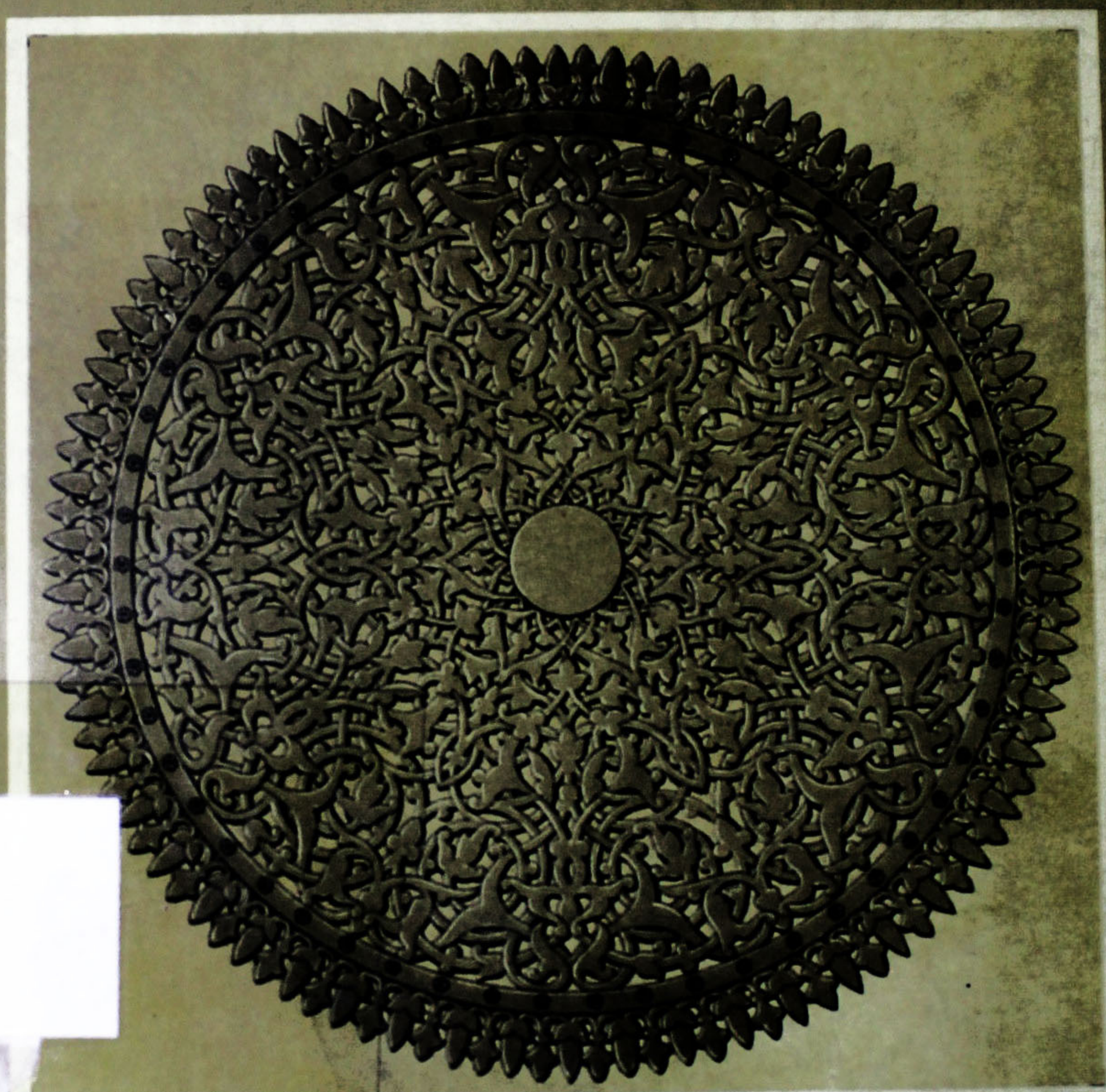
Murtada Mutahhari

UNDERSTANDING ISLAMIC SCIENCES

Philosophy · Theology · Mysticism · Morality · Jurisprudence



According to this Tradition, the members of the Muslim nation are deemed to have collectively the same status as a Prophet and to be faultlessly free from error. The speech of the whole nation has the same rank as the speech of a Prophet, and the entire nation, as soon as they come to the same view, are faultless, i.e. immaculate.

According to this view, since the whole nation is infallible, whenever such an agreed view occurs, it is as if divine inspiration has been revealed to the Holy Prophet.

Shi'ites, however, in the first place, do not count such a Tradition as coming definitely from the Prophet. Second, they agree that it is impossible for all the members of the whole nation to stray and to err, but the reason for this is that the leader of that nation, the Prophet or Imām, is a person who is infallible and immaculate. That the whole Muslim nation cannot err is because one particular member of the Muslim nation cannot err, not because an infallible is formed from a group of people who are fallible. Third, what is called consensus in the books of jurisprudence and theology (*kalām*) is not the consensus of the whole nation. It is simply the consensus of a group, the group of managers or supervisors – i.e. the ulamā' – of the nation. Furthermore, it is not even the consensus of all the ulamā' of the nation, but the consensus of the ulamā' from one sect of the nation.

Here is where the Shī'ites do not maintain the same principle of consensus as the Sunni ulamā'. Shi'ites maintain the binding testimony of consensus only insofar as it is the means of discovering the Sunnah.

With regard to the Shī'ites, whenever there is no proof in the Book and the Sunnah about a certain subject, but it is known that the general body of the Muslims or a numerous group of the companions of the Prophet or the companions of an Imām who never did anything except in accordance with the divine instructions all used to act in a particular way, then we must assume that in those times an instruction of the Sunnah existed of which we are unaware.

Acquired Consensus and Narrated Consensus

Consensus, whether as accepted by our Sunni brothers or as considered valid by Shi'ites, is of two types, acquired and narrated. Acquired consensus means the consensus of which the *mujtahid* has himself directly acquired knowledge as the result of minute research into history and the views and opinions of the companions of God's Prophet, of the companions of the Imāms or of the people close to the time of the Imāms.[8]

Narrated consensus is the consensus about which the *mujtahid* has no direct information, but which has been related by others. Acquired consensus, of

course, is a binding testimony, but narrated consensus, if certitude is not obtained from the narrator, is not to be relied upon. Therefore, the Single Report of consensus does not constitute a binding testimony, even though, as we have seen, the narrated Single Report of the Sunnah does, provided the chain of narrators meets the conditions.

Reasoning

Reasoning is one of the four sources of jurisprudence. This means that, by means of reasoned deduction and logic, we discover that in a certain instance a certain necessary law or prohibitive law of the Shari'ah exists, or we discover what type of law it is and is not.

The binding testimony of reason is proven by the law of reason ('the sun is shining, hence the proof of the existence of the sun', meaning that with the application of reason no other proof is needed) and also by the confirmation of the Shari'ah. Essentially we are sure of the Sharī'ah and of the principle of beliefs of religion because of reason. How could it be that in the view of the Shari'ah reason is not to be considered binding?!

The issues of the principles related to reason are in two parts. One part relates to the inner meaning or philosophy of the commandments. The other part is related to the requirements of the commands.

Let us begin with the first part. One of the obvious elements of Islam, especially in the view of Shi'ites, is that the Sharī'ah of Islam exists in relation to the best and the worst interests of human beings. That is, each command (*amr*) of the Shari'ah arises from the necessity of meeting the best interests of human beings and each prohibition (*nahy*) of the Sharī'ah arises from the necessity of abstaining from their worst interests, i.e. the things that corrupt them.

Almighty God, in order to inform them as to their best interests, wherein lie their happiness and prosperity, has made a chain of commands obligatory (*wajib*) or desirable (*mustahab*) for them. And so as to keep human beings away from all that that corrupts them, He prohibits them from those things. If the best interests and forms of corruption did not exist, neither command nor prohibition would exist. If reasoning human beings had full cognizance of those best interests and those forms of corruption, they would devise the same laws as have been introduced in the Shari'ah.

This is why the practitioners of the principles and also the *mutakallimin* consider that, because the laws of the Shari'ah accord to and are centred on the wisdom of what is best and worst for human beings – and it makes no difference whether those best and worst interests are relevant to the body or the

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soul, to the individual or the society, to the temporary life or the eternal – wherever laws of reason exist, so the corresponding laws of the Sharī'ah also exist, and wherever no law of reason exists, there exists no law of the Sharī'ah.

Thus, if we suppose that in some case no law of the Sharī'ah has been communicated to us, by narration or otherwise, but reasoning traces with absolute certitude the particular wisdom of the other judgements of the Sharī'ah, then it automatically discovers the law of the Sharī'ah in this case too. In such an instance, reasoning forms a chain of logic. First, in such and such a case, there exists such and such a best interest that must necessarily be met. Second, wherever there exists a best interest that must necessarily be met, the Legislator of Islam is definitely not indifferent, rather He commands that that best interest be met. Third, in such instances, the law of the Sharī'ah is that the best interests be met.

For example, in the time and place of the Holy Prophet there was no opium or addiction to opium, and, in the narrated testimonies of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and consensus, there is nothing about opium for good or ill, yet human beings have experienced opium addiction and thus have obvious proof of its corruption. Thus, with our reasoning and knowledge, and on the basis of 'a form of corruption that is essentially to be avoided' in the view of the Sharī'ah, we come to the realization that the law about opium is that addiction to opium is forbidden.

Similarly, if it becomes established that smoking tobacco definitely causes cancer, a *mujtahid*, according to the judgement of reasoning, will establish the law that smoking is forbidden according to the Divine Law.

The *uṣūliyyīn* and the *mutakallimīn* call reason and the Sharī'ah inseparable from each other. They say that whatever law is established by reason is also established by the Sharī'ah.

However, this of course is on condition that reasoning traces, in an absolute, certain and indubitable way, those best interests that must be protected and those worst interests or forms of corruption that must be avoided. The word 'reasoning' cannot be applied to opinion, guesswork and conjecture. Analogy falls into the same category and must be discounted, for it is more akin to opinion and imagination than to reasoning and certitude.

On the other hand, when reasoning has played no part in the forming of a particular law and we find that that law has been introduced in the Sharī'ah, we know that our best interests were definitely involved, for otherwise the law would not have been made. Thus, reason realizes the law of the Sharī'ah by realizing the best interests of human beings; and the reverse is also true, namely, that reason realizes the best interests of human beings by realizing the law of the Shari 'ah.

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Thus, whatever is a law of reason is a law of the Shari'ah and equally whatever is a law of the Shari'ah is a law of reason.

Let us now discuss the second part, the requirements of the commands. We know that a law made by a lawmaker of sanity and intellect naturally entails a chain of essentials that must be judged according to reason, to see if, for example, that law necessitates the drafting of a new law or the abrogation of a an existing law.

For example, if a command is made, such as the *hajj* and the form of worship to be performed there – and the *hajj* necessitates a chain of preparations, including acquiring a passport, buying a ticket, vaccinations and currency exchange – does the fact that the *hajj* is obligatory make these preparations obligatory as well or not?

The same question can apply to the things that are forbidden. Does the prohibition of a thing demand that its preparations also be forbidden?

Another issue is as follows. A person is not able to do two obligatory things at the same time as they must be done separately. For example, it is obligatory to say one's ritual prayers but it is also obligatory to clean the mosque if it has become unclean with blood, urine, etc. So the performing of one of these two duties demands the neglect of the other. Now, does one command necessarily contain the prohibition of the other? Do both the commands include this prohibition?

If two things are obligatory but they cannot both be done at once, it is our duty to perform whichever of the two is more important.

This brings us to another issue. Does our obligation with regard to an important duty lapse altogether with our attention to a more important duty? Suppose two men are in danger of their lives and it is within our means to save only one of them, and one of them is a good Muslim who works for others while the other is a corrupt man who causes only trouble to others, but whose life is nevertheless sacred. Naturally, we must save the Muslim who is good and who helps others and whose life is therefore more valuable to society than the life of the other. That is, to save him is more important; yet it is also important to save the life of the trouble-maker.

In such examples, it is reasoning, with its precise calculations, that clarifies our specific duties. In the study of principles these and similar issues are discussed and the way of properly determining the answers is set out.

From what has been said so far, it should be clear that the issues of principle are all divided into two parts, the 'principles of deducing' and the 'principles of application'. The principles of deducing are in turn divided into two parts, the narrated – which derive from the Book, the Sunnah and consensus – and the reasoned.

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The Principles of Application

Jurisprudents, as we have seen, refer to four sources for deducing the laws of the Sharī'ah. Sometimes the jurisprudent is successful in his referrals and sometimes not. That is, sometimes (of course, predominantly) he attains the actual law of the Sharī'ah at the level of certitude or reliable probability, which means a probability that has been divinely endorsed. In such cases, the duty becomes clear and he realizes with certitude or with a strong and permissible probability what it is that the Sharī'ah of Islam demands. Occasionally, however, he is unable to discover the duty and the Divine Law from the four sources, and he remains in doubt and without a defined duty.

What should be done in such cases? Has the Legislator of Islam or reason or both specified a certain duty in the event that the actual duty is out of reach? And if so, what is it?

The answer is, yes, such a duty has been specified. A system of rules and regulations has been specified for such circumstances. Reason too, in certain circumstances, confirms the law of the Sharī'ah, for the independent law of (aware) reasoning is the very same as the law of the Sharī'ah, or in certain instances it is silent, meaning that it has no independent law of its own and accords with the Sharī'ah.

In the part of principles that contains the principles of deducing we learn the correct and valid method of deducing the Sharī'ah and, in the part concerning the principles of application, we learn the correct way of benefiting from the rules that have been introduced for the kind of situation mentioned above, and of putting them into practice.

There are four general principles of application that are used in all the sections of jurisprudence:

- The Principle of Exemption (*barā'at*)
- The Principle of Caution (*iḥtiyaṭ*)
- The Principle of Option (*takhyyīr*)
- The Principle of Mastery (*istiṣḥāb*)

Each of these four types of principles operates in a special circumstance. Before looking at these, let us first define the four principles themselves.

The Principle of Exemption means that we are released from our obligation and we have no duty. The Principle of Caution means that we must act with caution, i.e. in such a way that if a duty actually exists as a law, we must ensure that we have performed that duty. The Principle of Option means that we have the option to choose whichever one of two things we like, and the Principle of

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Mastery means that what existed remains in its original state or has precedence over any doubt about it, and the doubt is ignored. Now we shall consider the circumstances in which these principles apply.

Sometimes a jurisprudent is unable to deduce the law of the Sharī'ah and to trace a particular necessity and thus remains in a state of doubt. This doubt may relate to some existing body of knowledge. For example, it may be doubted whether, in this age of the physical absence of the Imām, the special congregational prayer must be said on Fridays or the normal noon prayer – doubt exists about both the Friday prayer and the noon prayer, in the light of the general information that one of the two is definitely obligatory. Alternatively it may be doubted whether, in the age of the Imāms' absence, the prayer of *'id-i-fiṭr* in congregation is obligatory. In this second case the doubt is a 'primary doubt' (*shak badāvī*) and not a doubt linked to something that is known.

So the doubts of jurisprudents about an obligation are either linked to some general knowledge or are primary doubts. If they are linked to some general knowledge, it is either possible to act in accordance with caution, namely, to perform both possible duties, or it is not possible to act with caution. If caution is possible, one must apply it, and both of the possible duties must be performed. Such an instance calls for the Principle of Caution. Sometimes, however, caution is not possible, because doubt exists between the obligatory and the forbidden. We doubt, for example, in the absence of the Imāms, whether the performance of certain duties is peculiar to the Imām and forbidden to us or whether it is not peculiar to the Imām and is obligatory for us. Here it is self-evident that the way of caution is closed, and instead we must have recourse to the Principle of Option, which means that we may choose to do whichever of the options we please.

Assuming, however, that our doubt is a primary doubt not linked to any general knowledge, the fact is either that we know the previous condition and our doubt relates to whether the previous law stands or has been changed, or that the previous condition not been established. If the previous condition is established, the situation calls for the Principle of Mastery (mastery of the known previous condition over the doubt), and if the previous condition is not established the situation calls for the Principle of Exemption.

A *mujtahid* must, as the effect of frequent application, have great power of discernment in the execution of these four types of principles; discernment that sometimes demands hair-splitting exactitude, failing which he will make mistakes.[7]

Of these four principles, the Principle of Mastery has been uniquely established by the Shari'ah, and reason is subservient to it, having no

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independent rule of its own, but the other three principles are principles of reason, which the Sharī'ah has confirmed.

The justification of the Principle of Mastery consists of a number of reliable Traditions which take the form, 'Do not reverse a certitude with a doubt'. From the content of these Traditions and what precedes and follows this sentence it is clear discerned that what is meant is exactly what jurisprudence calls 'mastery'.

On the subject of the Principle of Exemption similarly there exist many Traditions, of which the most famous is the *ḥadīth ur-raf'i*.

The *ḥadīth ur-raf'i* is from the Holy Prophet, who told us, 'Nine things have been taken from my nation: what they do not know, what they have not tolerated, what they have been compelled to, what they have found themselves in need of, mistakes, forgetfulness, misfortune, envy (which they have not acted on) and whisperings of doubt in the thoughts of the creation'.

The *uṣūliyyīn* have had numerous discussions about this Tradition and about each of its points, and of course the part that sanctions the Principle of Exemption is the first line, which states that whatever we do not know has been 'taken from' us, thus the obligation is lifted from us.

The *mujtahid*s are not the only ones who may use the four principles as aids to understanding the laws of the Sharī'ah. People who are not *mujtahid*s and who must therefore imitate (*taqlīd*) a *mujtahid* can also benefit from them when they have doubts.

For example, suppose that a baby boy suckles from a woman other than his mother and that when the boy grows up, he wants to marry the daughter of that woman; it is not known whether as a baby he drank so much milk from that woman's breast that he is deemed to be the 'wet-nurse son' of that woman and her husband or not. That is, we doubt whether the boy drank milk from her breast fifteen consecutive times or for a complete day and night or so much that his bones grew from her milk (in which cases the boy is deemed to be her son and the brother of her daughter, whom he is thus forbidden to marry). This instance calls for the Principle of Mastery, because before the boy drank the woman's milk he was not her 'wet-nurse son', yet now we doubt whether or not he is. By the Principle of Mastery, we conclude that there is no question of a wet-nurse relationship.

Similarly, if we have performed the minor ablution obligatory before we say the ritual prayer or are permitted to touch the Qur'ān, and we then doze off and subsequently doubt whether or not we actually fell asleep (in which case the ablution becomes void), by the Principle of Mastery, we conclude that the ablution was valid. In the same way, if we have washed our hands and we then doubt to whether they are still clean or have become *najis* (unclean), by the

Principle of Mastery we conclude them to be clean. If, however, it was *najis* and we doubt whether we have cleaned our hands or not, by the Principle of Mastery we conclude that they are still unclean.

Let us consider some examples of the other principles. Suppose there is a liquid is in front of us and we doubt whether or not it contains alcohol, as some medicines do, the situation calls for the Principle of Exemption, and there is no obstacle to our drinking that liquid. If, however, we have two glasses of medicine and we know that alcohol is present in one of them, the Principle of Caution is called for, and we must not drink either.

Now suppose that we are at the side of a road in the middle of a desert and to follow the road in one direction definitely involves risking our lives, while to follow the road in the other direction means we will find safety; but we do not know in which direction lies safety and in which direction lies the risk to our lives. Here we are presented with two laws. One is the obligation to save life and the other is the prohibition against risking it. In which direction should we travel? This situation calls for the Principle of Option, and we may travel in whichever direction we like, and if we choose the wrong direction, we are blameless.

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Notes

1. These treatises (*Risālah*) are works in which the *mujtahid* states his verdicts on almost all the things that can affect daily life.
2. Translator's note: The weakness of this view can be appreciated when it is realized that many of the Traditions recorded in the reliable books, i.e. books compiled by reliable men, contradict each other, which naturally indicates that the only logical way to distinguish the holy words from the false ones is by examining the chain of narrators. It should also be borne in mind that for a number of reasons, such as lack of time for research or of knowledge of transmitters, it may not have been possible for the reliable compilers themselves to make the necessary distinctions.
3. Consensus is discussed further below.
4. His book is called *Ta'sīs ash-shī'ah' ulūm al-islām*.
5. This *āyah* and such 'tacit meanings' (*mafāhīm*) are further discussed in the next section.
6. *Taqiyah* is the legitimate practice of concealing one's faith in times of danger – sometimes by adopting the practices of a different faith – which was often necessary during the times of the Imāms.
7. More light is thrown on this subject under the treatment of the principles of jurisprudence.
8. Translator's note: Of course the Shī'ite view is that the time of the Imāms will last as long as mankind itself; what is referred to here is the era of access to the Imāms.
9. Translator's note: If he were likely to make many mistakes he would naturally not yet be regarded as a *mujtahid* at all.

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PART SIX

Islamic Ethics and Morality

Man is a species of animal and thus shares many features with other animals. But many differences distinguish man from animals and grant him a special virtue, an elevation, that leaves him unrivalled. The basic difference between man and the other animals, the touchstone of his humanity, the source of what have come to be known as human civilization and culture, is the presence of insights and beliefs. Animals in general can perceive themselves and the external world and strive to attain their desires and objects in the light of their awareness and cognition. The same holds true of man, but he differs from the rest of the animals in the scope, extent and breadth of his awareness and cognitions and in the level to which his desires and objects rise.

Awareness and Desire in Animals

In the first place, an animal's awareness of the world comes solely through its external senses and is, accordingly, external and superficial; it does not reach into the interiors and internal relationships of things. Second, it is individual and particular; it enjoys nothing of universality and generality. Third, it is localized, limited to the animal's environment. Fourth, it is immediate, confined to the present, divorced from past and future. The animal is not aware of its own history or that of the world and does not consider or relate its endeavours to the future.

The animal is thus confined in a fourfold prison. If it should by any chance emerge, it does so not with awareness, by intelligence and choice, but as a captive to the compulsions of nature, instinctually, without awareness or intelligence.

The level of the animal's desires and objects is also limited. First, it is material, not rising above eating, drinking, sleeping, playing, nesting and copulating. For the animal there is no question of abstract desires and objects,

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moral values and so on. Second, it is private and individual, related to itself or at most to its mate and offspring. Third, it is localized and related to its environment. Fourth, it is immediate and related to the present. The animal thus lives within certain confines in this respect as well.

If the animal pursues an object or moves towards an aim that is beyond these confines, for instance, if it shows concern for the species rather than the individual or for the future rather than the present, as do such social animals as the honey bee, this behaviour arises unconsciously and instinctually, by the direct command of the power that created it and administers the world.

Awareness and Desire in Man

Whether in the area of awareness, insights and cognitions or desires and objects, the human domain reaches much further and higher than that of the animals. Human awareness and cognition traverse the exterior bounds of objects and phenomena to penetrate into their interiors, their essences and identities, their interrelationships and interdependencies and the necessities governing them. Human awareness does not remain imprisoned within the limits of locale and place, nor does it remain chained to its moment; it journeys through both time and space. Accordingly, man grows aware both of what is beyond his environment and of his own past and future, discovering his own past history and that of the universe – the histories of the earth, the heavens, the mountains, the seas, the planets, plants and other animals – and contemplating the future to the far horizons. Beyond even this, man sends his thoughts racing after things limitless and eternal and gains knowledge of some of them. One who transcends a cognition of the individual and the particular discovers general laws and universal truths that embrace the whole world. Thus, he establishes his dominion over nature.

Man can also attain an elevated level from the standpoint of desires and objects. Man is a being that seeks values and aspires to virtues and ideals that are not material or utilitarian, that are not restricted to self or at most to mate and offspring, that are general and inclusive and embrace the whole of humanity, that are unconfined to a particular environment, locale or time period. Man is so devoted to ideals and beliefs that he may at times place them above all else and put service to others and their comfort ahead of his own comfort. It is as if the thorn that has pierced another's foot has pierced his own foot or even his own eye. He commiserates with others; he rejoices in their joy and grieves at their grief. He may grow so attached to his sacred beliefs and ideals that he readily sacrifices not only his interests but his whole life to them.

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The human dimension of civilization, the spirit of civilization, grows out of just such uniquely human feelings and desires.

The Touchstone of Man's Distinctiveness

Man's breadth of insight into the universe stems from humanity's collective efforts amassed and evolved over the centuries. This insight, expressed through special criteria, rules and logical procedures, has come to be known as 'science'. Science in its most general sense means the sum total of human contemplations on the universe (including philosophy), the product of the collective efforts of humanity within a special system of logic.

The elevated and ideal aptitudes of humanity are born of its faith, belief and attachment to certain realities in the universe that are both extra-individual, or general and inclusive, and extra-material, or unrelated to advantage or profit. Such beliefs and attachments are in turn born of certain world views and cosmologies given to humanity by prophets of God or by philosophers who sought to present a kind of thought that would conduce to belief and idealism. As these elevated, ideal, supra-animal aptitudes in man find an ideational and credal infrastructure, they are designated 'faith' (*imān*).

It is therefore my contention that the central difference between man and the other animals, the touchstone of man's humanity, on which humanity depends, is science and faith.

Although some people deny that there is any basic difference between man and other animals, asserting that the difference in awareness and cognition is quantitative or at most qualitative, but not essential, these thinkers have passed over all the wonders and glories that have drawn the great philosophers of East and West to the question of cognition in man. They regard man as an animal entirely, from the standpoint of desires and objects, not differing from the animals in the least in this respect.[1]

Others think that to have a psyche makes the difference; that is, they believe that only man has a psyche, or anima, that other animals have neither feelings nor appetites, know neither pain nor pleasure, that they are soulless machines only resembling animate beings. They think that the true definition of man is 'the animate being'.[2]

Other thinkers who do not consider man the only animate being in the universe but maintain basic distinctions between man and the rest of the animals may be grouped according to which one of man's distinguishing features they have dwelt upon. They have defined man as the reasoning animal, the seeker after the Absolute, the unfinished, the idealist, the seeker after values,

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the metaphysical animal, the insatiable, the indeterminate, the committed and responsible, the provident, the free and empowered, the rebel, the social animal, the seeker after order, the seeker after beauty, the seeker after justice, the one facing two ways, the lover, the answerable, the conscientious, the one with two hearts, the creator, the solitary, the agitated, the devotee of creeds, the toolmaker, the seeker after the beyond, the visionary, the ideal and the gateway to ideas.

Clearly, each of these distinctions is correct in its way, but if we wish to advance a definition that comprehends all the basic differences, we can do no better than to speak of science and faith and to say that man is distinguished from the other animals by the two features, 'science' and 'faith'.

Relationship between Humanity and Animality

The features that man shares with the animals plus those features that distinguish him from the animals make of him a being with two lives, the animal life and the human life or, in other words, the material life and the life of culture. What relationship exists between man's animality and his humanity, between his animal life and his human life, his material life and his cultural and spiritual life? Is one the basis and the other a reflection of it? Is one the infrastructure and the other the superstructure? Since we are considering this question from a sociological, not a psychological point of view, we may express it thus: among social structures is the economic structure, which is concerned with production and production relations, the principle and the infrastructure? Do the remaining social structures, especially those in which man's humanity is manifested, all constitute something derivative, a superstructure, a reflection of the economic structure? Have science, philosophy, literature, religion, law, morals and art at all times been manifestations of economic realities, having no substantive reality?

This sociological discussion automatically leads to a psychological conclusion and likewise to a philosophical argument that concerns humanity, its objective and substantive realities, the question of what today is called humanism. This conclusion is that man's humanity has no substantive reality, that only his animality has any substantive reality. Thus, any basic distinction between man and animal is rejected.

According to this theory, not only is the substantive reality of human beliefs denied, including the beliefs in truth, goodness, beauty and God, but the substantive reality of the desire to know the reality of the universe from a human viewpoint is denied, in that no viewpoint can be simply a 'viewpoint'

and disinterested, but every viewpoint must reflect a particular material tendency. Things cannot be otherwise. Curiously, some schools of thought offer this view and speak of humanity and humanism in the same breath!

The truth is that the course of man's evolution begins with animality and finds its culmination in humanity. This principle holds true for individual and society alike: Man at the outset of his existence is a material body; through an essential evolutionary movement, he is transformed into spirit or a spiritual substance. What is called the human spirit is born in the lap of the body; it is there that it evolves and attains independence. Man's animality amounts to a nest in which man's humanity grows and evolves. It is a property of evolution that the more the organism evolves, the more independent, self-subsistent and governing of its own environment it becomes. The more man's humanity evolves, in the individual or in society, the more it steps toward independence and governance over the other aspects of his being. An evolved human individual has gained a relative ascendancy over his inner and outer environments. The evolved individual is the one who has been freed of dominance by the inner and outer environments, but depends upon belief and faith.

The evolution of society precisely corresponds to the evolution of the spirit in the lap of the body or the evolution of the individual's humanity in the lap of his animality. The germ of human society is economic structures; the cultural and ideal aspects of society amount to the spirit of society. Just as there is an interaction between body and spirit, so there is one between the spirit and the body of society, that is, between its ideal structures and its material ones.[3] Just as the evolution of the individual leads to greater freedom, autonomy and sovereignty of the spirit, so does the evolution of society. That is, the more evolved human society becomes, the greater the autonomy of its cultural life and the sovereignty of that life over its material life. Man of the future is the cultural animal; he is the man of belief, faith and method, not the man of stomach and waistline.

Human society, however, is not moving inexorably and directly to the perfection of human values. Each temporal stage does not necessarily represent a step more advanced than the preceding stage. It is possible for humanity to pass through an era of social life in which, for all its scientific and technical progress, it declines with respect to human ideal values, as is said of humanity in our present time. This idea of human social evolution means rather that humanity is progressing in the sum total of its movements, whether material or ideal, but the movement sometimes twists to the right or left, sometimes stops or occasionally even reverses itself. On the whole, however, it is a progressive, evolutionary movement. Thus, future man is the cultural animal,

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not the economic animal; future man is the man of belief and faith, not the man of stomach and waistline.

According to this theory, the evolution of the human aspect of man (because of its substantive reality) keeps step with, or rather anticipates the evolution of the tools of production. It gradually reduces his dependence on and susceptibility to the natural and social environments and augments his freedom (which is equivalent to his dependence on belief, ideals, principle and ideology), as well as his influence upon the natural and social environments. In the future, man will attain to ever more perfect spiritual freedom, that is, ever greater independence or ever greater dependence upon faith, belief and ideology. Past man, while enjoying fewer of the blessings of nature and of his own being, was more captive to nature and to his own animality. But future man, while enjoying more of the blessings of nature and of his own being, will be proportionately freer from the captivities of nature and of his own animal potential and be better able to govern himself and nature.

According to this view, the human reality, despite having appeared along with and in the lap of animal and material evolution, is by no means a shadow, reflection or function of these. It is itself an independent, evolving reality. Just as it is influenced by the material aspects of being, it influences them. This, not the evolution of the tools of production, is what determines man's ultimate destiny, and his substantive cultural evolution. The substantive reality of the humanity of man keeps him in motion and evolves the tools of production along with the other concerns of life. The tools of production do not evolve of themselves, and man's humanity is not changed and transformed like the tools defining a system of production, such that it would be spoken of as evolving because it defined an evolving system of production.

Science and Faith

The Relationship between Science and Faith

Now let us see what relationship these two pillars of humanity may bear to each other.

In the Christian world, owing to some textual corruptions in the Old Testament (the Torah), the idea of the opposition of science and faith has become widespread, an idea that has cost both of them dearly.[4] This idea has its roots chiefly in the Book of Genesis. In Genesis 2: 16–17, we find, regarding Adam, paradise and the forbidden tree: '[The LORD GOD] told the man, "You may eat from every tree in the garden, but not from the tree of the knowledge

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of good and evil; for on the day that you eat from it, you will certainly die"'.' In Genesis 3: 1–8, we find:

> The Serpent was more crafty than any wild creature that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Is it true that God has forbidden you to eat from any tree in the garden?' The woman answered the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden, except for the tree in the middle of the garden; God has forbidden us either to eat or to touch the fruit of that; if we do, we shall die.' The serpent said, 'Of course you will not die. God knows that as soon as you eat it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing both good and evil.' When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good to eat and that it was pleasing to the eye and tempting to contemplate, she took some of it and ate it. She also gave her husband some and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they discovered that they were naked; so they stitched fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

In Genesis 3:23, it is written:

> The LORD God said, 'The man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; what if he now reaches out his hand and takes fruit from the tree of life also, eats it and lives forever?'

According to this conception of man and God, of consciousness and rebellion, God's command (*din*) is that man must not know good and evil, not grow conscious – the forbidden tree is the tree of consciousness. Man, in his rebellion, his mutiny, against God's command (his balking at the teachings of the revealed laws and prophets), attains consciousness and knowledge and so is driven from God's paradise. All satanic suggestions are the suggestions of consciousness.

To us Muslims, who have studied the Qur'ān, God taught Adam all the names (realities) and then commanded the angels to prostrate themselves before him. Satan was expelled from the court for not prostrating himself before this viceregent of God, conscious of realities. And the Sunnah has taught us that the forbidden tree represented greed or avidity, that is, something connected with the animality of Adam, not with his humanity, that Satan always suggests things contrary to reason but conforming with the passions of the animal ego, and that what manifests Satan within man's being is the ego that incites to evil, not the Adamic reason. For us who are thus schooled, what we see in Genesis is quite astonishing.

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It is this conception that divides the last fifteen hundred years of European history into the Age of Faith and the Age of Reason and sets faith and science at odds. But the history of Islamic civilization is divisible into the Age of Flowering, or the Age of Science and Faith, and the Age of Decline, in which science and faith together have declined. We Muslims must eschew the erroneous conception that has inflicted irreparable injuries on science and on faith, indeed on humanity; we must not take this opposition of science and faith for granted.

Let us now try to analyse whether these two aspects of humanity each actually pertain to a certain era. Is man condemned forever to remain half-human, to have only half his humanity in a given era? Is he forever condemned to one of two types of misfortune, the misfortune arising from ignorance and the misfortune arising from absence of faith?

Every faith is inevitably based on a special mode of thought and a special conception of the universe and of being. Many conceptions and interpretations of the universe, although they can serve as bases for faith and devotion, are inconsistent with logical and scientific principles and so necessarily deserve to be rejected. But is there a mode of thought, a kind of conception and interpretation of the universe and of being, that draws support from the region of science, philosophy and logic and can be a firm foundation for a felicitous faith? If such a conception, mode of thought or world view exists, then it will be clear that man is not condemned to the misfortunes arising from either ignorance or lack of faith.

One can address the relationship between science and faith from either of two standpoints. One standpoint is whether an interpretation or conception exists that is both productive of faith and idealism and supported by logic. Are all the ideas that science and philosophy impart to us contrary to faith, devotion, hope and optimism? (This is a question that I will take up later in discussing the idea of a world view.)

The other standpoint is that of the influences on man of science on the one hand and faith on the other. Does science call us to one thing and faith to another, opposed thing? Does science seek to shape us one way and faith another, opposed way? Does science carry us in one direction and faith in another? Or do science and faith fulfil and complement one another? Does science shape half of us and faith the other half, harmoniously?

Science gives us enlightenment and power; faith gives us love, hope and ardour. Science makes instruments; faith constructs purposes. Science gives speed; faith gives direction. Science is power; faith is benevolence. Science shows what is; faith inspires insight into what must be done. Science is the outer revolution; faith is the inner revolution. Science makes the universe the

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human universe; faith makes the psyche the psyche of humanity. Science expands man's being horizontally; faith conveys him upwards. Science shapes nature; faith shapes man. Both science and faith empower man, but science gives a power of discrimination and faith gives a power of integration. Both science and faith are beauty, but science is the beauty of the reason and faith is the beauty of the spirit. Science is the beauty of thought and faith is the beauty of feeling. Both science and faith give man security but science gives outer security and faith gives inner security. Science gives security against the onslaught of illness, floods, earthquakes, storms; faith, against worry, loneliness, feelings of helplessness, feelings of futility. Science brings the world into greater harmony with man and faith brings man into greater harmony with himself.

Man's need for science and faith together has greatly excited the interest of both religious and non-religious thinkers. 'Allama Muḥammad Iqbal of Lahore has said:

> Humanity needs three things today – a spiritual interpretation of the universe, spiritual emancipation of the individual and basic principles of a universal import directing the evolution of human society on a spiritual basis. Modern Europe has, no doubt, built idealistic systems on these lines, but experience shows that truth revealed through pure reason is incapable of bringing that fire of living conviction which personal revelation alone can bring. This is the reason why pure thought has so little influenced men while religion has always elevated individuals and transformed whole societies. The idealism of Europe never became a living factor in her life and the result is a perverted ego seeking itself through mutually intolerant democracies whose sole function is to exploit the poor in the interest of the rich. Believe me, Europe today is the greatest hindrance in the way of man's ethical achievement. The Muslim, on the other hand, is in possession of these ultimate ideas on the basis of a revelation, which, speaking from the innermost depths of life, internalizes its own apparent externality. With him the spiritual basis of life is a matter of conviction for which even the least enlightened man among us can easily lay down his life.[6]

Will Durant, author of *The History of Civilization*, although not a religious person, says:

> [Lucretius would suggest of our progress in mechanization] that this was a difference of means and not of end. What if all our progress is an improvement in methods, but not in purposes?

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He also says:

> Our wealth is a weariness, and our wisdom is a little light that chills; but love warms the heart with unspeakable solace, even more when it is given than when it is received.[7]

Today most people realize that scientism and an unalloyed scientific education are incapable of shaping the whole human being. The product of this education is the raw material of humanity, not the fully shaped humanity. It shapes a humanity with capacity, not one with attainment. It shapes a uniform humanity, not a multiform one. Today most people realize that the age of science-and-nothing-but-science has come to an end. A vacuum in ideals threatens society. Some would fill it with philosophy; others have resorted to literature, the arts and the humanities. In Iran, too, some propose to fill this vacuum with a humanistic culture and especially with the literature of *'irfān*, including such writings as those of Rūmi, Sa'di and Ḥāfiẓ. But they forget that this literature has derived its spirit and attraction from religion. The humanistic spirit of these literatures is that selfsame religious spirit of Islam. Otherwise why are some modern literatures so cold, lifeless and unattractive, for all their humanist affectations? The humane content of our literature of *'irfān* derives from the kind of thought concerning the universe and man that is specifically Islamic. If we take the spirit of Islam away from these literary masterpieces, we are left with nothing more than the dross or a dead form.

Will Durant feels this vacuum and proposes that literature, philosophy and art fill it. He says:

> Our schools and colleges have suffered severely from Spencer's conception of education as the adjustment of the individual to his environment; it was a dead, mechanical definition, drawn from a mechanistic philosophy, and distasteful to every creative spirit. The result has been the conquest of our schools by mechanical and theoretical science, to the comparative exclusion of such 'useless' subjects as literature, history, philosophy and art . . . An education that is purely scientific makes a mere tool of its product; it leaves him a stranger to beauty, and gives him powers that are divorced from wisdom. It would have been better for the world if Spencer had never written on education.[8]

It is remarkable that, although Durant acknowledges that the existing vacuum is, in the first place, a 'vacuum of ideals', a vacuum in the area of objects, ends and aspirations, a vacuum leading to nihilism, although he affirms that it is a vacuum of a kind of thought for and a kind of belief in humane objects and

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goals, he nonetheless supposes it is remediable through ideal values, even though they may not go beyond the realm of imagination. He supposes that busying oneself with history, art, aesthetics, poetry and music can fill this vacuum that arises from the depths of man's aspiring and idealistic nature.

Non-interchangeability of Science and Faith

Science cannot replace faith as a means of giving, besides illumination and power, love and hope. It cannot raise the level of our desires. Although it can help us attain objects and goals, to follow the road to them, it cannot take from us those objects, aspirations and desires that by nature and instinct turn on individuality and self-interest and give us in their place objects and aspirations that turn on love and on ideal and spiritual bonds. Although it is a tool in our hands, it cannot transform our essence and identity. Likewise, faith cannot replace science, to enable us to understand nature, discover its laws or learn about ourselves.

Historical experiences have shown that the separation of science from faith has brought about irremediable harm. Faith must be known in the light of science; faith must be kept far from superstition in the light of science. When science is removed from faith, faith is deformed into petrification and blind fanaticism; it turns on its own axis and goes nowhere. When there is no science and true knowledge, the faith of an ignorant believer becomes an instrument in the hands of the clever charlatans exemplified in early Islam by the Kharijites and seen in various forms in later times.[9]

Conversely, science without faith is a sword in the hands of a maniac or else a lamp at midnight in the hands of a thief, to enable him to pick out the choicest goods. Thus, the scientifically informed person of today without faith does not differ in the least from the ignoramus without faith of yesterday in the nature and essence of his behaviour. What difference is there between the Churchills, Johnsons, Nixons and Stalins of today and the Ghengises and Attilas of yesterday?

But, it might be said, is science not both light and power? Do the light and power of science not only apply to the external world but also illuminate and reveal to us our inner world and so empower us to change it? If science can shape both the world and man, it can perform both its own function (world shaping) and that of faith (man shaping). The reply is, this is all correct, but the power of science is instrumental, that is, dependent upon man's will and command. In whatever area man wishes to carry out something, he can do it better with the tool of science. Thus, science is man's best aid in attaining the objects he has chosen, in traversing the roads he has decided to follow.

But when man puts the instrument to work, he already has an object in view; instruments are always employed in pursuit of objects. Where has he found these objects? Because man is animal by nature and human by acquisition, that is, because his human potentialities must be gradually nurtured in the light of faith, by nature he moves toward his natural, animal, individual, material, self-interested objects and employs his instruments accordingly. Therefore, man needs a power not among his own instruments and objects but rather that can impel him as an instrument in its own direction. He needs a power that can detonate him from within and activate his hidden potentialities. He needs a power that can produce a revolution in his heart and give him a new direction. This is not accomplished by science, by discovery of the laws governing nature and man. It is born of the sanctification and exaltation of certain values in one's spirit, which values in turn are born of a range of elevated aptitudes in man, which result, further, from a particular conception and way of thinking about the universe and man that one can acquire neither in the laboratory nor from syllogism and deduction.

History shows the consequences of disconnecting science and faith. Where there has been faith and no science, individuals' humanitarian efforts have produced no great effect – at times, no good effect. Sometimes they have given rise to fanaticisms, stagnations and ruinous conflicts. Human history is filled with such events. Where there has been science and no faith, as in some contemporary societies, all the power of science has been expended on selfishness, egoism, acquisitiveness, ambition, exploitation, subjugation, deceit and guile.

One can regard the past two or three centuries as the age of the worship of science and the flight from faith. Many thinkers came to believe that science could solve all man's problems, but experience has proven the contrary. Today no thinker would deny man's need for some kind of faith – if not religious faith, at least faith in something beyond science. Bertrand Russell, although he had materialistic tendencies, admits,

> Work of which the motive is solely pecuniary cannot have this value [of bringing a man into fruitful contact with the outer world], but only work which embodies some kind of devotion, whether to persons, to things, or merely to a vision.[10]

Today materialists are driven to claim they are materialists with respect to philosophy but idealists with respect to morals, that is, they are materialists in theory, but idealists in practice and aims.[11] How it is possible to be a materialist

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in theory and an idealist in practice is a question for the materialists themselves to answer.

George Sarton describes the inadequacy and incapacity of science to humanize personal relationships and man's urgent need for the power of faith:

> Science has made gigantic progress in certain fields, but in others, e.g., in politics, national and international, we are still fooling ourselves.[12]

He admits that the faith man needs is a religious faith. He says this of man's need for the triad of art, religion and science:

> Art reveals beauty; it is the joy of life. Religion means love; it is the music of life. Science means truth and reason; it is the conscience of mankind. We need all of them – art and religion as well as science. Science is absolutely necessary but it is never sufficient."

Effects and Advantages of Religious Faith

Without ideals, aspirations and faith, man can neither live a sane life nor accomplish anything useful or fruitful for humanity and human civilization. A person who lacks ideals and faith becomes either selfish, never emerging from his shell of private interests, or a wavering, bemused being who does not know his own duty in life, in moral and social questions. Man constantly confronts moral and social questions, and must necessarily respond. If one is attached to a teaching, a belief, a faith, one's duty is clear; but if no teaching or method has clarified one's duty, one lives forever in a state of irresolution, drawn sometimes this way, sometimes that, never in balance. So without any doubt, one must attach oneself to a teaching and an ideal.

Only religious faith, however, can make man truly 'faithful', can make faith, belief and principle dominate selfishness and egoism, can create a kind of devotion and surrender in the individual such that he does not doubt the least point of his faith's teachings, and can render this belief something precious to him, to the extent that life without it is hollow and meaningless and that he will defend it with zeal and fervour.

Aptitudes for religious faith prompt man to struggle against his natural, individual inclinations and sometimes to sacrifice his reputation and very being for the sake of faith. This grows possible when his ideal takes on an aspect of sanctity and comes to rule his being completely. Only the power of religion can sanctify ideals and effect their rule to the fullest over man.

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Sometimes individuals make sacrifices and relinquish their fortunes, reputations or lives, not for ideals and religious belief but when driven by obsessions, vindictiveness and vengefulness, in short as a violent reaction to feelings of stress and oppression. We see this sort of thing in various parts of the world. The difference between a religious ideal and a non-religious one is that, when religious belief appears and sanctifies an ideal, sacrifices take place naturally and with complete contentment. There is a difference between an act accomplished in contentment and faith – a kind of choice – and an act accomplished under the impact of obsessions and disturbing internal stresses – a kind of explosion.

If man's world view is a purely materialistic one founded on the restriction of reality to sense objects, any sort of social and humane idealism will prove contrary to the sensible realities through which man then feels related to the world.

What results from a sensual world view is egoism, not idealism. If idealism is founded upon a world view of which it is not the logical consequence, it amounts to nothing more than fantasy. That is, man must figuratively make a separate world of the realities existing within him, from his imagination, and be content with them. But if idealism stems from religion, it rests on a kind of world view whose logical consequence is to live by social ideals and aspirations. Religious faith is a loving bond between man and the universe or, to put it differently, is a harmony between man and the universal ideals of being. Non-religious faith and aspirations, on the other hand, constitute a kind of 'severance' from the universe and an imaginary construction of a world of one's own that is in no way reinforced by the outer world.

Religious faith does more than specify a set of duties for man contrary to his natural propensities; it changes the mien of the universe in man's eyes. It demonstrates the existence of elements in the structure of the universe other than the sensible ones. It transforms a cold, desiccated, mechanical and material universe into one living, intelligent and conscious. Religious faith transforms man's conception of the universe and creation. William James, the American philosopher and psychologist whose life extended into the early part of the twentieth Christian century, says:

> The world interpreted religiously is not the materialistic world over again, with an altered expression; it must have, over and above the altered expression, *a natural constitution* different at some point from that which a materialistic world would have.[14]

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Beyond all this, there is an aspiration to sacred truths and realities that can be worshipped innate in every human individual. Man is the focus of a range of potential extra-material aptitudes and capacities waiting to be nurtured. Man's aptitudes are not confined to the material and his ideal aspirations are not solely inculcated and acquired. This is a truth science affirms. William James says:

> So far as our ideal impulses originate in this [mystical or supernatural] region (and most of them do originate in it, for we find them possessing us in a way for which we cannot articulately account), we belong to it in a more intimate way than that in which we belong to the visible world, for we belong in the most intimate sense wherever our ideals belong.[15]

Because these impulses exist, they should be nurtured. If they are not rightly nurtured and rightly profited from, they will deviate and cause unimaginable harm leading to idolatry, anthropolatry, nature worship and a thousand other forms of false worship. Erich Fromm says:

> There is no one without a religious need, a need to have a frame of orientation and an object of devotion . . .
>
> The person may be aware that his system is a religious one, different from systems in the secular realm, or he may think that he has no religion and interpret his devotion to certain allegedly secular aims like power, money or success as nothing but concern for the practical and expedient. The question is not *religion or not* but *which kind of religion.*[16]

What this psychologist means is that man cannot live without worship and a sense of the sacred. If he does not know and worship the One God, he will erect something else as the higher reality and make it the object of his faith and worship.

Therefore, because it is imperative for humanity to have an ideal, an aspiration and a faith and because, on the one hand, religious faith is the only faith that can really penetrate us and, on the other hand, by our nature we seek for something to hold sacred and to worship, the only road open to us is to affirm religious faith.

The Noble Qur'án was the first book

1. to speak explicitly of religious faith as a kind of harmony with the creation: 'Do they seek for other than God's religion, while all in the heavens and on earth bow to Him?' (3:83)

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2. to present religious faith as part of the make-up of human beings: 'So set your face towards religion as one upright – such is the disposition with which God has created man.' (30:30)

Tolstoy, the Russian thinker and writer, says, 'Faith is that by which people live'. Ḥakīm Nāṣir-i Khusraw 'Alavi says to his son,

> From the world I turned to religion,
> Without which what's the world but my prison?
> Son, religion imparts to my heart a kingdom,
> That *will* never fall into ruin.[17]

Religious faith has many beneficial effects, including producing cheer and expansiveness, ameliorating social relationships and lessening and remedying inevitable troubles that arise from the structure of the world.

Producing Cheer and Expansiveness

Religious faith creates optimism toward the universe, creation and being. In giving a special form to man's conception of the universe, in representing creation as having an object and the object as goodness, happiness and evolution, religious faith naturally shapes man's view of the universal system of being and its governing laws into an optimistic one.

The conditions of a person who has faith in the 'country' of being resembles the condition of a person who regards as right and just the laws, institutions and regulations of the country in which he lives and believes in its administrators' good intentions. He will inevitably see the way open to progress and elevation for himself and everyone else, and he will believe that only his own laziness and inexperience could hold him back and that the same holds for other responsible beings. Such a person would view himself, not national institutions and regulations, as responsible for his backwardness. He would blame any shortcoming on the failure of himself and his peers to carry out their tasks. This thought would naturally rouse him to zeal and compel him to optimism, hope and action.

A person without faith in the 'country' of being is like a person who regards the laws, institutions and regulations of the country in which he lives as corrupt and oppressive but must endure them. Such a person is always filled with rancour and vindictiveness. He never thinks of reforming himself; rather, he thinks that somehow earth and sky are askew, that all of being is injustice,

oppression and wrongness. He thinks, 'What effect can the rightness of a speck like me have?' Such a person never takes pleasure in the world; the world for him is always like a nightmarish prison. Thus, the Noble Qur'ān says, 'For whoever turns away from remembrance of Me, life will be narrow'. (20:124) Faith gives expanse to the life within us and checks pressures on the spiritual agencies.

Religious faith also illuminates the heart. When through religious faith man sees the world illumined with truth and reality, this clairvoyance illumines the spaces of his spirit. It becomes like a lamp illuminating his inward being. By contrast, an individual without faith, who sees the universe as futile and dark, is devoid of perception, insight and light. His heart is dark and oppressed in this dark dwelling he has conceived.

Religious faith provides hope, hope of a good outcome for one's efforts. According to the logic of materialism, the universe regards impartially and indifferently those following the road of verity and those following the road of falsity, those following the road of justice and those following the road of injustice, those following the road of right and those following the road of wrong. The outcome of their work depends only on the level of their effort. But according to the logic of the individual with faith, the system of creation supports people who work in the way of truth and reality, in the way of right, justice and benevolence. 'If you aid God, He will aid you'. (47:7) The reward to those who do good never goes to waste: 'Truly God does not lose the wages of those who do good'. (12:90)

Religious faith gives one peace of mind. Man innately seeks his well-being. He becomes immersed in pleasure at the thought of attaining well-being and he trembles at the thought of a blighted future filled with deprivation. Man's well-being arises from two things, effort and confidence in environmental conditions.

A student's success arises from two things: his own efforts and the appropriateness or supportiveness of the school environment, which includes the encouragement and appreciation of the school authorities. If a hardworking student has no confidence in his study environment or in his teachers who will grade him at the end of the year, if he fears he will be the target of unfairness, he will be filled with apprehension and anxiety every day of the year.

Plainly, one's duty towards oneself does not give rise to anxiety in this area because anxiety arises from doubt and uncertainty. One does not feel doubt or uncertainty in relation to oneself. What does induce such feelings of anxiety is the world and one's relationship with it.

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Is there no use in doing good? Are veracity and trustworthiness pointless? Do all our striving and dutifulness lead only to deprivation? Apprehension and anxiety here loom in their most terrible forms.

Religious faith, in relating man, one partner to the transaction, to the universe, the other partner, gives assurance and confidence. It alleviates apprehension and anxiety about the way in which the universe acts upon man and in their place brings peace of mind. Thus, one of the effects of religious faith is peace of mind.

Another effect of religious faith is a greater enjoyment of ideal pleasures. Man knows two kinds of pleasures. Material pleasures are connected with any of the senses and are felt when a relationship is set up between an organ and some external object (the pleasures of the eye in seeing, the ear in hearing, the mouth in tasting, the sense of touch in contact). Ideal pleasures are connected with the depths of the human spirit and conscience, not with any particular organ and not dependent upon a relationship with any external object. Such are the pleasures one feels from beneficence and service, from love and respect or from one's own success or that of one's offspring. These pleasures neither pertain to a particular organ nor arise under the direct influence of an external, material factor.

Ideal pleasures are both stronger and more enduring than material pleasures. For the devotees of truth, the pleasures of worship of God are of this order. When worship is conjoined with presence, humility and absorption, it affords the highest of pleasures, such as are celebrated in the language of religion as 'the relish of faith' and 'the sweetness of faith'. Faith has a sweetness above all sweetnesses. Ideal pleasures are redoubled when such works as scientific study, beneficence, service and success stem from the religious sense and are carried through for the sake of God, when they fall in the domain of worship.

Improving Social Relationships

Like some other animals, man has been created social. The individual alone is incapable of satisfying his needs; life must assume corporate form and all must share in its duties and fruits; a kind of division of labour must exist among individuals. But man differs from the other social animals, such as the honey bee, whose divisions of labour and function take the form of instincts and which are denied any chance to oppose and rebel against these preassigned functions. Man is free and empowered to perform his work freely as a function

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and duty. Other animals have social needs, but they also have social instincts that govern them.

Man likewise has social needs, but is not governed by social instincts. Man's social instincts consist of a range of demands within him that must be channelled by education.

A sane life for society consists in individuals' respecting the laws, the boundaries and each other's rights; in their regarding justice as sacred; and in their showing kindness to one another. Each should wish for another what he wishes for himself and deem unacceptable for another what he does not accept for himself. All should repose trust and confidence in one another and it should be their spiritual goal to guarantee each other's confidence. Each individual should be committed and responsible to his society and each should be as privately pious and honest as he is publicly. All should act with beneficence to one another with the greatest possible degree of disinterestedness. All should rise against injustice and oppression and leave the oppressors and the corrupt no room to practise their oppression and corruption. All should venerate ethical values. All should unite with and support others as the members of a body.

What honours truth and sanctifies justice, endears hearts to one another, establishes mutual confidence among individuals, causes piety and integrity to penetrate to the depths of the human conscience, invests ethical values with credence, creates courage in the face of oppression and interlinks and unites all individuals like the members of one body is religious faith. Human beings' humane manifestations, shining like stars in the sky of a tumultuous human history, are those manifestations welling forth from religious faith.

Lessening Troubles

Just as human life has its joys, delights, gains and successes, so it also has suffering, disasters, defeats, losses, hardships and disappointments. Many of them can be averted or obviated, albeit after great expenditure of effort. Man is clearly obliged to come to grips with nature, to transform the bitter into the sweet. But some of the vicissitudes of the world, such as old age, cannot be averted or obviated. One advances toward old age and one's life flame dies down. The infirmity and weakness of old age, together with the rest of its adversities, give life a grim face. On top of that, the thought of death and non-being, of closing one's eyes to the world and of entrusting the world to others causes one anguish of another order. Religious faith instils in man the power to resist. It turns bitter to sweet. A person with faith knows that everything in

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the universe has a fixed value. If he responds to hardships in the proper manner, even though they are irremediable, God Most High will recompense him in another way. As old age ceases to be seen as the end of man's existence and as the individual with faith regularly fills his leisure time with worship and nearness to God, through remembrance of God, life becomes more pleasant in old age than in youth. The visage of death is different in the eyes of one with faith; death is no longer oblivion and nothingness but is a transfer from an ephemeral world to an enduring one, from a smaller world to a greater one. Death is a transfer from the world of labour and sowing to the world of fruition and harvest. Thus, the individual with faith obviates his anxieties about death through efforts in good works, which in the language of religion are called 'acts of devotion'.

According to psychologists, non-religious individuals experience most of the psychological illnesses arising from spiritual turmoil and life's hardships. The stronger and firmer the religious individual's faith, the greater his immunity to such disorders. One of the features of contemporary life arising from the weakening of the faiths is an increase in mental and nervous disorders.

The Teaching: Ideology

Classifications of Actions

What is a teaching, an ideology? How are these concepts defined? By what necessity does one as an individual or as a member of a society follow a school and cleave to, invest faith in, an ideology? Is the existence of an ideology essential for the human individual or society?

Some prefatory remarks are called for here.

Human acts are of two kinds, pleasure-oriented and goal-oriented. People perform pleasure-oriented acts under the direct influence of instinct, nature or habit – which is second nature – to attain some pleasure or avoid some form of pain. For instance, a man grows thirsty and reaches for water, he sees a snake and flees or he feels a craving for a cigarette and lights one. Such acts conform to appetite and have to do directly with pleasure and pain. A pleasurable act attracts and a painful act repels.

One is not drawn to or repelled from goal-oriented acts by instinct and nature. One carries them out or leaves them undone according to reason and volition and with a view to the benefit of either course of action. That is, man's final cause and motive force is benefit, not pleasure. Nature discerns pleasure;

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reason discerns benefit. Pleasure excites appetite; benefit mobilizes will. Man takes pleasure in the midst of performing a pleasure-oriented act, but he does not take pleasure in carrying out goal-oriented acts. Rather, he finds satisfaction in conceiving that he has taken a step on an ultimately beneficial course – one leading to a future good, a future attainment, a future pleasure. There is a difference between an act that brings pleasure and happiness and an act that brings neither, that may even bring pain, but that the doer carries through contentedly, bearing even the pain. Because the result is deferred, goal-oriented acts do not result in pleasure and cheer, but they give satisfaction. Man and animal alike experience pleasure and pain, but satisfaction and dissatisfaction are unique to man, as is hope. Satisfaction, dissatisfaction and hope belong to the domain of intelligibles and to the thought per se of man, not to his senses and perceptions.

That goal-oriented acts are performed under the governance of reason means that the evaluative power of the reason sees a good, an attainment or a pleasure from afar, descries the road to it, which may at times be arduous, and plans for the journey to fulfilment. That these acts are performed through the power of the will means that there exists in man a faculty dependent on the faculty of reason that has the function of executing what reason has sanctioned. At times it puts these things that thought has devised and reason has sanctioned into effect in the teeth of all appetites and all natural inclinations. For example, a student's youthful nature calls him to sleep, food, comfort, sensuality and play; but his evaluative reason, which considers, on the one hand, the potentially disastrous outcome of such acts and, on the other, the ultimately happy outcome of working hard, forgoing sleep and abstaining from sensual delights and pleasures impels him, in the name of benefit, to adopt the second alternative. In this instance, man elects the governance of reason, which is benefit, over the governance of nature, which is pleasure. A sick person may loathe his bitter and distasteful medicine and recoil from drinking it. But he drinks it, governed by reason, which heeds benefit, and by willpower, which overrides appetites. The stronger are the reason and the will, the better they impose their command upon nature, despite nature's inclinations.

In his goal-oriented acts, man is continually implementing some plan, some design, some theory. The more he evolves in the area of reason and will, the greater is the ratio of his goal-oriented acts to his pleasure-oriented acts. The nearer he draws to the animal level, the more the reverse is true, because the animal's acts are all pleasure-oriented. Occasionally, animals are observed to act in ways that suggest remote ends and outcomes (nest building, migrations, coatings and reproduction, for example). But none of these is done with awareness, with an end in mind or with thought given to the means that must

be chosen to attain that end. Rather, they take place through a kind of irresistible instinctual suggestion from the beyond.

Man has so extended the scope of his goal-oriented acts that it has encompassed his pleasure-oriented acts. That is, the plans he makes on the basis of future benefit may be laid so finely that pleasures are incorporated into them. Each pleasure becomes a component of benefit; and every natural act, answering as it does to a natural need, also complies with the demand of reason. If goal-oriented action covers pleasure-oriented acts, and if pleasure-oriented acts assume a role as part of the general plan and programme of life under a goal-oriented outlook, then nature will accord with reason and appetite will accord with will.

Goal-oriented action, in turning on a range of remote ends and objects, as a matter of course calls for planning, programmes, methods and selections of means to reach these ends. Insofar as this action has an individual aspect (that is, insofar as an individual himself plans for himself), the planner, programmer and theoretician – the one who determines the method and means – is the individual's reason, which, of course, is dependent on the level of the individual's qualifications, information, learning and power of judgement.

Goal-oriented action, even at a hypothetical apogee of perfection, is not sufficient for man's actions to be truly human. Man's goal-oriented action is a necessary condition of humanity in that his reason, science, consciousness and foresight constitute half of his humanity, but it is not a sufficient condition. Human action is truly human when, in addition to being rational and volitional, it serves the more sublime aptitudes of humanity or at the very least does not oppose them. Otherwise, the most criminal of human acts may take shape through projections, ingenuity, forethought, planning and theorizing. The satanic designs of imperialism are the best evidence for this assertion. In Islamic religious terminology, the power of foresight when divorced from human aptitudes and aptitudes for faith and put at the service of material and animal ends is called 'abominable' (*nukrān*) and 'satanism' (*shaytānat*). Goal-oriented acts are not necessarily human; rather, if they turn on animal objects, they become far more dangerous than the pleasure-oriented animal acts themselves. For instance, an animal may tear apart another animal or a person to fill its stomach; but man the planner and evaluator will destroy cities and incinerate alive hundreds of thousands of innocent souls to achieve ends of the same order.

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The Insufficiency of Reason

To what extent can reason indicate an individual's best interests? The power of reason, reflection, and thought is certainly indispensable for one's particular and limited plans in life. One is constantly confronted with such problems as choosing friends, a field of study, a spouse, a job, travel, a social circle, entertainment, charitable activities, struggling against fraud and so forth. One needs to think, reflect and plan in all these instances; and the more and better one considers them, the better one will succeed. At times, one will need to call upon others' reflection and experience (the principle of consultation). In all these particular instances, one first prepares a plan and then puts it into effect.

What of questions of a broad and general scope? Can one draft a plan covering all the problems of his personal life, according with his best interests in every respect? Or is the power of the individual mind to plan confined to limited and particular questions? Is it beyond the allotted power of reason to comprehend one's best interests in life as a totality, embracing happiness in all its aspects? We know that some philosophers believe in such self-sufficiency. They claim to have discovered the road from adversity to happiness and to be building their own happiness on the strength of reason and will. But we also know that no two philosophers can be found in the world who are of one mind as to where this road lies. Happiness itself, which is the central and ultimate end and which at first appears self-evident, is one of the most ambiguous of concepts. What is happiness? How is it to be realized? What is wretchedness? What factors go into it? These questions highlight a great gulf in our knowledge because even now man himself, with his potentialities and possibilities, remains unknown. Is it possible, while man himself remains unknown, to know what constitutes his happiness and the means of attaining it?

Moreover, man is a social being. Social life brings about thousands of problems for him, all of which he must solve and vis-à-vis all of which he must define his responsibility. Because man is a social being, his happiness, aspirations, criteria for good and evil, methods and choice of means are interwoven with others' happiness, aspirations, criteria for good and evil, methods and choices of means. One cannot choose one's way independently of others. One must pursue one's happiness on the highway that is leading society to happiness and perfection.

The Need for Ideology Today

If we consider the eternal life of the spirit and the inexperience of reason with respect to the hereafter, the question becomes much more difficult. It is here

the need for a teaching, an ideology, becomes apparent – the need for a general theory, a comprehensive, harmonious and concrete design whose central object is to perfect man and secure universal happiness. Along the lines and by the methods it suggests, the musts and must-nots, goods and evils, ends and means, needs, ailments and remedies, responsibilities and duties may be discerned, and every individual may derive a sense of his own responsibility from these.

Ever since his first appearance, or at least since the age when the growth and diffusion of his social life produced a series of differences and disputes, man has needed an ideology – in the language of the Qur'ān, a 'revealed law' (Shari'ah).[18] As time has passed and man has evolved, this need has intensified. In the past, tendencies born of consanguinity, race, ethnicity, tribe and nation governed human societies as a collective spirit. This spirit in turn generated a range of collective (if inhuman) aspirations and gave unity and direction to society. Growth and evolution in reason and science have weakened these ties. An individualistic tendency is an essential property of science. It weakens sympathies and bonds of feeling. What will give unity, direction and shared aspirations to the man of today and, a fortiori, to the man of tomorrow, what will serve as his touchstone of good and evil, of musts and must-nuts, is an elective, conscious, inspirational philosophy of life underpinned by logic – in other words, a comprehensive, perfect ideology. More than the man of yesterday, the man of today needs a philosophy of life that will win him over to realities beyond the individual and his private interests. There is no doubt whatever that a teaching, an ideology, is today among society's most pressing needs.

Designing such an ideology is beyond the power of individual intelligence. But is it within the power of the collective intelligence? Can people design such a thing by using the aggregate of his past and present experiences and learning? If we first assume that man is the greatest of unknowns to himself, knowledge of human society and of what constitutes its happiness would seem to be even more difficult to attain. What is to be done? If we have the correct view of being and creation, if we regard the system of being as a system in equilibrium, if we deny that there is emptiness and futility in being, we shall be obliged to admit that this great system of the creation has not ignored our greatest need, but has marked out the basic lines of the course from a plane above human reason, that is, from the plane of revelation (the principle of prophecy). It is the task of reason and science to move along these basic lines. How beautifully and sublimely Ibn Sinā wrote in his *Kitāb al-Nājāt* of people's need for a divinely revealed law expressed by human (prophetic) means.

The need for such a man [prophet] to preserve the species of man and to bring it to fruition is much greater than the need for the growth of hair on the

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eyebrows, the arching of the soles of the feet and other such fine features, which are not essential for man's survival; indeed, most of them do not serve that purpose at all."

How, Ibn Sīnā asks, could this great system of creation, which has not neglected minor and inconsequential needs, neglect the most pressing need of all?

But if we are denied the correct view of being and creation, we must acquiesce in our condemnation to bewilderment and error. Any design, any ideology advanced by this bewildered humanity in this dark edifice of nature will amount to nothing more than a distraction and an entanglement.

Two Types of Ideologies

Ideologies are of two kinds: human and corporate. Human ideologies are addressed to the human species, not to some special nationality, race or class, and their purpose is the salvation of the whole human species. They attract supporters from all strata, groupings, nations and classes. Corporate ideologies are addressed to a certain group, class or stratum and their purpose is the liberation or the hegemony of that group. They thus attract supporters and defenders from that group only.

These two types of ideology are each based on a vision of human. The universal, human type of ideology, exemplified by Islam, embodies a kind of realization of man defined by the concept of primordial nature. According to Islam, in the course of the creation and before historical and social factors came into play, man gained a special existential dimension and lofty capacities that distinguished him from the animals and gave him his identity. According to this view, human beings within creation have gained a kind of species-intelligence and species-consciousness, which in turn have given them a species-individuation, an aptitude to be summoned and addressed and to act. Ideologies issue their summons and engender action by relying on the primordial consciousness that distinguishes the human species.

Another group of ideologies has a different vision of man. According to these, man as a species has no such aptitude to be summoned and be addressed or act because his intelligence, conscience and aptitudes coalesce under the influence of historical factors (in the life of nations and peoples) or social factors (in the class situation of man). Man in the absolute, apart from special historical and social factors, has no intelligence, consciousness or aptitude to be summoned or addressed; he is an abstract being, not an objective one. Marxism and the various nationalistic and ethnic philosophies are based on

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such a vision. These philosophies arise from class interests, national and racial sentiments or at best from an ethnic culture.

Beyond all doubt, Islamic ideology is human and arises from the primordial nature of man. Thus, Islam is addressed to the *nās*, the people at large, not to a special group or class.[20] Islam in practice has been able to attract supporters from among every group, even from among the very class against whom it has arisen – the class the Qur'ān terms the 'grandees' and the 'affluent' (*mala' wa mutrāfīn*). To recruit warriors to fight against their own class, to engage members of a group in a struggle against the interests of that group, even to incite an individual to combat his own corruption are things Islam has done in numerous instances throughout its history. Islam, penetrating as it does to the deepest strata of man's existence and resting on primordial human nature, is able to incite the individual to combat his own corruption and to bring about a revolution of self against self known as repentance (*tawba*). The only power for revolution the corporate and class ideologies have is to incite individual against individual or class against class. They are never able to incite a revolution of individual against self, just as they cannot exert control over an individual in his inwardness, at the locus of his essential selfhood.

Islam, in being a religion – in being, of all the revealed religions, the seal of religions – exists to institute social justice.[21] Its goal is to liberate the deprived and oppressed and to struggle against the oppressors. But Islam does not speak to the deprived and oppressed alone, just as it has not attracted supporters from these classes alone. Islam has recruited defenders, even from among the classes against which it has struggled, relying on the power of religion on the one hand and on primordial human nature on the other. Islam is the theory of the victory of humanity over animality, science over ignorance, justice over injustice, equality over discrimination, virtue over iniquity, piety over dissipation, *tawhīd* over *shirk*.[22] The victory of the downtrodden over the tyrants and the arrogant is one of the manifestations of these other victories.

Cultural Unity or Diversity

Does human culture have a single identity? Does culture have an ethnic, national or class identity, so that what is and always will be are cultures, not culture? These questions, too, relate to whether man has a single and authentic primordial nature, which may bestow a unity on culture, or whether he has no such single primordial nature, with the result that cultures must be the products of historical, ethnic and geographical factors or of profit-oriented class tendencies. Because Islam's world view upholds a single primordial nature, it favours both a single ideology and a single culture.

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Only a human ideology, not a corporate ideology, only a unifying ideology, not one based on human division and fragmentation, only a primordial ideology, not a profit-oriented one, can rest on human values and be human in its essence.

Ideological Temporality and Environmental Specificity

Is every ideology tied to a time and a place? Is man condemned to have a particular ideology for each permutation of temporal circumstances and under each set of varying local environmental conditions? Do the principle of variation (according to region and locale) and the principle of abrogation and substitution (according to the time) govern ideology? Or, just as man's ideology is single, not multiple, from the point of view of grouping, is it likewise single, rather than multiple, from the point of view of time and place? In other words, in addition to being general rather than special, is it also absolute rather than relative in terms of time and place?

Whether an ideology is absolute or relative in terms of time and place depends on whether it arises from the specific primordial human nature and has for its object the happiness of the human species, or whether it arises from corporate interests and ethnic and class sensibilities.

In another respect, it depends on what we regard as the essence of social transformation. When a society undergoes transformation, leaving behind an era and embarking on a new era, does that society undergo a change in identity and so come to be governed by a new set of rules, just as, for instance, water, as its temperature rises, finally vaporizes, thereafter to be governed by the gas laws, not the laws governing liquids? Or are the primary laws of social evolution constant? Is the axis on which social change turns itself fixed? Does society undergo changes in stage, but not in the axis, the law, of evolution, just as animals transform and evolve biologically, while the laws of evolution themselves always remain constant?

In a third respect, the question of whether an ideology is absolute or relative from the standpoints of time and place depends on that ideology's world view. Is it scientific, philosophic, or religious? A scientific ideology, being founded on an unstable world view, cannot itself be stable. It thus contrasts with the philosophic world view, founded on first principles and first axioms, and with the religious world view, founded on revelation and prophecy.

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Ideological Constancy or Change

Does the principle of constancy or the principle of change govern ideology? Whether ideology varies as time and place vary is a question of the abrogation and substitution of ideologies, but here I speak of a different question – that of the change and transformation of a single ideology. Whether an ideology is general or special in its content, whether it is absolute or relative, is it as a phenomenon constantly transforming and developing, given that this is the nature of phenomena? Is not the character of an ideology at its inception different from its character as it grows and matures? That is, does it not necessarily undergo constant modification, augmentation, deletion and revision at the hands of leaders and ideologues (as current materialistic ideologies do)? Otherwise, will it not soon grow exhausted and outdated and lose its authority? Or can an ideology be so ordered and so set along the primary lines of movement of man and society that it needs no revision or deletion and correction, that the role of the leaders and ideologues is only that of *ijtihād* in tenor and content and that ideological evolution takes place in the realm of these acts *of ijtihād,* not in the substance *of* the ideology?[22] The answer to this question, too, will become clear from the answers to the preceding questions.[23]

The Need for Faith

The individual act of cleaving to an ideology takes its true form when it takes the form of faith, and true faith cannot arise through coercion or with regard to expediency. One may be made to submit or yield to a particular issue or demand, but one cannot yield to an ideology. One must be magnetized by it, one must embrace it. Ideology calls for faith.

An appropriate ideology should, on the one hand, rest on a kind of world view that can convince the reason and nourish the mind and, on the other hand, logically deduce attractive goals from its world view. *At this juncture, love and conviction, the two basic elements of faith, work hand in hand to shape the world.*

Islam: The Comprehensive and All-Encompassing Teaching

Islam, being founded on such a world view, is a comprehensive and realistic teaching. It considers every aspect of human needs, whether this-worldly or otherworldly, physical or spiritual, intellectual or emotional, individual or

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social. From one point of view, the aggregate of Islamic teachings comprises three areas.

1. Principles of belief, that is, things in which it is the duty of every individual to strive to attain belief. The task that falls to every man comes under the heading of investigation and acquisition of knowledge.
2. Morals, that is, traits that every Muslim must seek to incorporate and use as an adornment of his character and whose opposites he has a duty to shun. The task that falls to every man here comes under the heading of self-control and self-moulding.
3. Decrees, that is, rules that relate to overt and objective acts, including acts with this-worldly and otherworldly ends, and individual and social acts.

According to the Shi'i school of thought, there are five principles of Islamic belief: *tawḥid,* justice, prophecy, the imamate, and the hereafter *(ma'ād,* the Destination). As regards the principles of belief, which require each individual to acquire the right belief, Islam does not regard imitation and blind submission as sufficient; every individual must freely and independently verify the rightness of this belief. According to Islam, worship is not confined to physical acts of worship, such as alms, *zakāt* and *khums.* There is another kind of worship, and that is mental worship. Mental worship, or contemplation, if directed towards self-reproof, awakening and self-improvement, is superior to years of physical worship.

Where Thought Stumbles

The Glorious Qur'ān, in summoning us to reflect and draw conclusions, in regarding reflection as worship and in regarding acceptance of the principles of belief as flawed without logical reflection, has focused on this basic question: where does human error come from? What is the root of error and straying? If one wishes to think straight and avoid error and deviation, what must one do?

In the Glorious Qur'ān, a series of phenomena are named as the occasions and causes of error: reliance on supposition, subconscious tendencies and desires, haste, traditionalism and obedience to personalities.

Reliance on Supposition Instead of Knowledge and Certainty

The Noble Qur'ān, in numerous verses, stringently opposes action based on supposition instead of knowledge and certainty. It says, 'Do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge' (17:36) and 'The nature of most people is such

that if you try to follow them, they will mislead you, because they rely on supposition (not on certainty) and act solely on conjecture and estimation' (paraphrase of 6:116). Modern philosophy has established that this tendency is one of the chief factors in error and confusion. A thousand years after the Qur'ān, Descartes made this recognition the first principle of his logic. He says, 'The first of these [precepts to which I have adhered] was to accept nothing as true that I did not clearly recognize to be so: that is to say, carefully to avoid precipitation and prejudice in judgements, and to accept in them nothing more than what was presented to my mind so clearly and distinctly that I could have no cause to doubt it.'[24]

Subconscious Tendencies and Desires

If one wishes to judge correctly, one must preserve complete impartiality towards the matter under consideration; that is, one must strive to find only reality and submit to reasons and evidence. One must be like a judge considering a case, impartial to the two sides of the dispute. If a judge has a personal bias towards one side, he will unconsciously pay more heed to the reasons adduced for that side's case. Such a bias will cause the judge to err.

If one fails to preserve one's impartiality relative to the right and wrong of an issue, if one's psychic tendencies are weighted towards one side, automatically and subconsciously the compass needle of one's thought will swing to the side of one's subconscious tendencies and desires. Thus, the Qur'ān identifies the desires of the psyche as one reason why the thought may stumble. It says in the *sūra Najm*, 'They follow nothing but supposition and what their own psyches desire'. (53:23)

Haste

Every judgement or expression of opinion demands a certain amount of evidence. Until sufficient evidence has been gathered on a question, any sort of expression of opinion constitutes haste and causes the thought to stumble. The Noble Qur'ān repeatedly alludes to the paucity of man's stock of knowledge and its insufficiency for some major judgements; it regards dogmatic assertions as highly imprudent. For instance, it says, 'Only a little knowledge has been given you', (17:85) which indicates that the amount of knowledge and information we have is insufficient for judgement.

Imām Ṣādiq (peace be upon him) has said:

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In two verses of the Qur'ān God has singled out His servants and admonished them: first, they must not affirm a thing until they have attained knowledge of it [haste in affirmation], and second, they must not deny a thing until they have attained knowledge of it – indeed, until they have reached the stage of knowledge and certainty [haste in denial]. God says in one verse, 'Was not the Covenant of the Book [the book of essential disposition or the revealed books] taken from them so that they would not ascribe to God anything but the truth?' (7:169). And in another verse He said, 'But they deny what their knowledge does not encompass'. (10:39)[25]

Traditionalism and Looking to the Past

It is a fact of man's nature that when he sees that a particular thought or belief was accepted by past generations, he automatically accepts it without allowing himself time to consider it. The Qur'ān reminds us not to accede to the accepted notions and beliefs of past generations until we have weighed them on the scales of reason, and recommends independence of thought vis-à-vis the beliefs of past generations. It says in the *sūra Baqara*, verse 170, 'When it is said to them, "Follow what God has sent down," they say, "No, we follow the customs in which our ancestors believed." What? Even though their ancestors were devoid of reason and unguided?'. (2:170)

Obedience to Personalities

Additionally, obedience to personalities may cause the thought to stumble. Great personalities of past and present, thanks to the grandeur they assume in others' minds, may exert an overwhelming influence on others' thoughts and wills. Others think as those personalities think and make decisions as they do. Others give up their independence of thought and will to those personalities.

The Noble Qur'ān summons us to independence of thought and regards blind following of great men and personalities as the way to eternal torment. Accordingly, people who were lost said on the Resurrection, 'Our Lord! We obeyed our leaders and great men, and so they led us to the wrong path'. (33:67)

The Qur'ān, in summoning us to thought and reflection, points out not only the possible stumbling-blocks of thought but also the springs of reflection, that is, the subjects that are suitable for contemplation and as sources of knowledge and information.

In Islam, there has been a general opposition to the expenditure of mental energy on questions that can have no outcome other than mental fatigue (i.e.

which people have no means or tools to investigate) and on questions that, although they can be investigated, offer no benefit to the human condition.

The Most Noble Messenger characterized as pointless a science that brings no benefit and whose absence brings no detriment, but Islam supports and encourages sciences in which investigation can be pursued and that additionally are beneficial. The Noble Qur'ān teaches that three subjects are useful and fruitful to reflect upon.

1. Nature

Throughout the Qur'ān, there are many verses mentioning nature (including earth, sky, stars, sun, moon, clouds, rain, winds, movements of ships upon the sea, plants, animals – in sum, all the sensible phenomena that man sees about him) as something we are to consider closely, for example, 'Say, "Observe all that is in the heavens and on the earth"'. (10:101)

2. History

There are many verses in the Qur'ān that summon us to study peoples of the past and that present such study as a resource for acquiring knowledge. According to the Qur'ān, human history, with its transformations, takes shape in accordance with a range of norms and laws. The exaltations and abasements, victories and defeats, successes and failures, joys and miseries of history are subject to exact and ordered calculations. By studying these calculations and laws, one can gain control of present-day history and employ it to further one's own happiness and that of one's contemporaries. Here is one verse as an example: '[Normative] systems have gone away before you. So travel the earth and observe how things came out for those who practised denial'. (3:137) That is, before your time, norms and laws were actually put into effect. So explore and study the land and the historical legacy of those who have gone before and see how things came out for those who took the truth that God revealed to them to be lies.

3. The Inner Being of Man

The Qur'ān identifies the human heart as a source of a special kind of knowledge. According to the Qur'ān, the whole of creation is a set of signs of God and indications pointing out reality. The Qur'ān terms man's external world 'the horizons' (*afaq*) and his internal world 'the selves' (*anfus*). It thereby underlines the special importance of the inner being of man. This is the source for the terms so frequently met with in Islamic literature.[26]

The German philosopher Kant wrote a universally famous sentence, which is inscribed on his gravestone, 'Two things fill the mind with ever new and

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increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me.'[27]

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Notes

1. The English philosopher Hobbes had such a view of man.
2. This is Descartes's theory.
3. The *ḥukamā'* of Islam have a principle for the interrelation of the spirit and the body, expressed thus, 'The soul and the body reflect each other responsively and preparatorily'.

   [Translator's note: The author makes repeated mention of three classes of traditional Islamic scholars in the course of this work. The *falāsifa* (sing. *failāsuf*) are concerned with the theory of knowledge, the structure of language and objective relations. Their field of inquiry is known as *falsafa*. Basically, they are Aristotelians. Ibn Sīnā typifies this class. The terms *falāsifa* and *falsafa* are translated by their English cognates, 'philosophers' and 'philosophy'.

   The *ḥukamā'* (sing. *ḥakīm*) are said to be more concerned with ultimate questions of being, the meaning of life, its end and human responsibility within it. Their field of inquiry is known as *ḥikma* (wisdom, *sagesse*). Ibn Sīnā would also be included in this group in certain respects. More typical representatives would be Mullā Ṣadrā, Mullā Hadi Sabzavarī and Shihāb ad-Dīn Suhravardi. These terms appear untranslated, except in a few instances where the author has used them in non-Islamic contexts or where *ḥikma* is translated as 'wisdom'.

   The *'urafā* (sing. *'ārif*) are the exponents of the theoretical Sufism codified by Ibn 'Arabi and especially influential in Shī'ī thought, known as *'irfān*. These terms, too, appear untranslated.

   The author seems sometimes to treat *falsafa* and *ḥikma* as synonyms, particularly in the section on 'Philosophy'. There he also treats *'irfān* as a synonym for Sufism as such, and many persons familiar in the West as *ṣūfis* are introduced throughout as *'urafā'*.

   My thanks to Muḥammad Javad Larijani for his help in clarifying these terms. *Trans.*
4. *Tawrāt*: This word is cognate with the word 'Torah', but Muslim commentators hold that the work to which it refers is not to be identified with the existing Jewish scripture. See A. Yusuf 'Ali, translator, *The Holy Qur'ān* (n.p., 1946), pp. 282–85. *Trans.*
5. This and the following quotations are from the New English Bible. *Trans.*
6. Muḥammad Igbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore, 1962), p. 179.
7. Will Durant, *The Pleasures of Philosophy* (New York, 1953), pp. 240, 114.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 168–69.
9. The Kharijites were a religio-political sect that rejected the claims to rule of both 'Ali and Mu'awiya, founder of the Umayyad dynasty, as well as evolving certain distinctive theological positions.
10. Bertrand Russell, *Marriage and Morals* (London, 1929), p. 102.
11. See, for instance, Georges Politzer, *Cours de philosophée: 1. Principes élémentaires* (Paris, 1948).
12. George Sarton, Six *Wings: Men of Science in the Renaissance* (London, 1958), p. 218.
13. This quotation is without attribution and the source is unknown. *Trans.*

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14. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York, 1929), p. 508.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 506.
16. Erich Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (New York, 1950), pp. 25–26.
17. *Divan-i Ash'ar*, ed Naṣrullah Taqavi (Tehran, 1335 Sh./1956), p. 364. Nāṣir-i Khusraw was a famous poet, philosopher and Isma'ili missionary (d. 481/1088). *Trans.*
18. It can be inferred from the noble verses of the Qur'ān taken as a whole that these variations and needs appeared in the time of the prophet Noah. No earlier prophet had been given a revealed law. See 'Allama Sayyid Muḥammad Husayn Tabatabā'i, *Tafsir al-Mizān* (hereafter referred to as *Tafsīr al-Mīzān*), the commentary to the blessed *sūra Baqara*, verse 213, 'The people were a single nation, and God sent messengers'. (2:213)
19. Exact place of occurrence not found. *Trans.*
20. Sometimes this word, *nās*, meaning the people at large, is erroneously taken to be synonymous with the masses of the people, as opposed to the privileged classes. Because Islam is addressed to the *nās*, it is claimed that Islam is the religion of the masses, and this is likewise accounted a special feature of Islam. But the real virtue of Islam is that it arose with the support of the masses of the people, not that it is addressed solely to them and so has a corporate or class ideology. What distinguishes Islam even further is that it not only takes hold among the exploited and deprived classes, but also, in resting on primordial human nature, it has at times stirred the conscience of the exploiting classes and capitalists themselves, to the advantage of the exploited.
21. Note Hadid: 25, 'We had sent our apostles with clear signs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance, that the people might stand up in equity' (57:25). Note also A'raf: 29, 'Say, "My Lord has commanded equity".' (7:29)
22. *Ijtihād*: used here in a broad and analogical sense; means the deduction of particular applications of law from its principles and ordinances, exercised by a *mujtahid*.
23. In *Khatm-i Nubuvvat* ('Seal of Prophethood') appearing in *Muhammad, Khatim-i Payambaran*, a publication of the Husayniya-yi Irshad, and later published separately as a pamphlet. I have discussed the universality and absoluteness of Islamic theology along with the role of *ijtihād* in adapting it to circumstances of different places and changing temporal conditions. I have shown that what is subject to change is *ijtihād*, not Islamic ideology.
24. René Descartes, *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason*, in 'Philosophical Works' (Cambridge, 1931), vol. 1, p. 92.
25. *Tafsir al-Mizan* (Arabic Text), vol. 6, p. 319, commentary to A'raf: 169.
26. See *Fussilat*: 53: 'Soon We will show them Our signs on the horizons and in their souls, until it grows clear to them that this is the Truth.' (41:53)
27. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (Indianapolis, 1956), conclusion.

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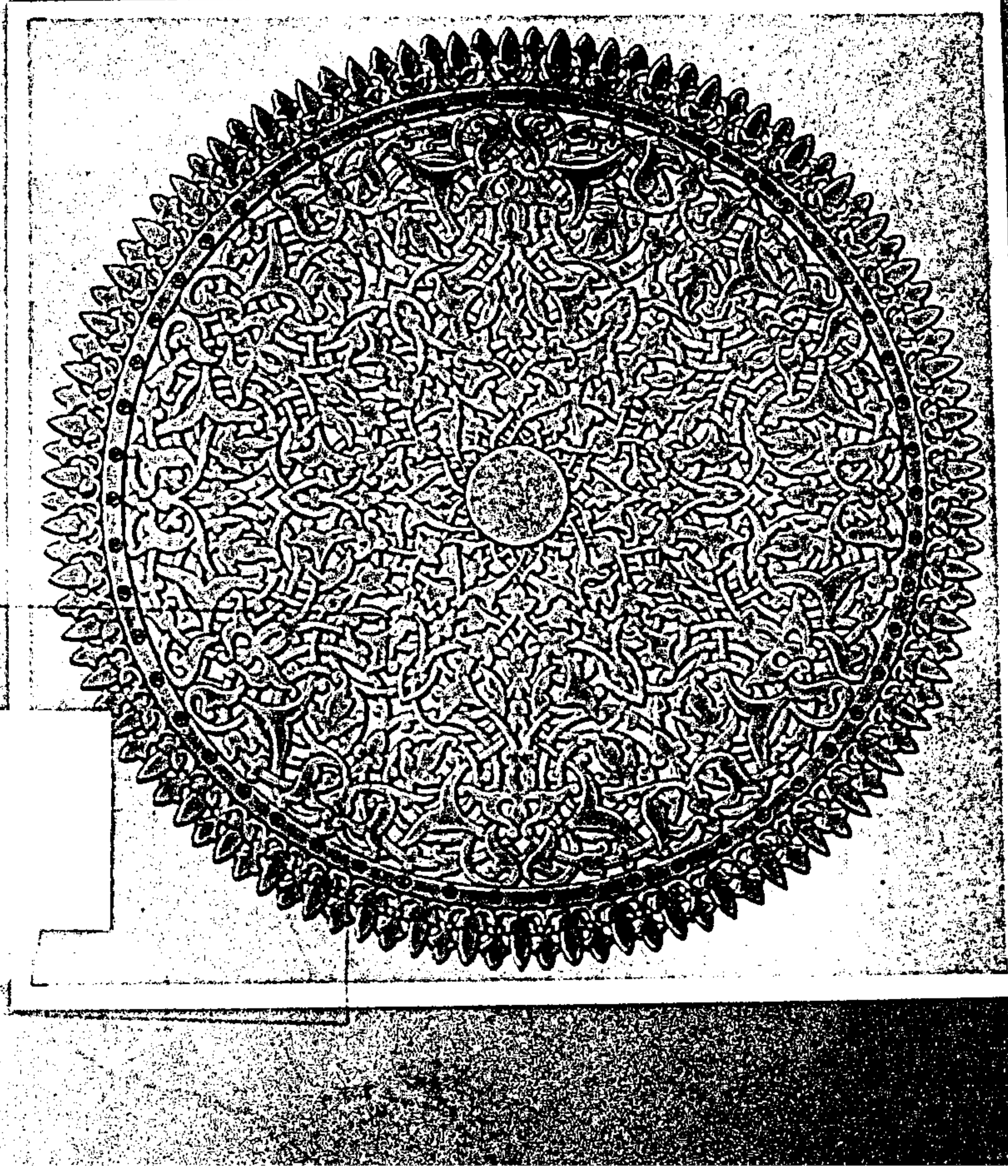

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