreed upon, also requires the denial of every other understanding of these values and doctrines that does not agree with their interests, regardless of their connection to the intellect and regardless of how self-evident and obvious they are.

Because of this you find them—at a time in which they are shackling their intellects for fear of the dangers they would pose to the doctrines they have established in compliance with certain circumstances in their lives—swooping down and attacking our doctrines, which have been established, as you have seen, in compliance with the rule of the pure intellect in accordance with its sound scientific method: and that is by their claim, in which they know are lying, of free thinking and intellect and not being guided except by science! In other words, this attack is masked in the mask of rational, free research yet it is nothing but in compliance with the same method that they have adhered to, which is that any doctrine that does not agree with their various interests, inclinations and hopes deserves to be fought again, regardless of its proofs and sources.

By my reckoning, all I am obliged to do is place before the reader several examples most of which share in affirming two specific matters: the path of pure inference that is free of any checking or investigation, and the effect of the desire to defend against a specific trend and build one’s theology on its foundations.

Von Kramer and Goldziher relate that people researched a strange matter, which was: do non-Arab men marry Arab women in Paradise? This was because of their desire to establish that the Islamic Conquests bore the hidden objective of Arab dominance⁽³⁷⁾. There is no doubt that whoever reads this text will imagine that a great mass of people researched this topic and that those who researched it were jurists (*fuqahā*) as it is something that concerns jurists before anyone else.

However, if you go back to the source of the story and its chain of transmission and reality you will know that the “people” who looked into the topic of non-Arabs marrying Arab women in Paradise were actually one Bedouin who had come from the desert. Al-Aṣma‘ī heard him saying to someone else, ‘Do you think these non-Arabs will marry our women in Paradise?’ He replied, ‘I think so, and righteous action is by Allah.’ It is a story that has been related by al-Mubrad in *al-Kāmil* and he declares its

certainty weak⁽³⁸⁾.

So contemplate on how a report that had been cut off from its source was put forward and presented in a general way, and forced to speak, against its will, and testify to what the pure, scientific, objective researcher wanted!

In the book *The Philosophy of Religious Thought between Islam and Christianity* by Louis Ghardiah and G. Qanwāṭī⁽³⁹⁾, it is mentioned that ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān approached the Qur’ān during his caliphate and divided it into chapters (*sūr*) and verses (*āyāt*) and he arranged the chapters according to length, starting with the longest and then the next longest and so forth. (v.1 p.42).

So contemplate, first of all, on the method followed in order to establish this claim or hypothesis and you will know that the method is absent from its foundations. The authors have just put this claim in front of us so that we close our eyes and accept it as it is, forgetting the statement of the poet:

Claims, if you do not establish clear proofs

Upon them, they will give rises to pleas

From what investigative, or demonstrative or inferential, source was it established that ‘Uthmān was the one who divided the Qur’ān into chapters and verses, that he deliberately arranged them according to his own desire and that he arranged them starting with the longest of them, knowing that he was the one who decided that this one should be long and this one should be short?

As for us, what we know according to the authentic, established narration of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and from ‘Uthmān himself, is that the matter of verses and their arrangement and chapters and their division and arrangement, all of it goes back to *at-tawqīf*,⁽⁴⁰⁾ which no one, not even the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, has a hand in. Our proof for this is what al-Bukhārī has related with his own chain of transmission on the authority of Ibn Zubayr, who said, ‘I said to ‘Uthmān, “This verse, **“Those who die leaving wives behind”** until His statement: **“without them having to leave their homes”** [al-Baqarah 2:240] has been abrogated by the other verse, so why do you write it?” He replied, “O my cousin, I do not change anything from its place.” And there is what al-Qurtubī and others have related with an authentic chain of transmission on the authority of Sulaymān ibn Bilāl, who said, ‘I heard Rabī‘ah being asked, “Why do al-Baqarah and Āl ‘Imrān come first when some eighty chapters were revealed before them while both of them were revealed in Madīnah?” Rabī‘ah replied, “They come first, and the Qur’ān has only been compiled according to the One Who compiled it”’⁽⁴¹⁾.

1. Now you have this example:

The orientalist Gibb, in his work “The Structure of Religious Thought in Islam”⁽⁴²⁾, says that Islam came to give a religious character to that ancient Arab “animism”, which had been weaved by the customs and the environment, after Muḥammad, peace

and blessings be upon him, had been unable to get rid of it. And he continued to affirm that—with odd and strange seriousness—using a method that was based on his deep penetration into inference, or indeed pure guesswork in most cases.

But all of the above is of the utmost simplicity compared to what follows:

Gibb says in the introduction to this book of his, ‘...’ Then he quotes his book *Hujjat Allāhi al-Bālighah*. This is the established, literal text, in quotation marks, which I am transmitting to the noble reader:

‘Indeed the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was sent with a mission that contained a second mission. The first was to the children of Ismā‘īl...this mission necessitated that the contents of his Revealed Law be rites and practices of worship and types of usefulness that they were familiar with, as the Revealed Law was only to rectify what they already had, not burden them with something they had absolutely no knowledge of’.

We say: There is no doubt that Gibb did not come across this expression alone in the book without looking at anything that came before it or after it. That would be impossible, as the expression is embedded in a long discussion that surrounds it from all sides. Here we find—unfortunately—the most serious kind of treachery in research and quotation, which is that he deliberately distorted what was being said and made the speaker responsible for what he was not responsible for, and tried to make him say what he was innocent of.

What is amazing is that if we were to go back and look in the books of those who came before us for a comprehensive refutation of Gibb’s fantasies which he has put forward in this book of his, we would not find a refutation more profound and more comprehensive than what is found in the book of Shah Walī Allah ad-Dahlawī, in his book *Hujjat Allāhi al-Bālighah*, on the same page from which Gibb plucked out this text in order for it to corroborate what he was saying. It is as if Allah, Mighty and Majestic, inspired him⁽⁴³⁾ to cut the means of whoever would come after him and load his speech with that which he never intended and make him say what he never could have said. Here is what he said:

‘Know that he, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was sent with the Ismā‘īlī Ḥanafīyyah⁽⁴⁴⁾ in order to straighten its crookedness, remove its distortions and spread its light. This is the Exalted’s statement: **“the religion of your forefather Ibrāhīm”**

[al-Ḥajj 22:78]

As that was the case, it was necessary for the foundations of that religion to be intact and its practices established. This meant that the Prophet was sent to a people who still had the remnants of rightly guided Sunnah⁽⁴⁵⁾, and thus there was no point in changing it or altering it. Rather, the obligation was to affirm it because it was more malleable to their souls and a firmer proof against them. The children of Ismā‘īl inherited the way of their father Ismā‘īl and they were upon that Revealed Law until ‘Amr ibn Luḥayy came into existence and inserted things into it according to his corrupt opinion, and thus he went astray and led others astray. He introduced the worship of idols and new,

unbound practices. There was the nullification of the religion and the mixing of the correct with the corrupt, and they were overwhelmed by ignorance, idolatry and disbelief. Allah then sent our master, Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, to straighten their crookedness and rectify their corruption. He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, looked at their law and whatever corresponded with the way of Ismā‘īl, peace be upon him, and the rites of Allah, he commanded that it remain, and whatever was a distortion or corruption or from the rites of idol worship and disbelief, he nullified it and recorded its nullification’⁽⁴⁶⁾.

One thing that cannot be doubted is that Gibb knew about this text that follows those sentences that we quoted from him, and it is, as you can see, nothing but an elaboration and explanation of its contents, as anyone who reflects knows. Thus, how can it be possible to ignore it and pay no attention to it, or indeed not be content with that alone until claiming that in affirming his ideas he was relying on al-Dahlawī, on this man who utterly pulverised these fantasies, as you can see?

Thus, this is the reality of the scientific method that is followed by most Westerners when they enter into a scientific discussion with others, or when they want to establish some hypothesis or fact, or when they try to extract some knowledge or grasp some certainty from a text or document in history: the path of inference first,⁽⁴⁷⁾ then subject the research to nothing but will and desire second, then deliberately distort transmissions and text third.

When we know these realities, and some of its many examples, we have no choice but to thank a researcher like ‘Abdur Raḥmān Badawī when he warns us—in immersed, exalted purity—after his discussion on the retrieval method of Westerners against explaining any historical text in other than the language of the age in which it was written, against ignoring the context and what precedes it, and against speculating in understanding an indication or expression according to other than what the context of the entire expression leads to.

However, what is amazing about his statement is that these pieces of advice are directed at Muslim scholars, those to whom the graciousness of drawing attention to this precision and trust goes back to, and to whom goes back the graciousness of applying it in the most comprehensive of ways, without directing any of it at these Westerners whom he is excessively impressed by and speaks at great length about their methods, unfortunate examples of which we have just shown. Instead of doing that, he directed it at Muslim scholars, imagining one of them stealing a Qur’ānic verse or Prophetic ḥadīth—as they say—in order to support contemporary statements that have no connection to them whatsoever apart from the literal wording.

I was hoping from ‘Abdur Raḥmān Badawī—and he ignored what these people did with their method of research—that he would mention to us one example of a researcher from amongst the Muslim scholars (from amongst those who do not imitate their rulers in following their retrieval and anticipation method) who quoted a text and distorted it, or started deriving significant scientific facts with ropes of inference

strengthened by guesswork and estimation.

Thus, it is for you, after fully understanding everything we have mentioned, to be completely amazed at those who call religious facts which Muslim researchers have arrived at by way of their scientific method that we have clarified “dogma” and those who hold them “dogmatists”. Then they look at what the philosophers of the West imagine, and those who have deviated from religion, and call it “science” and call the proponents of this imagining “scientists”! In other words, religion, as Gibb understands it with his non-existent method, which we have seen, is science, and his way of thinking is scientific. As for religion, as understood by Muslim scholars in the accordance with the scientific method that we have illustrated, it is pure dogma, and their way of thinking is just a dogmatic exercise!

Thus, O intelligent reader, be an honest, objective researcher, and call this group of people (whether they are Arabs or non-Arabs, Muslims or non-Muslims) whatever pure, scientific investigation shows them to be.

The chief factor behind the failure of Westerners’ research methods:

And despite that, let me speak to you about the deep reason for this strange phenomenon in these people:

Westerners, in terms of their stance towards the Christian religion, fall into two categories: those who profess it, submit to it and believe in all of its contents and rulings and those who disavow it, do not submit to it and are not lead to following it and professing it.

As for those amongst them who profess it, they are unable to digest the doctrines of their religion and all of its elements by way of science and the intellect (as the intellect and science clearly defy many of its requirements, reconciliation and interpretation are not possible) but they have also found that their natural, human disposition, urges them to find a religion to adhere to and an object of worship to be subject to, and they have become certain that many moral values have no guarantee of being realised without the guarantee of religion and its control over the soul. Thus, they have come to find themselves between two matters, there is no third in front of them that is true to their environment: either they reject this false religion or they reject sound intellect, but they have preferred the second over the first and rejected sound intellect without rejecting the false religion. Thus, they truly are dogmatists.

As for those amongst them who do not profess it, they have preferred rejecting the false religion over rejecting sound intellect, but they have sufficed with the requirements of sound intellect by denying the religion that they have and interpreting it according to what they imagine and what they think, without looking at the true religion whose principles and rulings in totality both the intellect and science submit to. They have been barred from that by other feelings, and they are the feelings of European, subjective partisanship and the constant fear that the Muslims will return once again to dominating the world, as they were back in the day. Thus, these people have been called secularists.

Then you know that amongst Arabs and Muslims there are individuals whom you consider to be people who articulate, comprehend and speak, but in reality they are nothing but pale shadows that stretch and move with the movements of Europe, the thoughts of Europe and the philosophy of Europe.

These people are of the opinion that religion in Europe has two explanations, a positive explanation which in reality is purely a dogmatic explanation and a negative explanation which, as they call it over there, is a purely scientific explanation. They brought these two explanations from over there and imposed them on the religion of Islam here, for nothing other than to complete the shadow and have blind imitation reinforced from all sides.

This, then, is the deep reason for this strange phenomenon in these people.

This category of people does not concern us at all after the intelligent, reflective, free person knows, from everything we have clarified in this introduction, that Islam does not mean those religious beliefs that Europe holds in defiance of the intellect, and that Islam, in all its principles and doctrines, stands upon an exact, honest, scientific method that is only drawn by the hand of the intellect alone, without partisanship or desire to believe something or blind imitation and following having any sway.

* * *

2. What Makes Man Need Authentic Theology

Regarding the Universe and Life and its Requirements

Some people continue-those who have not been prepared with enough Islamic education-to ask: what is the need or necessity that makes us worship Allah (presuming that He exists) with this religion and enjoins upon us everything it contains; its theology, its worship and its rulings? Why does not this god just leave his slaves free to establish their lives however they want and arrange them according to the manner or path that they like? Some of them have stretched this out into a series of questions and asked in exasperation and astonishment: why does Allah need me to confine myself to worshipping Him my whole life? What would diminish Him or harm Him if I did not do so?⁽⁴⁸⁾

First of all, there must be a thorough, satisfactory answer to this question, and before delving into any discussion about Islamic theology. We will not prepare minds and intellects to receive the facts of monotheism (*tawhīd*) and the doctrinal elements of this religion as long as the vision in front of them is not described, and the path leading to them has been cleared of all suspicions, obstacles and impediments.

In answering this, we say the following:

Indeed when Allah, Mighty and Majestic, attached His Will to the creation of this Universe, with all the very types and species of existence, His brilliant wisdom necessitated that He choose one type from amongst these created beings (which is man) and make him the master of this Universe and make the rest of its phenomena and created beings subject to him and at his service, and to make him responsible for building it up and organising it. This is what is meant by *khilāfah* in His statement: **“I am putting a vicegerent (*khalīfah*) on the earth”** [al-Baqarah 2:30] and it is what is meant by inhabiting in His statement: **“He brought you into being from the earth and made you its inhabitants”** [Hūd 11:61].

Man is equipped with the most important attributes and abilities:

He equipped this creature with all the abilities and attributes that he would need so that he would be perfectly capable of wanting any matter in this universe, building it and using it. Thus, He placed in him the attribute of intellect and everything that branches out from it, such as knowledge, comprehension and the ability to analyse things, probe their depths and arrive at what is behind them. He has also placed in him the sense of selfishness and everything that branches out from it, such as inclining towards preferring oneself and towards domination. He has placed in him the means of strength and the elements of planning and everything that branches out from them, such as desiring supremacy, exaltedness and rank. Then He placed in him all the feelings, cravings and emotions that are considered to be the completion of the value of these attributes and their benefits, such as love, hate, anger and so forth.

You know very well that man would not be able to subjugate anything in this universe or have mastery over any of the affairs of life and its phenomena if Allah the Exalted

had not equipped him with these abilities and attributes.

However, these attributes carry a great evil and they have immense banes. They are two-edged swords. If one edge is used, it brings sublime order to the universe and abundant goodness to man. If the other edge is used, or they are used together, they bring calamitous evil and dreadful chaos, and humanity inherits endless misery.

This is why Allah has called these weapons that He has entrusted these creatures with ‘the Trust’, and He clarified the extent of their importance and the sublimity of their affair in His statement: **“We offered the Trust to the heavens, the earth and the mountains but they refused to take it on and shrank from it. But man took it on. He is indeed wrongdoing and ignorant”** [al-Aḥzāb 33:72]⁽⁴⁹⁾.

The source of the importance of these attributes is that in reality they are nothing other than attributes of Lordship, for knowledge, power, dominion, domination, might—all of them are elements of Divinity and attributes of the Lord, Mighty and Majestic. It is from the very nature of these attributes that if they are found in man they will intoxicate him, take his mind, make him forget his reality and make him strut to the level of Lordship and Divinity, even though, in reality, the only thing man possesses of them is shadows and traces. The only thing they have in common with the actual divine attributes is the names.

One of the consequences of the importance that is in these attributes, is that by their nature they will induce the one who possesses them to use the attribute of strength to oppress others, to satiate his inclination towards power and dominion by extending his influence and power over oppressed groups, and his inclination towards domination will direct him towards the property of others, such that he will extort it and act

wickedly towards it. Then one of the consequences is that groups of people, pushed by these attributes, will compete in bloody conflicts for power, glory, possession, rule and leadership, and the continuous events of history clearly demonstrate this.

This is how the attributes are turned into a factor of chaos and misery in the life of man; when they were only placed in him in order to be a factor of felicity, progress and order.

On account of this, there had to be another power that would direct these attributes towards righteousness and prevent man from using their weapons unless it was from their beneficial edge, so what could this power be that would control the bridle of all these abilities and attributes and push them towards the path of righteousness alone?

The True Religion is the harness that protects man from the seriousness of these attributes:

That is the need of all humanity for religion, i.e. for the authentic creed regarding man, the universe, life and everything beyond that.

The authentic creed is what the intellect and science lead to, faith in the existence of Allah and His oneness, and that there is no true dominion in the universe apart from His dominion, there is no irresistible force other than His force, there is no kingdom apart

from His kingdom, and everything beyond that is created by Allah, Mighty and Majestic; He grants it whenever He wants and He takes it away whenever He wants. He is the One looking over all His slaves. He will resurrect them after death in order to reckon each one of them according to the good and evil that he earned. Whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.

If man reflects on all of this and believes in it firmly based on the foundations of free, reflective, rational investigation, he will feel within the depths of his entire being that he is a slave to this One, Sublime God. Furthermore, these serious and important attributes that he enjoys will come to be within the limits of his slavehood. They will be transformed and become a sublime means of his felicity as an individual and the felicity of his species as a group. There will be a fraternal bond between people and equality in slavehood to Allah after there had been dishonourable rivalries and competitions in which powers came into conflict, swords clashed and the weak were sacrificed for the impetuosity of the strong and the intoxication of their madness.

That is when the inclination for domination in man will become a natural means of establishing a just, comfortable life in which there is civilisation and verdant gardens and meadows everywhere, and treasures will be in abundance in its remote areas. The inclination for power and force will become a means of protecting rights, preserving justice and defending virtue. The inclination towards knowledge and understanding will become a radiant light with which more services of the universe will be unveiled. It will be a guiding firebrand, constantly confirming for man the existence of the Divine Essence and constantly warning him against forgetting the bounds of his slavehood and thus transgressing them into any disbelief or tyranny.

In summary, we say that it is from the nature of the Islamic creed that it descends upon those who claim divinity and the haughty and removes their loftiness and their tyranny. It prevents them from being insolent towards others. It raises the masses and the oppressed out of the climate of humiliation and servility that was imposed upon them and releases them into the highlands of freedom and dignity. It returns to them the feelings of honour and pride, and this is how these people and those people come together within the just and equal bounds, neither side having the opportunity or means to exploit or enslave the other.

The events of history and examples of Islamic life that have been established on this earth are the best evidence for the clear, self-evident fact.

This meaning is perfectly embodied in His statement, Glorified and Exalted, which explains the wisdom behind sending Mūsā, peace be upon him, to Pharaoh as a warner and a guide: **“Pharaoh exalted himself arrogantly in the land and divided its people into camps, oppressing one group of them by slaughtering their sons and letting their women live. He was one of the corrupters. We desired to show kindness to those who were oppressed in the land and to make them leaders and to make them inheritors and establish them firmly in the land and to show Pharaoh and Haman and their troops the very thing they were fearing from them”** [al-Qaṣaṣ 28:4-6].

Thus, here is the need of all humanity to submit to their Creator, Mighty and Majestic, with firm conviction in His existence and His oneness, to submit to him with absolute slavehood in all the affairs and circumstances of their lives. In other words, Allah, Mighty and Majestic, is not in need of any of this submission to Him or adhering to His command. Rather, our worldly felicity—let alone that of the Hereafter— makes us needy of and compels us towards this submission.

Allah, the Lord of all Creation, spoke the truth when He said:

“I only created jinn and man to worship Me. I do not require any provision from them and I do not require them to nourish Me. Truly Allah, He is the Provider, the Possessor of Strength, the Sure” [al-Dhāriyāt 51:56-57].

* * *

3. The position of creed in relation to the entire Islamic structure

The Islamic structure is comprised of three elements, which are: Theology, legislation⁽⁵⁰⁾ and manners.

The meaning of Islam is perfected for the Muslim with the authentic creed when it is firmly settled in his heart, by following its Revealed Law in all of his transactions with Allah and with people, and with virtuous manners upon which his relations with others are established.

However, the pillar of all of this is the creed, for it is the first foundation that cannot be dispensed with, such that when this creed has inundated the heart that person is still a Muslim even if he falls short in applying the other two elements. Nevertheless, he bears sin for doing so, which makes him liable to the punishment of Allah the Exalted. On the other hand, if the full creed is not present in his certainty and his understanding, he is not considered a Muslim, even if he spends his whole life in worship and acts of obedience and dyes all his entire comportment with the rulings of the Revealed Law and its etiquettes.

An example of these people is found in the statement of Allah the Exalted: **“Say: ‘Shall I inform you of the greatest losers in their actions? People whose efforts in the life of this world are misguided while they suppose that they are doing good.’ Those are the people who reject their Lord’s Signs and the meeting with Him. Their actions will come to nothing and, on the Day of Standing, we will not assign them any weight”** [al-Kahf 18:103-105].

From this standpoint, it is true that the religion (*al-dīn*) and the creed (*al-‘aqīdah*) are the same thing, as it is the entire affair. Thus, it is said, ‘So-and-so professes the religion of Islam’ or ‘he has embraced Islam’ if you see him affirming and avowing its full creed without any alternation or subtraction and his certainty has submitted to all of its pillars. In order to be called this, it is not stipulated that all of the above be accompanied by practical behaviour in affairs of worship and all other rulings of the Revealed Law, even though falling short in any of them necessitates iniquity and exposes the structure of the creed itself to earthquakes.

The authentic creed cannot be multiplied or contradictory:

Then this creed has not differed since Adam, blessings and peace be upon him, was sent, all the way through to the sending of the Seal of the Prophets, Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him, and its contents which the Prophets and Messengers have called to in succession are: faith in the existence of Allah and His oneness, His transcendence above everything that does not befit him, such as attributes of deficiency, faith in the Last Day, the Reckoning, Paradise, the Fire and so forth. Every Messenger called his people to have conviction in these matters, and by doing so each one of them confirmed the call of the one who was sent before him and gave the glad tidings of the

mission of whoever was coming after him.

This is what Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has explained in His Clear Book in several verses, such as the Exalted's statement: **"We sent no Messenger before you without revealing to him: 'There is no god but Me, so worship Me'"** [al-Anbiyā' 21:25].

There is also the Exalted's statement: **"He has laid down the same religion for you as He enjoined on Nūḥ, and that which We have revealed to you and which we enjoined on Ibrāhīm, Mūsā and 'Īsā: 'Establish the religion and do not make divisions in it'"** [al-Shūrā 42:13].

Indeed, if you study the verses of the Noble Qur'ān, you will notice that the name 'Islam' was the ancient, perennial name of this creed. Contemplate, for example, the Exalted's statement: **"Ibrāhīm was neither a Jew nor a Christian but a man of pure natural belief—a Muslim. He was not one of the idolaters"** [Āl 'Imrān 3:67].

Then there is the Exalted's statement regarding Pharaoh's magicians: **"They said, 'We are returning to our Lord. You are only avenging yourself on us because we believed in our Lord's Signs when they came to us. Our Lord, pour down steadfastness upon us and take us back to you as Muslims'"** [al-'A'rāf 7:125-126].

Then there is the Exalted's statement about 'Īsā's disciples, peace be upon him: **"When 'Īsā sensed unbelief on their part, he said, 'Who will be my helpers to Allah?' The disciples said, 'We are Allah's helpers. We believe in Allah. Bear witness that we are Muslims'"** [Āl 'Imrān 3:52].

From this it is made clear to you that the one, true religion is not multiplied, and that the expression "the Revealed Religions"⁽⁵¹⁾, which is oft-repeated on the tongues of common people today, is a mistaken expression, as there is only one, true, revealed religion which the Prophets and Messengers have called to and been sent with, one after the other.

How can the true religion be multiplied or contradictory on the tongues of the Prophets and the Messengers, and religion (*dīn*) only means creed, as you have learned, and the statements of the creed are always communicated, as is known, and one communication cannot be transmitted in numerous, contradictory ways and forms, and then all of them—despite that—are authentic, veracious, revealed communications?

Yes, that which has developed and changed over time and by way of sending the Prophets and Messengers is the legislation, with the differing acts of worship and so forth. The wisdom behind that is that legislation is nothing other than the establishment of rulings with the intention of organising the life of the society and the individual. It is self-evident that development over time and the differing of nations and peoples have an effect on the development of their laws, for indeed the idea of legislation, from its very foundations, is based on what the interests of the slaves require in their worldly life and in the Hereafter, and these interests differ greatly according to different times and places.

For example, Mūsā, peace be upon him, was sent to the Children of Israel, and the affair necessitated—based on the circumstances of the Children of Israel at that time—that their Revealed Law be harsh and based entirely on the foundations of strictness and

not dispensations. When some time had passed, our master ‘Īsā, peace be upon him, was sent amongst them. He came to them with a Revealed Law that was easier and simpler, and regarding this, look at Allah the Exalted’s statement on the tongue of ‘Īsā, peace be upon him, while he is addressing the Children of Israel:

“I come confirming the Torah I find already there, and to make lawful for you some of what was previously forbidden to you” [Āl ‘Imrān 3:50]. He made clear to them that in terms of the creed, he was confirming what had come in the Torah, and that he was affirming it and renewing the call to it. As for the legislation and the rules of what is lawful and unlawful, he was commanded to make some changes and to make some things easier.

Legislations are instituted, and thus there is no harm in them changing with time and no rational objection to them being abrogated over the passing of historical epochs.

In summary, the mission of every Messenger includes a creed and some form of legislation.

As for the creed, the only thing that a Messenger has to do is affirm the same creed that was sent before without any change or difference. As for the legislation, indeed the Revealed Law of every Messenger abrogates the previous Revealed Law apart from whatever the later legislation reinforces or is quiet about, and that is the according to the school that says: a Revealed Law from before is a Revealed Law for us as long that there is nothing that contradicts it.

* * *

Therefore, when we study creedal matters and their proofs, we are only studying those realities that Allah has obligated His slaves to have faith and firm conviction in since the mission of Adam until Allah inherits the earth and everyone on it. That is the connection between the Islamic creed and everything that the Prophets and Messengers, may Allah bless them and grant them peace, have brought. The People of the Book know about this connection and they know about the oneness of the religion. They know that the Prophets only came to confirm one another, not to split up into disparate, contradictory creeds. However, they differed and split up amongst themselves and invented things about the Prophets, things that they had not said, despite the knowledge that had come to them, because they envied one another. Allah the Sublime spoke the truth when He said in His Masterful Exposition:

“The religion in the sight of Allah is Islam. Those given the Book only differed after knowledge had come to them, envying one another. As for those who reject Allah’s Signs, Allah is swift at reckoning” [Āl ‘Imrān 3:19].

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