



MAHMOUD MUHAMMAD TAHA



THE
SECOND
MESSAGE
OF
ISLAM



FIFTH EDITION

Mahmoud Muhammad Taha

**The Second Message
of Islam**

Fifth Edition

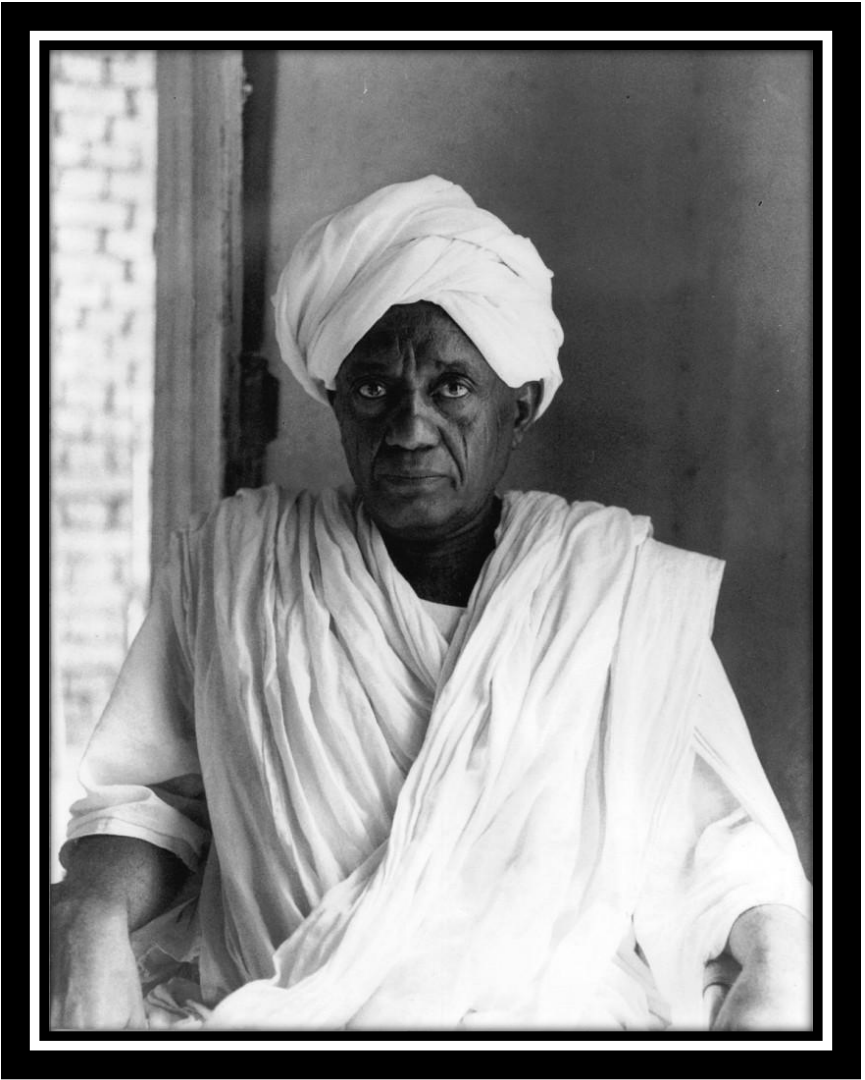


Table of Contents

Dedication.....	7
Introduction to the Fourth Edition	8
The Most Trustworthy Handhold.....	9
The Sunnah is the Second Message	12
The Sunnah is Not Exclusive to the Prophet.....	13
The Second Message of Islam	16
Who is Authorized?	21
Who is the Messenger of the Second Message?.....	22
How Do We Recognize Him?	23
Introduction to the Third Edition.....	24
The Sunnah and the Sharia.....	25
Islam and Faith (Imān)	26
Clarity of the Matter	28
Preface.....	30
Chapter One Civilization (<i>al-madaniyyah</i>) and Material Progress (<i>al-ḥaḍārah</i>).....	33
Is Civilization Morality??.....	33
Western Civilization	35
The Failure of Western Civilization	37
Chapter Two The Individual and the Community in Philosophical Thought	40
The Individual and the Universe in Philosophical Thought	44
Chapter Three The Individual and the Community in Islam.....	49
Absolute Individual Freedom	52
Shari'a in The Service of Absolute Individual Freedom	57

The Individual and the Universe in Islam	71
The Will.....	74
Determinism and Free Will.....	81
The Quran, Determinism, and Free Will.....	83
The Quran and Determinism	87
What is Determinism?	90
Forgiveness to Adam and Eve.....	102
How was Adam forgiven?	108
Determinism is Absolute Goodness.....	111
Decree (<i>qada</i>) and Destiny (<i>qadr</i>)	115
Conclusion	121
Chapter Four.....	123
Islam	123
What is Islam?	123
The Islamic Trinity.....	130
Chapter Five.....	139
The First Message	139
The Community of the Believers	149
Jihad Is Not Fundamental to Islam	152
Slavery is not inherent to Islam	158
Capitalism Is Not Fundamental in Islam	161
Inequality between men and women is not a principle of Islam.	162
Polygamy Is Not a Principle of Islam.....	164
Divorce is not a fundamental principle in Islam	166
The Veil “Hijab” is not Fundamental in Islam	168

A society where men are isolated from women is not fundamental to Islam	171
Chapter Six.....	172
The Second Message	172
The Muslims	178
The Righteous Society	182
Economic Equality: Socialism.....	183
Political Equality: Democracy	189
Social Equality: the elimination of classes and disparities	196
Conclusion	202
For the revival of Islam	209

Dedication

To humanity!

A glad tiding... and a greeting.

A glad tiding that God has reserved for it the perfection of both the life of thought and the life of feeling - what no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and what has never occurred to the heart of any human being.

And a greeting to Man, as he stirs today within her womb, with labor pains grown fierce, and the breath of dawn breaking forth.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

“There is no compulsion in religion. The right way has become distinct from error. Whoever rejects false gods and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that never breaks. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.” (2:56)

“And whoever submits his face to Allah while being a doer of good has grasped the most trustworthy handhold. And to Allah belongs the outcome of all matters.” (31:22)

- Truthful is Allah, the Almighty.

Introduction to the Fourth Edition

This is the introduction to the fourth edition of the book *The Second Message of Islam*. The first edition of the book was published in January 1967, coinciding with the sacred month of Ramadan in the year 1386 AH. The book has enjoyed significant popularity, and its appeal continues to grow with time as more people come to understand it, accept it, and show interest in it. This book serves as the foundational text for the Republican Mission. Nevertheless, it is highly condensed and requires further explanation, elaboration, and clarification, which is presently not feasible. The opportunity for such clarification will come soon, God willing.

In this introduction, I do not intend to engage in a detailed discussion of the book’s various topics. Rather, my aim is to establish a key premise: Islam comprises two messages - a first message based on

the *branches* of the Qur'an, and a second message that builds upon its *fundamentals*. The first message has already been elaborated, whereas the second awaits its elaboration. This will occur when its man comes and when its nation comes. And this coming is inevitable: *"This is a decree that your Lord has made inevitable."* (19:71)

The Most Trustworthy Handhold

The Arabic term *al-'Urwa* "handhold" refers to a handle or grip, like the part of a vessel that allows it to be held. It can also refer to a knot at the end of a rope, enabling the one holding it to secure his grasp. Thus, *al-'Uraw al-Wuthqā* "the most trustworthy handhold" refers to the grip of the sturdy rope. The rope, in this context, represents religion. Allah says: *"And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you: when you were enemies, He brought your hearts together, and you became brothers by His favor. And you were on the edge of a pit of the Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah make His signs clear to you that you may be guided."* (3:103)

The rope here is Islam, which is the Quran, and they both represent the same meaning. The Infallible (the Prophet) said in a hadith narrated by Ali ibn Abi Talib: "Indeed, there will be a tribulation! I asked, 'What is the way out of it, O Messenger of Allah?' " He said, *"The Book of Allah! In it is the news of what came before you, the information of what will come after you, and the judgment of what happens among you. It is decisive, not jest. Whoever abandons it out of arrogance, Allah will destroy him. Whoever seeks guidance in anything other than it, Allah will lead him astray. It is the sturdy rope of Allah, the Wise Reminder, and the Straight Path. It is the one from which desires do not deviate, tongues do not confuse it, and*

scholars cannot exhaust its knowledge, repetition does not wear it out, and its wonders never cease. The jinn, when they heard it, could not help but say: 'Indeed, we have heard an amazing Qur'an guiding to what is right.' Whoever speaks by it speaks the truth, whoever acts upon it is rewarded, whoever judges by it is just, and whoever calls to it is guided to the Straight Path." This is the statement of the Infallible (the Prophet).

This "rope" descends from Allah in His absoluteness to the realm of humanity. Its beginning is among us, and its end is with Him in His absoluteness. This imagery is beautifully captured in Allah's words from the beginning of *Surat Az-Zukhruf* (chapter 43):

"Ha, Meem. By the clear Book, indeed, We have made it an Arabic Qur'an so that you might understand. And indeed, it is in the Mother of the Book with Us, exalted and wise." (43:1-2-3-4).

This rope is also referred to as guidance in God's address to Adam, Eve, and Iblis: *"We said, 'Descend from it, all of you. And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear upon them, nor will they grieve"* (2:38). Indeed, this guidance was sent down from Allah in His absoluteness to the place where Iblis, Eve, and Adam descended, which is the Earth. Thus, the concepts of guidance and the rope of God signify the same reality - the Qur'an.

The most trustworthy handhold (*al-'Urwat al-Wuthqā*), which we described as the grip of the sturdy rope, is actually the end of the rope that has reached the earth - the realm of human existence. This is reflected in the apparent meaning of the Quran, conveyed to us through the Arabic language. God expressed this by saying: *"Indeed, We have made it an Arabic Quran so that you may understand."* The phrase 'so that you may

understand' signifies its descent to the human level, representing the *Shari'ah*.

This sturdy rope descended from the realm of absoluteness. Allah described its origin in the absolute by saying: *"And indeed, it is in the mother of the Book with US - exalted and wise."* HE also alluded to its point of descent with His words, the Exalted: 'Ha Meem.' This is a mere allusion, yet it is an allusion of profound sublimity. The earlier verse provides an explicit expression, which is marked by supreme eloquence. Between the statement and the allusion lies a difference in degree. However, the essence expressed in words and that conveyed by the allusion is one and the same: the Divine Self. The difference in degree arises only as a necessary step for bringing this knowledge down to the level of human understanding.

The most trustworthy handhold (*al-'Urwat al-Wuthqā*), is the Sharia, while the sturdy rope is the religion. The difference between the Sharia and the religion is one of degree, not kind. The Sharia is the portion of religion addressed to the general public according to their understanding. We began this introduction with two verses. The first is: *"There is no compulsion in religion. The right way has become distinct from error. Whoever rejects false gods and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that never breaks. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."* (2:56) Here, the most trustworthy handhold (*al-Urwatul al-Wuthqā*) refers to the Sharia, which "never breaks" for those who reject false gods and believe in God. For them, it is a means and a connector. This is the condition for its inseparability from the religion - disbelief in false gods and belief in God. This means that it is disconnected from the faith for those

who adhere to it without disbelief in false gods and without belief in God, which reflects the state of Muslims today. This is the first of the two verses.

And the second verse is: *“And whoever submits his face to Allah while being a doer of good has grasped the most trustworthy handhold. And to Allah belongs the outcome of all matters.”* (31-22) This verse carries a meaning similar to the previous one but goes further in explaining the application of the Shari'ah. In this verse, the phrase *‘whoever submits his face to Allah while being a doer of good’* corresponds to the verse *‘Whoever rejects false gods and believes in God’*. The concluding phrase *‘And to God belongs the outcome of all matters’* signifies the return to the ascent on the rope descending from the absolute, where man stood, before he stumbled, and expelled due to the misstep, and distanced. *“We said: descend from it, all of you, and when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance will have no fear and will not grieve.”* (2:38) In the same meaning, Allah says: *“We have certainly created man in the best of stature; Then We returned him to the lowest of the low, Except for those who believe and do righteous deeds, for they will have a reward uninterrupted.”* (95:4-6) The uninterrupted reward means a reward that is unbroken, and thus, it refers to the 'sturdy handle that is inseparable.'

The Sunnah is the Second Message

The *Sunnah* is the Sharia with an addition. So, if the most trustworthy handhold (*al-'Urwat al-Wuthqā*) represents the Sharia, then the Sunnah stands above it. If the rope of Islam descends from the Absolute to the realm of humanity, where the Sharia exists to address people according to their capacities, then the Sunnah exists at a level above the general populace. The Sunnah is the Prophet's personal Sharia - his address

tailored to his intellectual and spiritual capacity. There is a vast difference between his intellect and that of the general public, and this is precisely the difference between the Sunnah and the Sharia. The Second Message is essentially the revival of this Sunnah to become the Sharia for the general populace. This has become possible, by Allah's grace, due to the evolution of human society over nearly fourteen centuries. When the Infallible (the Prophet) foretold the revival of Islam, he referred specifically to the revival of the Sunnah, not the Sharia. He said: *"Islam began as something strange, and it will return to being strange, just as it began. So, glad tidings to the strangers!"* They asked, *"Who are the strangers, O Messenger of Allah?"* He replied, *"They are those who revive my Sunnah after it has been abandoned."* It is clear from this statement that he did not mean the revival of the Sharia but rather the revival of the Sunnah. As mentioned earlier, the Sunnah is the Sharia with an addition. The Sunnah is a *ḥarīqa* "path," and the path is an emphasized Sharia.

The Sunnah is Not Exclusive to the Prophet

It is often said by jurists that certain actions are exclusive to the Prophet. This is a grave misunderstanding that has had negative consequences, discouraging people. Allah, speaking through His Prophet, says: *"Say, 'If you love Allah, follow me, and Allah will love you.'" (3:31).* From this, the Sharia opens to the Sunnah, and it becomes incumbent upon the diligent worshiper to ascend from the Sharia to the path - the Sunnah. However, this ascent is not an obligatory duty for the general populace but a recommended endeavor. The reason it was not an obligation lies in the dictates of the time. The early phase of the call to Islam was specific to the *Ummah al-Mu'minin* "Community of Believers." At that time, the Prophet's personal actions operated at the level of Muslims, as he was the sole

Muslim within the community of believers. Islam represents a higher rank than faith (imān), as detailed in this book, which can be referred to in its appropriate section. What we are concerned to affirm here is that the present era is a time when the earth is preparing for the emergence of the *Ummah al-Muslimīn* "Community of Muslims." This community is the community of the Second Message, and its Sharia will be the Sunnah of the Prophet, not the Sharia of the previous community in all its details.

This transition is possible, by Allah's grace, as we said previously, and also due to the development of human society over this extended period, which has made it capable of comprehending the evolving legislation from Sharia to Sunnah. It is as though the realm of humanity has been elevated during this period, and a part of the rope has drawn closer from distance to nearness. The new *'urwat al-wuthqā* is thus closer to the Absolute than the old one, as the level of human understanding has advanced, drawing nearer to the Absolute compared to earlier times.

The Muslim community is what the noble Prophet referred to as *al-Ikhwān* "the brothers," while the believing community was referred to as *al-aṣ-ḥāb* "the companions." This distinction is evident in his famous hadith: "*Oh, how I long for my brothers who have not yet come! They said: Are we not your brothers, O Messenger of Allah? He said: No, you are my companions. Oh, how I long for my brothers who have not yet come! They said: Are we not your brothers, O Messenger of Allah? He said: No, you are my companions. Oh, how I long for my brothers who have not yet come! They said: Who are your brothers? He said: They are a people who will come at the end of time, each of them will have the reward of seventy of you! They said: Seventy of us or seventy of them? He said: Rather, seventy of you! They said: Why is that? He said: Because you will find helpers in doing good, while they will not find helpers in doing good.*"

In another instance, referring to the brothers, the Prophet said: *"The prophets are children of one mother,"* meaning they are brothers because they all suckle from one breast, which is the breast of *"lā ilāha illā Allāh"* *"There is no god but Allah."* This implies that in the Muslim Community, through their complete knowledge of Allah, would be as if they were prophets, although they are not. The idea that the Sunnah is exclusive to the Prophet is refuted by Allah's words: *"There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; he is concerned for you and to the believers is kind and merciful."* (9:12) The essence of this verse lies in the phrase: *"from among yourselves."* It signifies that the qualities of perfection exhibited by the Prophet are also attainable for you if you follow his path. He is from your nature, not of an alien essence. The difference between you and him is one of degree, not kind.

And the claim of those who say that this action is a unique attribute of the Prophet misses the wisdom behind sending messengers to humans from among humans, rather than from angels. Today, with humanity possessing immense material power and advanced methods in worldly affairs yet struggling with deep confusion in their hearts and minds, the earth is prepared for the emergence of the Muslim community. It has thus become an obligation upon the inheritors of Islam - the inheritors of the Qur'an - to call for the Second Message, heralding the new era that humanity urgently feels the need for but has not yet found the way to. This path is in the Qur'an, but the Qur'an does not speak for itself - it is spoken for by men. Allah says: *"Rather, it is clear verses preserved in the chests of those who have been granted knowledge. And none reject Our signs except the wrongdoers."* (29:49)

One of the truths revealed in the hearts of the knowledgeable is that the path to the new era - the path of Muslims on earth - is charted by the Meccan verses, the verses of the fundamentals, which were initially abrogated by the Medinan verses, the verses of the branches. The verses of the fundamentals were abrogated at that time due to the dictates of the time - an era that belonged to the believing community. The fundamental verses, however, address the Muslim community - a community that had not yet come into existence at that time. Yet the fundamental verses were not abrogated in the sense of being nullified, but rather deferred, their legislative application suspended until the time for their implementation arrives. And that time is the one we live in today, at the dawn of its true illumination. It is for this reason that we have devoted ourselves to proclaiming the Second Message of Islam.

The Second Message of Islam

Islam is one religion - Allah's religion, with which He is not pleased to have any substitute. Allah says: *"So, is it other than the religion of Allah they desire, while to Him have submitted all those within the heavens and the earth, willingly or by compulsion, and to Him they will be returned?"* (3:83) In this sense, Islam is the willing surrender to Allah as Lord. All the prophets, from Adam to Muhammad, came with Islam. Allah says: *"He has ordained for you the religion which He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you, and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus - to establish the religion and not be divided therein. Difficult for the polytheists is that to which you call them. Allah chooses for Himself whom HE wills and guides to Himself whoever turns to Him."*(42:13)

The phrase *“He has ordained for you the religion”* here does not refer to the Shari’a laws but rather to *lā ilāha illa Allāh* “there is no god but Allah”. The laws of nations differ because their levels differ. However, *lā ilāha illa Allāh* remains constant, though its constancy pertains to its structure, not its meaning, which varies according to the levels of understanding of the messengers. This variation is also a difference of degree, not kind.

The Infallible (the Prophet) referred to the constancy of *lā ilāha illa Allāh* when he said: *“The best thing I and the prophets before me have brought is ‘lā ilāha illa Allāh.’”* The variation in the Sharia laws of the prophets, resulting from the differing levels of their peoples, is evident. For instance, the law regarding marriage differed significantly between Adam and Muhammad. During Adam’s time, it was lawful for a brother to marry his sister, which was a part of Islamic law then. And when Muhammad came, what was permissible in this law became prohibited. Furthermore, the prohibition extended to circles farther than the circle of the sister. Allah, the Exalted, said regarding that: *“Prohibited to you [for marriage] are your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your father’s sisters, your mother’s sisters, your brother’s daughters, your sister’s daughters, your milk mothers who nursed you, your sisters through nursing, your wives’ mothers, your stepdaughters under your guardianship [born] of your wives unto whom you have gone in. But if you have not gone in unto them, there is no sin upon you. And [prohibited are] the wives of your sons who are from your own loins, and that you take [in marriage] two sisters simultaneously, except for what has already occurred. Indeed, Allah is ever Forgiving and Merciful.”* (4:23).

If the vast difference between the two Shari’as is due to the differing levels of the nations, and without the slightest doubt it is, then it would be a grave mistake for anyone to assume that the Islamic Sharia of the seventh

century, with all its details, is entirely suitable for application in the twentieth century. This is because the difference between seventh-century society and twentieth-century society is beyond comparison, and the knower (**al-‘ārif**) has no need to elaborate on it in detail; it speaks for itself.

Thus, we are faced with one of two possibilities: Either Islam, as conveyed by the infallible (the Prophet) and contained between the covers of the Qur’an, is capable of encompassing the potential of twentieth-century society and guiding it in the fields of legislation and ethics; or its capacity has been exhausted, having stopped at organizing seventh-century society and those similar societies that followed. In that case, twentieth-century humanity would have to abandon it and seek solutions to its problems in other philosophies, and this is something no Muslim would ever accept. Nevertheless, Muslims are unaware of the necessity of developing the Sharia. They assume that the problems of the twentieth century can be addressed and resolved by the same legislation that dealt with the problems of the seventh century, and this is a glaring misconception.

Muslims say that the Islamic Sharia is complete, and this is true. But its completeness lies in its ability to evolve, to absorb the energies of individual and social life, and to guide that life along the paths of continuous progress, no matter how much that individual and social life may attain in activity, vitality, and renewal

When we speak of the development of Islamic Sharia, some Muslims respond by saying:

“Islamic Sharia is complete; it does not need development, as only what is incomplete evolves.” This is entirely incorrect. In truth, only what is

complete evolves. The ultimate aspiration of perfected individuals is to embody the attributes that Allah ascribed to Himself:

'Every day He is bringing about a matter.' (55:29). They renew the life of their thought and the life of their feeling every day. For them, the day is the Day of Allah. And here, it is not a twenty-four-hour day, but rather a 'temporal' unit of manifestation - a unit smaller than a minute, smaller than a second, even smaller than a millisecond. It is a *temporal* unit in which a second can be divided into a billion parts, to the point that it almost escapes the concept of time as the mind perceives it. They set out, or try to set out, with Allah in manifesting His signs to His creation, renewing the life of their thought and their feeling in this continuous manner. This is perfection. Perfection is not the commitment to one fixed form. The small plant that grows on the mountainside, greening, leafing, flowering, bearing fruit, then dropping its seed into the soil, and finally turning into chaff scattered by the winds, is more perfect than the mountain that stands tall above it, defying the storm's rage. This is because that small plant has entered a more advanced stage of evolution – the stage of life and death – which the mountain has not yet experienced. The mountain, however, aspires to it and longs for it.

Similarly, the perfection of Islamic Sharia lies in its being a living, growing, and evolving entity that keeps pace with the development of life - life that is itself living, growing, and evolving. It guides its steps and charts its course on the journey toward closeness to Allah, stage by stage. Life will never cease moving toward God on its path of return, for there is no alternative to that: '*O mankind, indeed you are laboring toward your Lord with exertion and will meet Him.*'" (84:6) And this meeting is achieved by God's grace, followed by the guidance of Islamic Sharia through its three levels: the Sharia, the Tariqa (path), and the Haqīqa (truth). The

development of Sharia, as we previously mentioned, lies in the transition from one text to another: from a text that was timely and suitable in the seventh century and was therefore enforced, to a text that was considered, at that time, greater than its time. Allah says: *"Whatever verse We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring forth one better than it or similar to it. Do you not know that Allah is over all things Powerful?"* (2:106) His saying: "Whatever verse We abrogate" means: whatever ruling of a verse We nullify and remove. His saying: *"or cause it to be forgotten"* means: We delay the implementation of its ruling. *"We bring forth one better than it"* means: one that is easier for people to understand and more suited to the circumstances of their time than the one delayed. *"Or similar to it"* means: We restore the very same ruling when its time comes. Thus, the verses that were abrogated were abrogated for the dictates of the time, so they are postponed until their time comes. When their time comes, they then become the ones relevant to the time, and they hold authority. Thus, they become the definitive verses, and the verse that was definitive in the seventh century is now abrogated. This is the meaning of the dictates of time.

The seventh century had the verses of the branches, while the twentieth century has the verses of the fundamentals. This is the wisdom behind abrogation. Abrogation, then, is not a complete cancellation, but rather a postponement awaiting its proper time. In this development, we look at the wisdom behind the text. If a verse of the branch, which had abrogated a fundamental verse in the seventh century, has fulfilled its purpose and is no longer sufficient for the new time - the twentieth century - then the time has come to abrogate it. This allows for the revival of the fundamental verse, which had been abrogated in the seventh century, so that it can serve as the ruling verse for the twentieth century and form the basis of

new legislation. This is the meaning of the development of legislation. It is a transition from a text that served its purpose until it was exhausted to a text that was reserved for the time when its purpose would arise. Therefore, development is neither a leap into the unknown nor an arbitrary opinion; but rather, it is a transition from one text to another.

Who is Authorized?

The Prophet of Allah has passed on to join the Most High and left behind the abrogated as abrogated and the definitive as definitive. This raises a pressing question in the reader's mind: Is there anyone authorized to make such a fundamental and essential change - to revive what was abrogated and to abrogate what was definitive? The truth is, many who object to our call for the Second Message of Islam do not object to its content; they may not even give the content much consideration. Rather, they object to the concept itself. They object to the idea of a new "message," which implies a "messenger," necessitating "prophethood." And it is indisputably true that prophethood has been sealed by an explicit, unequivocal text: *"Muhammad is not the father of any one of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets. And Allah is ever, of all things, Knowing."* (33:40) It is known that every messenger is a prophet, but not every prophet is a messenger. But what is prophethood?

Prophethood means that a person is informed by Allah and conveys knowledge of Him to others. A prophet receives divine knowledge through revelation and conveys that knowledge to people according to their capacity to understand. By the rank of receiving knowledge from Allah, a man is a prophet, and by the function of delivering it to people, he is a messenger. This is the common understanding known to people. However, there is something new in the matter altogether: understanding the wisdom

behind the sealing of prophethood in its conventional sense. Why was prophethood sealed? The first point that must be emphasized is that prophethood was not sealed until everything that Heaven intended to reveal to the people of the earth was firmly established on the earth. This matter continued to be revealed in portions, according to the wisdom of time, from Adam to Muhammad. That matter is the Qur'an. Its establishment on the earth is the reason for the sealing of prophethood.

As for the wisdom behind the sealing of prophethood, it lies in enabling people to receive from Allah without the mediation of the angel, Gabriel - to receive directly from Allah. At first glance, this idea may seem strange, but it is the truth, as affirmed by the intuitive reasoning of minds. This is because the Qur'an is the word of Allah, and whenever we read it, Allah is addressing us directly. However, we fail to comprehend Him. Why? Because we are preoccupied with other things. Allah says regarding this: *"No indeed! But their hearts have been stained by what they used to earn * No indeed! On that day they will be veiled from their Lord"*. (83-14-15) The Qur'an has come with the methodology of its Shari'ah, its Tariqah (spiritual path), and the proper etiquette in both, in order to lift that veil, so that we can understand what Allah is telling us in the Qur'an. When this understanding is achieved by a person, he is then permitted to speak about the secrets of the Qur'an, to the extent that he has comprehended from Allah.

Who is the Messenger of the Second Message?

He is a man to whom Allah has granted understanding from the Qur'an and authorized to speak.

How Do We Recognize Him?

Well! It was said that Jesus once told his disciples, *“Beware of false prophets!”* They said, *“How can we recognize them?”* He said, *“By their fruits, you will know them.”*

Introduction to the Third Edition

This is the introduction to the third edition of the book *The Second Message of Islam*. The first edition was published in January 1967, coinciding with the sacred month of Ramadan in 1386 AH. The second edition followed in April 1968, corresponding to the month of Muharram in 1388 AH. When this edition was published, we were diverted by other obligations from writing a special introduction for it.

This book, *The Second Message of Islam*, is new in every respect. Along with its novelty, it is profoundly unfamiliar - indeed, this should come as no surprise. For it heralds the return of Islam anew, and who among the scholars of humanity would not expect such strangeness in the reemergence of Islam? Did not the Prophet (peace be upon him) say: "*Islam began as something strange, and it will return to being strange as it began, so glad tidings to the strangers!*" They asked, "Who are the strangers, O Messenger of Allah?" He replied, "*Those who revive my Sunnah after it has been abandoned.*"

Thus, Strangeness is inherent in the very essence of Islam's return, but this is often overlooked by those who take it upon themselves to write about Islam. Some of them have criticized this book, becoming entangled in opposing what they neither understood well nor had the patience to reflect upon. As a result, their opposition has often stemmed from misunderstanding, flawed reasoning, and even ill intent. We are not in need of responding to them, for their poor actions suffice as a response. However, we wish to alert readers who might need our guidance to

understand that this book is truthful, and studying it requires patience, deliberation, and precision. If the reader achieves these virtues, their mind will open to a new understanding of the Quran and Islam, and they will appreciate the outcome of their patience and perseverance, Allah willing.

The Sunnah and the Sharia

The Prophet mentioned the 'strangers' in his hadith and said that they are the ones who revive his Sunnah after it has faded away. Through their call to this revival, they become strangers among their own people, due to how this call involves departing from what people are accustomed to. They are strangers of truth among people for whom the truth has become strange because of how long they have been accustomed to falsehood, thinking it to be the truth, and how long they have been heedless of the truth.

It is commonly believed that the Sunnah of the Prophet consists of his sayings, approvals, and actions. However, this is incorrect. The truth is that the Prophet's sayings and approvals are not Sunnah; rather, they are Shari'ah. As for his actions in his personal life, those are the Sunnah. Yes, there are some of his sayings that are connected to the Sunnah, and those are the sayings that reflect the state of his heart in his knowledge of Allah. However, his sayings intended to teach the nation about their religion are Shari'ah. The difference between Shari'ah and Sunnah is the same as the difference between message (*Risalah*) and prophethood (*Nubuwwah*), or it is the difference between the level of the nation, from its highest to its lowest, and the level of the Prophet himself. And that is a vast and profound difference.

The Sunnah is the Prophet's personal practice, while the Shari'ah is the Prophet's descent from the level of his personal practice to the level of his

community, to teach them what they can handle and to assign them what they are capable of. Thus, the Sunnah is his prophethood, and the Shari'ah is his message. Regarding this message, he said: *“We, the community of prophets, have been commanded to address people according to the capacity of their understanding.”*

Islam and Faith (Imān)

People today lack the ability to make a precise distinction between Islam and faith. They believe that faith is greater than Islam, and they have been led into this error by their inability to sense the state of time.

The era in which such an understanding was accurate has passed, and a new era has begun - an era in which the understanding of religion has progressed from the level of faith to the level of Islam. The essence of the matter is as follows:

Islam is a thought through which the diligent worshiper ascends the steps of a sevenfold ladder. The first step is Islam, the second is faith (Iman), the third is excellence (Ihsan), the fourth is the knowledge of certainty ('Ilm al-Yaqin), the fifth is the vision of certainty ('Ayn al-Yaqin), the sixth is the truth of certainty (Haqq al-Yaqin), and the seventh is Islam once more. However, at this final stage, Islam differs from the initial stage in degree. In the initial stage, it is merely outward compliance, while in the final stage, it is the submission of both the outward and the inward. In the initial stage, it is spoken with the tongue and performed through actions of the limbs, but in the final level, it is submission, surrender, and complete acceptance of Allah, both in contentment with Allah in both secrecy and openness.

Islam in its initial level is less than faith, but in its final level, it surpasses faith. It is at the initial level below faith, but at the final level, it is greater than faith. This is what the scholars we know are unable to distinguish. Their misunderstanding has been further compounded by the well-known Hadith of Gabriel, narrated by Umar ibn al-Khattab:

"While we were sitting with the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), a man with extremely white clothes and intensely black hair appeared before us. No signs of travel were visible on him, and none of us recognized him. He sat before the Prophet, rested his knees against his, and placed his hands on his thighs. He then said: 'O Muhammad, tell me about Islam.' The Prophet said: 'Islam is to testify that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, to establish prayer, to give zakat, to fast during Ramadan, and to perform the pilgrimage to the House if you are able to do so.' The man said: 'You have spoken the truth,' and we were astonished that he asked and then confirmed the answer. He then said: 'Tell me about faith.' The Prophet replied: 'Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and to believe in predestination, its good and its evil.' The man said: 'You have spoken the truth. Now tell me about excellence (*iḥsān*).' The Prophet replied: 'Excellence is to worship Allah as though you see Him, for even if you do not see Him, He surely sees you.' The man said: 'You have spoken the truth. Now tell me about the Hour (The Day of Judgement).' The Prophet replied: 'The one questioned about it knows no more than the one questioning. He then said: 'Tell me about its signs.' The Prophet replied: 'That the slave woman will give birth to her mistress, and that you will see barefoot, naked, shepherds of sheep competing in the construction of tall buildings.' Then the man left, and we remained in wonder for a while. The Prophet then said: 'O Umar, do you know who the questioner was?' I

replied: 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' He said: 'That was Gabriel; he came to teach you your religion.'"

This hadith has confused many scholars, leading them to believe that the levels of our religion are limited to Islam, faith, and excellence (*ihsān*). The Qur'an, however, provides clarity. Allah says regarding the Bedouins: "*The Bedouins say, 'We have believed.' Say, 'You have not believed; rather, say, 'We have submitted,' for faith has not yet entered your hearts.*"(49:14). From this verse, it became clear that faith is a rank above Islam. However, the scholars have failed to understand that this matter requires deeper consideration.

Clarity of the Matter

The reality is that Islam, as mentioned in the Qur'an, has come in two phases: the phase of creed (*al-'aqidah*) and the phase of truth (*al-ḥaqīqa*) or knowledge. Each of these phases consists of three levels. The three levels of the stage of creed are: Islam, faith, and excellence. The three levels of the stage of knowledge are: the knowledge of certainty, the vision of certainty, and the truth of certainty. After these comes the seventh level of the seven-step ladder, which is Islam, completing the circle. The end resembles the beginning, but it is not the same. In the beginning, it is Islam, and at the end, it is Islam. However, there is a vast difference between the Islam of the beginning and the Islam of the end, as previously indicated. The phase of creed is the phase of the community of believers (*Ummat al-Mu'minīn*), which is the community of the First Message.

The stage of knowledge is the stage of the Muslim nation, which is the nation of the second message. This nation has not yet arrived, except for its pioneers, who have appeared individually throughout the long history

of human society. These pioneers are the prophets, led by their master and seal, the unlettered prophet, Muhammad ibn Abdullah, upon whom be the best of blessings and peace. He foretold the coming of this Muslim nation, as he also brought its message, summarized in the Qur'an and detailed in the Sunnah, as previously explained.

When the nation of Muslims comes it will begin where the believing nation started - with the phase of creed. However, it will not stop at the third level, where Gabriel's questions concluded. Rather, it will progress beyond that, attaining the final levels and thus becoming both a community of creed ('aqīdah) and a community of knowledge simultaneously. It will embody both creed and Islam in its ultimate sense, while the first community embodied creed but not this final stage of Islam.

It must be made clear that Gabriel's questions concluded at the end of the phase of belief because his purpose was to teach the religion to the community of believers, not to the Muslim community, which had yet to come into existence.

Muhammad is the messenger of the first message, and he is the messenger of the second message. He detailed the first message in full and summarized the second message. Its elaboration requires a new understanding of the Qur'an, which is what this book in the readers' hands seeks to provide.

This book guides the way but cannot benefit those who do not approach it with open minds.

From Allah, we seek guidance and the fulfillment of our aims. He is the best of patrons.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

“This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as your religion.” (5:3)

We praise You, O Allah, seek Your guidance and assistance, and cannot enumerate Your praises. You are as You have praised Yourself.

Preface

When the divine light shone through Muhammad, the illiterate Prophet, from the mountains of Mecca in the seventh century A.D., a new civilization dawned. It elevated human value to a summit unprecedented in human history.

This new human civilization reached its peak, at least theoretically, on the day Allah the Exalted, revealed to His Prophet the verse with which this book begins: *“This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as your religion.” (5:3)*. This revelation occurred toward the end of the first third of the seventh century A.D. Shortly afterward, the Prophet departed and joined his Lord, causing the apex of this new human civilization to falter. One of the most profound expressions of this loss is found in the words of one of his companions: "We had barely dusted off our hands from the grave of the Messenger of Allah when we found our hearts in denial." The practical manifestation of this sentiment became evident during the later years of Uthman's caliphate, culminating in what is known in Islamic history as the Great Tribulation (*Al-fitnah-al-kubra*).

This new human civilization, brought by Allah through the words of Muhammad and lived by Muhammad at its peak, receded dramatically with his death, as noted by the statement of one of his companions. Its peak continued to decline, even as its base expanded, until it reverted to a material civilization resembling, in some ways, the Roman and Persian civilizations upon whose ruins it was initially built.

They say that history repeats itself - and this is true, but it is not the entire truth. History does not repeat itself in exactly the same form; rather, it returns in a form that resembles the past in some aspects and differs from it in others. For space is not circular, and time, accordingly, is not circular either. Rather, both are spiral in nature, moving from a base toward a peak - where the end of the cycle resembles its beginning, yet is not identical to it.

Just as time on our planet alternates between night and day - darkness and light - and just as humans walk on two legs, left and right, so does life evolve on two legs: matter and spirit. And when human society, in its progression, extends the leg of matter, establishes it, and relies upon it, it enters a state of readiness to extend the leg of spirit, and it is inevitably bound to do so - *"This is a decree that your Lord has made inevitable."* (19:71) For the progression of life neither halts, nor delays, nor repeats itself. Rather, it steadily advances along the steps of its ascension, as life aspires to be perfect in form, just as it is perfect in essence - and that is far-fetched!

Or say that the progression of life, in its ascent, resembles the motion of a wave - it continually oscillates between a trough and a peak. When it rests in the trough, it gathers strength to rise toward the peak. The trough symbolizes the material advancement of human society, while the peak

represents its spiritual growth. Those who fail to see the full picture of societal evolution - viewing it only in fragmented parts - often criticize its material progress, perceiving it solely as a form of decline and labeling it corruption from Satan. Yet it is Allah who guides life toward Him on these two legs: matter and spirit. In truth, when unity is achieved, matter and spirit are but one and the same; they differ not in essence, but only in degree.

Chapter One

Civilization (*al-madaniyyah*) and Material Progress (*al-ḥaḍārah*)

Civilization is distinct from material progress. They differ not in kind but in degree. Civilization represents the peak of the social pyramid, while material progress forms its base.

Civilization can be defined as the ability to distinguish between the values of things and to adhere to these values in daily behavior. A civilized person does not confuse means with ends, nor does he sacrifice ends for the sake of means. Such a person possesses values and character. In brief, a civilized individual is one who has achieved the life of thought and the life of feeling.

Is Civilization Morality??

It undoubtedly is. But what is morality? There are many definitions of morality, yet the most comprehensive and complete definition is that morality is the proper exercise of absolute individual freedom. The Infallible (the prophet) said: "I was only sent to perfect noble character." This statement implies that he was sent solely to perfect the noble character. Thus, we have said that Muhammad lived at the pinnacle of the civilization that Allah brought forth through him. Allah described him within this framework: (*And indeed, you are of great moral character.*) (68:04)

When Aisha was asked about the character of the Prophet, she replied, "*His moral values were the Qur'an.*" It is known that the Qur'an is the morals of Allah, and Allah's morals are in the realm of absoluteness. From

this understanding comes the definition that morality is the proper exercise of absolute individual freedom.

Muhammad was the most capable of all people in exercising this absolute individual freedom with perfection. This was due to his deep mindfulness of his Lord and his meticulous self-accountability regarding everything he did or refrained from doing, whether concerning Allah or humanity. Did he not say, *"Hold yourselves accountable before you are held accountable"*?

Indeed, the proper exercise of absolute individual freedom is the very Sunnah of the Prophet, a concept often discussed without its essence being fully grasped. This Sunnah is what the Prophet referred to in his famous hadith about the return of Islam, where he says: *'Islam began as something strange, and it will return as something strange as it began, so blessed are the strangers!' They asked, 'Who are the strangers, O Messenger of Allah?' He said, 'Those who revive my Sunnah after it has been abandoned.'*"

His Sunnah is his ability, in all his circumstances - whether at rest or in motion, in ease or difficulty - to exercise absolute individual freedom properly. This is the pinnacle of morality and, simultaneously, the pinnacle of civilization.

As for material progress, it is the human being's utilization of the means that increase the charm and freshness of life. It is as though material progress is material advancement: if a man owns a luxurious car, a beautiful house, and elegant furniture, then he is materially advanced. But if he has obtained these means by compromising his freedom, then he is not civilized (**mutamaddin**), even though he is materially advanced (**mutahaqdir**). It is indeed among the subtleties of distinction that we

realize a person may be materially advanced without being civilized - and this is common - or that he may be civilized without being materially advanced - and this is rare. Perfection lies in a person having both material progress and civilization at the same time. And this is what we aspire to from this day forward.

Western Civilization

Based on this precise understanding, the current Western civilization is not truly a civilization but merely a material progress (*ḥaḍārah*). It fails to qualify as a civilization because the scales of values within it have been disrupted: means have advanced while ends have receded.

In our book *The Message of Prayer*, we wrote:

“Modern Western mechanical civilization is like a coin with two faces: one bright and beautiful, the other ugly. Its bright face lies in its achievements in scientific discovery, which have enabled the harnessing of material forces to enrich human life and the use of machines to assist humanity. As for its ugly face, it is its inability to wisely strive to achieve peace, and this inability has made it work for war and spend on means of destruction multiples of what it works for peace, and multiples of what it spends on reconstruction facilities.

The ugly side of modern Western mechanical civilization lies in its social philosophy and its failure to reconcile the needs of the individual with those of the community - the individual's need for absolute individual freedom and the community's need for comprehensive social justice. In truth, the inability to balance these two needs - the needs of the individual and the

needs of the community - has remained the bane of social thought throughout all eras of human intellectual history.

And this reconciliation remains, to this day, the pinnacle by which the glaring inadequacy of the philosophers' philosophies and the thinkers' thoughts is revealed. One may say that the virtue of Islam is never more evident - so manifest that it outshines every ambitious rival - as when the comparison between it and other ideologies is elevated to this lofty summit."

This is what we wrote at that time in *The Message of Prayer (Risalat as-Salah.)*¹ Today, we say that one of the clearest signs of distorted values in this materialistic Western culture is the way Soviet communism prioritized society - a mere means - over the individual, who is the true end. Socialism in communism sacrifices both collective and individual freedom. Western capitalism, meanwhile, fares no better in this regard than Soviet communism.

¹ *Risalat as-Salah (Message of Prayer)*, pp 66-67 5th Edition June 1970, Rabi Al-Thani 1390, (Arabic) PDF <https://www.alfikra.org/books/bk008.pdf>

Message of Prayer, pp 72-73. PDF 6th edition December 1972, Dhu al-Qi'dah 1392, (English) PDF <https://www.alfikra.org/books/bk308.pdf>

The Failure of Western Civilization

The present Western mechanical civilization has reached the end of its development and has failed, definitively and visibly, to organize the life of contemporary human society. The clearest indication of this failure is that the post-World War II society has not enjoyed the stability experienced by the post-World War I society. During the aftermath of the First World War, Western civilization still had the resources and creativity to address the problems of that era. The victors of the First World War were also victors in peace, enabling them to organize global society in some manner - despite its flaws, it was sufficient to ensure disarmament to some extent and for some time, and to establish a form of stability. However, the victors of the Second World War, particularly Britain, found themselves defeated in the peace that followed. To be precise, one could argue that there were no true victors or vanquished in the Second World War. Instead, all parties found themselves in the same boat, engulfed in confusion and uncertainty. More than twenty years have passed since the end of the war, and humanity remains in a state of fear of war. It talks of peace but spends many times more on armaments than on reconstruction. And that is only because it knows no path to peace except one based on frightening the enemy with the consequences of risking the ignition of war.

The reason for the failure of the present mechanized Western civilization to organize contemporary society is that it has reached the end of its purely material development at this critical stage in the transformations of modern human society. It now lacks a new element to complement and fertilize its old element - thereby increasing its capacity for development and enhancing its ability to keep pace with, and guide, the vitality of modern society.

As Russia faces failure today in achieving socialism - let alone communism - and retreats to measures that resemble capitalism more than socialism, it offers the clearest evidence that Western civilization has reached the end of its purely material trajectory and now stands at a dead end. It will be compelled to return to a crossroads, where it must embark on a new path - one that the fervor of revolution had blinded it to half a century ago.

China will not have the long period of experimentation that Russia enjoyed, for time is running out. The stark contrast between the energy of modern society and the shortcoming of Western civilization becomes clearer each day. China has begun to sense this huge contradiction but has not found a constructive outlet for it. Instead, it has resorted to a frantic response labeled ironically as the "Cultural Revolution." This movement involves adolescents taking to the streets and public spaces to rebel against university professors and scholars, aiming, among other objectives, to deify Mao Tse-tung and elevate his writings to the sole source of culture and wisdom, beyond which no other opinion is valid.

It is unnecessary to discuss the capitalist West here, as the contradictions of Western civilization are better exemplified by communism in Russia and China than by the West itself. The capitalist West offers no new perspective on Western civilization; rather, it clings to its old system, making minor adjustments prompted by the extremism of the communist revolution. These adjustments represent an attempt to meet communism halfway in order to preserve its outdated system in the face of the sweeping revolutionary tide.

Thus, the failure of present-day Western mechanical civilization lies in its inability to complement its material and technological advancements with

moral progress. It has failed to recalibrate its value systems to place machines in their proper role as servants of humanity rather than its masters. Material progress has not aligned or synchronized with spiritual progress.

In contemporary social thought, as previously noted, the loaf of bread receives more consideration than freedom. This phenomenon applies to socialist ideologies as much as it does to capitalism. In truth, communism differs from capitalism only in degree, not in kind. Both are fundamentally materialistic in essence, though communism is more efficient at achieving material abundance and equitable distribution. We should not be misled by the apparent hostility between communism and capitalism, for it is akin to the animosity between different sects within a single religion. Such hostility does not indicate different origins but rather a shared foundation on which these conflicting factions stand.

If we want to pinpoint the cause of the failure of modern mechanical Western civilization precisely, we must conclude that the fundamentals of this failure lie in its inability to answer two questions - questions that have remained unanswered throughout the past eras of human history, and answering them has become an unavoidable necessity. These two questions are:

What is the true relationship between the individual and society?

What is the true relationship between the individual and the universe?

Chapter Two

The Individual and the Community in Philosophical Thought

As for social philosophy, throughout the ages and up to contemporary communism, it has failed to comprehend the relationship between the individual and the community. It assumed that if the individual were given the opportunity to exercise his freedom, his actions would conflict with the interests of the community. And since the community is considered greater than the individual, its interest was deemed more deserving of protection than his. Consequently, the individual's freedom was sacrificed for the sake of the community's interest whenever the two appeared to be in conflict.

Looking back at the history of human society from its origins to the present, it becomes evident that individual freedom has frequently clashed with the interests of the community. Indeed, human communities have historically established their systems and safeguarded their interests at the expense of restricting individual freedom. Early human beings evolved from a state of wild animalistic instincts, dominated by the pursuit of base desires such as stomach need and sex. Human societies could not have emerged without regulating these two desires. Thus, customs arose to organize sexual relationships: prohibiting the sister from the brother, the daughter from the father, the mother from the son, the son's wife from the father, and the father's wife from the son, even before the broader societal norms that generally prohibit adultery were established.

This custom, or call it the first law, helped to calm the sexual jealousy that used to divide the human family whenever the children reached adulthood. After this custom, it became possible for the father, the grown-up son, the son-in-law, and the married son to live together in one house or in adjacent houses, with each of them secure that his wife was safe from the others.

The custom of respecting individual property may have arisen simultaneously with these sexual norms, for in primitive societies, there was little distinction between owning a wife, a tool, or a cave. If small communities were to live in harmony, in a shared space, with ever-growing numbers, hunting together, fighting their enemies together, and facing the challenges of life as a united front, it was necessary to establish these two customs. These customs regulated behavior within the group and safeguarded its cohesion.

In such contexts, the punishment for transgressions like adultery might have been death, applied equally to men and women. Similarly, theft from close kin was punishable by death, a punishment that later extended to theft in general as communities expanded. Over time, as humans became more refined and intelligent, these punishments were softened - cutting off a thief's hand replaced taking his life - because individuals had developed enough awareness to be deterred by less severe measures.

This account does not imply that all societies evolved in the same way, but it is certain that wherever human societies emerged, they were founded on sets of customs and traditions. These customs, which represent the origins of law, played a fundamental role in the development of human society. Early human beings were coarse, hard-hearted, and dull in sensitivity - more animal than human. They required extreme measures to

be tamed and to transition from a state of wildness to one of domestication. Early social customs were correspondingly harsh, often imposing the death penalty for even minor infractions. Such societies required virtuous individuals to commit themselves to the service of the community. Human sacrifices were a known practice, performed on the altars of communal temples to win the favor of deities or to avert their anger when they were presumed to be angry.

And this harsh law, which suppressed individual freedom for the sake of communal interest, was well known and practiced until relatively recent times. In the era of Prophet Abraham, the Father of the Prophets - who lived about two thousand years before the birth of Christ - this law was still accepted both religiously and rationally. He himself was commanded to sacrifice his son Ishmael, and he proceeded to carry out the command without fear or hesitation. Then Allah permitted its abrogation, so it was abrogated, and mankind was ransomed with an animal more bestial than himself. This was a declaration that the ascent of humanity one degree above the level of the animal had neared its end. And Allah has recounted to us the story of Abraham and Ishmael, saying:

"And he said, "Indeed, I am going to my Lord; He will guide me. My Lord, grant me [a child] from among the righteous." So We gave him good tidings of a forbearing boy. And when he reached the age of working with him, he said, "O my son, indeed I see in a dream that I am slaughtering you, so see what you think." He said, "O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, among the patient." And when they had both submitted and he laid him down on his forehead, We called to him, "O Abraham, you have fulfilled the vision." Indeed, We thus reward the doers of good. Indeed, this was the clear trial. And We ransomed him with a great

sacrifice. And We left for him [favorable mention] among later generations: Peace be upon Abraham.” (37-99-108)

“*And We left for him among later generations*” means, among other things, the abolition of the law of violence against the human individual, for it had lasted through long ages, and the individual had benefited from it. He rose from the pit of beastliness and became worthy of being ransomed with something lower than himself, a beast.

The remnants of such violence against individuals in contemporary societies are not significant, for they are destined to vanish as opportunities for awareness and maturity increase. The physical sacrifice of individuals did not end abruptly in Abraham’s time. History tells us that during the Islamic conquest of Egypt, Muslims discovered such practices persisting in the form of the Bride of the Nile. It is said that Amr ibn al-As, the conqueror of Egypt and its governor at the time, once observed a great commotion. Upon inquiring, he was informed of a custom whereby the community would select a girl, the most beautiful and of noble lineage, to be ceremoniously offered to the Nile each year. This was believed to entice the river to overflow its banks, bringing abundance and blessings, and to prevent drought.

Amr ibn al-As instructed the people to delay this act until he could consult Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab. Umar responded with his famous letter, which read as follows:

"In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

From the servant of Allah, Umar ibn al-Khattab, Commander of the Faithful, to the Nile of Egypt: If you flow of your own accord, then do not flow. But if you flow by the command of Allah, then flow."

Umar instructed Amr to cast the letter into the Nile, which was done, and the Nile flooded, abolishing the practice of human sacrifice. Thus, another instance of ransoming individuals through knowledge and wisdom was achieved.

And this intense violence against the human individual, which has persisted since the dawn of human society - long before the dawn of recorded history - and whose manifestations continued until recently, as demonstrated by the two previous examples, has misled social thinkers. They assumed that individual freedom, based on historical precedent, always conflicts with the interests of the community. Hence, they concluded that wisdom lies in sacrificing individual freedom for the sake of the interest of the community. Communism, as the vanguard of contemporary social philosophy and a leading progressive force in contemporary Western mechanical civilization, became entangled in this misconception.

The Individual and the Universe in Philosophical Thought

The failure of contemporary social philosophy to understand the relationship between the individual and the universe surpasses its failure to grasp the relationship between the individual and the community. However, the former is less apparent because the relationship between the individual and the community directly affects practical matters such as politics, legislation, and governance, whereas the relationship between the individual and the universe remains largely theoretical. This oversight

stems from our continued dominance by herd instinct, which prevents us from ascending to the realm of individuality. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that the era of the community is yielding to the era of the individual, whose sun now heralds its rise. This new era will arrive when the perceived conflict between the individual and the community is resolved - first theoretically, then practically. This resolution is a subject we will address in detail shortly, Allah willing.

A precise understanding of the relationship between the individual and the universe is not merely a matter of abstract philosophy, which might be dismissed as intellectual luxury. Rather, it is a practical necessity. Such understanding is essential not only for realizing individuality through personal effort but also for organizing the community to serve as a legitimate parent to individuals capable of achieving their individuality.

The misguidance of social philosophy in correctly understanding the relationship between humanity and the universe finds its cause in the study of human history from its very beginnings. When the first human being stood upright for the first time and confronted the natural environment with his mind, he found it teeming with immense forces that, as they appeared to him, were constituted in a manner different from his own. These forces acted in ways incompatible with his thinking and desires. Moreover, they were indifferent to his life or death - indeed, many of them seemed to be relentlessly working towards his destruction. Those who shared life with him amid these inert forces were either prey or predator: prey that hunts and is hunted, and predators that hunt and are hunted. It was as if the whole environment consisted of blue fangs and red claws. Thus, if he was to preserve his life, he had to devise all kinds of tricks and resort to every manner of cunning for his own survival.

Then, these inert forces, some of which are immense and terrifying, rendering his ingenuity powerless and exhausting his mind, and some of which are predominantly harmful, while others are predominantly beneficial, led his ingenuity to ingratiate himself with all of them, driven by motives of fear or love. Thus, he humbled himself, showed reverence, offered gifts, sacrificed offerings, and established rituals of worship. Among the forces in the natural environment in which he lived were those that could be outwitted or confronted. So, he devised various strategies: he built homes atop trees, on mountain peaks, on pillars he fashioned from tree trunks and embedded in the beds of ponds, and in other fortified places. Then, by making tools from branches of trees and pieces of stone, he further extended his ability to contend with these forces.

The human being, caught between worship and confrontation, is often overwhelmed by a sense of desolation and plagued by the anxiety of being unique in their kind, surrounded by enemies on all sides, lying in wait for their moment of vulnerability and plotting their downfall. From here, it occurred to the human being that their place in the universe is one of hostility and contention.

Philosophy has now led some of its adherents to declare that religiosity, which early humans were driven to by natural forces as previously mentioned, is merely a necessity of childhood. They argue that religion, wherever it has existed up to the present day, is nothing more than a phenomenon of childhood, where early man resorted to imagining a god to fulfill the child's need for a father to protect him. They claim that the fundamental way to confront the environment is through confrontation, not flattery, and that what pushed man toward flattery was his inability to engage in conflict. Now, with his development of weapons from tree branches and stone tools to the hydrogen bomb, his ability to engage in

conflict has been completed, or nearly so. Therefore, they argue that he must abandon flattery - or rather, abandon religiosity, the religions, and Allah.

Khrushchev is alleged to have said that when Gagarin became the first human to travel into outer space, he did not find the being known as God. It seems that Khrushchev could not conceive of God except as a type of matter - something he claimed to know. In truth, when their philosophy failed to conceive of anything beyond matter, they turned that very failure into a virtue by denying the existence of anything immaterial. This allowed them to maintain the coherence of their claim that man, while contending with his material environment, develops his understanding of it and improves his means of confronting it, until he conquers and subjugates it, thus becoming the master of his destiny.

The misunderstanding of the relationship between man and the universe has never, at any point in time, reached the depth it did during the era of communism - and all in the name of science and philosophy. Communism stands at the forefront of contemporary social philosophy and plays a progressive, intelligent role in today's mechanized Western civilization. At the very least, this is how it appears to people today.

Or do you claim that Western Christendom differs from the Communist East in matters of religion and in its conception of God? This may be true in the traditional sense, but it is not true in practice. There is nothing in the Western conception of religion or of God that prevents the West from becoming communist. After all, before the communist revolution, Russia was Christian - and specifically, it was Orthodox.

In truth, religion - whether Christianity or Islam - if it does not encompass all aspects of societal and individual activity and does not take charge of organizing all the energies of individual and collective life with wisdom and guidance, will detach itself from people's lives, lose its influence, and leave its place to any other philosophy. This can happen regardless of how misguided that philosophy may be, as long as it is capable of providing practical solutions to people's daily problems or even misleading them temporarily under the guise of serving their livelihood interests. Since people possess bodies and stomachs, any call to virtue must not neglect their bodies and stomachs needs. Indeed, a proper understanding of the nature of things dictates that the call to virtue should reach them through their bodies and stomachs.

Whatever the case may be between the Communist East and the Christian West, the present Western mechanical civilization is not Christian. It has failed to grasp the relationship between the individual and the community, just as it has failed to understand the relationship between the individual and the universe. As a result of this failure, it has practically fallen short of reconciling socialism with democracy, which is one of the greatest manifestations of its shortcomings.

We are not, at this moment, seeking to disparage or belittle it. Rather, we aim to conduct a scientific study of it, placing it in its proper context, acknowledging its merits, and calling for addressing its deficiencies so that it may transform into a true civilization after having become merely a material progress.

Chapter Three

The Individual and the Community in Islam

The first point to emphasize is that, in Islam, the individual is the end, and everything else is a means to that end - including the Qur'an and Islam itself. This applies equally to men and women, without any distinction. In Islam, every human being, whether a man or a woman, whether mentally sound or impaired, must never be treated as a means to an end beyond themselves. Rather, each individual is the end to which all means lead.

This emphasis on individuality is the core of the matter, as it underpins accountability and honor. It is individuals, not groups, who will be judged when the scales of justice are set. Men and women are equal in this regard - a point that must be firmly ingrained in our understanding. Allah says:

"No bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another."(6:164);

"Whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it."(99:7-8);

"And We inherit him [alone] in what he says, and he will come to Us alone."(19:80);

"There is no one in the heavens and the earth but that they come to the Most Merciful as a servant. He has enumerated them and counted them a [full] counting. And all of them are coming to Him on the Day of Resurrection alone." (19:93-95);

"And you have certainly come to Us alone, just as We created you the first time."(6:94).

The equality between men and women is fundamental in Islam. The distinctions made between them in Islamic law (*sharī'a*) arose due to historical and social factors tied to the evolution of human society.

The individual who holds weight in Islam is the one who knows Allah. However, Islam regards every individual as an end in himself, even the mentally retarded, because each individual is a potential knower of Allah, a germ of an individual who is a knower of Allah. This knowledge will manifest, sooner or later: *"This is a decree that your Lord has made inevitable."* (19:71)

At the beginning of this book, we stated that Islam has resolved the apparent conflict between the needs of the individual and the needs of the community. It has harmonized these two needs into a unified framework, where the individual's need for absolute personal freedom becomes an extension of the community's need for comprehensive social justice. In other words, Islam has made the organization of the community a means to freedom.

Islam achieved this balance through the principle of (*tawhīd*) monotheism, which grounds its laws legislations on two levels: the level of the community and the level of the individual. At the level of the community, the laws legislations are known as the laws legislations of transactions (*mu'āmalāt*). At the level of the individual, the laws legislations are known as the laws of worship (*ibādāt*).

The dominant characteristic of the legislation of transactions is that it coordinates the relationship between individuals in society, while the dominant characteristic of the legislation of worship is that it coordinates the relationship between the individual and the Lord. This does not mean

that each of these two legislations operates independently of the other, but rather it means that they are two parts of a single law that cannot exist without both together, with a difference in degree, not in kind. Thus, the legislation of transactions is legislation of worship at a coarse level, and the legislation of worship is legislation of transactions at a higher level, because the characteristic of individuality in worship is more apparent than in transactions.

It is established that worship holds no value unless it is reflected in one's interactions with others - interactions that themselves become worship. The Infallible (the Prophet) encapsulated this principle by saying: "Religion is how you deal with others." It is as though worship in solitude serves as a foundation for personal preparation and self-discipline, but its true purpose is realized through practical application in one's behavior within the community and in dealings with its members.

Monotheism (*Tawhīd*) establishes that all existence shares a single source, a single path, and a single destiny: It originates from God, and to God it returns, however, it returns individually. *"And you have certainly come to Us alone, just as We created you the first time."*(6:94). Returning to Allah is not about traversing physical distances but about aligning attributes. It involves drawing the qualities of the finite closer to those of the Infinite. This return to Allah is facilitated by specific means, including Islam, the Qur'an, and the community.

The community has its own form of freedom, which serves as the base of the pyramid, while the freedom of the individual represents the apex. Alternatively, one could say that the freedom of the community is akin to the tree, and the freedom of the individual is its fruit. From this holistic

perspective, Islam finds no contradiction between the individual and the community.

When Islam, thanks to the principle of monotheism, achieved this precise balance between the individual and the community, it legislated all its laws in a way that simultaneously addresses the needs of the individual and the needs of the community. It did not sacrifice the individual for the sake of the community, thus defeating the end by the means. Nor did it sacrifice the community for the sake of the individual, neglecting the most important means of achieving individuality. Rather, its legislation, in all its forms, represents a high level of ability to reconcile the individual's need for absolute personal freedom with the community's need for comprehensive social justice.

Absolute Individual Freedom

Many philosophers regard the notion of absolute individual freedom as a redundant concept, arguing instead that individual freedom must be restricted to prevent it from devolving into chaos.

Islam, however, regards freedom as absolute in essence. When we discuss freedom at any level, we are ultimately referring to absoluteness, whether we realize it or not. This is because restricted freedom is but a breath from the fragrances of absoluteness, diffused upon the people of the earth according to their capacity to bear it. Thus, restriction is not the origin; absoluteness is. Restrictions are merely transitional necessities accompanying the evolution of the individual from limitation to absoluteness.

Freedom in Islam is absolute and is a right for every human being by virtue of their humanity, regardless of their religion or race. It is a right accompanied by a duty and cannot be upheld without it. This duty is the proper exercise of freedom. Freedom becomes limited only when a free person is incapable of fulfilling that duty. In such cases, it is restricted to the extent of that incapacity and is regulated by constitutional laws. The constitutional laws in Islam are those that have the ability to reconcile the individual's need for absolute personal freedom with the community's need for comprehensive social justice. They do not sacrifice the individual for the sake of the community, nor the community for the sake of the individual. Rather, they represent a balanced measure between the two. When applied in all their particulars, they fulfill both the interests of the individual and those of the community simultaneously and within a unified framework.

Absoluteness is considered a fundamental principle in Islam because it places no limit on an individual's progress. In Islam, a person is constantly journeying from the finite toward the infinite - or rather, from deficiency toward perfection: absolute perfection. The ultimate goal of the servant in Islam is the perfection of the Lord, and the Lord's perfection lies in His absoluteness. Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, says: *"And that there is not for man except that for which he strives, And that his effort is going to be seen - Then he will be recompensed for it with the fullest recompense - And that to your Lord is the finality."*(53:39-42) This means: the ultimate end of one's journey. The journey to God is not about traversing physical distances, as we mentioned earlier, but about embodying the divine attributes through one's character. God Almighty says:

“O mankind, you are laboring toward your Lord with [great] exertion and will meet Him.” (84:6). Whether you seek this meeting or not - where will you encounter Him? In His heavens or on His earth? He, the Exalted, has said:

“Neither My heavens nor My earth can contain Me, but the heart of My believing servant can.” Thus, the meeting with Him occurs within you - through Him, not through yourself.

Regarding this, the Infallible (the Prophet) said:

“Adorn yourselves with the attributes of Allah, for my Lord is upon a straight path.”

And Allah says:

“Be rabbānīyīn (godly people), because of what you have taught of the Scripture and because of what you have studied.” (3:79)

What renders us incapable of fulfilling the duty of absolute individual freedom is ignorance. In the excess of our ignorance, we come to love that ignorance and despise knowledge - unless it arrives in a form that aligns with our desires. *“Fighting has been prescribed for you, though it is hateful to you. But it may be that you hate a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing while it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you do not know.”* (2:216). The phrase *“And it may be that you love a thing while it is bad for you”* highlights our selfishness. We love ourselves and everything that proceeds from us - even our follies. Every human being is, by nature, inherently selfish, and it is within this very selfishness that the potential for growth and perfection lies.

Selfishness exists on two levels: the narrow, degraded, ignorant selfishness, and the expansive, elevated, enlightened selfishness.

The ignorant selfish person may perceive their own interest in ways that conflict with the interests of the community and, if necessary, may sacrifice the community's welfare to pursue what they mistakenly believe to be their own interest. In contrast, the rational selfish person recognizes their true interest only when it aligns with the interests of others. Such a person resonates with the words of Abu Al-Alaa Al-Ma'arri:

*If I were granted eternal life alone,
I would not desire eternity in solitude.
Let no clouds rain on me or my land,
Unless their blessings nourish the entire land.*

The cornerstone of this matter lies in sound education, as encapsulated by the words of the Infallible (the Prophet): *"None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."* From that moment, Islam positioned itself decisively against ignorant selfishness and in favor of rational selfishness. The Infallible (the Prophet) also said, *"None of you truly believes until his desires align with what I have brought."* Here, "desires" refers to ignorant selfishness. He likewise stated: *"Your worst enemy is your own self between your sides."* This phrase refers to the lower or base self, in contrast to the higher self - your other self - which is implied in the expression *"your worst enemy."* It is as if he were saying, *"Your greatest enemy is your lower self, in opposition to your higher self."* For some reason, the Qur'an frequently contrasts the terms *dunya* (the lower world) and *ukhra* (the higher world).

This contrast symbolizes ignorant selfishness versus rational selfishness. When Allah says, *“Indeed, this Quran guides to that which is most upright”* (17:9), it signifies guidance toward the higher self. Likewise, the verse *“Whoever is guided is only guided for [the benefit of] his soul, and whoever goes astray only goes astray against it”* (17:15)

As long as we operate within the realm of ignorant selfishness, our freedom must be restricted - for the sake of both society and ourselves. This restriction must be governed by constitutional laws. From this, it becomes clear that freedom in Islam operates on two levels: the level of freedom restricted by constitutional laws, which we have already discussed, and the level of absolute freedom. At the first level, the free individual is one who thinks as he wishes, speaks as he thinks, and acts as he speaks - provided that his exercise of freedom in speech or action does not infringe upon the freedoms of others. If he exceeds these bounds, his freedom is restricted by constitutional law, as a just and proportional consequence.

The free individual at the second level of freedom is one who thinks as he wishes, speaks as he thinks, and acts as he speaks, yet the outcome of all these actions is nothing but goodness, blessing, and kindness toward another. The lower standard of the first level of freedom is justice, while the lower standard of the second level is forgiveness. A person who embodies this level of freedom harbors no hidden grudge in his veiled conscience against anyone, for he understands that wrongdoing begins in the conscience, then manifests in speech, and finally translates into action. It is such individuals - those of the second level, not those of the first - whom Allah addresses in His words: *“And abandon open and secret sin. Indeed, the one who earns sin will be recompensed for what he used to commit.”* (6:120). He also refers to them when He says: *“Say, ‘My Lord has*

only forbidden immoralities - what is apparent of them and what is concealed.” (7:33). Furthermore, Allah emphasizes this in the verse: “Whether you show what is within yourselves or conceal it, Allah will bring you to account for it.” (2:284).

For those at the level of restricted freedom, the Prophet’s statement applies:

“Allah has overlooked for my nation what they think to themselves, as long as they do not act upon it or speak of it.”

The two freedoms are intertwined, the first of which serves as a preparatory stage for the second. An individual can only reach its levels through personal effort in nurturing the self, by monitoring it, holding it accountable, and disciplining it to be entrusted with excellence and charged with doing good. Monitoring means being present with Allah at all times so that one’s limbs do not act in ways displeasing to Him - whether in thought, word, or deed. Accountability means rectifying what escapes the discipline of monitoring. Since absolute individual freedom is only attained at its price, and that price, as we previously mentioned, is the proper conduct of freedom of the veiled conscience, freedom of speech, and freedom of action, Islam has tailored its acts of worship and laws to guide the individual to achieve this level.

Shari’a in The Service of Absolute Individual Freedom

The acts of worship in its entirety are individualistic because it revolves around the hidden conscience (*ḍamīr al-mughayyab*). This statement is not undermined by the fact that some acts of worship are performed in congregation. Indeed, all Islamic practices, whether in worship or

transactions, fundamentally focus on the conscience. From this comes the saying of the Infallible (the Prophet): *“A person’s intention is better than his action.”* Intention functions within action as the soul does within the body: if the soul departs from the body, it becomes corrupt, disintegrates, and turns to scattered dust. This is alluded to in the noble verse: *“And We will regard what they have done of deeds and make them as dust dispersed”* (25:23), for it is a deed without a soul - or rather, without a sincere intention for the sake of Allah.

Sin begins in thought, and thought is the discourse of the conscience. If the veiled conscience harbors sin, then its thoughts become evil. These evil thoughts persistently press upon their owner until his tongue expresses them, making his speech evil. This evil speech then continues to urge its owner until it manifests in action, making his deeds evil as well. Therefore, if an individual thinks evil in his hidden conscience, speaks evil, and his limbs move to commit evil deeds, then his freedom must be withdrawn and restricted. However, this restriction must be for his own benefit first, and for the benefit of the community second. It is for his benefit if it results in education that makes him worthy of regaining his freedom anew, with the ability to use it properly.

Undoubtedly, legislation, whether concerning social customs or acts of worship, serves as an educational framework aimed at guiding individuals and societies from rigidity and harshness toward refinement and humanity. The more people are hardened in heart and dulled in sensitivity, the more stringent the laws become, imposing heavier constraints and obligations. Had people truly fulfilled their responsibilities as they ought to, they would not have been burdened in matters of their livelihood or their afterlife. Allah Almighty says: *“What would Allah do with your punishment if you are grateful and believe? And Allah is ever Appreciative and Knowing”* (4:147).

The need for education, taming, and guidance is what necessitated the prohibition of certain acts and the imposition of strict obligations. Prohibitions and obligations were introduced in proportion to the need for them.

We have spoken sufficiently about the strictness imposed on the individual during the early stages of human society in ancient times. If we turn to the modern eras - the eras of the scriptural religions known to us - we find that the principle remains consistent and unchanged. The Qur'an speaks to us about the Jews, saying:

"So for wrongdoing on the part of the Jews, We made unlawful for them certain good foods which had been lawful to them, and for their averting many from the way of Allah, and for their taking of usury while they had been forbidden from it, and their consuming of people's wealth unjustly. And We have prepared for the disbelievers among them a painful punishment." (4:160-161). The Quran also says about the Jews " :*And [recall] when Moses said to his people, 'O my people, indeed you have wronged yourselves by your taking of the calf [for worship]. So repent to your Creator and kill yourselves. That is best for [all of] you in the sight of your Creator.'* Then He accepted your repentance; indeed, He is the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful." (2:54)

Due to the hardness of their hearts and the dullness of their senses, strictness was imposed upon them: good things were forbidden to them, and, as part of their repentance, they were commanded to physically kill themselves. This is related to what we previously discussed regarding the sacrifice of individuals on the altars of worship in the early stages of human existence.

As the individual human being advanced somewhat and no longer required such strictness for discipline, it was eased for him. Thus, the legislation concerning the nation of Muhammad came to state: *"Say, 'I do not find within that which was revealed to me [anything] forbidden to one who would eat it unless it be a dead animal, or blood spilled out, or the flesh of swine - for indeed, it is impure - or it be [that slaughtered in] disobedience, dedicated to other than Allah. But whoever is forced [by necessity], neither desiring [it] nor transgressing [its limit] - then indeed, your Lord is Forgiving and Merciful.'"* (6:145). The Quran also says about the nation of Muhammad: *"O you who have believed, do not consume one another's wealth unjustly but only [in lawful] business by mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves [or one another]. Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful."* (4:29).

Thus, the scope of prohibitions in the final legislation was narrowed down and reduced to four, all of which are considered evil. Yet even these four were permitted in cases of necessity - so long as the individual is neither willfully disobedient nor transgressive toward others.

Allah forbade the taking of life when the soul became responsive with less than such violence. He said: *"And do not kill yourselves; indeed, Allah is ever Merciful to you."* (4:29) And He was merciful to us in His legislation because we had become merciful ourselves - *(As you judge, so shall you be judged)*.

The principle continues its consistent course in further easing burdens on people as they become more refined to the point where they no longer require severity to learn. This easing reaches such an extent that

prohibition shifts from material things to moral behaviors. Listen to how the Noble Quran addresses us, saying: *“O children of Adam, take your adornment at every place of prayer, and eat and drink, but do not be excessive. Indeed, He does not like those who commit excess. Say: Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has brought forth for His servants, and the good things of provision?” Say: ‘They are for those who believe in this worldly life, and exclusively for them on the Day of Resurrection. Thus, We detail the verses for a people who know. Say: Indeed, my Lord has forbidden immoralities - both apparent and hidden - sin, oppression without right, associating partners with Allah for which He has sent down no authority, and saying about Allah that which you do not know.”* (7:31-33) And HE says: *“And what is wrong with you that you do not eat of that upon which the name of Allah has been mentioned, while He has explained in detail what He has forbidden to you - except what you are compelled by necessity? And indeed, many lead astray by their desires without knowledge. Indeed, your Lord knows best the transgressors. And abandon all sin, both apparent and hidden. Indeed, those who commit sin will be recompensed for what they used to commit”* (6:119-120)

Thus, what is truly forbidden, in the final analysis, is flawed behavior and moral deficiency. The prohibition of physical things serves merely as a means of purging the self of these behavioral and moral deficiencies. This aligns with the wise principle presented in the following noble verse: *“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. Is it not sufficient concerning your Lord that He is, over all things, a Witness?”* (41:53)

When the prohibition withdraws from coarse, tangible forms to subtle, abstract forms within the flaws of human conduct, this withdrawal continues until it reaches the innermost secrets of the soul and the hidden

thoughts of sin that stir within it. Thus, when HE said, *“And abandon the outward sin and the inward one,”* (6:120) the command to abandon outward sin was placed as a means, while the command to abandon inward sin was placed as the ultimate goal. It is as if it says: Abandon the outward sin so that you may be able to abandon its inward form, for it is the source of all evils.

The Qur’an traces sin to the depths of the soul when HE says: *‘And whether you disclose what is within yourselves or conceal it, Allah will bring you to account for it’* (2:284). And when HE says: *‘All faces will be humbled before the Ever-Living, the Sustainer, and he will have failed who bears injustice’* (20:111). Here, “injustice” refers to hidden polytheism, which is the root of all evil in all its forms. Hidden polytheism resides in the innermost depths of the self, and even subtler than that is what lies in the “secret of the secret,” as our Sufi friends say. The Qur’an says: *“And if you speak aloud, then indeed, He knows the secret and what is even more hidden.”*(20:7). What is more hidden than the secret is the secret of the secret.

The Qur’an method of ridding the self of sin is a reverse one (al-uslub al-aksi); it begins from the outside and moves inward. The verse *“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. Is it not sufficient concerning your Lord that He is, over all things, a Witness?”* (41:53) indicates, among other meanings, that the diligent worshiper on the path to Allah observes and holds himself accountable at the beginning of his journey, striving to abandon flaws in actions, even though he may still be entangled, during this phase, in flaws of speech. But it allows this as a form of gradual training for the self. Then, if the self-achieves stability in

abandoning flaws in actions and does so with clear ease and submission, it is then moved forward to the task of abandoning flaws in speech, even though, at that time, it remains entangled in flaws of thoughts. The thoughts are scattered and filled with inner chatter, but this is permitted as a form of guidance and gradual progression, for it has already been tasked with the more challenging matter of abandoning the chatter of the tongue.

Then, if he manages to align his conduct as desired by controlling his tongue after controlling his limbs, all of that leaves a praiseworthy effect in refining his thoughts. He then becomes obligated to approach them steadily and confidently, disciplining them after their confusion and calming them after their agitation. If he succeeds in aligning his conduct in the best way he desires, cleanses his heart from whispers, and purifies his inner self, the inward approach (al-uslub al-tardi) can then begin to appear clearly, after the reverse method (al-uslub al-aksi) has reached this advanced stage. At this point comes the application of His saying in the previously mentioned verse: *“Is it not sufficient concerning your Lord that He is, over all things, a Witness?” (41:53).*

At this stage, the alignment between outward conduct (sīrah) and inner state (sarīrah) is on the verge of realization, for the purity of the inner state is reflected in the uprightness of outward conduct. The one who attains this alignment reaches the threshold of absolute individual freedom. As the inner self becomes increasingly purified, outward conduct improves, resulting in a contraction of prohibitions and an expansion of permissible actions. This aligns with the verse: *“What would Allah do with your punishment if you are grateful and believe? And ever is Allah Appreciative and Knowing.” (4:147).*

If the diligent worshiper continues on this path toward the desired end - namely, the complete purity of the inner self and the perfect rectitude in outward conduct - then all tangible objects revert to their original permissibility. At that point, the noble verse applies: *"There is no blame upon those who believe and do righteous deeds for what they have eaten, as long as they fear Allah and believe and do righteous deeds, and then fear Allah and believe, and then fear Allah and do good. And Allah loves the doers of good."* (5:93). This is an advanced level of absolute individual freedom, which Islamic legislation in its entirety has been tailored to help individuals attain. One of the clearest signs of this design is that the entire body of legislation, in all its forms, is founded upon reciprocity (*al-mu'āwāḍah*) - or rather, retribution (*al-qīṣāṣ*): *"In retribution there is life for you, O people of reason, so that you may become pious"* (2:179). The Qur'an also states: *"It will not be according to your desires nor those of the People of the Book. Whoever does a wrong will be recompensed for it, and he will not find besides Allah a protector or a helper."* (4:123).

The Qur'an also states: *"So Allah will reward the truthful for their truth and punish the hypocrites, if He wills, or accept their repentance. Indeed, Allah is ever Forgiving and Merciful."* (33:24). The Qur'an also states: *"So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it."* (99:7-8). These two verses form the essence of the entire matter, both in the structure of Sharia and the foundation of truth - meaning in the rewards or punishments of this world, as well as the rewards or punishments of the Hereafter.

The Qur'an states: *"That (Allah) may question the truthful about their truth. And He has prepared for the disbelievers a painful punishment."* (33:8). When the leader of the Sufi order, *Abu al-Qasim al-Junayd*, was asked about this verse, he said: "The truthful - those who consider themselves

so - will be questioned about their truthfulness before God." Truthfulness before Allah is absolute, whereas truthfulness among creation is relative. Each person is rewarded for their truthfulness in proportion to how it measures against absolute truth, as He said: *"That He may reward the truthful for their truthfulness"* (33:24).

This recompense is retribution (*qasas*) both in *sharia* (Islamic law) and in *ḥaqīqa* (ultimate truth), as alluded to in the verse: *"And there is for you in retribution life, O people of understanding"* (2:179). Here, "life" signifies an increase in knowledge. When you are rewarded for the good you have done, based on the principle that a single good deed is rewarded tenfold or more, or when you are punished for a sin in equal measure - or even forgiven - you gain an added dimension of life. This comes through the elevation of your understandings, the clarity of your minds, and the purity of your hearts.

And this increase in perception, in the context of retribution in the Sharia, does not require deep thought; it is evident. This is because an individual does not infringe upon the freedoms of others while exercising their own freedom except out of ignorance, foolishness, or a lack of imagination. So, when a person gouges out someone's eye, for example, in a fit of rage, he does not fully grasp the extent of the pain or the severity of the harm he causes his victim. But if retribution is carried out - placing him in the victim's position and gouging out his eye in return - then two purposes are achieved at once: first, the rights of the community are preserved by deterring him personally and making him a warning to others; second, he gains the capacity for deeper imagination, as he is given the chance to experience the pain he imposed on another due to his limited ability to imagine the intensity of the suffering and the magnitude of the loss he

caused. There is no doubt that such a painful experience profoundly transforms the person who endures it, making him more humane in the days to come than he was before. He can no longer disregard the consequences of his actions on others. At the very least, he will refrain from harming others, may even endure harm from them, and will, without a doubt, become more considerate of others in his actions.

This act, when accompanied by worship, may lead him to take on the responsibility of bringing good to others - and he is likely to find in that the satisfaction of his self and the peace of his heart. If he reaches that point, then he stands at the threshold of absolute individual freedom, thanks to the awareness and the expanded imagination granted to him by retribution. If he does not reach this higher state, it suffices for him to be conscious of the boundaries of his own freedom and the freedoms of others - and even this awareness brings significant benefit.

The recompense for adultery is carried out through stoning or flogging, depending on the circumstances. This is because the adulterer, in pursuing pleasure wherever it may be found and without regard for divine law, is made to taste pain to bring him back to his senses. Pain occupies the farthest edge of the valley of the self, while pleasure resides on its lowest bank. Drawing the self toward pain when it rushes toward forbidden pleasure establishes balance with justice - helping it attain moderation and distancing it from recklessness and impulsiveness.

The punishment for consuming alcohol follows the same foundational principle: an individual who seeks to nullify his mind by indulging in alcohol is attempting to escape reality and immerse himself in a world of illusions and sickly fantasies. The purpose of the pain inflicted by flogging is to return him to his harsh reality so that he may employ his mind in

transforming it. Reality does not change by fleeing from it; it changes only through confrontation and the exercise of thought in altering it. Allah, the Exalted, says: *"Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves."* (13:11).

Moreover, the mind, which uniquely entitles humans to their dignity above animals, is the legitimate offspring of the interplay between pleasure and pain. This interplay has been at work since the dawn of time throughout life's arduous journey. If someone, in a moment of weakness, undermines his mind, the sting of pain can help him reclaim his place in the captain's seat, navigating the turbulent seas of life to reach the shores of safety.

The principle of reciprocity (*al-mu'āwadhah*) - *qiṣāṣ* - emerges from a deep and intrinsic aspect of life. It is not merely a religious law in the conventional sense of religion. When we assert that Islamic legislation is grounded in reciprocity, we are referring to Islam in its essence, not merely its doctrinal aspect. Islam in its essence is not what people traditionally understand as religion; it is a science. The stage of creed (**aqīdah**) within Islam is but a transitional phase leading to its scientific stage. The stage of *sharī'a* within Islam is a transitional phase leading to the stage of *ḥaqīqah* (truth), where individuals rise from communal laws to personal laws specific to the realities of those who possess truth.

"Has there [not] come upon man a period of time when he was not a thing [even] mentioned? Indeed, We created man from a sperm-drop mixture that We may try him, and We made him hearing and seeing" (76:1-2). The term "has" here conveys certainty ("has indeed") and the word "man" refers to the human species. The phrase "was not a thing mentioned" means that the human being was fluctuating within the lower levels of life, with no manifestation of the mind - upon which accountability is founded

and by which human distinction is elevated. *"A sperm-drop mixture"* refers to pure water mingled with clay, from which life originated in the depths of time. The phrase *"that We may try him"* forms the essence of this verse, pointing to the ongoing struggle in the natural environment - between the living being and inert forces, and among humans themselves. This struggle, as previously mentioned in the discussion of the emergence of human society, existed both before and after its formation, and has always been governed by the law of reciprocity (qasas).

The statement *"We made him hearing and seeing"* alludes to the mind, which is the product of this struggle, guided by the principle of reciprocity: *"Whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it."* (99:7-8) Following the two aforementioned verses from *Surat Al-dahar* (chapter 76), the Qur'an states: *"Indeed, We guided him to the way, be he grateful or ungrateful."* Here, *"grateful"* signifies correctness, while *"ungrateful"* signifies error. Thus, the mind balances itself on the scales of error and correctness and therein lies its perfection. The Infallible (the Prophet) said: *"If you did not make mistakes and seek forgiveness, Allah would bring forth a people who do make mistakes and seek forgiveness, and He would forgive them."*

The law of reciprocity operates on two levels: the level of *ḥaqīqa* (truth) and the level of *sharī'a* (divine law), differing in degree but not in kind. At the level of *ḥaqīqa*, it is based on His saying, the Exalted: *"Whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it"* (99:7-8). At the level of the *sharī'a* it is based on His saying, the Exalted: *"And We decreed for them in it: a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, and a tooth for a tooth, and for wounds - legal retribution. But if anyone gives [up his right] as*

charity, it is an expiation for him. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed - it is they who are the wrongdoers." (5:45).

The law of reciprocity, at the level of *ḥaqīqa* (truth), is the Divine Will by which Allah subjected the worlds, brought them into existence, and guided them toward perfection. It is the Truth frequently mentioned in the Qur'an: *"We did not create the heavens and the earth and everything between them except in truth and [for] a predetermined period. But those who disbelieve, from what they are warned, are turning away."* (46:3); HE also says: *"He created the heavens and the earth in truth. Exalted is He above what they associate with Him."* (16:3); HE also says: *"And We did not create the heavens and the earth and everything between them in play. We did not create them except in truth, but most of them do not know."* (44:38-39). Thus, truth is the essence of the universal reciprocity captured most profoundly in the verses: *"Whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it."* (99:7-8). The phrase 'in play' in the previous verse refers to what is indicated by the two verses from the saying of Allah the Exalted: *"Then did you think that We created you aimlessly and that to Us you would not be returned? So exalted is Allah, the Sovereign, the Truth; there is no deity except Him, Lord of the Noble Throne."* (23:115-116). This emphasizes that all creation inevitably returns to Allah through the operation of the law of reciprocity: *"It will not be according to your desires or the desires of the People of the Scripture. Whoever does a wrong will be recompensed for it, and he will not find besides Allah a protector or a helper."* (4:123).

The law of reciprocity (*al-Mu'awadah*) at the level (*sharī'a*) is a precise imitation of the law of reciprocity at the level of truth (*ḥaqīqa*). It runs parallel to it, but in its higher realms, it is more complete and more precise. The law of reciprocity (*al-Mu'awadah*) operates on three levels, as

reflected in the verse: *"Indeed, Allah commands justice, and excellence, and giving to relatives"* (16:90). Justice (*adl*) corresponds to retribution (*qasas*) at the level of *"an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,"* and *"whoever transgresses against you, respond with the equivalent of what they have transgressed against you"* (2:194). Excellence (*ihsan*) refers to forgiving the offender, as stated in the verse on retribution: *"But if one overlooks and forgives, it is an expiation for him"* (5:45). *"Giving to relatives"* signifies the act of maintaining kinship ties, means maintaining the bonds of kinship in its broader sense - the kinship of life.

These three levels are illustrated in the verse: *"And the retribution for an evil act is an evil one like it, but whoever pardons and makes reconciliation, their reward is [due] from Allah. Indeed, He does not like the wrongdoers"* (42:40). The phrase *"And the retribution for an evil act is an evil one like it"* represents the level of justice (*adl*) at the degree of equivalence. Allah called it an evil in order to discourage people from resorting to retribution where that is possible: *"And whoever is patient and forgives - indeed, that is of the matters [requiring] determination"* (42:43). The phrase *"but whoever pardons"* corresponds to the level of excellence (*ihsan*), where one forgives the offender, a level that surpasses justice. The phrase *"and makes reconciliation"* signifies mercy toward the offender, showing compassion, gentleness, and love for them. This represents the pinnacle of goodness and reconciliation, the highest level of the law of reciprocity (*mu'awadah*) in the *sharia*.

Since the law of reciprocity (*mu'awadah*) at the level of *ḥaqīqa* (truth) is intended to guide the cosmos toward Allah through the physical - through compulsion - the law of reciprocity at the level of *sharia* (Islamic law) is

meant to guide humanity toward Allah through mind - through freedom. This embodies the essence of dignity, the highest dignity, for humanity. It is within this context that our discussion about the relationship between humankind and the universe arises.

The Individual and the Universe in Islam

The relationship between the human being and the universe has remained a subject of teaching and learning from the dawn of human life to the present day. Humanity has sought to understand this relationship through both religion and material science from its very inception. Religion and material science are twin companions; they were born simultaneously, developed together, and have continually collaborated along the path of progress.

The domain of material knowledge for early man was very limited, while the domain of religion was vast. Religion encompassed all aspects of material life in the natural environment, as well as what lay beyond matter, to the extent offered by dreams during sleep and suggested by illusions during wakefulness. And it left in the domain of material knowledge only a few things, which long familiarity suggested did not require much attention.

Early human felt that every object in existence had a spirit. This belief was reinforced by dreams to the extent that humans offered prayers to everything: for hunting, for agriculture, for harvesting, for eating, and for their weapons. Then familiarity and habit began to play their role in lifting awe and sanctity from the things he became accustomed to and gained control over, bringing them into the realm of his empirical knowledge. Thus, the domain of science expanded while the domain of religion contracted, until we arrived at the present era where some, dazzled by

modern science, claim that religion no longer has a place in the life of the civilized individual. However, it is not science itself that denies the role of religion, but rather some scientists who have denied the missions of both science and religion. Science does not claim to seek the essence or true nature of things; it merely studies their phenomena and the laws governing their behavior. For instance, science understands the properties of electricity but does not grasp its true nature. Indeed, science itself acknowledges that matter, as we know it, is merely an appearance of something beyond, whose essence remains unknown. Albert Einstein postulated that matter and energy are one, a theory supported by experiments on nuclear fission. Energy, despite being governed by some observable laws, remains elusive in its essence.

In truth, modern science is a powerful advocate for God, speaking with eloquent tongue. It reveals daily how, when the physical world is thoroughly explored, it leads us to the threshold of a metaphysical realm - an unseen reality that our senses cannot comprehend in their usual way. Science leaves us there, standing in reverence and awe, seeking tools beyond material investigation to navigate the mysteries of the sacred valley that lies beyond the material world we know. The people of enlightened hearts have perceived that material phenomena call out loudly to God, saying: "We are but a temptation, do not become infidels so do not fall into disbelief! Your ultimate purpose lies ahead of you, so do not stop with us!"

It is time for man to realize that the environment in which he lives is, in essence, a spiritual realm with a material appearance. This is a new discovery brought about by recent advancements in material science. It is a revelation that presents modern man with a decisive challenge: the

necessity to harmonize his life with this ancient yet newly understood environment if he is to continue to survive.

The first human was wiser than we are in our present situation when he thought - or rather knew - that everything in existence has a spirit. Now, as existence has completed a full cycle, history will repeat itself in the coming days. However, as we stated at the beginning of this book, history will not repeat itself in exactly the same form but rather in a way that resembles the past in some aspects and differs from it in others. The point of resemblance in the new cycle will be our realization that our environment is spiritual in essence and material in appearance. The point of difference will be that this realization will not be naive or ignorant but rather a keen, knowledgeable understanding. With it, religion will once again embrace all our activities - both small and great. It will return as a science, advancing with a comprehensive program for life that addresses the mind, respects it, and seeks to convince it of the value of practicing its methodology in daily life, in all its complexities, concerning both worldly affairs and matters of the hereafter.

Humans entered this life without any control over their coming into existence, and they will leave it similarly, without any say in their departure. Allah, the Exalted, speaks to us about this, saying: *"And We certainly created man from an extract of clay. Then We placed him as a sperm-drop in a firm lodging. Then We developed the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We developed the clot into a lump [of flesh], and We developed the lump into bones, and We clothed the bones with flesh; then We brought him into being as another creation. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators. Then indeed, after that, you are to die. Then indeed you, on the Day of Resurrection, will be resurrected."* (23:12-16). This comprehensive Qur'anic image provides us with an understanding of our position in the

universe, as we are directed within it just like the inanimate elements. We will have no superiority over them unless we are certain of this divine governance, and then submit to it willingly - with acceptance, surrender, and knowledge. Indeed, God has created us with the capacity to acquire such knowledge, and He has alluded to this readiness in His saying: *"Then We developed him into another creation."* In another instance - a clear statement is made, where HE said: *"When your Lord said to the angels, indeed, I am creating a human being from clay, from molded black mud. So, when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My Spirit, then fall down to him in prostration."*(15:28-29). Thus, this other creation came only as a result of the divine breathing of the Spirit into him.

The Will

The divine spirit breathed into humans is the will, and the will is an attribute situated between two others: above it is knowledge, and below it is power. Through knowledge, will, and power, God brought the worlds into existence. Similarly, humans carry out their actions through knowledge, will, and power, establishing a resemblance between the Creator and the created. This is what is referred to in the saying of the Infallible (the Prophet): *"Indeed, God created Adam in His image."*

The will belongs originally to God and is bestowed upon humans as a trust. This trust is the very responsibility (*amanah*) referenced in the verse: *"Indeed, We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to] bear it. Indeed, he was "unjust" because he claimed for himself what belongs to another, and "ignorant" because he misjudged his capacities, imagining himself to be the master of an independent will."* (33:72). What led humans to this injustice and ignorance is the subtlety of the matter and

the precision of its workings. God, in His wisdom, governs the inanimate - gases, liquids, and solids - with direct compulsion. *“Say, Are you disbelieving in Him who created the earth in two days and made for Himself equals? That is the Lord of the worlds. And He placed therein firm mountains over it, blessed it, and determined therein its sustenance in four days as equal for the questioners. Then He established Himself above the heaven, which is [as] smoke, and said to the earth, ‘Come willingly or by compulsion.’ They said, ‘We come willingly.’ Then He completed them seven heavens in two days and revealed in each heaven its command. And We adorned the lowest heaven with lamps and protected it. That is the determination of the Exalted in Might, the Knowing.” (7:54)*

This is the environment of life. When the conditions on Earth became suitable, life was created, and within it was instilled the "will to live" - a force driven by the desire for survival, working to preserve life. Its guiding principle is the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. At this level of existence, which encompasses plants and animals, Allah's guidance of creation becomes almost direct, though it operates from behind the veil of the "will to live." It is called "the will to live" because it possesses what is referred to as spontaneous movement. This is because the motives and the strength for its movement, as it appears, are embedded within it. It is a movement utilized by the living being to obtain its sustenance, preserve its life, and maintain its species.

When God elevated life to the level of humanity, He added a new element: the "will for freedom," which differs from the "will to live" only in degree, not in kind. Allah guided humanity first through the "will to live," and then through the "will for freedom." In doing so, His guidance became indirect, and His intervention in our affairs was characterized by such subtlety and precision that it entangled us in the greatest illusion: the belief that we

possess an independent, free will capable of choosing or refraining from action.

And here are verses that are a sign indicating the subtle intervention of God's will in directing our will: *"[Remember] when you were on the nearer bank [of the valley], and they were on the farther bank, and the caravan was lower [in position] than you. If you had made an appointment, you would have failed to meet [each other]. But [it was] so that Allah might accomplish a matter already destined - that those who perished [through disbelief] would perish upon evidence and those who lived [in faith] would live upon evidence; and indeed, Allah is Hearing and Knowing. When Allah showed them to you in your dream as few; and if He had shown them to you as many, you [believers] would have lost courage and would have disputed in the matter. But Allah saved [you]. Indeed, He is Knowing of that within the breasts. And [remember] when He showed them to you when you met as few in your eyes, and He made you [appear] as few in their eyes so that Allah might accomplish a matter already destined. And to Allah are [all] matters returned."* (8:42–44). Behold this gentle kindness, from the side of the ancient divine will, as it intervenes in guiding the newly created human will.

The Prophet sees his enemies in his dream as few, so he resolves to fight them. Had he seen them otherwise, he would not have fought them. Then, at the encounter, the believers see the polytheists as few, so they too resolve to fight them. Likewise, the polytheists see the believers as few, and they in turn resolve to fight them. It is God who shows the Prophet his enemies as few in his dream, and it is God who makes each group see their enemies as few, so that God may accomplish a matter already decreed. All of this occurs without disturbing the "will of freedom" or

making it feel any external intervention in its affairs, imposing upon it or depriving it of its freedom.

God created humans with a frail physical constitution, lacking claws and fangs, so that they would rely on ingenuity rather than physical strength. He gave humans a prolonged childhood, ensuring dependence on others and fostering the formation of communities. Weakness of body and the necessity of prolonged care drove humans to live in groups. We have previously discussed the formation of communities and how they established customs to regulate individual impulses. Heinous killing was the inevitable consequence for anyone who violated the norms embraced by the community. Additionally, the wrath of the gods was believed to await the transgressor after death, subjecting them to torment far greater than any punishment the community could inflict. This dual fear - of communal reprisal and divine wrath - haunted the individual, and continued to play a role in compelling him to refrain from violating the laws.

With the emergence of primitive human society, a conflict arose within the human structure between two forces: the ancient animalistic nature, governed by the "will to live," which pursues pleasure by any means, and the modern humanistic nature, governed by the "will for freedom," which seeks pleasure without incurring the wrath of the community or the gods by violating established norms, resulting in lasting pain both in life and after death.

If the desired pleasure can only be achieved by opposing the command of the community - which is always the command of the gods - then the direction of the "will to freedom" lies in abandoning the pursuit of that pleasure in the hope of attaining a greater pleasure: the reward of the community and the reward of the gods, which is better and more lasting.

Thus, values entered life that lead the human individual to sacrifice immediate pleasure for anticipated joy or to forego fleeting sensory gratification in favor of spiritual fulfillment, whether immediate or deferred. Such values may be reflected in society's approval, trust, and praise or in the satisfaction of the gods and their rewards, whether in this life or the life to come.

Human society continued to grow, and with it grew its customs and traditions, which became increasingly refined and decisive. Prophets of truth emerged, introducing divine law concerning what is permissible and impermissible, and establishing concepts of heaven and hell and descriptions of the divine. For the prophets of truth and the messengers of humanity did not come to tell people that they have a Creator - this had already been conveyed to them by the messengers of reason. Rather, they came to assist minds in knowing the Creator by teaching them His names, attributes, and actions.

As for the lights of reason, they arose from the fire of friction that continued to occur between the "will to live" and the "will for freedom" due to the ancient fear instilled in the heart of the first human by the inert forces that abounded in the natural environment in which he lived.

We have already noted that the "will for freedom" differs from the "will to live" not in kind but in degree. The "will for freedom" represents the refined, transparent aspect of the "will to live" - it is the spirit, while the "will to live" represents the self. In this sense, the "will to live" can be seen as the "Eve" of the human constitution, and the "will for freedom" as its "Adam." The mind is the offspring of the union between these two forces. At the level of sexual union that produces reason, the "will to live" has another name: memory, and the "will for freedom" is imagination. Memory is the sum of

all past experiences, and thus we have called it the self in another context. It has been mentioned that retribution is intended to strengthen imagination in those who need to be placed, through retribution, in the position of their victim.

On the other hand, imagination, another term for intelligence, is the discerning and restraining force against the whims of the self that contradict the law. Intelligence guides the self's desires through the influences of fear - or, more accurately, through both desire and fear. The better it manages the self's impulses, the stronger its ability to discern becomes. The self may become more compliant or more rebellious, depending on its ability to act justly or its failure to do so and its inclination toward violence and madness.

The mind was born in a divided house, to two contentious parents - a mother who is lustful, wild, highly capricious, and abundant in desires, and a father who is weak, cowardly, driven by fear into violence, rejecting her demands with harshness and strictness, to the extent that he may oppress her and suppress her without justification - its childhood was not happy but rather vagrant, resentful, full of rebellion and deviation. It inherited the traits of its parents and was influenced by the atmosphere of the house in which it was born, thus becoming divided against itself as well, with one part opposing the other. Long ago, it was said, "*A house divided cannot stand.*"

Fear has sedimented in the depths of the self since the inception of life, and before the appearance of humans on its stage. Then the long struggle broke out between the "will to live" and the "will for freedom," which accompanied the appearance of humans on the stage of life and whose blaze continues to rage to this day. And as a result of this struggle, some

forbidden desires, which once moved freely, were shackled and suppressed, becoming imprisoned in dark recesses at the edges of the self. All these desires are innate, and many of them, due to their prolonged confinement in darkness, have lost sight and the ability to move. Yet, they have not died; they await the day they will be released from this prison.

The human self today is exposed to numerous afflictions - fear that has become sedimented within it before it became human. This fear exists between the dawn of primitive life, the era when humans first appeared on the stage of existence, the inherited repression since the emergence of human society, and the moment of an individual's birth. Subsequently, there is the acquired repression throughout an individual's life, from birth to death, where laws, customs, and public opinion dictate, repressing desires that lack approval for their movements and expressions in freedom and fluency.

All repression is caused by fear - whether it is the primitive, naïve, unjustified fear or the rational, balanced fear with known and reasonable causes. Fear has left a chronic imprint on the human self.

The fear, in its essence, is the legitimate father of all moral flaws and behavioral defects. A man cannot achieve the full virtues of manhood while being fearful, nor can a woman attain the full virtues of womanhood while being afraid - regardless of the degree or form of fear. Perfection lies in being free from fear.

An individual cannot be liberated from all forms of inherited fear except through knowledge - knowledge of the minutiae of the natural environment in which one has lived and continues to live. This environment has been a direct cause for the regimenting of fear deep within the self. Fear is

ignorance, and ignorance is only combated with knowledge. For this reason, it is essential to provide individuals with a complete and accurate understanding of their relationship with society and the universe, which is what we have been for some time.

Determinism and Free Will

The issue of determinism (*jabr*) and free will (*ikhtiyar*), or coercion and choice, represents the relationship between the individual and the universe. It is a problem whose finer points have exhausted human thought across all eras, and it is fitting that it reemerges to capture the full attention of thinkers due to the necessity of understanding it. This understanding is precise - not stemming from mental luxury as some might assume, nor is it an issue irrelevant to our daily livelihoods in earning and spending, as others might believe. Rather, the necessity of understanding it arises from the need for a practical approach to achieving absolute individual freedom. Absolute individual freedom has now become the center from which collective freedom emanates in all its forms and at all levels, influencing our daily lives in both earning and spending. The enduring question is: Is the human being destined to a predetermined fate? Or is he delegated to choose in an ongoing matter?

The Infallible (the Prophet) has decreed the need for the believer to be entirely self-sufficient when He said: *“Whoever believes has believed in qada’ (divine decree) and qadar (predestination), and whoever disbelieves has disbelieved in qada’ and qadar. So, the pens have been lifted, and the pages have dried.”* When some companions asked, *“Then what is the point of effort, O Messenger of Allah?”* He replied, *“Act, for everyone has what was created for him.”* The companions turned to their work, held steadfastly to their faith, and their faith protected and embraced them.

“Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds, their Lord will guide them because of their faith. Beneath them rivers will flow in the Gardens of Pleasure” (10:9).

Thus, the believer's need is satisfied by faith itself, but the Muslim's need requires further knowledge that brings about certainty and secures for it the tranquility of the heart. Consider Ibrahim al-Khalil: *“And [mention] when Abraham said, ‘My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead.’ [Allah] said, ‘Have you not believed?’ He said, ‘Yes, but [I ask] only that my heart may be satisfied.’ [Allah] said, ‘Take four birds and commit them to yourself. Then [after slaughtering them] put on each hill a portion of them; then call them - they will come [flying] to you in haste. And know that Allah is All-Powerful and All-Wise” (2:260).*

After the companions, those who came after did not find in this matter what the companions had discovered. Some of them, the people of opinion, began to think that absolute coercion with punishment for sin was akin to someone saying, *“He threw him into the sea while he was tied up and said to him, ‘Do not let yourself get wet’.*” This is injustice. Since Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, is free from injustice, and since punishment for sin is fixed in the Sharia and religion, there remains the notion that man enjoys some choice - deserving punishment when he errs and meriting reward when he succeeds. Thus, they believed and fell into *shirk* (polytheism) from wanting to exalt Allah.

These misguided individuals are influenced by two factors: the first is that common sense and the apparent aspect of the matter suggest that a human being has a choice, which appears in his voluntary movements - for he can walk, if he wishes, or sit, or stand, in addition to a number of other movements and states of stillness, all of which fall under his choice

and will. And the second is that the apparent aspects of the Quran affirm for the human being what this lived common sense has bestowed upon him.

Our Sufi friends, in general, have tried to be content with what the companions were content with regarding this matter. However, the wisdom of time and the insistence of other groups forced some of them to decide that humans are destined (*musayer*) in every small and large matter, and that, nevertheless, they are punished for wrongdoing and rewarded for goodness. Allah is not unjust in any of these matters because He did not act in a kingdom other than His own. Some others were compelled to accept absolute determinism with punishment, then departed from this issue of Allah's injustice by His saying: "*They do not inquire about what they do*" (10:36).

All the great scholars agreed that reconciling absolute determination - which is a matter necessitated by monotheism - with punishment and divine justice must be sought in the wisdom behind punishment. They pursued various avenues of explanation, which sufficed for the needs of their era and the eras that followed, up to the present day. However, we do not see these explanations as adequate for the needs of modern thought from now on.

The Quran, Determinism, and Free Will

The people of opinion based their views on the Quran, deriving clear signs from it to support their truthfulness. The Sufis, who stand in opposition to the people of opinion, also based their doctrines on the Quran, drawing clear signs from it to validate their truthfulness. This peculiar phenomenon has entangled many Orientalists, who, intending to study the Quran, have

committed a grave mistake by thinking that some parts of the Quran contradict others. They have exaggerated this upon themselves and their people.

The truth in this matter is that the Quran has both apparent and hidden aspects. Its apparent aspects relate to the appearances of things, and its hidden aspects are based on the truths entrenched behind the appearances. In its educational approach, it took the appearances as a bridge through which the knower (*'arif*) conveys the hidden meanings. In this, it says: *"We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. Have your Lord not made it evident that He is over all things a Witness?"* (41:53).

The appearances here are the signs in the horizons, and the hidden aspects are the signs within the selves. The mind's gates to the signs in the horizons are the senses, and all senses are paired - right and left - with varying strengths between them. Consequently, what the right eye conveys to the mind of the visible object differs from what the left eye conveys. There is no correctness between them. This means that there is a filter in the mind to eliminate what is called the deception of the senses and to arrive at the matter as it truly is.

Many naive minds lack the ability to free themselves from the captivity of the senses and the mind, which are heavily dependent on sensory data. Since the Quran is a book of creed, law, and truth, and there is no path to its truth except through its creed and legislation, and since it is not in the interest of the creed to confront its call with what the apparent sight gives through the eyes, it has come to us with an apparent aspect that matches the illusion given by the senses about the visible world, and a hidden aspect that rests on the clear truth.

By accommodating our illusion, He intended to spare us hardship when there was no need for it, gradually transitioning us, over time, to the truth. To illustrate this, let us consider two examples: one at the level of the illusion of the senses, which is a gross illusion, and the other at the level of the illusion of the mind, which is a subtle illusion.

As for the first example, when the Quran came to call for creed people who saw with their own eyes that the earth is flat, He did not want to impose the hardship of calling them to a new creed in God or to a new idea about the earth that contradicts the obviousness seen by the eye. Instead, He addressed them in context with verses about the earth that did not trouble the invitees regarding what they were accustomed to about it. He said: *“And We built the sky with Our hands, and indeed, We are expanding it. And the earth - we spread it out, and excellent is the preparer”* (51:47-48). He also said: *“Have We not made the earth a resting place? And the mountains as stakes?”* (78:6-7). Further, He said: *“And after that, We crushed it and extracted from it its water and its pasture”* (79:27-28). And He declared: *“And the earth, moreover, We have extended, and cast therein firmly set mountains, and produced therein every kind of balanced thing”* (15:19).

When they entered into the creed and acted upon the Sharia, it became clear to them that the earth is not flat except as the eye sees it. There is no way to reach the truth by rejecting what the eye sees - all rejection stems from our calculation. Similarly, there is no way to reach the truth by completely shadowing or distorting the illusions of the senses. Rather, the right guidance is to make what the eyes see a metaphor for what the mind sees, and what the mind sees a metaphor for what the hearts see, which is the truth. Then, the truth remains the truth moment after moment.

The example that corresponds to the illusion of the mind is given by these two verses: *“Whoever desires to be righteous - let him be upon a right course. And you do not will except that Allah wills”* (6:125).

A diligent worshiper (alsalik), being at the beginning of the path, when he reads these verses, understands from the first part that he has an independent will that can choose to be righteous or to deviate. He does not comprehend from the second part except what the language conveys. Thus, he strives diligently in the path of righteousness. When his experience matures through struggle and perseverance, he comes to a certain knowledge that he does not possess a will separate from Allah's. The discourse regarding him then becomes, at that moment, Allah's statement: *“And you do not will except that Allah wills”* (6:125). He realizes that Allah's statement *“Whoever desires to be righteous”* (6:125) has become abrogated in his case after he has freed himself from the illusion of his mind. This is coupled with a certain understanding of the wisdom behind this noble verse.

Thus, the Quran has presented its meanings in duality: a meaning close at the level of the apparent, and a meaning distant at the level of the hidden. However, the people of opinion did not perceive this, so they made the verses that correspond to the illusions of the senses and the illusions of the minds their foundation, building their knowledge upon them. They strayed greatly and let others astray.

As for the Sufis, they have perceived this and knew that the illusions of the senses and the illusions of the mind must be eliminated through the methods of exalted worship, which lead them to the stages of certainty that are veiled by veils of darkness and veils of light.

The Quran and Determinism

"...And We send down from the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it increases the wrongdoing people only in loss" (17:82). Among the wrongdoing people are those who rely solely on the mind to understand the truths of religion, placing all their reliance on it.

The Quran has established and emphasized the concentration of understanding determinism in the mind through its vast array of verses. When the mind's perceptions settle in the depths of the heart, it becomes apparent that there is not a single letter in the Quran that does not call for the unity of the actor (*wahdat al-fa'il*). The unity of the actor is the foundation and basis of *tawhid* (monotheism), and by perfecting the unity of the actor, all other levels of *tawhid* follow. The matter of determinism is this unity of the actor.

Let us consider a set of these verses: *"It is He who rides you through the land and the sea, and when you are in the ship, He causes it to glide with a good wind, and they rejoice therein, and when a storm comes over them, they assume they are surrounded by death, but it is not death; and they call upon Allah, sincere to Him in religion, 'If You should save us from this, we will surely be among the grateful. But when He saves them, at once they commit injustice upon the earth without right. O mankind, your injustice is only against yourselves - [being merely] the enjoyment of worldly life. Then to Us is your return, and We will inform you about what you used to do.'" (10:22).*

This is the clearest statement about Allah's divine management of people. It subtly points to the cause of heedlessness, which is the breadth of ingenuity. When we become absorbed in our affairs and our ingenuity in

solving our problems leads us to success, this success contributes to the causes of heedlessness, making us believe we have a chosen will. The ingenuity on land is broader than that at sea. Therefore, Allah says: *"It is He who rides you through the land and the sea"* (10:22), then He goes on to detail the terrors of the sea that reveal our limited ingenuity. At that point, *"They call upon Allah, sincere to Him in religion, 'If You should save us from this, we will surely be among the grateful'"* (10:22). When their supplication reaches them, Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, saves them. Then He recounts to us what was in their affairs, saying: *"But when He saved them, they went forth in the land in unjust ways."* (10:23). It means that when they escaped the terrors of the sea, set foot on dry land, and felt capable of managing, their heedlessness returned, and they claimed it was by will and choice. This reminds us that the One who guides us on land is the same One who guides us in the sea, so we must not be among the heedless.

Allah says:

"Indeed, I have relied upon Allah, my Lord and your Lord. There is no creature except that He holds its forelock. Indeed, my Lord is on a straight path." (11:56)

Allah says:

"Do they seek other than the religion of Allah while to Him have submitted whoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or by compulsion, and to Him they will be returned?" (3:83)

Allah says:

"Or have they set up partners for Allah who created like His creation so that the creation would resemble them? Say, Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Prevailing." (13:16)

Allah says:

"All seven heavens and the earth and whatever is in them exalt Him. And there is not a thing except that it exalts Allah by His praise, but you do not understand their exaltation. Indeed, He is ever Forbearing, Forgiving." (17:44)

Allah says:

"And Allah has created you and what you do," (37:96) meaning He has created you and your deeds.

Allah says:

"No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We bring it into being. Indeed, that, for Allah, is easy. So that you may not grieve over what has escaped you and not exult in pride over what He has given you. And Allah does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful - those who are stingy and enjoin upon people stinginess. And whoever turns away, then indeed, Allah is the Self-Sufficient, the Praiseworthy." (57:22-24)

In all these verses, there is profound educational wisdom, benefiting those who have certainty about the matter of determinism.

What is Determinism?

The first thing to emphasize is that Allah does not lead people to sin but rather guides them to what is right. Allah says on behalf of Hud: *“Indeed, I have relied upon Allah. My Lord and your Lord. There is no creature but that He holds its forelock. Indeed, my Lord is on a straight path”* (11:6). This means that Allah guides every creature on the straight path, each being guided both in its state and its destiny, as long as it obeys Allah. Nothing in existence escapes this obedience. However, Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, wants the obedient to be aware of this obedience. Thus, He has established a clear line between guidance and misguidance - those below it are misguided, and those above it are guided. Here, the consideration of faith and disbelief comes into play.

The difference between faith and disbelief is not a difference of kind but rather a difference in degree. A believer knows more than a disbeliever - or rather, the believer obeys Allah while being aware of it, and the disbeliever obeys Allah while being ignorant of it. Allah, the Exalted, says: *“Indeed, Allah knows whatever you associate with Him, and He is the Almighty, the Wise”* (4:116). He knows this, but they do not know it, and He wants them to know. *“Are those who know equal to those who do not know?”* (39:9).

Allah’s will is not disobeyed, but Allah wants to transfer creation from obedience to what He wills, to obedience to what He is pleased with. For He, Glorified and Exalted, willed something that He did not find pleasing. He, the Exalted, says: *“Indeed, if you disbelieve, indeed, Allah is Free from need of you. And if you should be believers, then indeed, Allah is Affectionate and Merciful”* (47:38). It is as if He says, if you disbelieve, you have not disbelieved against Allah’s might, but rather, you have

disbelieved in His will, but He does not accept from you what He has willed for you.

Contentment (*rida*) is the highest point of will (*irada*), or it is the pinnacle of a pyramid with its base being will. Will exists at the level of duality, and contentment exists at the level of individuality. In will, disbelief and faith enter, but in contentment, only faith enters.

The formative matter is above will. Its peak is contentment and its base is will, forming a complete pyramid. The elaboration of this comes at the end of the Surat Yasin, as He, the Most Glorious of speakers, says: *“His command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is”* (36:82). The legislative matter represents the pinnacle of the formative command, where its base is will. When Allah says: *“And when We intend to destroy a village, We command its affluent to forsake it. But they defiantly disobey in the land, so We seized them for their sins and destroyed them completely”* (7:82), He means the formative command at the level of its pyramid’s base, which is will. When He says: *“And when they commit an immorality, they say, ‘We found our fathers doing it, and Allah has ordered us to do it.’ Say, ‘Allah does not order immorality. Do you say about Allah that which you do not know?’”* (7:83), He means the legislative command.

The meaning of *“Indeed, Allah does not order immorality”* (7:83) is that Allah does not send messengers and support them with miracles, and then their laws advocate immorality. *“It is not for any human being that Allah should give him the Scripture and authority and prophethood, and then he would say to the people, ‘Be servants to me rather than to Allah,’ but [instead], be pious, for you were taught the Scripture and wisdom”* (6:121). *“But be devoted to the Lord because of your teaching of the Scripture and*

your studying of it. And He would never command you to take the angels and the prophets as lords. Would He command you to disbelief after you have submitted as Muslims?" (3:79-87).

The legislative command is a call to take people from Allah's will to His contentment. For this reason, He sent messengers and revealed scriptures, saying in them: *"Indeed, Allah commands justice and the doing of good, and giving to relatives; and forbids immorality, and bad conduct, and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded"* (16:90).

Although the legislative command is a unity when compared to the will, upon close examination, it also has a pyramidal shape. Its base is the collective Sharia, and its peak is the individual Sharia. The peak of this pyramid of the legislative command serves as the base for the pyramid of the creational command, the peak of which is with Allah, *'where' there is no 'where'*. To this fine, exceedingly delicate peak, the reference is in His saying, *"Indeed, all things We created with predestination. And Our command is but one, as the twinkling of an eye."* (54:49-50)

Thus, the pyramid of beings appears clearly. Its pinnacle is the first descent to the level of the name (*al-ism*), which is the level of individual legislation (*Sharia fardiyah*), and its base is the final descent to the rank of action, which is the rank of multiplicity in living beings and elements. The lowest of these is smoke, which is water vapor from which things and living beings are created. He, the Exalted, said: *"Then He directed Himself to the heaven while it was smoke and said to it and to the earth, 'Come willingly or by compulsion.' They said, 'We have come willingly.' And He completed them as seven heavens in two days and inspired in each heaven its command; and We adorned the nearest heaven with lamps and*

as protection. That is the determination of the Exalted in Might, the Knowing.” (41:11-12)

Even closer than that to the base of the pyramid of creation is His saying about this smoke: *“Have those who disbelieved not considered that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and We separated them and made from water every living thing? Then will they not believe?” (21:30)*

When the peak of this pyramid was with God, its base was far from Him - not in terms of physical distance, but in terms of degree. The peak of the pyramid of creation, representing the level of individual law, exists in the realm of the divine (*Malakut*). The base of the pyramid exists in the physical realm (*Mulk*). The realm of *Malakut* dominates the realm of *Mulk*, such that the latter serves as a mere shadow of the former. The realm of *Mulk* is the realm of the visible, while the realm of *Malakut* is the realm of the unseen, or in other words, the realm of *Mulk* is the sensory world, characterized by multiplicity, whereas the realm of *Malakut* is the world of meanings, characterized by unity. This does not mean that the *Malakut* realm lacks tangible aspects; rather, its tangibility is so subtle that it can only be perceived by the seventh sense.

The Sultan of the Lovers, Ibn al-Farid (*a Sufi poet*), meant this delicate subtlety when he said: *“And the subtlety of vessels in reality follows the subtlety of meanings, and meanings are nourished by it.”* This is because every meaning has a perceptible form, and every reality has a corresponding Sharia. Thus, every meaning or reality takes on a pyramidal shape, with a pinnacle and a base. The finer the pinnacle, the finer the base correspondingly. Or, if you prefer, the more subtle the meaning, the more refined the perception.

Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, says: *“Exalted is He in whose hand is the kingdom of all things, and to Him you will be returned”* (57:23). The kingdom of all things is its individuality. *“And to Him you will be returned”* confirms this understanding because returning to Allah is bringing the attributes of the servant closer to the attributes of the Lord. It is as though creation is journeying toward its individuality through its collectiveness, from multiplicity within unity, by virtue of *Tawhid* (monotheism).

He, the Exalted, says: *“And (I swear) by the fig, and the olive, and Mount Sinai, and this safe house, We have certainly created man in the best of stature; Then We returned him to the lowest of the low, Except for those who believe and do righteous deeds, for they will have a reward uninterrupted. So, what yet causes you to deny the religion? Is not Allah the most just of judges?”* (95:1-8).

We have mentioned that the apparent meaning of the Qur'an pertains to the signs of the horizons, while its hidden meaning pertains to the signs of the human self. Honor, in the sight of Allah, is for humans, not for the heavens or the earth. Indeed, the ant is more honored by Allah than the sun, for the ant has entered the cycle of life and death, a distinction not granted to the sun, even though it yearns for it and strives toward it with great effort. For this reason, we will not discuss the apparent meaning of these verses; whoever seeks it may find it in any of the books of interpretation of the Qur'an, as it is readily available.

Allah swore by Himself when He swore by the powers of the human self: *“O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one self and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed, Allah is ever, over you, an Observer.”* (4:1) This one self from

which we were created is none other than His own self, blessed and exalted is He.

“The fig” symbolizes the self (*nafs*), and *“the olive”* symbolizes the spirit (*ruh*), and *“Mount Sinai”* symbolizes the mind (*aql*), and *“this secure city”* symbolizes the heart (*qalb*). We have previously mentioned that the mind is the result of the insemination of the self and the spirit. Here, we say that the mind is the vanguard of the heart and its guide to knowledge. It is like a blind man's cane, with which he feels his way, or, if you prefer, you may say that the mind serves the heart in the same way that the senses serve it.

When the mind strengthens, matures, and begins to receive its perceptions from all the senses at every moment, it becomes the anticipated sixth sense. This is because life began with a single sense, then advanced - over immense spans of time - to the second sense, then the third, then the fourth, and then the fifth. It continues on its path toward the sixth sense and then the seventh sense, which marks the end of the journey. Beyond that, progress will occur not through an increase in the number of senses but through the development and refinement of these seven senses.

The sixth sense, then, is the mind when it matures and becomes capable of tasting, smelling, touching, seeing, and hearing everything, all at once and in a single moment. When the mind reaches this level, it recognizes its own limits and understands that its place is behind the heart (*qalb*), not in front of it. It hears, and tries to obey, the words of the knower Aljunayd: *“And place as your leader one whom you once led.”* However, obeying this command is among the most difficult things for the mind, and it only happens a tick after a tick and at the peak of perfected spiritual striving.

Even then, the time spent in this state is brief, for at this point comes the address from the “*Khidr of the heart*” to the “*Moses of the mind*”: “*Indeed, you will never be able to have patience with me.*” (18:67)

But this brief moment, which every individual's “*Moses*” can endure with his “*Khidr*”, weighs as heavily as eternity itself, for it exists outside of time. It is the station of “*The sight did not swerve, nor did it transgress*” (53:17), and in it, the diligent worshiper beholds the One who is not contained by time.

This is the station of direct witnessing the Supreme Being of the self, with all intermediaries fell. In that moment, the heart attains the level of the seventh sense, and in this state, the diligent worshiper becomes singular (*witr*).

Then, the mind will soon realize its weakness, lose awareness of its own limits, and advance ahead of the heart. At that point, the worshiper becomes dual, and they are veiled by the lights of the mind from witnessing the Supreme Being. He only witness its manifestations in the stage of the name, or the stage of the attribute, or the stage of the act - the lowest of which is the stage of the unity of the doer.

The diligent worshiper in the stages of being veiled by the light is one who carries hidden polytheism (*shirk khafi*). Such a person adheres to an individual shari'a, and thus, he remains within his realm of *malakut*. His saying, Exalted is He, in the previous verses: “*Indeed, We created man in the best of stature*” (95:4) is a reference to his creation in the realm of the *Malakut* (the spiritual kingdom), which is the apex of the pyramid of creation in the world of command (*alam al-amr*). And His saying: “*Then We returned him to the lowest of the low*” (95:5) is a reference to his

creation in the realm of the *Mulk* (the physical dominion), which is the base of the pyramid of creation in the world of creation. *“Unquestionably, His is the creation and the command”* (7:54). The realm of creation is also what He referred to in His saying: *“Indeed, all things We created with predestination. And Our command is but one, like a glance of the eye”* (54:49-50). The story of creation in the best of stature, followed by the return to the lowest of the low, is narrated through these verses.

“When your Lord said to the angels, ‘Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority.’ They said, ‘Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?’ He said, ‘Indeed, I know that which you do not know.’ And He taught Adam the names - all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, ‘Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful.’ They said, ‘Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing, the Wise.’ He said, ‘O Adam, inform them of their names.’ And when he had informed them of their names, He said, ‘Did I not tell you that I know the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth? And I know what you reveal and what you have concealed.’ And [mention] when We said to the angels, ‘Prostrate before Adam’; so they prostrated, except for Iblis. He refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers. And We said, ‘O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat therefrom in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will. But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers.’ But Satan caused them to slip out of it and removed them from that [condition] in which they had been. And We said, ‘Go down, [all of you], as enemies to one another, and you will have upon the earth a place of settlement and provision for a time.’ Then Adam received from his Lord words, and He accepted his repentance. Indeed, it is He who is the

Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful. We said, 'Go down from it, all of you. And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve. But those who disbelieve and deny Our signs - those will be companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally.'" (2:30-39)

Adam was created in the realm of command, perfect, knowledgeable, and free. His freedom was a gift for which he did not pay a price. So, God tested him to see how he would handle it, saying: *"O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat therefrom in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will. But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers."* (2:35)

The tree he was forbidden from was, inwardly, his own self (*nafs*), and outwardly, his wife. He did not manage his freedom well by prioritizing God's command over his own desires. Instead, he chose himself over his Lord, disobeyed His command, and had intercourse with his wife.

As a result, his freedom was revoked, for he failed to handle it wisely. He was sent down to face the consequences of his disobedience and to begin reclaiming his freedom by paying its price, so it would become precious to him, and he would not squander it again. For freedom that is not paid for is not valued, nor is it defended.

Exalted is He, who warns His beloved Muhammad about Adam's condition: *"So exalted is Allah, the Sovereign, the Truth. And, do not hasten with [recitation of] the Qur'an before its revelation is completed to you, and say, 'My Lord, increase me in knowledge.'* And We had already taken a promise from Adam before, but he forgot; and We found not in him determination." (20:114-115) *"And We had already taken a promise from*

Adam” means that We made a covenant with him that he would manage his freedom well by always choosing Allah. *“But he forgot, and We found not in him determination”* - he forgot Our covenant and lacked the resolve to fulfill the obligations of freedom. He succumbed to the temptation of his wife and the desires of his self (*nafs*), misusing his freedom, so We revoked it. *“And thus do We deal with the criminals.”* (77:18)

When Adam disobeyed his Lord due to forgetfulness and weakness to align his desires, Iblis (*Satan*) deliberately disobeyed and became arrogant. Allah recounted to us his experience:

“When your Lord said to the angels, ‘Indeed, I am creating a human being from clay. So when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My spirit, then fall down to him in prostration.’ So the angels prostrated - all of them entirely - except Iblis; he was arrogant and became of the disbelievers. Allah said, ‘O Iblis, what prevented you from prostrating to that which I created with My hands? Were you arrogant, or were you among the haughty?’ He said, ‘I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay.’ Allah said, ‘Then get out of it, for indeed, you are expelled. And indeed, upon you is My curse until the Day of Recompense.’ He said, ‘My Lord, then relieve me until the Day they are resurrected.’ Allah said, ‘So indeed, you are of those relieved until the Day of the time well-known.’ He said, ‘By Your might, I will surely mislead them all except, among them, Your chosen servants.’ Allah said, ‘The truth [is My oath], and the truth I say - that I will surely fill Hell with you and those of them that follow you, all together.’” (38:71-85)

Iblis was a worshiper, but he was arrogant, and thus he was veiled by his self from his Lord, rendering his worship of no benefit to him. Iblis was also knowledgeable, but his knowledge was only outward knowledge, not

accompanied by inner knowledge. For this reason, he was neither pious nor wise. He swears by the might of Allah, saying: *“By Your might, I will surely mislead them all”* (38:82), yet he arrogantly refuses to obey Allah.

And because he lacked piety, he did not think to seek forgiveness when he sinned. Instead, he persisted in his disobedience and sought respite to find an opportunity to lead others astray, saying: *“My Lord, then relieve me until the Day they are resurrected”* (15:36). When Allah said, *“So indeed, you are of those relieved until the Day of the time well-known”* (38:80-81), Iblis responded: *“By Your might, I will surely mislead them all, except Your chosen servants among them”* (38:82-83).

The final verse among His signs of knowledge is that He knew that the sincere servants of Allah hold no power over Him, but His knowledge, as we have said, is apparent without piety in the inner.

As for Adam and Eve, they said: *“Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers.”* (7:23) Whatever the matter may be, they all disobeyed the command of their Lord, and through sinning, they became harsh and dense, not harmonized with that gentle environment. Thus, their heavy weight descended from the ladder of ascension to the pinnacle, which is referred to in the verses: *“By the fig”*. Their order in descent was Iblis first, followed by Eve, then Adam.

In their new environment, they were surrounded by evils from every side. However, it was not long before they adapted and forgot much of the perfection they had once experienced - except for a little. Allah answered the prayer of Iblis, granting him respite until the Day they are resurrected.

So he remained in the *"lowest of the low"*, without any ascension, because he did not seek ascension; he only sought respite.

Allah also answered the prayer of Adam and Eve, so they did not remain in the *"lowest of the low"* for long - only until forgiveness and mercy overtook them, which they had sought at the moment of their disobedience to their Lord's command. *"Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good."* (7:56)

One might think, when reading the preceding verses of Surah *"By the Fig"*, specifically His saying, *"Except those who believe and do righteous deeds, for they will have a reward uninterrupted"* (95:6), that the exception here means they were not returned to the *"lowest of the low."* This is a mistake. The truth is that this verse and the one before it conveys the same meaning as His saying: *"And there is none of you except he will come to it. This is a decree that your Lord has made inevitable. Then We will save those who feared Allah and leave the wrongdoers within it, kneeling."* (19:71-72). Thus, Adam and Eve were saved from the *"lowest of the low"*, and their ascension began through forgiveness and mercy, while Iblis was left as he was, for he did not consider change.

His saying: *"So what yet causes you to deny the Recompense?"* (95:7) Recompense (*al-din*) refers to reward, exchange, and retribution. It alludes to the law of retribution, which we have said is the foundation upon which Islam is built - both in its reality and its law. This reference aims to guide us to understand that humanity was returned from the station of *"the best of stature"* to the depth of *"the lowest of the low"* by the rule of the law of retribution, as a just and appropriate recompense.

His saying: *"Is not Allah the most just of judges?"* (95:8) is an affirmation of the law of retribution and a reminder of the wisdom inherent within it.

Forgiveness to Adam and Eve

How was Adam forgiven? Allah commanded the angels to prostrate to Adam, and they obeyed. He also commanded Iblis to prostrate to Adam, but he disobeyed. As for the angels, they obeyed the legislative command, as they are *"those who do not disobey Allah in what He commands them and do what they are commanded"* (66:6). As for Iblis, he disobeyed the legislative command, but through his disobedience, he fulfilled the creative command (*amr takwini*), for he had no choice but to comply with it.

Prostration signifies the subjugation (*taskhir*) of the angels to Adam, as well as the subjugation of Iblis, though the two types of subjugation differ. The subjugation of the angels is assistance in goodness and guidance to truth, while the subjugation of Iblis is a sign of evil and a leading astray from truth. Adam is torn between the pull of goodness from above and the pull of evil from below, yet in both states, he journeys toward Allah.

"And He has bestowed upon you His blessings, both apparent and hidden" (31:20). The apparent blessings are well-being, while the hidden blessings are afflictions. All of these are forms of mercy, even though human selves tend to recoil from afflictions and find comfort in well-being. However, Allah, exalted is He, says: *"Fighting has been enjoined upon you while it is hateful to you. But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."* (2:216) All misfortune lies in the deficiency of knowledge.

If you envision the first human being at the threshold between animality and humanity, and you envision him as the head of the arrow of evolution, then you have imagined Adam, the vicegerent (*khalifa*) on earth. He is in a stage of his development stemming from distant beginnings, but it is a transformative stage that he entered through a unique leap. This leap resulted from the accumulation of various virtues he gathered during his long and arduous evolution from those distant beginnings.

This leap is what is expressed in His saying, Exalted is He: *"Then We developed him into another creation"* (23:14) from the noble verses: *"And We created man from an extract of clay. Then We placed him as a sperm-drop in a firm lodging. Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump [of flesh], and We made [from] the lump, bones, and We covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him into another creation. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators."* (23:12-14)

This is the same as what is expressed in His saying, Exalted is He: *"And I breathed into him of My spirit"* (38:72). From the two noble verses: *"And [mention] when your Lord said to the angels, 'I will create a human being out of clay from an altered black mud. So, when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My spirit, then fall down to him in prostration.'" (15:28-29)*

"So when I have proportioned him" refers, with miraculous conciseness, to the series of evolutionary stages that began with water vapor, when the heavens and the earth were a single cloud, and to the point where the place became ready for the divine spirit to be breathed into it.

We have said that the divine spirit is *"the will for freedom"* that crowned the *"will for life"* and suddenly elevated the human being above the higher

animals. The *will for freedom* did not appear suddenly out of nothing; rather, it emerged after a long dormancy. It is like the cream churned from the milk of life through struggle.

We previously discussed it and mentioned that it entered into a struggle with the *will for life*, and that the mind is the result of this encounter.

The *will for life* grew from the earth, with the factors of the heavens present within it, though they are weaker than the factors of the earth. The *will for freedom* originated from the earth, but the factors of the heavens within it are strong. Through it, the human figure rose to stand upright on two legs, dedicating them to walking, thus freeing the hands for tasks more closely related to the mind.

This will also enable the head to turn easily and smoothly to observe its surroundings and what is above, allowing the human to see the sun, the moon, and the stars, and to walk upright, guided on the paths of the earth and the ways of the heavens: "*Then is one who walks fallen on his face better guided, or one who walks upright on a straight path?*" (67:22).

Adam, in existence, is torn between the angels from above and the devils from below. He is the isthmus (*barzakh*) of all existence, and in that, he is also the mind of existence. Allah, Blessed and Exalted is He, refers to him when He says: "*He released the two seas, meeting [side by side]; between them is a barrier [so] neither of them transgresses.*" (55:19-20)

The two seas here are: the sea of the higher spirits, which radiated with obedience, and the sea of the lower spirits, which darkened with disobedience.

The mind of Adam, within Adam, is torn between the "*will for life*" - which is the self, from below - and the "*will for freedom*" - which is the spirit, from above. He is also an isthmus, and Allah, Exalted is He, refers to him in the aforementioned noble verses. He is their inner meaning, while Adam is their outward meaning.

The self is governed by the law of seeking pleasure by any means and avoiding pain by any means as well. For this reason, it complies with the creative command, but the legislative command (*amr tashri'i*) weighs heavily upon it, as it imposes limits. In this, it resembles Iblis.

The spirit is governed by the law of permissible and forbidden. It seeks from the self (*nafs*) to abstain from immediate pleasure if it is forbidden, in pursuit of delayed permissible pleasure, and to avoid the pain that results from indulging in forbidden pleasure, whether this pain is immediate or delayed.

For this reason, the spirit rises from compliance with the creative command (*amr takwini*) to compliance with the legislative command. In this, it resembles the angels.

Adam, in this primitive stage of his development, was told: "*Eat from this, and do not eat from that*" - that is, he was told: "*This is forbidden (haram), and this is permissible (halal)*." If he could overcome the self (*nafs*) and its command toward evil, and abstain from what is forbidden, he would have managed his freedom well and would deserve to have it increased. Allah, Exalted is He, says: "*Is the reward for good [anything] but good?*" (55:60). The reward for goodness (*ihsan*) is multiplied, and this is pure grace.

Listen to His saying: *"Whoever comes with a good deed will have ten times the like thereof [to his credit], and whoever comes with an evil deed will not be recompensed except the like thereof; and they will not be wronged."* (6:160). It may be multiplied many times over, or even without limit. Listen to Him, Blessed and Exalted is He, when He says: *"The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] that sprouts seven ears; in every ear is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing."* (2:261) Here, the single grain produced seven ears, and in each ear were a hundred grains, making those seven hundred times. Then He said, beyond that: *"And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills"* - as if it could be seven thousand times or seventy thousand times. And when He said: *"And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing"* (2:261), it transcended numbers and entered into absolute abundance.

If he could not overcome it (the self), weakened before its temptations, and indulged in fulfilling its forbidden desires, then he mismanaged his freedom and thereby exposed it to confiscation. If his misconduct violates any right of the rights of the community, his freedom would be confiscated in accordance with the law of retribution in the Shari'ah. Its proof from the Book of Allah is His saying, Blessed and Exalted is He: *"And We ordained for them in it: a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and for wounds [legal] retribution. But if anyone remits [this] as charity, it is an expiation for him. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed - then it is they who are the wrongdoers."* (5:45)

If his misconduct affects only himself without impacting others, his freedom is confiscated in accordance with the law of retribution in reality. Its proof

from the Book of Allah is His saying, Blessed and Exalted is He: "*So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.*" (99:7-8)

Let no one think that the principle of reciprocity in Shari'ah was always applied with the same strictness as stated in the Torah, later affirmed by the Gospel, and ultimately confirmed and endorsed by the Quran. This is because it is a law that evolves with the evolution of human society and is influenced by the level of precision in the human mind and its ability to emulate the law of reality, which is its origin. The law of reality has always been, and remains, in ultimate precision - it leaves nothing, small or great, without accounting for it.

The precision that belongs to the law of retribution in reality, which many of its aspects surpass in the law of retribution in Shari'ah, is evident in how both laws work together to confiscate the freedom of one who fails to fulfill the obligations of freedom. This is done without there being two punishments for a single transgression at the same level of punishment.

The closest laws of retribution in Shari'ah to the precision of the laws of retribution in reality are the *hudud* (prescribed punishments), which are four: adultery (*zina*), slander (*qadhf*), theft (*sariqah*), and highway robbery (*qat' al-tariq*). These return to two fundamental principles: the preservation of honor and the preservation of wealth. These two principles were the first two laws to emerge in primitive human society, and they were instrumental in making society possible.

Following these *hudud* is the punishment for intoxication (*had al-sukr*), and then come the laws of retribution such as a life for a life and an eye for an eye.

The recompense for an evil act is to counterbalance it by placing pain against the pleasure experienced by the self. The purpose of this is to balance its powers so that they become moderate and do not deviate, driving the self to indulge in pleasure without the guidance of an illuminating book.

How was Adam forgiven?

The answer is: He was forgiven by being granted the right to err. This means that his freedom was not confiscated permanently, with a guardian appointed over him until the end of eternity, as was done with Iblis. Instead, he was permitted to reclaim it and begin exercising what he could bear of it. In this, he operates between error and correctness.

Every time he manages his freedom well, he is granted more of it. If he mismanages it, he bears the consequences of his mismanagement through a retributive punishment corresponding to the sin. This punishment aims to sharpen the powers of his self, enabling it to become more capable than before of bearing the responsibility of freedom at the level where it previously showed weakness.

Moreover, this punishment reflects divine grace as befits Him. He rewards a good deed with ten times its like, and He may multiply it to the extent that it becomes beyond measure. He does not punish a bad deed except with its equivalent, and He may pardon it, or even transform it into a good deed, and then multiply it thereafter to unlimited multiples.

He, Blessed and Exalted is He, says: *"And those who do not invoke with Allah another deity or kill the self which Allah has forbidden, except by right, and do not commit unlawful sexual intercourse. And whoever should*

do that will meet a penalty. Multiplied for him is the punishment on the Day of Resurrection, and he will abide therein humiliated, except for those who repent, believe, and do righteous work. For them, Allah will replace their evil deeds with good. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful." (25:68-70)

And Adam was inspired with words, which he received and recited, and they became a means for his repentance and subsequent forgiveness: *"And Adam received from his Lord words, and He accepted his repentance. Indeed, it is He who is the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful." (2:37)* Those words were: *"Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers." (7:23)*

This is the forgiveness granted to Adam after he became a rational human being. Adam spent an immeasurable span of time before reaching this higher rank. Allah, Exalted is He, said regarding this: *"Has there [not] come upon man a period of time when he was not a thing [even] mentioned? Indeed, We created man from a sperm-drop mixture that We may try him, and We made him hearing and seeing. Indeed, We guided him to the way, be he grateful or be he ungrateful." (76:1-3)* This means that there was a distant era in which Adam was not obligated nor held accountable, as he had not yet attained the level of the mind.

We have previously discussed this and mentioned that Allah has directed the course of life, from its emergence between water and clay until it reached the level of the mind, in a manner that was semi direct. Its governing law at that time was the law of retribution in reality. Its proof from the Book of Allah, as previously confirmed, is found in the two noble verses: *"So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it." (99:7-8)* This is a law

that always works to develop goodness and erase evil, guiding life toward the compassionate care of Allah.

This progression through the stages of closeness is the forgiveness granted to Adam, from the point of being a mixed sperm-drop until he became a responsible human being. So what was Adam before this? And how was he forgiven? Listen: *"And We certainly created man from an extract of clay. Then We placed him as a sperm-drop in a firm lodging."* (23:12-13)

Before Adam became a sperm-drop mixed with clay - a mixed sperm-drop - he was a particle of water vapor, which is the origin of life, as Allah, Blessed and Exalted is He, informs us: *"Have those who disbelieved not considered that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and We separated them and made from water every living thing? Then will they not believe?"* (21:30) This particle is the origin of the extract of clay.

Indeed, he was forgiven during this stage through this direct determinism, by willful compulsion, which drove life toward Allah and propelled it toward His proximity. Thus, it ascended the stages and reached the heights. The law governing this divine will is also the law of retribution in reality.

This forgiveness granted to Adam in its various levels is itself determinism. People are determined from the stage of elements to the stage of life, from the stage of primitive life to the stage of advanced, refined, and complex life, and from this to the stage of collective freedom with the entry of the mind into the scene. Then, from the stage of collective freedom to the stage of absolute individual freedom. This determinism continues indefinitely, as it is a journey toward Allah in His absoluteness.

Determinism is Absolute Goodness

With the entry of the mind into the scene, the law of retribution in the *Shari'ah* emerged. It is a crude law when compared to the law of retribution in reality, but it becomes more refined and perfected as the mind strengthens and matures. This is a newly occurring law that reflects the newly created human will. Its purpose is to achieve full alignment with the ancient law, which reflects the eternal divine will. Yet, how far it is from achieving that alignment!

Human beings are determined from remoteness to closeness, from ignorance to knowledge, from multiplicity to unity, from evil to goodness, from limitation to infinity, and from restriction to freedom. Determinism, from its beginning, is mercy in the form of justice, and it is greater than justice - for *"mercy is above justice."* We have previously elaborated on this.

Determinism is freedom because it is based on the exercise of action with perceived freedom at a certain level. If the individual manages well, their freedom is increased, and their level rises through experience and practice. If they do not manage well, they bear the consequences of their mismanagement under a wise law that aims to enhance their ability to manage well. Thus, it is as if the human being is determined from determinism to free choice, for a person is free in what they can manage well and determined in what they cannot manage well, across the levels of thought, speech, and action.

There is a sacred saying (*hadith qudusi*) in which Allah, Exalted is He, spoke to His prophet Dawud: *"O Dawud! You want, and I want, but only what I want will happen. If you surrender to what I want, I will suffice you*

in what you want. But if you do not surrender to what I want, I will exhaust you in what you want, and in the end, only what I want will happen." The matter was made clear from the outset when He said at the beginning of the hadith: *"Only what I want will happen,"* indicating that the will of Allah is what prevails.

And when he said, *'If you surrender to what I want, I will suffice you in what you want,'* it indicates that a person's will becomes effective only if it aligns with Allah's will. If you ask, does a person have the ability to will what God wills? We say that a person only has the ability to will what Allah has granted him the power to will, for He, Almighty, says, *'And they do not encompass any of His knowledge except what He wills.'*(2:255). He wills for us, at every moment, to encompass something of His knowledge, and this is indicated by His saying, *'Every day He is in a matter.'* (55:29). His 'day' is not the twenty-four hours we know, but rather a unit of time of manifestation, which may be divided into parts as small as one-billionth of a second, so much so that time itself seems to transcend time. All of this occurs according to the capacity for reception that Allah has instilled in the place.

Since the limitation on the capacity for reception is subject only to the wisdom of the Absolute, it is a limitation within freedom and a constriction within vastness. Because of this absolute mercy, we have come to feel that we possess free will. This feeling imposes upon us the responsibility to manage our free will well. The proper management of free will is to will Allah and not will anything other than Him. If we do so with complete certainty - through thought, speech, and action - He grants us further freedom of will. If we mismanage our free will by willing something other

than Him, He confiscates our freedom in a way that teaches us how to manage it better in the future.

The purpose of wisdom is to prepare the place to receive divine grace. All of this takes place with gentle care, such that our sense of self is not disturbed, nor is our existence erased. We do not choose ourselves over Allah except due to our ignorance, and ignorance is not an unchangeable affliction upon us. We move out of it into knowledge every moment. If you ask, *"Why were we not created knowledgeable, thereby spared the evil of ignorance, the mismanagement of freedom, and the punishments that result from such mismanagement?"*

We answer: Punishment is the price of freedom, because freedom entails responsibility, and responsibility is a personal commitment to bear the consequences of actions, whether they are right or wrong. Allah created beings who are knowledgeable and do not err, but they are not free. The lack of their freedom results in the incompleteness of their perfection. These are the angels, and Allah preferred humans over them due to humans' capacity for error and correction - or, more precisely, their ability to learn after ignorance. This is referenced in the statement of the Prophet, peace be upon him: *"If you did not sin and seek forgiveness, Allah would bring a people who sin and seek forgiveness, and He would forgive them."*

Thus, those who err and seek forgiveness are the focal point of Allah's attention in existence, because through this process, they progress toward freedom - and ultimately absolute freedom, which is Allah's grand attribute. Every constrained being is destined for freedom, and in that lies absolute freedom; every ignorant being is destined for knowledge, and in that lies absolute knowledge as well. Allah, Blessed and Exalted is He, says: *"O mankind, indeed you are laboring toward your Lord with [great] exertion*

and will meet Him." (84:6) And He says: *"Then did you think that We created you uselessly and that to Us you would not be returned?"* (23:115) Meeting Allah and returning to Him is not achieved by traversing distances but rather by bringing attributes (*sifat*) closer to attributes.

For this reason, we have affirmed that determinism is absolute goodness. In its essence, it is goodness in the present and goodness in the final end. A time will come when ignorance will come to an end, by the grace of Allah through determinism. This was referenced by the Prophet, peace be upon him, when he said: *"If you relied upon Allah as He should truly be relied upon, He would provide for you as He provides for the birds, and you would know knowledge after which there is no ignorance. But no one has known that!"* They asked, *"Not even you?"* He replied, *"Not even me!"* They said, *"We never thought that the prophets fall short in anything!"* He said, *"Allah is too majestic and too great for anyone to attain what is with Him!"*

The less ignorance and the more knowledge, the less evil, and punishment is lifted from those who were punished in the area that falls under their knowledge. Punishment is not a fundamental principle in religion; rather, it is a temporary necessity accompanying immature development. It motivates progress toward higher stages until the individual learns what makes punishment unnecessary. At that point, its burden is lifted, and the self rises to its station of honor.

There is no self that will not emerge from the torment of the Fire and enter Paradise, once it has fulfilled its prescribed term in the Fire. This term may be long or short, depending on each self's need for the experience. However, every measure has an appointed time, and every appointed time comes to an end. The greatest error is the belief of those who think that punishment in the Fire is eternal, for such a belief makes evil a

fundamental principle of existence, and it is not so. If punishment were to become eternal, it would represent the vengeance of a vindictive self, devoid of wisdom - and Allah is far above such a notion, Exalted and Great is He.

Decree (*qada*) and Destiny (*qadr*)

There is something referred to as the secret of destiny, which represents the fine edge of decree. This is alluded to in His saying, Exalted is He: "Indeed, We created everything with predestination. And Our command is but one, like a glance of the eye." (54:49-50) Decree is this singular command that transcends time and space, as indicated by the phrase "like a glance of the eye." Destiny, on the other hand, is the execution of decree, manifesting it within the confines of time and space, through gradual progression, delay, and development.

Decree (qada) and destiny (qadar) are also referenced in another verse, where Allah, Exalted is He, says: "*Allah eliminates what He wills or confirms, and with Him is the Mother of the Book.*" (13:39). His saying, "*Allah eliminates what He wills or confirms,*" refers to destiny (*qadar*) and is an allusion to the process of development through the successive transformations of created forms. We have previously mentioned that life cycles through forms in pursuit of being constant in form, just as it is constant in essence - but how distant that goal is!

His saying, "*And with Him is the Mother of the Book,*" refers to decree (*qada*), which is the secret of destiny (*sirr al-qadar*).

These concepts are also referenced in His saying, Exalted is He: "*And there is not a thing but that with Us are its treasures, and We do not send*

it down except according to a known measure." (15:21). His words, "*We do not send it down except according to a known measure,*" refer to destiny (*qadr*), while His words, "*And there is not a thing but that with Us are its treasures,*" refer to decree (*qada*), which also implies the secret of destiny (*sirr al-qadr*).

Destiny is a dual realm, encompassing good and evil, knowledge and ignorance. Decree, however, is a realm of unity, where evil vanishes, and only absolute good remains - with Allah, where there is no "*where*." This is what our companions refer to as the secret of destiny, a matter they considered too profound to disclose, out of respect for the wisdom of the time and adherence to proper decorum.

Every created being has two precedents: one in decree and one in destiny. The precedent in decree is absolute good for all creation, while the precedent in destiny may be either good or evil. The nature of this precedent in destiny is concealed from people, though it may be inferred from the subsequent state of the individual - whether they are righteous or unrighteous in their daily life. This subsequent state is not hidden from those with insight (*basirah*), who recognize the imperfections in human adherence to the *Shari'ah* and understand the purpose of Allah sending messengers. The messengers were sent to unveil the subsequent state through the elaboration of the *Shari'ah*. Meanwhile, Allah has concealed the precedent within the secret of His Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawh al-Mahfuz*), establishing proof against His servants and obliging them to act according to the commands and prohibitions of the *Shari'ah*, as He says: "*So that mankind will have no argument against Allah after the messengers.*" (4:165). He, Exalted is He, said regarding this: "*And they said, 'If the Most Merciful had willed, we would not have worshipped them.'*"

They have no knowledge of that; they are only guessing." (43:20)
They have no knowledge of the will of the Most Merciful, as it is concealed from them. What they do have knowledge of is the law (*shari'ah*) of the Most Merciful, which commands them to worship none but Him. His words, "*They are only guessing,*" mean they are lying, for they do not attribute all matters to Allah - neither in their livelihood nor in earning their sustenance. Even when they attribute matters of worship to Him, it is only due to their lack of certainty in the Hereafter compared to their certainty in worldly life.

When the self gains insight into the secret of destiny (*sirr al-qadr*) and becomes certain that Allah is pure goodness, it finds peace in Him, becomes content with Him, and surrenders and submits to His will. At that point, it is freed from fear, achieves peace with itself, with living beings, and with all things. The self purifies its thoughts from evil, guards its tongue from harmful speech, and restrains its hand from violence. It soon attains the unity of its essence, becoming pure goodness, radiating sweetness of character effortlessly, just as fragrance naturally emanates from a fragrant flower.

Here, the heart prostrates, eternally, at the threshold of the first station of servitude. On that day, the servant is no longer determined; rather, he is given free choice. This is because determinism has elevated him to the stations of honor, delivering him to the freedom of choice.

They have obeyed Allah to the extent that Allah grants them obedience in return, as a retribution for their actions. Thus, they live with the life of Allah, know with the knowledge of Allah, will with the will of Allah, and act with the power of Allah - until they become Allah.

Allah, Exalted is He, has no form to be assumed, nor an end to be reached. Rather, one's share of that is to remain in continuous becoming, renewing the life of his feelings and his thoughts at every moment, emulating His saying about Himself: *"Every day He is [bringing about] a matter."* (55:29)

This is the purpose of worship, which the Prophet, peace be upon him, summarized in his advice: *"Adorn yourselves with the attributes of Allah, for my Lord is on a straight path."*

Allah, Exalted is He, also said: *"Be people of the Lord because of what you have taught of the Book and because of what you have studied."* (3:79)

Concerning these individuals, Allah, Exalted is He, said: *"They will have whatever they wish with their Lord. That is the reward of the doers of good."* (39:34). His words, *"They will have whatever they wish,"* indicate that they are given free choice. His words, *"with their Lord,"* signify the station of servitude, for none stands with the Lord (*Rabb*) except the servant (*abd*). His words, *"That is the reward of the doers of good,"* refer to those who excelled in managing absolute individual freedom by using it to fulfill servitude to Allah. For He, exalted is He, has said: *'And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.'* (51:56)

This is the realm of individualities, where the laws are individual laws, and the caller to Allah is Allah Himself. Here, the servant stands directly before the Lord, with no intermediaries between them and with the veils - both the veils of darkness and the veils of light - lifted.

Worship in this realm is pure servitude, and actions are carried out with an awareness of the precedent (*sabiqah*) and a careful alignment of the

subsequent (*lahiqah*) with it, so that balance is achieved with justice. The servant's endeavor here is to be for their Lord as their Lord is for them. This is the meaning of the command of the Lord, Exalted is He, when He said: *"And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance."* (55:9)

If the servant's presence with the Lord mirrors the Lord's presence with the servant perfectly, then the balance has been established with justice. Yet, how distant this ideal remains!

A brief digression on the practical value of worship is permissible here, because the servant standing directly before the Lord, with no intermediaries between them, signifies the meeting of the transient and the eternal. The veils have been lifted between them - the transient here is the mind, and the eternal is the heart, which is also expressed as the subconscious mind.

These veils are the remnants of repressed desires, lying on the surface of the subconscious mind, caused by inherited fear that stretches back to ancient times, from the very beginning of human existence. This is the *"stain" (rayn)* mentioned in His saying, Exalted is He: *"No! Rather, the stain has covered their hearts for what they were earning."* (83:14)

An individual cannot attain absolute individual freedom while being divided within himself, with parts of him in conflict with each other. Instead, they must restore unity to their inner structure so that they may be at peace with themselves before attempting to be at peace with others, for one cannot give what one does not possess. One achieves peace with oneself only when the conscious mind is not in opposition or conflict with the subconscious mind. On that day, the heart will find peace, and the mind

will achieve clarity. In other words, the life of thought and the life of feeling will be realized, and that is the higher life.

The unification of the forces embedded within the structure is achieved when a person thinks as they wish, speaks as they think, and acts as they speak. This is the demand of the Qur'an for all of us, as He, Exalted is He, said: *"O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do? Great is hatred in the sight of Allah that you say what you do not do."* (61:2-3)

The conflict between the conscious mind and the subconscious mind is resolved through understanding the conflict between the individual and the community, as well as between the individual and the universe. We have already explained the virtue of Islam in addressing this. Thus, it becomes clear that the necessity of understanding the relationship between the individual and the community, and the individual and the universe, in a well-defined manner, arises from the practical need for a methodology through which absolute individual freedom can be achieved. This cannot be accomplished by any other methodology.

There remains one thing: there is a mistake into which many thinkers fall when they assume that the belief in determinism implies passivity. The truth is otherwise. The concealment of what destiny has decreed beforehand, and the revelation of what the Sharia has brought forth, have obligated the human being to act according to the commands and prohibitions of the Sharia, striving for excellence and perfection. Then, one must accept with contentment whatever may be written and destined by Allah, relying on Him and trusting in Him. The infallible (the Prophet) said: *"Indeed, Allah has prescribed excellence in all things. So, when you kill, kill with excellence, and when you slaughter, slaughter with excellence."*

Let one of you sharpen his blade and spare his animal from suffering." In fact, I know of no greater form of positivity than that of a person who performs their immediate duty with utmost excellence, as "Allah has prescribed excellence in all things," and then accepts the outcome, whatever it may be, without succumbing to despair in failure or being carried away by joy in success.

And Allah, Blessed and Exalted is He, nurtures and disciplines us in this regard with His words: *"No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allah, is easy. So that you may not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you. And Allah does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful." (57:22-23)*

Conclusion

In summary, the individual's relationship with the universe is not one of hostility or enmity, nor is it a continuous struggle and confrontation that ends only to begin anew on another front.

The human being is the fruit and the essence of the universe. Within it, he is a king in his kingdom, occupying a position akin to wise governance, capable management, and balanced justice. The Lord of the universe has decreed to make the human being His vicegerent (*khalifa*) upon it. He prepares them for this vicegerency through nurturing, teaching, and wise guidance.

Ignorance has deluded the human being into believing that he is the target of enmity, without mercy or leniency. As a result, he wages battles where there is no battlefield and harbors animosity without any cause for enmity.

The human being will not achieve the status of vicegerency until he rises above enmities, realizes that he is too great to be involved in hostility, and leaves no room in his heart except for love.

Indeed, Allah loves all creation - its gases, liquids, stones, minerals, plants, animals, humans, angels, and Iblis. For He, Blessed and Exalted is He, created all things through His will, and will (*irada*) is a form of love (*rayda*). The human being will not become Allah's vicegerent over His creation unless his heart expands to encompass absolute love for all its forms and colors, and unless his actions toward creation reflect the wisdom of one who rectifies and does not corrupt.

Nothing obstructs love in hearts more than fear. Fear is the legitimate father of all the afflictions that have plagued human behavior throughout all eras of history. A person cannot be fit for vicegerency on earth, nor for proper management of his domain, while he is fearful. There is no method or approach to education that frees a person from fear except Islam. Through Islam, a person attains peace with himself, with their Lord, and with all living beings and things.

Allah, Exalted is He, says: *"O you who have believed, enter into Islam [peace] completely, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy."* (2:208) "Peace" means Islam, and it also means peace - they share the same meaning. "Do not follow the footsteps of Satan" refers to his incitement of enmity and hatred among you. This is indicated by the mention of enmity in His words: *"Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy."* (2:208)

Chapter Four

Islam

We have spoken about the individual and the community in philosophical thought, as well as the individual and the universe in philosophical thought. We then followed that by discussing the individual and the community in Islam, and the individual and the universe in Islam. In Islam, we find solutions that eluded us in philosophy. Allah has granted us success in attaining what we sought, and thus it has become necessary for us to know the ground upon which we stand!

What is Islam?

Aslama means to submit and surrender, and *Islam*, in essence, is submission and surrender. By “essence,” we mean the inherent nature upon which things are created. Allah, Blessed and Exalted is He, refers to this when He says: *“So is it other than the religion of Allah they desire, while to Him have submitted all those within the heavens and the earth, willingly or by compulsion, and to Him they will be returned?”* (3:83). Here, religion means a way, conduct, or law, and the religion (*deen*) of Allah refers to the law of Allah in His creation, which is the natural disposition (*fitrah*) upon which all things are created. All things have been created in submission to Allah: *“To Him have submitted all those within the heavens and the earth, willingly or by compulsion, and to Him they will be returned.”* (3:83). *Islam*, in this sense, is the religion of all creation - at the beginning, at the end, and throughout the time in between. The human being is no exception to this.

However, divine mercy did not will for creation to submit without will. In the subtlety of its grace, this mercy extended to the foremost of creation - the human being - the ability to imagine that they differ from the rest of creation. This illusion is the source of their suffering in the present, but it is also the source of their happiness in the end. This illusion arose from the freedom of will that Allah instilled within them. This is alluded to in His saying: *"Indeed, We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to] bear it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant."* (33:72) *"Unjust and ignorant"* is a praise in the guise of reproach. For it is because of this Trust that the dignity of human beings was bestowed. Allah, Blessed and Exalted is He, says: *"And We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference."* (17:70).

Regarding the human being's illusion of being distinct from the rest of creation, Allah, Blessed and Exalted is He, speaks to us, saying: *"Do you not see that to Allah prostrates whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth - the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the trees, the moving creatures, and many of the people? But upon many the punishment has been justified. And he whom Allah humiliates - for him there is no bestower of honor. Indeed, Allah does what He wills."* (22:18). The word "prostrate" (*yasjud*) has many meanings, one of which is submission to willful compulsion. This submission occurs in humans just as it occurs in inanimate elements. Another meaning is the prostration of worship, which is what is intended in His saying: *"And many of the people."* These are the ones who prostrated their bodies in the niches of worship - something that did not occur with some others. These others are referred

to in His saying: *"But upon many the punishment has been justified."* Their deserving of punishment is not because they failed to prostrate in submission to willful compulsion, for they have done so. However, it was not accepted from them because what was required of them was the prostration of worship, which they did not perform. Thus, punishment was justified upon them.

Another meaning is the prostration of servitude, which no one has ever completed, nor will anyone ever achieve in its entirety. This is because servitude, like lordship, is infinite. However, the forerunners of humanity, the prophets of truth, have attained varying degrees of it. The fact that the prostration of servitude has not been perfected by anyone, nor will it be, is supported by the beginning of the following verse, where Allah, Exalted is He, says: *"These are two adversaries who have disputed concerning their Lord."* (22:19). This applies to every worshiper, as it points to the division of the human personality into an outward and an inward aspect. This division will never cease, for duality is its share. True servitude can only be fulfilled through oneness, and how distant that seems! The prostration of worship is a means to the prostration of servitude. Through it, the veil of illusion is lifted from the human being, freeing them from their confinement into liberation, from ignorance into knowledge, and from misery into happiness.

This occurs when they prostrate in submission to willful compulsion, but with awareness, understanding, and comprehension - distinguishing them from inanimate elements. The subtle reference to this elevated prostration is found in His words, Exalted is He:

"And who is better in religion than one who submits his face to Allah while being a doer of good and follows the religion of Abraham, inclining toward

truth? And Allah took Abraham as an intimate friend." (4:125). The subtle reference here lies in the phrase "while being a doer of good," which is the essence of this verse. It is also the essence of another verse that says: "And whoever submits his face to Allah while being a doer of good has grasped the most trustworthy handhold. And to Allah will be the outcome of all matters." (31:22)

The phrase *"while being a doer of good"* is the essence of both verses because all inanimate elements have already submitted their face to Allah, but they are not *muhsin* - they lack awareness and understanding. Therefore, their submission carries no significance, as it exists within the realm of compulsion (*irada*) but does not extend to the realm of contentment (*rida*). This distinction is reserved for humanity alone and is the reason Allah sent the messengers. This has already been referenced earlier.

Islam, in this sense, is the religion of humanity. Its purpose is to align the human illusion inspired by the will of freedom, so that humanity may gradually transcend this illusion with deliberate wisdom, culminating in conscious Islam. The *Islam* that serves as humanity's religion emerged with the advent of the mind and has continued to keep pace with the growth of the mind throughout its long evolution - from its simple, weak beginnings to its mature, well-developed wisdom. And *Islam*, which is the religion of humanity, is the same *Islam* that is the religion of God, in the verse that has been previously mentioned, where Allah says: *"So, is it other than the religion of Allah that they desire, while to Him has submitted all that is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and to Him they will be returned."* And regarding *Islam* as the religion of humanity, the verse was revealed: *"And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will*

never be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter, he will be among the losers."

And His saying, "*And in the Hereafter, he will be among the losers,*" means that all of his attempts will fail, and in the end, he will be returned to submission after all his efforts have been exhausted." In the same meaning, the verse states: "*Indeed, the religion with God is Islam. And those who were given the Scripture did not differ except after knowledge had come to them, out of envy among themselves. And whoever disbelieves in the signs of God, then indeed, God is swift in account.*" (3:19)

The word "with" does not denote time or place, for God is not encompassed by time or space. Rather, it signifies the utmost perfection. *Islam*, as the religion of humanity at its peak, moves in parallel with *Islam* as the religion of the elements, demanding submission akin to theirs - but with awareness and complete understanding of this submission. And how distant that remains! His saying, "*And those who were given the Scripture did not differ except after knowledge had come to them*" (3:19) means that they only differed concerning the laws. This is one of its meanings and aligns with the notion that the essence of religion is one, while the laws differ.

Allah, Exalted is He, says: "*Mankind was [of] one community; then Allah sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Book in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed.*" (2:213)

They were one community in their primitive ignorance. "*And sent down with them the Book*" refers to "*There is no god except Allah*" (*La ilaha illa Allah*) and the laws appropriate to their communities and their modes of

worship. At this point, differences arose, leading to His saying: *"to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed."*

Regarding the unity of religion, the Qur'an tells us: *"To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And We have instructed those who were given the Scripture before you and yourselves to fear Allah. But if you disbelieve - then to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And ever is Allah Free of need and Praiseworthy."* (4:131). His saying, *"And We have instructed those who were given the Scripture before you and yourselves to fear Allah,"* means: We commanded them, just as We commanded you, to say *"There is no god except Allah"* (*La ilaha illa Allah*), for this is the pinnacle of piety (*taqwa*). It is the *"word of piety"* referenced in His saying: *"When those who disbelieved had put into their hearts pride - the pride of ignorance - then Allah sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers and imposed upon them the word of piety, and they were more deserving of it and worthy of it. And ever is Allah, of all things, Knowing."* (48:26)

The *"word of piety"* is *"There is no god except Allah."* From this comes the saying of the Prophet, peace be upon him: *"The best thing I and the prophets before me have said is: 'There is no god except Allah.'"*

The reference to the unity of religion is found in His saying, Exalted is He:

"He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you, and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus - to establish the religion and not be divided therein. Difficult for the polytheists is that to which you invite them. Allah chooses for Himself whom He wills and guides to Himself whoever turns back [to Him]." (42:13). His saying, *"He has ordained for you of religion what He*

enjoined upon Noah," means that He has clarified for you of religion what He mandated for Noah, which is also what He mandated for Adam. By clarifying it to you, He has also mandated it for you. This does not refer to the law (*shari'ah*) but rather to monotheism (*tawhid*), upon which the law is established, as evidenced by the unity of monotheism and the diversity of laws. This is further supported by His saying: *"To establish the religion and not be divided therein. Difficult for the polytheists is that to which you invite them."* What burdens the polytheists, those who associate others with Allah, is being called to monotheism. This is always the case. The reflection of monotheism in legislation is what exposes legislation to opposition, as the self (*nafs*) finds no share in monotheism.

Islam, as a religion, began its emergence with the appearance of the first human individual. We have discussed this in the chapter dedicated to the relationship between the individual and society. At its peak, Islam seeks to align closely with the divine will. We have addressed this in our discussion of the creative command (*amr takwini*) and the legislative command (*amr tashri'i*). Thus, *Islam* has a beginning but no end, for its ultimate end is with Allah:

"Indeed, the religion with God is Islam." (3:19)

The emergence of this singular idea began within primitive, scattered paganisms. It then progressed through stages of development, evolving into more advanced forms of paganism. This progression continued until the monotheistic scriptural religions emerged, with the advent of Judaism and Christianity. This development was crowned by the mission of Muhammad, and the revelation of the Qur'an. This singular idea has a pyramidal shape: its base consists of the lowest forms of pagan polytheism, with the greatest multiplicity, while its apex lies with Allah,

where absolute unity resides. The difference between the base and the apex, as is evident, is a difference in degree, not in kind.

This singular idea sprouted on earth, just as life sprouted between water and clay. It has remained suspended between the influences of the heavens and the influences of the earth. It remained in constant pull between the causes of the sky and the causes of the earth. Whenever it was touched by the causes of the sky, its peak would rise to a summit. Then, when touched by the causes of the earth, its peak would lower toward the base until it settled, the base expanded, and the peak declined. This expansion of the base serves as preparation for the peak to rise again to a new summit, higher than its predecessor, with the renewed touch of the causes of the sky.

The touch of the sky at its zenith we call the time of a mission (*prophethood*), and the touch of the earth at its nadir we call the time of a gap (interval between revelations). Thus, this great idea continued to ascend toward perfection, much like a wave that moves between a peak and a base - each peak higher than the one before, and each base broader than the one before - until the earth nearly aligned with the causes of the sky. At that point, the revelation of the sky settled on earth within the covers of the Qur'an, on the earth, though it still awaits its full application.

The Islamic Trinity

With the coming of Moses and the revelation of the Torah to the Children of Israel, the Islamic idea entered a new phase, known as the phase of the scriptural religions. These include Judaism, Christianity, and Islam - the Torah for the Jews, the Gospel for the Christians, and the Qur'an for the

Muslims. This new phase, into which the Islamic idea entered with the mission of Moses, was characterized by an unprecedented expansion in religious legislation. All these legislations are attributed to the Lord through angelic revelation to Moses. The divinely revealed religious legislation, from the One Lord, focused on regulating the life of society comprehensively, addressing both major and minor matters on a wide collective scale.

The doctrine of monotheism intertwined with the law of organization on this broad scale for the first time in history. Then Jesus came with the Gospel, and the Islamic Trinity was completed with the mission of the Seal of the Prophets. The Qur'an tells us about this, saying: *"Indeed, We sent down the Torah, in which was guidance and light. The prophets who submitted [to Allah] judged by it for the Jews, as did the rabbis and scholars by that with which they were entrusted of the Scripture of Allah, and they were witnesses to it. So do not fear the people but fear Me, and do not exchange My verses for a small price. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed - then it is those who are the disbelievers. And We decreed for them in it: a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and for wounds [equal] retribution. But if anyone pardons it by way of charity, it will be an expiation for them. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed - then it is those who are the wrongdoers. And We sent, following in their footsteps, Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming that which came before him in the Torah. And We gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light and confirming that which preceded it of the Torah, as guidance and instruction for the righteous. And We have revealed to you, the Book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture and as a criterion over it. So judge between them by what Allah has revealed and do not follow*

their inclinations away from what has come to you of the truth. To each of you We prescribed a law and a method. Had Allah willed, He would have made you one nation [united in religion], but [He intended] to test you in what He has given you; so race to [all that is] good. To Allah is your return all together, and He will [then] inform you concerning that over which you used to differ." (5:44-48)

Moses was sent in the 13th century BCE, at a time when society was primitive and coarse, and individuals were harsh and ill-tempered. They were still closely tied to the law of the jungle. The Torah called them to fairness - to reciprocal justice: *"a life for a life, an eye for an eye."* This became their law. However, it gently encouraged them, from afar, toward forgiveness. It said, as the Qur'an recounts: *"But if anyone pardons it by way of charity, it will be an expiation for him."* (5:45). Whoever pardons retribution against the aggressor and does not seek retaliation, Allah will compensate them from His bounty for what they endured. Thus, the Qur'an says of the Torah: *"In it was guidance and light."* (5:44) Guidance refers to the law (*shari'ah*), while light refers to ethics (*akhlaq*). Ethics represent the elevated aspect of the law. They transcend the compulsion of the law and move toward voluntary actions, undertaken by each individual on their own.

But rather, the Torah demanded retribution, and it almost limited itself to it, because it is closer to the nature of the primitive human self, which is inclined toward treachery and aggression, so little is to be expected from it in the matter of justice, let alone forgiveness. And indeed, the Children of Israel - whenever they were called to clarity - turned away from it. They were indeed in the vigor of their religion, with Moses among them, and God's support for them against their enemy remains ever manifest, when

they longed to the worship of the calf. And this Qur'an relates to us from their accounts. *"So they came upon a people devoted to their idols. They said, 'O Moses, make for us a god just as they have gods.' He said, 'Indeed, you are a people behaving ignorantly. Indeed, those worshippers will be destroyed for that in which they are [engaged], and worthless is whatever they were doing.' He said, 'Is it other than Allah I should desire for you as a god while He has preferred you over the worlds?'"* (7:138-140). They fell silent, neither convinced nor believing. But when Moses went to his appointed meeting with his Lord and left his brother Aaron in charge of his people, they took the calf [for worship] and said, *"This is your god and the god of Moses."*

Allah, Exalted is He, said about them: *"Do they not see that it could not return to them any speech and that it does not possess for them [the power of] harm or benefit? And Aaron had already told them before, 'O my people, you are only being tested by it, and indeed, your Lord is the Most Merciful, so follow me and obey my order.' They said, 'We will never cease being devoted to it until Moses returns to us.'"* (20:89-91)

The Qur'an contains numerous instances that speak of the stubbornness of the Jews, their rigidity, and how they clung to the earth whenever they were called to ascend. This behavior was natural during that early stage of human development. Yet, despite their state, they were the chosen elite of their time: *"Indeed, Allah chose Adam and Noah and the family of Abraham and the family of Imran over the worlds."* (3:33). They are the family of Abraham and also the family of Imran: *"Descendants, some of them from others. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing."* (3:34).

Whatever the case, the laws of the Torah came at the initial stage of development. The Jews, in their application of these laws, could not rid

themselves of the paganism they had been exposed to during their long stay in Egypt, which further entrenched their primitiveness.

Then came Christ with a legislation that drew people toward the farthest end, almost as if it were a reaction - and indeed, it is undoubtedly so. This is something understood by every devout worshipper who perfects his practice. At the beginning of your worship, your "self" is dense, as your spirit is clouded by its darkness. However, if you engage in the prophetic worship methods of Ahmadian Prophethood, fasting continuously for three days and two nights, or for seven days and six nights, along with regular prayer - especially the prayer in the last third of the night - you will begin to feel that your "self" is being drawn toward the other end. If you persist in maintaining this Ahmadian approach for a sufficient duration, your spirit, which was once folded under the wing of a dense, dark self, will begin to ascend, with grace and lightness, to the bank of the right-hand valley. You, meanwhile, will oscillate like the pendulum of a clock, swinging between the farthest left and the farthest right. Your ultimate aspiration will be to stabilize in the middle - but how distant that goal remains! For that is the station of: *"The sight did not swerve, nor did it transgress."* (53:17)

What happens to an individual devout worshipper, as their trinity emerges, is the same phenomenon that occurred for striving humanity over this long period, with the emergence of its trinity of the three religions - Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This is because the history of the individual human reflects the history of humanity as a whole. This is the secret behind Christ bringing an excessive spirituality to counterbalance the excessive materialism - one an excess of extremity and the other an excess of deficiency - found among the Jews. Christ said to his disciples: *"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to*

abolish but to fulfill." This is what the Qur'an alludes to in the preceding verses: *"And We sent, following in their footsteps, Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming that which came before him in the Torah. And We gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light and confirming that which preceded it of the Torah, as guidance and instruction for the righteous."* (5:46). Thus, he confirmed what came before him in the Torah, and his Gospel confirmed what came before it in the Torah. He did not abolish but rather fulfilled, as he said. The meaning of fulfill is that he developed and extended the meanings that had been constrained by the limitations of their time, bringing them closer to their ultimate purposes - or almost so.

Listen to him as he teaches his disciples, saying: *"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, do not resist evildoers. Instead, if anyone slaps you on your right cheek, turn to them the other also."* Christ was sent at a time when temporal authority over the Jews was held by the Romans, and Jewish law was, in some aspects, suspended as a result. Thus, Christ's call appeared, from a practical perspective, to focus less on organizing societal life and more on offering moral instructions. This appearance was further reinforced by the fact that Christ did not live long, his ministry lasted only three years. The truth is that the legislation of the Jews is also the legislation of the Christians, except in cases where Christ developed it. In such instances, the legislation of the Christians becomes a renewal of the legislation of the Jews, based on the explicit text from Christ. However, this matter is neither understood nor practiced by the Christians.

"And We gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light." (5:46). Here, guidance also means legislation, and light refers to ethics. The Gospel is more focused on ethics than the Torah, and for this reason, it

made forgiveness its core principle, which was commanded by its messenger. When Christ said, *"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,'"* he referred to the beginning, which reflects a deficiency in spirituality. When he said, *"But I say to you, do not resist an evildoer. Instead, if anyone slaps you on your right cheek, turn to them the other also,"* he referred to an end-point resembling excess in spirituality.

Then came Islam, during the time of Muhammad, positioned between the extremes of excess and deficiency. It can be likened, within the *"Islamic Trinity,"* to the station of *"The sight did not swerve, nor did it transgress."* (53:17) This aligns with the trinity of forces instilled within the human structure. Allah, Exalted is He, said regarding this: *"And thus We have made you a just community, that you will be witnesses over the people, and the Messenger will be a witness over you."* (2:143). A just community means one balanced between excess and deficiency. *"That you will be witnesses over the people"* means that within you are embodied all the qualities that connect human beings. This idea is further echoed in the verse: *"Guide us to the straight path - the path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray."* (1:6-7)

The straight path is the middle way between two extremes: one characterized by Allah's anger, representing deficiency, and the other characterized by misguidance, representing excess in spirituality. The phrase *"those upon whom You have bestowed favor"* refers to the Muslims. This is alluded to in His saying: *"This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as your religion."* (5:3). Since the *Islam* brought by

Muhammad lies between Judaism and Christianity, the Qur'an integrates the characteristics of both Judaism and Christianity. This is evident, for example, in the verse: *"And the retribution for an evil act is an evil one like it, but whoever pardons and makes reconciliation, their reward is [due] from Allah. Indeed, He does not like wrongdoers."* (42:40)

His saying, *"retribution for an evil act is an evil one like it,"* corresponds to the saying of the Torah as recounted by Christ: *"An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth."* However, it does not replicate it entirely. Instead, it develops it in a way that discourages retribution and paves the way for forgiveness by labeling the act of retribution against the aggressor as an *"evil act."* His saying, *"But whoever pardons and makes reconciliation, their reward is [due] from Allah. Indeed, He does not like wrongdoers,"* corresponds to the Gospel's statement, as recounted by Christ: *"But I say to you, do not resist an evildoer. Instead, if anyone slaps you on your right cheek, turn to them the other also."* However, it does not entirely mirror it. The Qur'an's statement surpasses this phrase from the Gospel in terms of its emphasis on forgiveness. Yet, Christ has another saying that aligns more closely with *"But whoever pardons and makes reconciliation, their reward is [due] from Allah,"* where he says: *"Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you."*

Islam, being a middle ground between two ends - one representing the beginning and the other the end - has made itself possess two aspects: one closer to the beginning and the other closer to the end. This is the nature of any middle ground between two ends; it is like a child who combines the characteristics of both the father and the mother, in varying proportions that may differ but never completely disappear. If this

understanding is correct - and it is undoubtedly correct - then it has profound implications for the future of Islamic thought. It means that *Islam*, as conveyed in the Qur'an, is not a single message but two messages: a message at the beginning, closer to Judaism, and a message at the end, closer to Christianity.

The infallible (the Prophet), conveyed both messages through the Qur'an and his life example (*sunnah*). However, he detailed the first message through comprehensive legislation, while summarizing the second message broadly, except in cases of overlapping legislation between the first and second messages. Such overlapping legislation can also be considered detailed in the context of the second message, particularly with regard to the laws of worship - except for *zakah* with fixed proportions.

Chapter Five

The First Message

The first message is the one that was clarified through legislation, and it is the message for the believers (*mu'minun*). The believers are not the same as Muslims. However, the difference between a believer (*mu'min*) and a Muslim is not one of kind but one of degree. Not every believer is a Muslim, but every Muslim is a believer.

Islam is both a beginning and an end. Just as time and space are spiral in nature, so too are ideas. The one ascending through the stages of thought moves along a spiral path, rising higher with each turn upon himself. When a full cycle is completed from the point of origin, the diligent worshiper finds himself elevated above it. The end of that cycle resembles the beginning, yet it is not identical to it. Similarly, on the path of Islam the diligent worshiper ascends on a spiral journey, drawing ever nearer to its center the higher he rises toward its summit. With each complete turn upon himself in a cycle, he advances through seven stages - first Islam, then Faith (*iman*), followed by Excellence (*Ihsan*), next the knowledge of certainty, then the vision of certainty, thereafter the truth of certainty, and finally, at the end of the cycle, Islam.

The nation of the first resurrection - the nation of the first message - its name is "the believers," strictly speaking; yet the name "Muslims," which is usually applied to it, was taken from the first Islam, and not, in truth, from the last Islam.

While reading the verse "Indeed, the religion with Allah is Islam," you must understand that it refers to the last Islam - not, in truth, the first Islam. The earlier Islam carried no exemplary lesson; it was that Islam which kept

people safe from the sword. In its midst were men whose hearts were riddled with hypocrisy, their very beings entwined with a hatred for the Prophet and his Companions - a hatred so deeply concealed that it remained hidden even as their outward forms did not betray it. This is because the Infallible (Prophet) said: *"I have been commanded to fight the people until they bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, establish prayer, and pay zakat. If they do so, they will have secured their blood and wealth from me, except by its due right, and their reckoning is with Allah."*

Islam emerged between the two cities, Mecca and Medina. It began in Mecca; when it was defeated there, it migrated to Medina, where it triumphed. It was never meant to prevail in Mecca - and indeed, it did not. As the verse states, *"And these are the parables which We present to the people, but none will understand them except those of knowledge."*

It was not Islam that triumphed; rather, it was Faith that triumphed. Indeed, the Qur'an is divided into two parts - Faith and Islam - in the sense that its revelation is split between Medinan and Meccan. Each of these - the Medinan and the Meccan - has its own distinct characteristics, which can be traced back to the fact that the Medinan represents the stage of Faith, while the Meccan represents the stage of Islam.

Everything in which the address appears using the phrase "O you who believe" is of Medinan origin - except that which comes under the command of Surat al-Ḥajj. Similarly, every passage that mentions the hypocrites is Medinan, and all that includes references to Jihad or explanations of its meaning is Medinan. This is in addition to a number of other rules.

As for the Meccan, one of its guidelines is that every surah in which a prostration is mentioned is considered Meccan, and every surah that begins with the disjointed letters is Meccan - except for Surat al-Baqarah and al-Imran, which are Medinan. Similarly, every passage in which the address appears with either "O people" or "O children of Adam" is considered Meccan, except for Surat al-Nissaa and al-Baqarah, which are Medinan. In these exceptions, their opening sections begin with the verse "O people, fear your Lord" and their closing sections with the verse "O people, worship your Lord."

The irregularities in these guidelines between the Meccan and Medinan arise solely from the intermingling of Faith and Islam - for, as we have mentioned, every believer is a Muslim in the initial stage and not in the final stage, and every Muslim is a believer, and this will never cease.

The difference between the Meccan and Medinan is not one of the place or time of revelation, but rather a difference in the level of the addressees. In the phrase "O you who believe," it is addressed to a specific community, whereas in the phrase "O people" the address is universal. If you consider His verse: "*There has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves, to whom is [given] ample provision; he worries for you; so, let the believers have mercy on you*" (9:128) and His verse: "*Indeed, Allah is kind and merciful to the people*" (9:128), and you notice a difference, then know that it is the difference between the believer and the Muslim - and this distinction marks the level of both addresses.

Furthermore, the discourse regarding the hypocrites appears in Medina and not in Mecca, even though the period of revelation in Mecca spanned thirteen years and in Medina ten years, or fewer. This is because in Mecca there were no hypocrites; the people were either true believers or

polytheists. The use of force was never a means of propagating the message; rather, verses emphasizing tolerance were the norm at that time. Consider the verse: *"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided"* (16:125) and its sister verses, which are numerous.

And when the migration to Medina was completed, the verses of leniency were abrogated, and the ruling of the time shifted to the verse of the sword and its equivalents: *"Then when the sacred months have passed, kill the polytheists wherever you find them, capture them, besiege them, and lie in wait for them at every ambush. But if they repent, establish prayer, and give zakat, let them [go] on their way. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful."* (9:5). Fear entered the realm of the call, forcing some souls into caution; they concealed one thing and declared another. Thus, hypocrisy found its way among the people. The mention and explanation of Jihad is one of the hallmarks of Medinan verses and requires no further explanation.

As for the Meccan criteria - such as the mention of prostration - this is because prostration is closer in nature to Islam than to Faith. In the narration of the Infallible (the Prophet) it is stated: "The closest a servant comes to his Lord is when he is prostrating" and in the Qur'an we find, "So prostrate and draw near." Within that phrase lies a profound secret concerning the journey toward the stations of servitude.

Another one of its criteria is that some surahs begin with disjointed letters. This is a significant category that contains the secret of the entire Qur'an. However, discussing it in detail exceeds the scope of this context. We will

suffice with what we have already stated regarding the distinction between the two messages of Islam. The number of letters used in these openings is fourteen - which is half of the Arabic alphabet. With these, twenty-nine surahs are inaugurated in fourteen different patterns, which are: the combinations such as Alif Lam Meem (الم), Alif Lam Meem Sad (المص), Alif Lam Ra (الر), Alif Lam Meem Ra (المر), Kaf Ha Ya Ayn Sad (كهيعص), Ta Ha (طه), Ta Seen Meem (طسم), Ta Seen (طس), Ya Seen (يس), Sad (ص), Ha Meem (حم), Ha Meem Ayn Seen Qaf (حم عسق), Qaf (ق), and Nun (ن). And all these combinations were followed by what indicates that they are the Qur'an. One clear explanation of this is found in the verse from Surat al-Baqarah: *"Alif Lam Meem, that is the Book there is no doubt in it, a guidance for those conscious of Allah."* (2:2-3). That is if you pause at *"in it"*, On the other hand if you pause at *"no doubt,"* then you would have the verse read as: *"Alif Lam Meem, that is the Book there is no doubt, in it is a guidance for those conscious of Allah."*

In each case, the reference is made to *"Alif Lam Meem."* And the meaning of *"Harf"* is that it refers to the edge, the blade, or the boundary of anything. For example, *"harf al-jabal"* (the edge of the mountain) refers to its sharp, defined peak.

Over the ages, the disjointed letters underwent profound changes, passing through very primitive forms long before they assumed their present shapes. This is because the need for writing arose simultaneously with the need for language - a necessity that preceded the need for custom, which we mentioned earlier when we noted that the earliest society formed around a custom that regulated the whims of the individual and imposed the care of certain boundaries, necessities in themselves. The need for a means of communication and the transmission of ideas emerged out of the imperative of living together in a society.

All kinds of animals felt the necessity of gathering together, but only the human being was able to secure what he needed, due to his capacity for "imitation" of the sounds of objects and living beings, as well as the mimicking of movements. This was facilitated by the upright posture, the dexterity of the hands and head, and the refinement of the vocal cords.

The emergence of language, the development of writing, and their steady evolution from simple, rudimentary beginnings to the near perfection we see in our modern era can be attributed to the unique human faculty of "imitation," a trait that sets humans apart from all other animals. Indeed, it is this very faculty that God endowed upon humanity which lies behind education and the mastery of skills. In order to perfect imitation, one must first thoroughly comprehend, in a complete intellectual manner, the things to be imitated; next, there must be coordination between the instruments of imitation and the mind - whether these instruments are the hands, the head, the face, or the eyes. It is through this considerable effort to harmonize the movements involved in imitation that credit is due for the unification of the mind and the body - a unification that remains incomplete and continues to progress steadily.

Although the need for writing emerged simultaneously with the need for language, it did not arise with the same urgency or necessity. The reference to it has sufficed for a long period of time. Writing began with the depiction of things - drawing the image of an animal to express it, or perhaps sketching an entire event intended to be conveyed to someone who had not witnessed it. The act of drawing animals was closely tied to hunting rituals, which were deeply rooted in beliefs and worship. It seems the hunter believed that capturing the image of the animal within the confines of their cave symbolically ensured their success in the hunt. This

belief stemmed from an assumed connection between the image and the spirit.

Then understanding evolved, and the artist began to render only a specific part of the animal to represent the whole - such as drawing only the bull's head instead of its entirety. Evolution continued, simplifying the images of objects and living beings until the present alphabetic letters emerged, from the vast expanse of time after a slow, prolonged development.

The number of disjointed letters varies among different languages. In our language, however, it is twenty-eight letters - beginning with alif and ending with ghayin - and in this regard, it is the most complete of languages.

When necessity drove the development of language, it also spurred the emergence of calculation. Early arithmetic was rudimentary and primitive, its foundations supported by - and even evoked by - the use of the fingers of the hands and feet. This phenomenon inspires reflection and wonder. Indeed, numbers have long been counted on one's fingers, which is one of the reasons why the number ten became the basis for counting. The numerals we know today did not appear until long after an extended evolution from the primitive representations of numbers.

Due to the association of symbols, signs, and the transmission of expression - which links language and counting - the alphabet letters were employed in place of numbers from ancient times, as is familiar with the Roman numerals, a practice that had been preceded by the Greeks. This usage later spread to the Arabic language, where the first nine letters were designated to represent the nine single numbers; the tenth letter up to the eighteenth indicated the decimals; and from the nineteenth to the twenty-

eighth represented the hundreds. In this system, the numeral corresponding to the end of the alphabet became "a thousand." This is what leads us to say that the Arabic language is the most complete, owing to the spiritual significance of the numeral "a thousand" as illustrated in the verse: *"And if a day were like a thousand years as you count..."* (22:47) or when it is stated, *"Indeed, We sent it down during a blessed night. Indeed, We were to warn [mankind]. And what can make you know what is a blessed night? The blessed night is better than a thousand months..."* (97:1-3) - which signifies a thousand years. And when it is said, *"From Allah, the Possessor of the Ascents. The angels and the Spirit ascend to Him in a day the measure of which is fifty thousand years..."* (70:4)

The entire Qur'an is structured hierarchically. It has a base and a peak, and it varies between the base and the peak in meanings that become subtler as they ascend toward the peak. It is a variation between good and better. At the peak of the Qur'an are the alphabetic letters with which some surahs begin, and these letters, in themselves, also have a pyramidal shape, varying between a base and a peak. The letters are divided into three levels: the numerical letters, the vocal letters, and the intellectual letters. The numerical letters refer to the familiar twenty-eight characters from which overt speech is formed. The vocal letters, however, are innumerable - they include both those sounds we can hear and others that are not perceptible to the senses, and they constitute the thoughts that arise in the conscious mind. As for the intellectual letters, they are the dominion of everything - they are the Words of Allah about which He, the Exalted, said, *"Say, 'If the sea were ink for the Words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the Words of my Lord were exhausted, even if we brought the like of it as a supplement.'"* (18:109)

From these intellectual letters arise the deepest thoughts concealed within the subconscious mind and the eternal, primordial reality - with religion marked on its margins. Furthermore, corresponding to the numerical letters, vocal letters, and intellectual letters is the indication found in the verse "*And if you speak aloud, then He knows the secret and what is even more hidden*" (10:61). Here, the overt speech aligns with the numerical letters, while the secret corresponds to the vocal letters. The intellectual letters, in turn, correspond to the "secret of secrets," which is expressed by the term "and what is even more hidden." Among these intellectual letters are those that cannot be heard except through the seventh sense.

These three levels are also indicated by His saying, the Exalted: "*And the sounds have been humbled for the Most Merciful, so you hear only whispers*" (57:1). This verse speaks to both the outward and the inward - that is, the speech of the tongue and of the innermost thought. As for the secret of the secret, it is found in His saying, the Exalted: "And [all] faces will be humbled before the Ever-Living, the Sustainer, and he will have failed who carries injustice" (20:111).

Here, injustice refers to hidden polytheism, which is the repression that has caused the human personality to split into a conscious mind and a subconscious mind, existing in a state of conflict and opposition.

We have already discussed repression earlier in this book, explaining that it is the result of fear. We stated that absolute individual freedom requires freedom from fear. For complete liberation from fear, society must be organized in such a way that an individual is assured security regarding his livelihood, is protected from an oppressive ruler, and is shielded from the rigidity and stubbornness of public opinion. Furthermore, it is necessary to provide the individual with a comprehensive understanding

of his relationship with the environment and the true nature of the environment in which his ancestors lived - and in which he still lives - so that he may free himself from the psychological complexities that have accumulated in his subconscious and have been inherited submissively from the oppressive forces of ancient times.

We have already discussed the Qur'an's inverse approach to teaching humans alongside its direct method as exemplified in the noble verse: "*We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. Is it not sufficient that your Lord is a witness to all things?*" (41:53). We stated that this means, in conduct, the diligent worshiper strives to forsake wrongful actions. At that stage, he may permit his "self" to commit slips of the tongue as a form of gradual adjustment, provided that he has already achieved steadfast effort at that level; he then moves on to giving up wrongful speech. Similarly, if he allows his self some leeway at that stage for transgressions of thoughts in the conscious mind - by permitting evil thoughts to wander - this, too, is a gradual approach for the self. Then, if his striving remains steadfast at this stage as well, he moves on to prohibiting the turbulence of conscious thoughts, and so on until he reaches the purification of subconscious thoughts. The heart is perfected, and in its clarity, it beholds the Almighty Allah. From that point on, the expelling method in teaching begins. The diligent worshiper then finds himself at peace with his self, with his Lord, and with all living beings and things. This is Islam at its pinnacle, as Allah, the Exalted, commanded the believers when He said, "*O you who have believed, enter into submission completely and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.*" (2:208). Here, "submission" refers to peace, and it signifies Islam at its highest level.

The Community of the Believers

We have stated that The Qur'an is divided between Faith and Islam, as its revelation is split into Medinan and Meccan - the Meccan coming first and the Medinan later. In other words, it began by inviting people to Islam; but when they could not tolerate it - and when their practical inability to accept its message became manifest - it was then adjusted to what they could bear. The practical demonstration is an undeniable argument for people. This is what is meant in the verse *"And We will surely test you until We make evident those who strive among you [for the cause of Allah] and the patient, and We will test your affairs."* (47:31) so that the knowledge of experience may become clear to you, for the knowledge of Allah is eternal. The term *Mujahideen* (those who strive) refers to the greater jihad, which is the struggle against the self. The term "*Sabireen*" (patient people) are those who endure for the sake of Allah, and "We will test your affairs" means that your deeply repressed inner thoughts - your very secrets - will be brought forth.

There are many verses that indicate a descent from the summit of Islam to the level of Faith. Among them is His saying, exalted is He: *"O you who believe, observe Allah as He ought to be observed, and do not die except in a state of submission to Him"* (3:102). So when they said, *"Who among us is able to observe Allah as He ought to be observed?"* His saying, exalted is He, was revealed: *"So observe Allah as much as you are able; and listen, and obey, and spend what is good for yourselves. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of one's own self, they are the ones who will be successful"* (64:16).

When the verse of Allah, the Exalted, was revealed: *"Those who have believed and have not worn out their faith with injustice – those will have*

security, and they are rightly guided" (46:18), it became difficult for the people. They said, "O Messenger of Allah, where is he who does not wrong himself?" He replied, "It is not what you mean; have you not heard what the righteous servant said? (O my children, do not associate anything with Allah; indeed, association [shirk] is great injustice) (4:48). It is nothing but association [shirk]." So they were relieved for they knew they had not committed shirk since they believed. The truth is that the Infallible (the Prophet) explained to them that verse on the level of the believer, knowing that its full meaning - intended for the level of the Muslim in its ultimate, elevated state - was beyond their capacity. In that verse, "injustice" refers to hidden shirk, much like what is hinted at in the verse of the secret of secrets: "And the faces have grown hostile toward the Ever-Living, and he who carries injustice has failed." (70:19–21)

It has been said that when the verse "*Those who believed and did not mix their belief with injustice – those will have security, and they are the rightly guided" (31:22) was revealed, the Prophet said, "I was told: You are one of them." However, the Prophet was not among the believers; rather, he was the first of the Muslims: "Say, 'My prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my life, and my death are for Allah, Lord of the worlds, and He has no partner. By this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims.'"*

We have said that the community of the first message is the believers (*al-mu'minun*). The Qur'an, when referring to the Muslims at the time of Moses, calls them Jews or those who became Jews (*alladhīna hādū*); and when referring to the Muslims at the time of Jesus, it calls them Christians (*nasārā*). Yet, in the era of the first Muhammadan mission, it calls them the believers or those who have believed (*alladhīna āmanū*). Listen to His words: "Indeed, those who have believed, and those who were Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians - whoever believes in God and the Last

Day and does good - they shall have their reward with their Lord; and no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve.” (2:62)

And listen to His words: “Indeed, those who have believed, and those who were Jews, and the Sabians, and the Christians - whoever believes in God and the Last Day and does good - no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve.” (5:69)

There is also a verse that perfectly illustrates what we are addressing, where He says: “O you who have believed, believe in God and His Messenger and the Book which He has sent down upon His Messenger, and the Book which He sent down before. And whoever disbelieves in God, His angels, His Books, His messengers, and the Last Day has certainly gone far astray.” (4:136)

He thus calls them those who have believed (alladhīna āmanū), and then calls upon them to believe.

Indeed, anyone with insight into meanings, upon reading Allah’s words: “*O you who believe, observe Allah as He ought to be observed, and do not die except in a state of submission to Him*” (3:102) - and then His words - “*So observe Allah as much as you are able; and listen, and obey, and spend what is good for yourselves. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of one’s own self, they are the ones who will be successful*” (64:16) - will recognize that there are two meanings: a primary and a secondary. The intended meaning in the first verse is the primary one. However, since necessity required its postponement, action shifted to the secondary meaning and will remain there until the transition from secondary to primary becomes possible, once the appropriate conditions arise. These conditions refer to a time when human readiness - both

individual and collective - matures and when capacity expands. This lack of readiness is the reason behind the postponement of the fundamentals of religion and the reliance on secondary aspects. Here is an explanation of that: -

Jihad Is Not Fundamental to Islam

The fundamental principle in Islam is that every human being is free - until he demonstrates, in practice, his inability to fulfill the duty that accompanies freedom. For freedom is a natural right that entails a duty which must be performed: the proper exercise of that freedom. When a free person proves unable to uphold the duty of freedom, his freedom is then withdrawn through constitutional law.

Constitutional law, as has been previously indicated, is the law that reconciles the individual's need for absolute personal freedom with the community's need for comprehensive social justice. We have already established that this is the law of compensation (qānūn al-mu'āwāḍah).

This principle is the foundation of all principles. To uphold it, the call to Islam initially began with verses of tolerance, as revealed in Mecca. Among these is, *"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided"* (16:125). Many similar verses were revealed. The call to Islam remained in this spirit for thirteen years, during which much of the miraculous Qur'an was revealed. During this period, the new school produced many virtuous examples of men, women, and children.

The early Muslims refrained from retaliating against the harm inflicted by the polytheists, endured suffering, and sacrificed, with sincerity and nobility, all the comforts of life for the sake of spreading the religion. They neither weakened nor yielded. Through eloquent speech and genuine example, they clarified people's duties in this life - towards their Lord, by worshiping Him with sincerity, and towards one another, by upholding family ties and fostering reconciliation.

Allah, the Exalted, says, "*And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me*" (51:56). He has bestowed upon us the blessings of the mind and body, and the pleasures of life, enabling us to worship Him and recognize His bounties. He also says, "*Indeed, Allah commands justice, excellence, and giving to relatives and forbids immorality, bad conduct, and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded*" (16:90). And He declares, "*And do not kill your children out of poverty; We provide for you and for them. And do not approach immoralities - what is apparent of them and what is concealed. And do not kill the self which Allah has forbidden, except by right. This He has enjoined upon you that you may understand*" (6:151).

All of this was brought by the Qur'an in the new religion and conveyed by the Prophet and his companions through speech and practice. It contained guidance for the well-being and prosperity of humanity. However, if people insisted after all of that on worshiping the idols they carved, severing family ties, committing heinous killing, and burying their daughters alive, they misused their freedom and subjected it to forfeiture. And since no law existed to take it away, the sword alone remained, and so it was taken away.

After acting according to His saying, the Exalted, "*So remind, you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller*" (88:21-22), it transitioned to, "*Except he who turns away and disbelieves, then Allah will punish him with the greatest punishment*" (88:23-24). This implies, "*As for those who turn away and disbelieve, We have granted you control over them, so Allah will punish them through you with the lesser punishment of fighting and then with the greater punishment of Hellfire*". "*Indeed, to Us is their return; then indeed, upon Us is their account*" (88:25-26). The two preceding verses were considered abrogated by the following two verses. Likewise, all verses of tolerance, which were the original principle, were abrogated by the Verse of the Sword and its counterparts, which were a secondary ruling dictated by the temporal circumstances and the limited human capacity at that time to uphold the duty of freedom.

This aligns with the saying of the Infallible (the Prophet): "*I have been commanded to fight the people until they testify that there is no deity but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. If they do so, they will have protected their blood and wealth from me, except by the right of Islam, and their account will be with Allah.*"

Some Muslim scholars have assumed that the wars of Islam were purely defensive. This is a misconception influenced by their eagerness to refute claims by some Orientalists who alleged that Islam spread by the sword. The truth is that the sword was used to confiscate a freedom that had been misused. For thirteen years, Islam called for a clear understanding of individual and communal responsibilities. When people failed to bear the burdens of their freedom and misused it, their self-governance was taken away. The Prophet was made a guardian over them until they reached maturity. Once they entered the new religion, their blood and wealth were sanctified, and they were commanded to uphold ties of kinship as

instructed. The sword was lifted from them, and the misuse of freedom under the new law was subject to confiscation. This was how Islamic legislation was established, and the new government emerged.

All that can be said to justify Islam's use of the sword is that it was not wielded like a butcher's knife but rather like a surgeon's scalpel. Islam possessed the wisdom, compassion, and knowledge necessary to serve as a healer for the ailments of the heart. Regarding this, Allah says, *"Indeed, We sent Our messengers with clear proofs and sent down with them the Scripture and the balance that the people may maintain justice. And We sent down iron, in which there is severe force and benefits for the people, and so that Allah may make evident those who support Him and His messenger's unseen. Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Exalted in Might"* (57:25). His saying, *"We sent Our messengers with clear proofs"* (57:25) refers to decisive evidence affirming their truthfulness. *"And We sent down with them the Scripture"* signifies the declaration of *"There is no god but Allah."* *"And the balance"* refers to the divine law (**shari'ah**), which regulates the relationship between the servant and *the Lord, as well as between individuals.* The phrase *"so that people may uphold justice"* means establishing fairness in dealings.

As for *"And We sent down iron, in which there is severe force, and benefits for the people,"* it signifies the prescription of combat with the sword to confiscate the freedom of those who misuse it. The sword serves to redirect such individuals towards righteousness, enabling them to reclaim their freedom and make meaningful use of their lives. Of course, this is in addition to the other numerous benefits of iron, which require no further elaboration. And He says: *"And let Allah know who supports Him and His messenger's unseen"* – He knows through experience for you, because fighting is something disliked by the soul. To know who can endure the

hardship of war for the sake of Allah, to support the oppressed by establishing justice between each individual and himself and between him and the others.

His words, "*Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Almighty*" (57:25), by "Powerful" He means the One who has no need for anyone's support, while "Almighty" signifies that what He grants can only be attained through Him. In this context, what He grants is victory. This subtly alludes to His words: "*If you support Allah, He will support you and strengthen your footholds.*" If you support Allah by aiding His prophets in establishing justice, He will grant you victory over yourselves. In other words, if you support Allah in the lesser jihad, He will support you in the greater jihad, for you have no strength except through Him and no helper but Him. "*And He strengthens your footholds*" means He reassures your hearts. The strengthening of one's foothold is undeniably significant in the context of victory.

The wisdom in treating the ailments of the heart dictates that the call to faith begins with gentleness, resorting to severity only when absolutely necessary - like using cauterization as the last treatment. And the punishment of being killed by the sword in this world is but a glimpse of the torment of the Hereafter in the Fire; there is no cause for the punishment of the Hereafter except disbelief. The same applies to fighting: if a person adds to his disbelief a call to disbelief and a hindrance from the path of God, then fighting and killing him becomes even more warranted. Otherwise, he is inevitably fought against due to his disbelief.

Allah says: "*Indeed, those who disbelieve spend their wealth to avert people from the way of Allah. So they will spend it; then it will be for them a source of regret; then they will be overcome. And those who disbelieve - unto Hell they will be gathered. This is so that Allah may distinguish the*

wicked from the good and place the wicked, one upon another, and heap them all together and put them into Hell. It is they who are the losers. Say to those who disbelieve that if they desist, what has previously occurred will be forgiven for them; but if they return, then the precedent of the former peoples has already taken place. And fight them until there is no more fitnah and the religion, all of it, is for Allah. And if they cease - then indeed, Allah is Seeing of what they do." (8:36–39)

Reflect on His Saying, Exalted is He: "*And those who disbelieve - unto Hell they will be gathered. This is so that Allah may distinguish the wicked from the good.*" You find that the cause of punishment is disbelief. "*What will Allah do with your punishment if you are grateful and believe? And Allah is ever Appreciative and Knowing.*"(4:147). And His statement, "And fight them until there is no fitnah," means until there is no polytheism, no call to polytheism, and no hindrance to the path of faith. And His statement, "And let the religion be entirely for Allah," is the original purpose of fighting. "And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him." That is the command of Allah. And Allah fulfills His command even if the disbelievers dislike it.

Allah also says in another instance: "*And fight them until there is no fitnah and the religion is for Allah. But if they cease, then there is to be no aggression except against the oppressors.*" (2:193). The wrongdoers are on two levels: those who make religion for other than Allah and persist in that, and those who submit to Allah in obedience but transgress people's rights and oppress them. In the verse, there is an order to confiscate the freedom of those who misuse freedom, and the confiscation is only to the extent of the wrongdoing. For the disbelievers, there is the law of war and the sword; and for those who transgress people's rights, there is the law of peace and the resolution of rights. This is the meaning of Allah's

statement: "But if they cease, then there is to be no aggression except against the oppressors."

The transition from the original meaning to the secondary meaning signifies a descent from the level of Islam to that of Iman (faith). This understanding clarifies Allah's words: "*And We revealed to you the Reminder so that you may explain to the people what was sent down to them, and so they may reflect.*" (16:44) His saying "And We revealed to you the Reminder" refers to the entire Qur'an, encompassing both the origin (*Islam*) and its branch (*Iman*). The phrase "to explain to the people what was sent down to them" means to clarify, through legislation and various forms of explanation, the details suited to the believers' level. His saying "so they may reflect" implies that thoughtful reflection while practicing the derived aspects of religion may lead them back to the original level they were initially unable to bear. This highlights a subtle indication of ascending through the different stages of Islam, starting with the first Islam and progressing upward through clear thinking, perfected speech, and sincere action. For, as Allah says, "*To Him ascends the good word, and the righteous deed elevates it.*" (35:10)

From what has been presented, we conclude a very important matter: much of the current forms of legislation we have today are not the ultimate intent of Islam in its essence. Rather, they are adaptations to the circumstances of the time and human capacity.

Slavery is not inherent to Islam

The fundamental principle in Islam is freedom. However, Islam was revealed to a society where slavery was an integral part of the social and economic system. This was a society that had practically proven incapable

of handling freedom, leading to the removal of individuals' ability to manage their own affairs and placing them under the guardianship of others. This, in turn, justified the legitimacy of jihad.

One of the fundamental principles of jihad in the path of God is that Muslims first invite non-believers to embrace the new faith. If they accept, they become part of the Muslim community. If they refuse, they are offered the option of paying jizya and living under Islamic rule while maintaining their original religion and remaining secure. However, if they reject this option as well, Muslims engage them in battle. If they are defeated, prisoners are taken from among them, thereby increasing the number of enslaved individuals who existed prior to the new call.

The wisdom behind enslavement is based on the law of compensation. It is as if when a person was invited to be a servant of God but refused, this refusal indicated ignorance that necessitated a period of training to prepare him, willingly, for servitude to God. During this period, he was made a servant to a created being to practice obedience, which is the duty of a servant.

The compensation here lies in the fact that when he rejected servitude to the Lord while being free and was then defeated, he was made a servant to another servant as a fitting recompense. As the Qur'an states, "*And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.*" (99:8)

Thus, the method of inviting people to Islam, shaped by the circumstances of the time and human readiness, added new forms of slavery to the inherited practices from earlier eras of ignorance. It was neither practical nor wise for Islamic legislation to abolish the institution of slavery with a

single decree, despite its alignment with the higher principle of freedom inherent in the religion.

The needs of enslaved individuals, as well as the social and economic needs of society, necessitate the continuation of this system while constantly working on its development until every enslaved person transitions from the bonds of slavery to the realm of freedom.

This developmental period serves as a transitional phase during which the enslaved gain the strength to stand on their own feet and earn their livelihood through lawful labor. This happens within a society that also undergoes training during this transition to restructure itself in a way that no longer relies on the exploitation of slaves - an exploitation that brutally degrades their dignity and oppresses their humanity, which was their unfortunate fate during the era of ignorance.

Thus, Islam legislated regarding slavery by granting enslaved individuals rights and duties, whereas before, they had only duties without rights. It then made acts of expiation and acts of devotion linked to the emancipation of believing, healthy, and capable slaves. Furthermore, Islam obligated the process of *mukataba* (a contract of manumission) for a righteous slave who was able to ransom himself and live as an upright citizen. In the meantime, Islam also called for kind treatment of slaves, as reflected in the words of the Infallible (the Prophet): "*Your servants are your brothers. God has placed them under your care, so feed them from what you eat and clothe them from what you wear.*"

Capitalism Is Not Fundamental in Islam

The fundamental principle in Islam is the communal sharing of wealth among God's servants, where each person takes only what he needs, akin to provisions for a traveler. This principle was fully embodied in the life of the only true Muslim of that time - the Prophet.

However, Islam was revealed to a people unaccustomed to such a concept; they recognized wealth solely as their personal property. They had never been governed by a system that imposed obligations on their wealth. As a result, they found it difficult to accept zakat, which was levied on their possessions. This difficulty became particularly evident upon the Prophet's passing, as resistance to zakat became a direct cause of apostasy.

Regarding them, Allah says: *"Indeed, the life of this world is nothing but play and amusement. But if you believe and are mindful of Allah, He will grant you your rewards and will not demand your wealth. If He were to demand it of you insistently, you would withhold it, and He would bring forth your hidden resentments. Here you are, those invited to spend in the way of Allah, but among you are those who withhold. And whoever withholds only withholds from himself. Allah is free of need, while you are the needy. And if you turn away, He will replace you with another people; then they will not be like you."* (47:36–38)

His saying, *"Indeed, the life of this world is but play and amusement,"* means a period of heedlessness and ignorance, unworthy of the responsibility of men. And His saying, "If you believe" means in God and His Messenger, and "and fear Allah" means avoiding disbelief, polytheism,

and major sins. "He will grant you your rewards" refers to the reward for these deeds.

His saying, "*and will not ask you for your wealth,*" means that all of it for charity. "If He were to ask you for it, and presses you, you would withhold" means that if He asks you to give all your wealth in charity, you will be reluctant to obey this command, which is burdensome to your souls. And His saying, "*And He will expose your hidden resentments*" means He will expose what your hearts harbor, such as the love of wealth, weakness of faith, and latent polytheism.

His saying, "*If you turn away, He will replace you with another people; then they will not be the likes of you,*" subtly alludes to the Muslims who will come after the early believers and will be better than them. This is the reason why Islamic legislation regarding wealth did not fully reflect its true intent; it was a means of easing things for the people, gradually guiding them, and alleviating hardship for those with a miserly nature.

Thus, zakat was established with specific amounts and made a religious obligation upon them, purely out of kindness. In addition to the individual consideration, there is another aspect to consider: the sun of socialism had not yet risen upon the world at that time.

Inequality between men and women is not a principle of Islam.

The fundamental principle in Islam is complete equality between men and women, and this is reflected in individual responsibility before God on the Day of Judgment, when the scales of deeds will be set up. Allah, the Almighty, says in this regard:

“No bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another; and if one heavily laden calls to (another) to carry some of its load, none of it will be carried, even if he be a near relative. You can only warn those who fear their Lord unseen and establish prayer. And whoever purifies himself does so only for his own soul; and to God is the final return.” (35:18)

And He says: “Today every soul will be recompensed for what it has earned; no injustice today. Indeed, Allah is swift in account.” (40:17)

And He says: “Every soul is held in pledge for what it has earned.” (74:38)

However, when Islam was first revealed, it came to a people who used to bury their daughters alive - out of fear of the disgrace that might befall them if they were captured, or to escape the burden of providing for them when the land was barren and sustenance scarce. God says of them: “When any of them is given the tidings of a female [child], his face darkens and he is filled with grief. He hides himself from the people because of the evil of what he has been told. Shall he keep her in humiliation, or bury her in the dust? How evil is their judgment!” (16:58–59)

Thus, society at that time was not ready, nor was woman herself ready, for Islam to legislate her rights at the level of goodness it ultimately intends for her. There had, therefore, to be a transitional period during which both men and women, as individuals, would evolve - and society itself would evolve as well.

Accordingly, the legislation came to make woman’s share equal to half that of man in inheritance, and her testimony equal to half of his in bearing witness. And woman was made subject to the authority of man - as a father, a brother, or a husband: “Men are guardians over women, because

God has made some of them excel others, and because they spend of their wealth." (4:34)

In truth, this legislation represented a great advance for woman compared to her former condition; yet it still fell short of what religion ultimately intends for her.

Polygamy Is Not a Principle of Islam

In Islam, the fundamental principle in Islam is that a woman is equal in marriage to a man - he belongs entirely to her, just as she belongs entirely to him, without a dowry or the occurrence of divorce. The prohibition of polygamy is inferred from Allah's statement: *"But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one"* (4:3) and His words: *"You will never be able to be just between wives, even if you strive [to do so]"* (4:129). The prohibition of divorce is indicated by the Prophet's saying: *"The most detestable of permissible things to Allah is divorce."* The subtle indication here is that whatever Allah detests must eventually be prevented when such prevention becomes both possible and practical - for Allah will accomplish His decree.

It is inferred that Islam, in its fundamentals, does not intend the dowry, as the dowry represents the price of purchasing a woman at a time when marriage occurred through one of three means: either by being taken as a captive, abducted, or bought. Thus, it is a remnant of an era when she was demeaned by people, and it should not accompany her into the era of dignity that Islam has prepared for her when its principles are put into practice.

Islam was first revealed to a society where women had no dignity, as we have previously seen. They were treated in a manner that placed them among the ranks of slaves. Marital relationships lacked the humanity and kindness they deserved; instead, a man would marry ten or even twenty wives, using them for childbearing and exploiting their labor.

Another phenomenon Islam encountered in that society was the higher number of women compared to men, due to the toll of wars on the male population. Islam sought to regulate the excessive practice of polygamy but did not immediately mandate monogamy. This was both impractical in a society accustomed to multiple marriages and because it recognized that it was better for a woman to have a quarter of a husband who protects her chastity, safeguards her, and provides for her, than to remain unmarried and exposed to the hardships of life with no one to support her.

Islam also limited polygamy to four wives, as stated by Allah: *"Marry those that please you of women, two, three, or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one"* (4:3). In another verse, a delicate acknowledgment of the difficulty of achieving justice between wives is expressed when Allah said: *"And you will never be able to be just between women, even if you strive [to do so]. So do not incline completely [toward one] and leave the other hanging. And if you amend and fear Allah, then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful"* (4:129).

Islam lowered the requirement from the absolute justice demanded by faith - justice that was not yet attainable for the society or for individuals, whether men or women at that time - to the level of justice prescribed in the Sharia law. Thus, after stating, *"And you will never be able to be just between wives, even if you strive [to do so]"* (4:129), the verse continues, *"So do not incline completely [toward one] and leave the other hanging."* This

adjustment restricted the concept of justice in polygamy to material fairness, without extending it to matters of the heart. Without this concession, the legislation permitting polygamy would not have been feasible. Yet, in reality, this legislation was necessary, particularly for that stage in the development of the believing society.

The nature of justice here is that it is only restricted by what restricts freedom, because it is a right that corresponds to a duty. Whoever does not know their duty will be deprived of their right. At that time, woman was far behind and was not at the level of equality with man. Several factors contributed to her being in that inferior position, and thus the restriction of justice in her case was a form of justice that served her and her society.

The legislation of polygyny is therefore a transitional law, moving toward the dawn of complete equality between men and women. At that time, justice for her will include fairness in the inclinations of the heart, as indicated in the verse: *"And you will never be able to be just between women, even if you should strive to do so."* (4:129) At that time, the restriction arises from Allah's statement: *"But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one"* (4:3). Thus, the process of prohibiting polygamy begins, except in specific cases of necessity that warrant it. Such cases would be explicitly defined in law, with the consent of the party affected by it being a required condition.

Divorce is not a fundamental principle in Islam

The fundamental principle in Islam is the permanence of the marital relationship between the spouses, because your wife is your counterpart, the emanation of your self from you, outside of you. She represents the entirety of the signs in the external world corresponding to one's inner self,

as stated in the verse: “We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth” (41:53).

However, we do not have the light by which we can choose our other half in marriage correctly. Our example in this is similar to that of a blind person sitting with various pegs before him - some square, some rectangular, some triangular, some twined, some half circular, and some sections of circles in different sizes. Before him is a surface with holes, each suited to one of the pegs. He tries to place the right peg in the right hole, sometimes succeeding and sometimes failing, or even at times being completely unable to match the peg with the hole.

In reality, this analogy is not a perfect fit for choosing a spouse, as the blind person in this example is actually closer to success and proper guidance than any of us when making this choice. If one of us makes a mistake and places a semicircular peg into a square hole, for example, we would need a second chance to try again. Divorce was legislated to give us this second chance.

When Adam and Eve fell into sin and were expelled from Paradise, each descended to a different, isolated place on Earth. They began searching for one another: Adam seeking Eve, and Eve seeking Adam. After much effort, Adam found Eve but did not truly find her, and Eve found Adam but did not truly find him. From that day until now, every Adam searches for his Eve, and every Eve searches for her Adam. The paths of misguidance are wide, while the paths of guidance are narrow. Yet, thanks be to Allah, with every passing day, more light shines upon us, narrowing the realm of error and expanding the scope of clarity.

The light of faith is not enough - just as it has never been enough for the believers before - to ensure complete success in choice. But when Allah completes His light, and the sun of Islam rises, then no mistakes will be made in choice that would require correction through the law of divorce. The likes have met with the likes, and shapes have joined with shapes. "Each people knows their drinking place." (7:57)

Thus, marriage in Islam is an eternal bond that predates marriage in the law. Marriage in the law is merely an attempt to reach the relationship that existed between Adam and Eve, when Eve was taken from Adam: "*O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs [that bore you]. Verily, Allah is over you, a Watcher.*" (4:1)

Divorce is merely an opportunity for error granted to both partners so they may learn, outgrow their mistakes, and render the law of divorce obsolete by no longer needing it.

The Veil “*Hijab*” is not Fundamental in Islam

The fundamental principle in Islam is unveiling (sufur) because Islam's intention is chastity. It seeks for chastity to be established in the hearts of both women and men, not merely a chastity confined behind closed doors and draped garments. However, there is no way to reach this precious chastity except through education and discipline. This requires a period of transition during which chastity can only be achieved through hijab, and thus hijab was legislated.

It seems that the original state was what Adam and Eve were in before their fall: "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat from wherever you will, but do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers. But Satan whispered to them to reveal to them that which was concealed from them of their private parts. And he said, 'Your Lord did not forbid you this tree except that you become angels or become of the immortals.' And he swore to them, 'Indeed, I am to you from among the sincere advisors.' And he led them to ruin. And when they tasted the tree, their private parts became apparent to them, and they began to cover themselves with the leaves of Paradise. And their Lord called to them, 'Did I not forbid you that tree and tell you that Satan is to you a clear enemy?' They said, 'Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers.' He said, 'Descend, [being] to one another enemies, and for you on the earth is a place of settlement and provision for a time.' He said, 'There you will live, and there you will die, and from it you will be brought forth.' O children of Adam, We have bestowed upon you clothing to conceal your private parts and as adornment, and the clothing of righteousness - that is better. That is from the signs of Allah that perhaps they will be reminded.' O children of Adam, let not Satan tempt you as he removed your parents from Paradise, stripping them of their clothing to show them their private parts. Indeed, he and his tribe see you from where you do not see them. Indeed, We have made the devils allies for those who do not believe.'

His saying 'to show them' refers to revealing to them-- 'what had been concealed from them' refers to what had been covered by the light garment of Allah-- 'their private parts' refers to their nakedness... 'And he led them to ruin' means he deceived them with false advice and lies until they fell into sin. And when they fell, 'their private parts became apparent to them,

and they began to cover themselves with the leaves of Paradise.' They used the leaves of the fig tree to cover their nakedness, and from that day, the practice of covering began. It is a consequence of sin, and it will continue until the sin is eradicated, if Allah wills.

In this regard, Allah says: "O children of Adam, We have sent down upon you clothing to cover your private parts, and as adornment. And the clothing of righteousness - that is better. That is from the signs of Allah that perhaps they will be reminded." This means that Allah has created for you and prescribed for you garments made of cotton, wool, and other materials to cover your private parts, while the "clothing of righteousness" refers to the garment of faith, chastity, and preservation that is placed in your hearts. "That" refers to the clothing of chastity. "Better" refers to the clothing of cotton, and "from the signs of Allah" refers to His wisdom in His legislation. The entire meaning of the verse, "perhaps they will be reminded," is that people may remember the state of purity, innocence, and chastity in which they were before sin, and thus they may return to that state.

The last verse is clear evidence of what we have argued regarding the issue of hijab. Unveiling (sufur) in Islam is the original state because it represents freedom. As we have previously stated, in Islam the fundamental principle is that every person is free unless they misuse that freedom, in which case their freedom is revoked by a constitutional law. We have previously referred to this constitutional law.

Read in the wisdom of hijab in the verse: "And those who commit immoralities among your women - then call to witness four witnesses from among you. If they testify, then imprison them in their houses until death takes them or Allah ordains for them a way." When evidence is provided

of immoral conduct that does not reach the legal limit, their freedom is revoked by depriving them of their right to unveil, and they are confined to their homes "until death takes them," unless it becomes apparent that they have benefitted from the punishment and reformed, which makes them hopeful for good conduct in unveiling.

Thus, hijab is a wise punishment for the misuse of freedom in unveiling. This is the original Islamic principle. However, in present legislation it represents an ongoing revocation of the freedom to unveil because the legislator sought it as a preventative measure, to protect the vulnerable from a costly and heavy responsibility that believers do not bear, but Muslims do, for whom no law is prescribed.

A society where men are isolated from women is not fundamental to Islam

What is said about unveiling (sufur) also applies to gender mixing, as the original principle in Islam is a mixed society, with both men and women. It is a society free from the behavioral flaws that contemporary mixed societies have fallen into.

All of these are just examples presented to show the difference between the original (fundamental) and the derivative (secondary), and to demonstrate that the first revelation descends from the second revelation in order to suit the time, to accommodate the needs of its society, and to be gentle with human weakness at that time, for in that there is sufficiency.

Chapter Six

The Second Message

The second message is Islam itself. The Prophet conveyed it in a summarized form, without detailing it explicitly, except through overlapping legislations between the first and second messages - such as the rulings on acts of worship and legal punishments. Allah says: *"Today I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as your religion"* (5:3). This declaration was made on the Day of Arafah, during the Farewell Pilgrimage, in the eighth year of Hijrah, which also coincided with a Friday. This verse is the final revelation of the Qur'an and represents the pinnacle of all divine messages.

And He has approved Islam as our religion so that we may accept it willingly, for a matter that does not begin from His side cannot begin from ours. As He says: *"Then He turned to them so that they might repent"* (9:118).

Many people have thought that Allah's saying, *"Today I have perfected your religion for you"* (5:3), means that Islam had become complete among people - that it reached the height of its perfection on that day. And when such people read His saying, *"And We have sent down to you the Reminder, that you may make clear to mankind what was sent down to them"* (16:44), they assume that the clarification of the Qur'an has already been completed. Yet nothing could be further from the truth.

For of the Qur'an, only that portion was clarified - through legislation and interpretation - which suited the time in which the clarification took place and corresponded to the capacity of the people.

The Qur'an can never be fully clarified, just as Islam can never be completed. The journey within its domain is an eternal journey. Allah says: *"Indeed, the religion with Allah is Islam."* (3:19) And the word *"with"* (*'inda*) here is neither a reference to time nor to place; rather, it signifies a realm beyond time and space. Thus, the journey through the Qur'an, within the domain of Islam, is a journey toward Allah in His Absoluteness. The Qur'an, therefore, has not been fully clarified - nor will it ever be - though its revelation between the covers of the Book has been completed. Its revelation has been completed, but its clarification has not.

From this, one may understand the difference between *anzalnā* ("We have sent down") and *nuzzila* ("was sent down") in the verse:

"And We have sent down to you the Reminder, that you may make clear to mankind what was sent down to them, and that they may reflect."
(16:44)

The common understanding among scholars is that the two expressions are synonymous - but they are not so. And the word *"what"* (*mā*) in the phrase *"what was sent down to them"* does not refer to the entire *Reminder*, but only to the portion of it that concerns the First Message - except for what is interwoven between it and the Second Message.

It is important to note that the Qur'an was revealed in *mathānī* (dual meanings):

"Allah has sent down the best of speech, a Book, resembling, with dual meanings. The skins of those who fear their Lord creep with awe at it; then

their skins and their hearts soften to the remembrance of Allah. That is the guidance of Allah by which He guides whom He wills. And whomever Allah leads astray, there is no guide for him.” (39:23). The meaning of “resembling” (mutashābihan) is that a resemblance exists between its lower and upper parts, between its front and back, and between its outward and inward aspects. The meaning of “dual meanings” (mathānī) is that it contains two layers of meaning: a distant one that is with the Lord, and a near one that descends to the servant. The entire Qur’an is composed of dual meanings - every verse, every word, and even every letter. The secret lies in the fact that it is a discourse issued by the Lord and directed to the servant.

The resemblance within it is the resemblance that exists between the Lord and the servant, and it was expressed by the Infallible (the Prophet), peace be upon him, in his saying: *“Indeed, God created Adam in His image.”* It was also expressed by the Blessed and Exalted in His saying: *“O mankind, observe your Lord who created you from a single self.”* And that single self is none other than His own Self, Blessed and Exalted is He.

The word *Islam*, for example, has both a near and a distant meaning. Its near meaning is expressed in the Qur’an where Allah says: *“The Bedouins say, ‘We have believed.’ Say, ‘You have not [yet] believed; but say [instead], ‘We have submitted (aslamna),’ for faith has not yet entered your hearts.”* (49:14). This refers to what we have called the *first Islam*, which holds no weight before Allah.

In its distant meaning, this was alluded to by Allah - glorified and exalted is He - when He said: *“O you who believe, observe Allah as He ought to be observed, and do not die except in a state of submission to Him (muslimun)”* (3:102). It is well known that none observes Allah as He ought

to be observed except Allah Himself. It is, therefore, a path of ascension (**mi'rāj**) to Allah, the Lord of the ascending ways, in the station of His majesty - through servitude ('*ubūdiyya*), humility, and submission. Servitude ('*ubūdiyya*) is infinite, just as Lordship (*rubūbiyya*) is infinite. Absolute servitude to Allah requires absolute knowledge of Him - something that belongs to Allah alone. *"Say, none in the heavens and the earth knows the unseen except Allah"* (27:65). Here, the unseen (*al-ghayb*) refers to Allah Himself, meaning that none truly knows Allah except Allah. In our discussion on *The Message of Prayer*, we have elaborated on how servitude is the essence of freedom, and there is no need to repeat it here. Those seeking further understanding may refer to that explanation.

Islam is, in essence, a path of ascension (*mi'rāj*) toward the station of servitude ('*ubūdiyya*), guided by the Qur'an, which serves as the roadmap for this journey. This guidance is the very purpose for which the Qur'an was revealed, as indicated in Allah's words: *"And We have certainly made the Qur'an easy for remembrance, so is there any who will remember?"* (54:17). The Qur'an serves to remind us of the servitude we once acknowledged upon ourselves but later forgot. This is referenced in Allah's words: *"And when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], 'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'Yes, we have testified.' [This] lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, 'Indeed, we were unaware of this.' Or lest you say, 'It was only that our forefathers associated [others in worship] before, and we were but descendants after them. Then would You destroy us for what the falsifiers have done?' And thus do We explain the verses in detail, so that they may return"* (7:172-174). This return is a return to Allah through servitude and surrender - through true Islam.

Since the Qur'an is the path of conduct to Allah, as He said: "Descend from it, all of you. And when guidance comes to you from Me, then whoever follows My guidance - there shall be no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve" (2:38). The Qur'an is that guidance, for its beginning is with Allah and its end is with us. So if we perfect our conduct in its stages, we recover the paradise that we lost due to Adam's sin and ascend the degrees of absoluteness. Allah describes the Qur'an, saying: "*Alif, Lam, Meem. This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for the righteous*" (2:1-2). He then speaks of those guided by the Qur'an: "*Indeed, the righteous will be in gardens and a river, in a seat of truth, near a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability*" (54:54-55). These represent ascending degrees: first, the gardens (*jannāt*), then the river (*nahr*), then the seat of truth (*maq'ad ṣidq*), and finally, "*near a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability*" - which is "*near, yet beyond nearness*" and "*a realm beyond all realms.*"

These levels range from the tangible gardens, namely the Paradise lost due to sin, to the Absolute in its absoluteness. The Qur'an serves as a guide to all these degrees, for it is inexhaustible. Allah says: "*Say, 'If the sea were ink for [writing] the words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the words of my Lord were exhausted, even if We brought the like of it as a supplement'*" (18:109).

Thus, it is an error to claim that the Qur'an can ever be fully explained or that its meanings can be entirely encompassed. This is because the Qur'an is the very essence of Allah, and this essence has descended - out of sheer grace - into the realm of human comprehension so that they may come to know it. In its various levels of descent, it became *al-dhikr* (the Remembrance), *al-Qur'an* (the Recitation), and *al-Furqan* (the Criterion).

At the level of al-Furqan, it took the form of Arabic expression, where language was employed with the utmost precision to point toward the higher realities of al-Qur'an and al-Dhikr. The Qur'an was thus cast into the mold of Arabic expression to enable us to understand Allah - within the limits of our human faculties. Allah says regarding this: "Indeed, We have made it an Arabic Qur'an so that you may understand" (43:3). However, this verse and similar ones have led many Muslim scholars into error, as they assumed that the Qur'an's Arabic nature means that its full comprehension can be attained solely through the Arabic language and its rhetorical structures. But this is not the case. We have previously discussed this matter in our explanation of the chapters that begin with disjointed letters, where we clarified that the Qur'an's meanings extend beyond linguistic analysis alone. Those interested may refer to that discussion.

Given the lofty nature of Islam, no nation has yet fully realized it. The truly Muslim nation has yet to emerge - it remains a hope for the future of humanity. Its arrival is anticipated in the days to come, and when it does, it will mark the Greater Pilgrimage - the day when the divine proclamation is fully actualized: "Today I have perfected for you your religion, and completed My favor upon you, and have approved for you Islam as your religion" (5:3).

On that day, Muhammad was the forerunner of the Muslims to come, as if he had arrived for his nation - the nation of believers - from the future. He was not truly one of them in their time, for he was the only true Muslim among them. Allah says: "Say, 'Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds. He has no partner. And this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims'" (6:162-163).

Abu Bakr, the second of two in the cave, was the foremost among the believers, but there remained a great distance between him and the Prophet. Muhammad stood alone as the pioneer of complete submission (Islam), while Abu Bakr led the ranks of those who believed yet had not reached that ultimate station.

And to the Muslims who will emerge in the future days of humanity, the Prophet alluded in his saying: *"Oh, how I long for my brothers who have not yet come!"* Upon hearing this, Abu Bakr asked, *"Are we not your brothers, O Messenger of Allah?"* The Prophet replied, *"No, you are my companions."* Then he repeated, *"Oh, how I long for my brothers who have not yet come!"* Abu Bakr again asked, *"Are we not your brothers, O Messenger of Allah?"* The Prophet replied, *"No, you are my companions."* For the third time, he said, *"Oh, how I long for my brothers who have not yet come!"* The companions then asked, *"Who are your brothers, O Messenger of Allah?"* He replied, *"They are people who will come at the end of time. Each of them will receive the reward of seventy of you."* The companions asked, *"Seventy from among us or from among them?"* He said, *"Rather, from among you."* They asked, *"Why is that, O Messenger of Allah?"* He said, *"Because you find others to help you in doing good, while they will find no one to assist them."*

The Muslims

The Muslims, as a nation, have yet to come. The Infallible prophesied their coming in the end times, when the Book reaches its final conclusion and the promise of Allah is fulfilled, as stated in His words: *"And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers."* (3:85) On that day, all people will enter into the religion, and they will find no escape from it, because all

problems will not find their resolution except within it. What we see is that the earth is beginning to prepare for the emergence of the *Shariah* of the Muslims, which will bring about a new civilization. Without this new civilization, people cannot escape the bankruptcy of contemporary social systems. This is something that was previously mentioned at the beginning of this message, where we stated that all of humanity is currently in a state of wandering. The efforts of Western civilization have lost their way, its bankruptcy has become evident, and the pressing issues of democracy, socialism, and individual freedom are now demanding and calling for solutions, which will not come except from an infusion of Western civilization - or, say if you want precision, from Western culture - infused with a new spirit, the spirit of Islam. The reason Islam was nominated for this position is its ability to resolve the ongoing conflict between the individual and the community, and between the individual and the universe, as we have previously discussed in detail.

The name Muslims, as intended here, should not be confused with the traditional name carried by the present-day nation. As we have previously stated, this name was only given to the nation from the first Islam; otherwise, it is the nation of the believers. No past nation truly deserves this name. All references to nations and Islam refer to the first Islam, except for the matter of the pioneers of humanity, which refers to the last Islam, or rather, a level within the last Islam. The last Islam has no ultimate goal that can be reached. They are, in this way, the pioneers of the Muslim nation that has yet to appear. Allah says about this: *"And when Ibrahim raised the foundations of the House, and Isma'il, 'Our Lord, accept [this] from us. Indeed, You are the Hearing, the Knowing. Our Lord, and make us Muslims [in submission] to You and [of] our descendants a Muslim nation [in submission] to You. And show us our rites and accept our*

repentance. Indeed, You are the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful. Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves who will recite to them Your verses and teach them the Book and wisdom and purify them. Indeed, You are the Exalted in Might, the Wise.' And who would turn away from the religion of Ibrahim except one who makes a fool of himself? And We chose him in this world, and indeed, he will be among the righteous in the Hereafter. when his Lord said to him, 'Submit,' He said, 'I have submitted to the Lord of the worlds.' And Ibrahim instructed his sons [to do the same], and Ya'qub, 'O my sons, indeed Allah has chosen for you the religion, so do not die except while you are Muslims.' Or were you witnesses when death approached Ya'qub, when he said to his sons, 'What will you worship after me?' They said, 'We will worship your God and the God of your forefathers, Ibrahim, Isma'il, and Ishaq, one God, and to Him we submit.'" (2:127–133)

His saying "*Our Lord, and make us Muslims to You*" refers to the last Islam, and they were Muslims of that kind. As for "*And [make] of our descendants a Muslim nation to You,*" it refers, in the near term, to a Muslim nation in the sense of the first Islam, and then it continues to develop and evolve until it reaches the farthest heights of the stages of the last Islam, and their prayers were answered in that. His saying "*And Ibrahim instructed his sons*" means that he instructed them with the word *La ilaha illallah* (There is no God but Allah), and Ya'qub also instructed his sons in the same way: "*O my sons, indeed Allah has chosen for you the religion, so do not die except while you are Muslims.*" This means that "*do not die except while holding firmly to the creed and the word La ilaha illallah.*" And his saying, "*They said, We will worship your God and the God of your forefathers, Ibrahim, Isma'il, and Ishaq, one God, and to Him we submit,*" also refers to the first Islam.

Allah the Exultated says about this: *"And when I revealed to the disciples, 'Believe in Me and My messenger,' they said, 'We have believed. And bear witness that we are Muslims.'" (3:52)* Their Islam here is in accordance with faith, which was authorized by the revelation. Allah had revealed to them to believe, and when they believed and said, *"We have believed,"* it became clear to them that this belief was Islam. Therefore, they also said, *"And bear witness that we are Muslims."* And the knower hears the response of holiness in the essence of the verse: *"Say, 'You have not submitted, but rather say, 'We have believed.'"* They did not submit to the last Islam, I mean the initial stage of it; rather, they only embraced the first Islam.

We have affirmed that the Islam of all of those is the first Islam because the lowest rank of the last Islam is to depart from the collective shariah and enter into the individual shariah. This is done by perfecting adherence to the collective shariah until the individual improves conduct in absolute individual freedom. The last Islam is a stage of individuality. Individualism cannot be attained by anyone who is divided within himself. He must restore unity to his structure so that the conscious mind is not in conflict or contradiction with the subconscious. When the conflict between them is resolved, the heart becomes sound, the mind clear, and the body beautiful. This results in the life of thought and the life of feeling. This is the higher life. *"And indeed, the Hereafter is "al-hayawan" if they only knew."* (29:64) "al-hayawan" here refers to life in contrast to "al-mawatan" - death, - and it signifies the complete life that is not affected by deficiency, illness, or death.

Restoring unity to the structure means that the individual thinks as he wishes, speaks as he thinks, and acts as he speaks. This is what Islam requires, as Allah says: *"O you who have believed, why do you say what*

you do not do? It is greatly hated by Allah that you say what you do not do." (61:2–3)

The Righteous Society

No one can reach this high level of life except through two means: the first is the means of a righteous society, and the second is the educational methodology that supports the individual's efforts to fully liberate their natural talents from inherited fear.

A righteous society is one that is based on three forms of equality: economic equality, known in modern society as socialism, which means that people are partners in the wealth of the earth; political equality, known as democracy in modern society, which means that people are partners in holding the power that executes the demands of their daily lives; and social equality, which is, to some extent, a result of the previous two, with its clear manifestation being the elimination of class distinctions and the removal of differences based on color, belief, race, or gender (man or woman). There should be no discrimination between individuals based on any of these considerations. People are only distinguished by mind and morals. The standard for this is justice in dealing with people, offering advice, being sincere with fellow citizens in private and public, and a spirit of public service at all times and through all means.

Social equality aims to eliminate classes and bridge the gaps between cities and rural areas, and that is achieved by providing equal opportunities for education and urbanization, so that intermarriage between all individuals in society becomes a normal practice. This is the true measure of the extent of social equality.

A righteous society, after being based upon these three principles of equality, which the law ensures to organize and protect, also relies on a tolerant public opinion that does not narrow down different behavioral patterns among the diverse human models, as long as such behavior results in goodness and blessing for the society.

Public opinion issues judgments that come from behind the authority of the law. These judgments are not binding on anyone and cannot be enforced by power, but they may still be more effective than the law in deterring deviants and outcasts. Public opinion, of course, can pass judgment on any behavior it disagrees with, but violence should be avoided in making any changes to that behavior. Violence only leads to one of two outcomes: either violence from those who are capable of resisting or hypocrisy from those unable to do so, and neither of these is good. Moreover, in cases of necessity, the judgments of public opinion and the collective custom may enter the domain of the law through the proposal of legislation that addresses the gaps perceived by those who wish it. Of course, such legislation would not be unconstitutional, as the constitutionality of law is well known to us.

Economic Equality: Socialism

This is not the place for a detailed discussion on socialism, as there will soon be a book released to the public, God willing, titled *"Islam: Democratic and Socialist."*

Socialism means that people should be partners in the wealth of the earth, and it began when society first emerged, for it is the counterpart of capitalism. Capitalism, represented in property ownership, was the system on which society was founded, and it evolved until it reached its current

scientific meaning. Socialism also evolved, but its development was slower than capitalism because capitalism is considered its natural predecessor, and socialism cannot precede capitalism. Furthermore, socialism is the result of the rule of law that protects the rights of the weak, whereas capitalism is the result of the law of the jungle, which gives right to the powerful and claims it for them. By nature, the law of the jungle is a stage prior to the stage of the law of justice and mercy.

Socialism first appeared in its primitive germ form as envy or longing that stirs in the heart of the have-nots against the haves. The one who is envious is the one who is fortunate enough to possess a light, strong, and sharp stone weapon, or who finds a secure and spacious cave, or is blessed with a beautiful, loving, obedient, and strong wife, and so on. This envy led to the historical struggle between the have-nots and the haves. This struggle continues to intensify and will not cease until there is absolute equality among people in the wealth of the earth.

Before scientific socialism emerged as the result of this long and bitter struggle, socialism existed in its primitive stage, which meant sharing in the resources that are not scarce to anyone and cannot be claimed by anyone. The Infallible (the Prophet) expressed this when he said, "*People are partners in three things: water, pasture, and fire.*" This prophetic speech (*hadīth*) clearly indicates the necessity of socialism among people when the wealth of natural and industrial resources can be abundantly exploited.

Socialism entered its scientific phase recently, emerging and gaining the attention of people to the point that nowadays both those who advocate it and those who do not claim it, due to the strong attachment of nations to it.

In the early 19th century, the terms "*socialism*" and "*communism*" began to be used in connection with the idea of public property ownership. The term "*socialism*" was first used in England around 1820 by Robert Owen, a wealthy manufacturer who is considered the founder of modern socialism. He believed that social improvement could be achieved through voluntary, constitutional, gradual, and stable means that would protect people from the evils that accompany violent revolutionary changes, especially poorly prepared ones.

The term "*communism*" is derived from a Latin word meaning "common" or "owned by all." It was initially used around 1835 by secret revolutionary societies in France that aimed to overthrow the middle class through violence and then take control of France, with the goal of establishing an economy where all produced goods were owned by the people and where the working class would be the ruling class. Karl Marx entered the scene and began studying, observing, and developing his ideas based on the various socialist and communist theories and applications. He preferred the term "*communism*" to describe his ideas, as it was associated with the concept of changing society through violence.

Marx based his ideology on four main principles:

1. The course of history is controlled by economic forces.
2. History is nothing but a record of class struggles.
3. The government is merely a tool used by one class to oppress another.
4. Violence and force are the only means to achieve any fundamental change in society.

Based on these principles, and adhering to them, Marx, from his earliest writings, consistently attacked socialist experiments - such as those supported by Robert Owen - and described them as unscientific and unrealistic. According to Marx's view, history followed harsh scientific laws, and a fundamental social change could not occur without the use of force and violence. He ridiculed Owen and other socialists' belief in the possibility of social reform through fellowship, cooperation, and gradual evolution. He referred to their work as "*utopian socialism*" and made a clear distinction between it and his own philosophy, which he called "*scientific socialism*" or "*communism*."

When we refer to scientific socialism or communism in the context we are advocating, we do not mean Marx's doctrine. We are aware that Marx's socialism is not scientific but entangled in a fundamental error. However, this is not the right moment to delve into this, and we will discuss it in detail when writing about "*Islam: Democratic and Socialist*," which will be published soon, God willing.

Scientific socialism, in our view, is based on two pillars simultaneously. The first is the increase in production from the sources of production, namely minerals, agriculture, industry, and livestock. This is achieved through the use of machines, science, and by improving administrative and technical expertise. The second pillar is justice in distribution, which, in the stage of socialism, means that there should be both a maximum and a minimum income level for individuals. The minimum must be guaranteed for all citizens - including children, the elderly, and those unable to produce - and it must be sufficient to allow a citizen to live at a level that preserves their human dignity. As for the maximum income, it should not be many times higher than the minimum, so as to avoid the creation of an upper class that refuses to intermarry with the lower-income class.

To increase production, the ownership of the means and sources of production must be prohibited for any individual or a few individuals in the form of a company, whether it is a production company or a distribution company. A citizen is only permitted to own, individually, their home, the surrounding garden, the furniture inside, a car, and similar items, as long as they do not exploit others' labor to increase their own income. Even within these narrow limits, private ownership should not be of the things themselves, but rather the right to use them, as their essence remains owned by Allah and the community as a whole.

As production from sources of wealth increases, justice in distribution moves toward refinement and the reduction of disparities by raising both the minimum and maximum income levels. However, the minimum income should be raised at a relatively higher rate than the maximum, with the aim of achieving absolute equality. Once absolute equality is realized - through divine grace and abundant production - communism is achieved, meaning the shared ownership of the earth's resources among all people. Communism differs from socialism only in degree; socialism is merely a transitional phase toward communism.

The Infallible (the Prophet) embodied communism at its highest level when his legislation reached the stage of the supreme *zakat* verse: *"They ask you what they should spend. Say: 'The surplus.'"* The term *"surplus"* has been interpreted to mean whatever exceeds immediate needs. His statement about the *Ash'arites* reflects the level of communism, and that is when he said, *"The Ash'arites, when they were in need or on a journey, would spread out a cloth and place on it whatever food they had, then divide it equally among themselves. They are of me, and I am of them."* This understanding aligns with the philosophy of the yet-to-come Muslim nation.

The Sufi mystics grasped this concept when they envisioned the entire earth and its resources as a divine banquet set for all human beings, where each is merely a traveler taking provisions for the journey. To them, the world is like a communal table spread with meat, bread, vegetables, and sweets, around which ten men are seated. Everything on the table is shared among them, and individual ownership of a piece of meat only occurs the moment that your finger grasps it and it begins its journey to your mouth.

When the Quran speaks to us about Paradise: *"And they will say, 'Praise be to Allah, who has fulfilled His promise to us and has made us inherit the earth, so we may settle in Paradise wherever we wish. How excellent is the reward of those who labor!'"* (39:74), it also refers to a miniature model of the greater Paradise, which is to be realized on this very earth we live on today when: *"The earth will be filled with justice just as it was filled with oppression,"* as expressed in the noble prophetic tradition. This vision also captivated Karl Marx's imagination, though he completely lost his way in trying to reach it, and he will never attain it - rather, it will only be achieved by the Muslims who have yet to come.

And when they arrive, a glimpse of the following verse will manifest on earth: *"Indeed, the righteous will be in gardens and springs. Enter in peace, secure! And We will remove whatever resentment is in their hearts - [so they will be] brothers, on thrones facing each other. No fatigue will touch them therein, nor will they ever be expelled from it."* (15:45–48) This glimpse is the communism that Islam will establish with the coming of the true Muslim community. On that day, the earth will shine with the light of its Lord, His blessings will be completed upon its inhabitants, peace will prevail in its lands, and love will triumph.

Political Equality: Democracy

We will not elaborate on democracy here, as our discussion on it is reserved for the forthcoming book titled *"Islam: Democratic and Socialist."* Just as socialism is the outcome of the long struggle between "the haves and the have-nots" in the material realm, democracy is likewise the result of the struggle between "the haves and the have-nots" in the political sphere. It aims to ensure that people are partners in power, just as they are partners in the wealth of the land.

Democracy and socialism are two counterparts - together, they form the two wings of society. Just as a bird cannot soar through the air with only one wing, society cannot achieve stability without both democracy and socialism. Democracy emerged before socialism because socialism requires a higher level of collective awareness than democracy does, which can, in its early stages, be initiated by a small group of intellectuals. Moreover, socialism necessitates a developed and prosperous capitalist foundation as a prerequisite. It is also a product of industrialization, meaning it could not have preceded it - modern machinery only came into existence relatively recently. This discussion pertains to scientific socialism. As for primitive, naïve socialism, its origins stretch far back into history.

Democracy was born in ancient Greece, specifically in Athens, which was the most culturally advanced of the Greek city-states. Each city in Greece functioned as an independent government, and since these states, represented by the cities, were small, it was easy for the people to practice direct governance through the assembly of its individuals. This resulted in a system of direct democracy, without the need for a parliamentary or executive council as we know today. There were no permanent officials in

this system; instead, officials were elected annually, and often, the election was conducted by voting. The Athenians believed that participation in the discussion and policy of public affairs was both a right and a duty for every citizen - they did not consider women and slaves as citizens.

Pericles, the greatest orator speaking of Athenian democracy, famously described this system in his Funeral Oration, delivered in 430 BCE during a public ceremony honoring those who died in the war against Sparta. In his speech, he portrayed Athenian democracy as follows:

"Our government is called a democracy because it is in the hands of the many, not the few. Our laws ensure equal justice for all in private disputes, and our public opinion honors talent, in every accomplished work, not for any sectarian reason but purely on the basis of merit. We also provide an absolute opportunity for everyone in public life, and we maintain the same spirit in our daily interactions with one another. And we are not angered against our neighbor for doing as he pleases, nor do we direct toward him resentful looks, which may not harm, but are undesirable"

"We adhere strictly to the boundaries of the law in our public conduct, even as we remain frank and friendly in our private relations. We recognize the obligations of respect: we obey our rulers and the laws, especially those that protect the oppressed, as well as the unwritten laws whose violation brings undeniable shame.

Yet, our city does not impose on us to labor alone throughout the day. No other city offers the same means of relaxation that we do - festivals and sacrifices, throughout the year, along with the beauty of our public spaces, which uplift the spirit and delight the eye day after day. Moreover, our city

is vast and powerful, attracting the wealth of the entire world, making foreign goods as familiar to us as our own local products.

We love beauty without extravagance and pursue wisdom without forsaking courage and dignity. We use wealth not as a means for vanity and arrogance but as an opportunity for service. Acknowledging poverty is no disgrace; the true disgrace lies in failing to make any effort to overcome it."

"No Athenian citizen neglects public affairs due to being too absorbed in his private matters. We do not consider a person who avoids public engagement as 'peaceful and quiet' - rather, we see him as useless."

"And while only a few among us may formulate policy, all of us are capable judges of it. In our view, the greatest obstacle to work is the lack of sufficient information, which is gained from discussion before taking action, not the discussion itself."

This is how Pericles described Athenian democracy - an insightful portrayal. From the days of Athens, democracy has continued to grow, evolve, and take diverse forms across the world, but it stems everywhere from principles that aim to clearly demonstrate it as a distinctive and unique approach to life - one that upholds human dignity and attempts to manage human affairs with justice, fairness, and acceptance of the people.

The development of modern democracy has produced principles, the most important of which can be summarized as follows:

1. Recognition of fundamental equality among people.
2. The value of the individual above the value of the state.

3. The government as a servant of the people.
4. The rule of law.
5. Guidance by reason, experience, and expertise.
6. Majority rule, with respect for the rights of the minority.
7. Democratic processes and means are used to achieve the goals of a democratic state.

Democratic procedures and institutions are not ends in themselves; rather, they are means to a purpose. Democracy is not merely about having a legislative body, an executive authority, and a judiciary - these are all tools for achieving human dignity. Democracy is not just a system of governance; it is a way of life in which the individual is the ultimate goal, and everything else is merely a means to serve that purpose. A democratic system of governance holds value in the eyes of the people only because it is the best means of ensuring human dignity. In the current democratic approach, the error is much less than the one that Marxist communism got entangled in. However, we will not delve into it here, but rather leave it for its time, in the forthcoming work *"Islam: Democratic and Socialist."*

Human dignity arises from the fact that humans are the most capable of all living beings in learning and progressing. Likewise, the dignity of democracy stems from its ability, as a system of governance, to provide the individual with opportunities to attain honor and dignity. The human being learns from his mistakes, and that is the best way to acquire knowledge. In a dictatorship, however, the government prevents individuals from experimenting or acting independently, thereby stunting their intellectual, emotional, and moral growth. This growth depends on engaging in actions, taking responsibility for mistakes in both speech and action, and then learning from those mistakes.

In contrast to dictatorship, democracy is based on the right to make mistakes - not because mistakes are desirable, but because freedom necessitates the ability to choose between different courses of action. A person cannot be truly democratic without learning how to choose wisely, how to refine their choices, and how to correct the errors they inevitably make.

In reality, all human behavior and the exercise of freedom as a whole consist of a series of individual actions in choice and execution - or, in other words, freedom of thought, speech, and action. The only condition is that individuals must bear the consequences of their mistakes in speech and action in accordance with constitutional law.

Democracy is the right to make mistakes. At the highest level of this definition, the Infallible (the Prophet) said: *“If you did not err and seek forgiveness, God would bring forth a people who do err and seek forgiveness, and He would forgive them.”*

Part of human dignity in God's sight is that individual freedom has no appointed guardian - not even the Prophet himself, despite his noble character and perfect virtues. This is evident in God's words: *“So remind, you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller.”* (30:21-22). The people addressed here are the polytheists who rejected the worship of God and devoted themselves to idols, offering sacrifices to them. Yet, even over them, the Prophet was forbidden from exerting control. This same Prophet, who sought no dominance on earth and whom God described as being *“of great moral character”* (29:4), was not granted authority over others' freedom.

From this, we understand that no individual is so perfect as to be entrusted with the freedoms of others. The price of individual freedom is constant vigilance over it. Indeed, individual freedom is a fundamental right, and it comes with the responsibility of exercising it wisely. Because the community of believers was not yet ready to fully exercise individual freedom in choice and action, the Prophet was made their guardian - to prepare them for the responsibility of absolute personal freedom. Yet even in this role, he insisted on allowing them the right to make mistakes whenever possible, without burdening or oppressing them. In doing so, he was preparing them for democracy, for the time when they would mature in thought and capability.

This aligns with God's command: *“So by mercy from Allah, you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from around you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in matters. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely upon Him.”* (3:159)

This is the verse of shura (consultation). And shura, wherever it is mentioned, whether in this verse or in His saying: *“And those who respond to their Lord, and establish prayer, and conduct their affairs by mutual consultation among themselves, and spend from what We have provided them.”* (42:38), is not a verse of democracy. Rather, it is a verse that descended from the verse of democracy to prepare people to become worthy of democracy when its time arrives.

Thus, shura is not a fundamental principle but a branch. And it is not democracy, but rather the rule of the wise individual who prepares the nation to become democratic. The foundation of democracy lies in the two

verses: *“So remind. You are only a reminder. You are not a controller over them.”* (88:21–22).

Likewise, zakat with fixed amounts is not socialism, but capitalism. Its verse, *“Take from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cleanse them, and pray for them. Indeed, your prayer is tranquility for them.”* (9:103), is not a fundamental verse but a branch. Its purpose is to prepare people, psychologically and materially, to become socialists when the time for socialism arrives. The fundamental verse from which the fixed-amount zakat verse was derived is His saying: *“They ask you what they should spend. Say: What is beyond need (al-‘afw).”* (2:219). We have already pointed this out.

And since the Second Message is based on the elevation from the branch verses to the fundamental ones, which are the verses from which the derivatives descended due to the conditions of the time and the limited capacity of society, both materially and humanly, it is necessary to elevate the legislation by developing it to be based on the fundamental verses. In this way, the era of socialism and the era of democracy begin, and the path opens toward the realization of absolute individual freedom, practiced both in worship and in daily dealings.

This is the Sharia of the Muslims, the Sharia of the Muslim nation that has not yet come into existence, and for whose arrival the earth is now preparing. It is upon the people of the Qur’an to prepare their path and to make their emergence possible and facilitated. And it is for this reason that this book was written.

Social Equality: the elimination of classes and disparities

This is the most difficult form of equality to achieve. Economic equality and political equality are considered its prerequisites; they are the culmination, essence, and pinnacle for both. It has not been achieved by humanity up until this day, and will not be accomplished in the future except through hard work, education, and guidance to correct and change what seems natural in human behavior. In this way, it is the highest product of civilization throughout all ages. Civilization is principally an attempt to distance the human being from his baser animal instincts and lead him to a higher level of character, where the law of the jungle - the law of violence and domination by force - is replaced by the law of justice, truth, and mercy. Thus, improvement enters human relationships: satisfaction replaces force, justice replaces exploitation, freedom replaces repression, and the transcendent emotion, guided by a strong mind, replaces the dwindling emotion.

Our approach to this equality in this book is similar to our approach with the previous ones, which is to defer the detailed examination to its appropriate time in the book *"Islam: Democratic and Socialist,"* where we will study it thoroughly. However, it is necessary to mention it here to the extent that the context allows.

The subject of social equality is the human individual, as was the case with economic equality and political equality. The human individual, as previously mentioned multiple times, is the goal behind every collective effort. He is a goal, and his means are Islam and the Qur'an, which are the greatest methodological tools of all. Its means is also the society, which is the highest achievement humanity has produced until today. The individual, who is the goal, is the human individual in the sense that he is

human - even if he is an imbecile. He should not be made a means to anything else. For this reason, there should be no distinctions between individuals based on birth, ethnicity, color, belief, or gender, whether male or female.

Allah, the Almighty, said about this: *"O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted."* (49:13) His saying, *"Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you,"* means that nobility comes from knowledge and character. Righteousness is knowledge and acting according to that knowledge, as indicated by His saying, *"Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted,"* where "Knowing" refers to knowledge and "Acquainted" refers to acting according to that knowledge. The Infallible (the Prophet) said, *"All of you are from Adam, and Adam was made from dust. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you."*

The absence of social discrimination against the weak, and the elimination of the disparities that arose from the law of the jungle between individuals and classes, is the certain work of civilization. If you find a society where the rights of the weak are preserved and their dignity respected; if you find a society where women enjoy freedom, privacy, and honor, and where children have rights and are cared for with mercy and love, then that is a civilized and advanced society.

The family is the first society, and within it the individual learns - and continues to learn - the system, proper social conduct, respect for the law, reverence for authority, compassion, tolerance, and love. The family still has its exceptional ability to educate individuals in a way that leaves a

lasting impact on their personal lives, as well as on their lives in both their small community and the larger society when they emerge into it. The pillar of the family is the mother, who is the queen of the small kingdom. However, unfortunately, recognition of this has not been granted to the human family to this day. The woman has been, and continues to be, oppressed. Her role in the home has been that of a servant. This situation has dire consequences for the upbringing of children, leaving a deep impact on the entire society and on all its levels.

We have previously mentioned in this book the matter of absolute equality between men and women, so there is no need to repeat it here. However, it is important to point out that social equality does not come about naturally, nor as a spontaneous result of evolution. Rather, it requires planning and intelligent development of society, as it needs education and guidance. Education is different from guidance; the purpose of education is to equip individuals with professional experience that makes them useful to society in the field for which they were created and are naturally prepared based on the talents instilled in their nature. Education is essential to arm individuals with scientific, technical, administrative, and technological skills to develop their society's civilization and elevate it to higher levels of competence and efficiency.

Within education, specialization occurs, differentiation takes place, and the direction of planning to meet the needs of society prevails. There is differentiation between men and women, as well as among men. This differentiation aims to develop and nurture the talents of every gifted individual so that they can serve their society in the field for which they were naturally prepared. However, this distinction that occurs in the fields of preparation for serving civil society does not carry any social privilege that automatically elevates the status of one individual above another. In

this perspective, which focuses on professionally preparing citizens through directed education programs, the value of a woman is not the same as that of a man, but it is equal to his value.

This means that when a woman is prepared to be a mother by learning everything that qualifies her for this vital, complex role, her service to society, in the eyes of society, is not less than that of her brother, who is being prepared to become an engineer, doctor, or legislator. There is no limit to the preparation for successful motherhood. The more a girl learns, the greater her competence in the field of motherhood itself. For the benefit of society, every individual must be taught a skill that they master, both physically and intellectually. This is also in the individual's best interest, as a person's intellectual and moral values mature only when they love manual work and master part of it with good proficiency, because all advancement is rooted in knowledge and action according to that knowledge. Allah, the Almighty, says: *"To Him ascends the good word, and the righteous deed raises it."* All of these matters are part of the purpose of education.

As for the purpose of upbringing, it is to liberate natural talents, the mind, and the heart from the captivity of delusions and falsehoods. When the heart is freed from fear and the mind is cleared of delusions, the life of thought and feeling is realized, this being the aim of every living being. This is the mission of upbringing. Upbringing has many functions, which in their totality lead to the transformation of the human being from a state of wildness to a social being, where all their habits become humane and refined.

They eat in a humane way, drink in a humane way, sleep, sit, talk, and act in all matters, both public and private, in a humane and civilized manner. They do not display indecencies, nor do they utter words that offend the hearing, sight, mind, or heart. They do not spit in clean public places, nor urinate or defecate in public spaces. They do not throw dirt or filth on clean streets. Generally, they strive with all their might to leave everything in a better state than they found it. Guidance should prepare individuals for all of these things. Guidance occurs in schools, clubs, and public places, where education and awareness are continuously provided to the public, always without interruption, using all the media that the state can offer: radio, television, cinema, theater, press, books, magazines, lectures, and various types of recordings for different arts. The state must direct all the community's resources towards nurturing mature individuals by following the right educational approach.

The problems in societies arise from the majority of individuals being either adolescents or children, with very few mature individuals who are capable of confronting the truth. *"Children follow the principle of play, which makes a person act driven by desires and passions, trying to fulfill any desire when it arises, without balancing one desire against another, executing it immediately. This pursuit of immediate gratification is often coupled with avoiding failure, pain, or denial. Such behavior stems from the failure to distinguish between conflicting desires based on a reasonable, long-term perspective. Often, wishful thinking replaces what is possible or desirable."* There is no way out of this except through guidance. Guidance, unlike education, does not involve specialization or differentiation between men and women. It is a fundamental right for every human being and extends even to children, with no limit except their capacity to receive, understand,

and implement. We have previously discussed the Islamic approach to upbringing in this book, and there is no need to repeat it here.

The golden rule in guidance is to place individuals in front of responsibility and to assist them, by all means, in bearing that responsibility. The purpose of upbringing is to raise mature individuals - to turn children and adolescents, who crowd societies, into men. The difference between children and adolescents, and men, is that men act freely and take responsibility for their actions, while children and adolescents avoid acting out of fear of responsibility, or they act and attempt to escape, under the cover of darkness, from the responsibility of their actions.

Conclusion

Now then, the decisive word regarding the First Message and the Second Message is that religion has a pyramidal structure - its summit is with Allah, where there is no "where," and its base is among the people: *"Indeed, the religion with Allah is Islam."* (3:19). And this base has descended from that summit - it descended to meet the reality of people, their needs, and their human and material capacity. Thus, *Sharia* was established. The summit of Islam's pyramid will always remain beyond full realization, in eternity and beyond. Individuals will continue to evolve in their understanding of religion as they gain more knowledge of the signs in the horizons and within themselves. Allah, exalted and glorified, says: *"We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. Is it not sufficient that your Lord is a witness over all things?"* (41:53). And He says: *"They do not encompass anything of His knowledge except what He wills."* (2:255).

He, exalted and glorified, wills for us to gain more of His knowledge at every moment. Regarding this, He says: *"Every day He is bringing about a matter."* (55:29). His matter is nothing but the unveiling of Himself to His creation so they may come to know Him. He, blessed and exalted, teaches us, saying: *"And do not hasten with the Qur'an before its revelation is completed to you, and say: 'My Lord, increase me in knowledge.'"* (20:114). The increase in knowledge is nothing but an ascent from the base of the pyramid toward its summit in continuous evolution. As a person evolves in understanding religion, they develop their *Shari'ah* according to their needs and capacity, moving from a rigid foundation to one less rigid.

Individuals evolve in understanding religion and enter the ranks of individual laws, while societies evolve accordingly, raising their laws from a rigid foundation to a less rigid one. This progression ascends the pyramid's ladder, whose base is the *Sharia* of the First Message.

If the summit of the pyramid of religion, regarding wealth, is found in the verse: *"They ask you what they should spend. Say: 'What is beyond your needs.'" (2:219)*. Then its base is the verse: *"Take from their wealth a charity that purifies them and uplifts them, and pray for them; indeed, your prayer is a source of comfort for them. And Allah is Hearing, Knowing."* (9:103). Upon this foundation, the *Shari'ah* of the First Message established *Zakat* with fixed amounts, making it a financial law and a pillar of worship, because people could not yet bear a higher obligation. The realization of the pyramid's summit was left to individuals, each according to their capacity. Encouragement for spiritual elevation was conveyed in the Prophet's words: *"In wealth, there is a right beyond Zakat."* In Allah's statement: *"Say: If you love Allah, then follow me, and Allah will love you."* (3:31). For his law on wealth and its place in worship was closer to the summit.

If the summit of the pyramid of religion in politics is found in the verses: *"So remind, you are only a reminder. You are not a controller over them."* (88:21-22). Then near its base is the verse of *Shura*: *"It was by Allah's mercy that you were gentle with them. And had you been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you. So pardon them, seek forgiveness for them, and consult them in affairs. But once you have decided, put your trust in Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely upon Him."* (3:159). At its absolute base is the Verse of the Sword: *"When the sacred months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them, capture them, besiege them, and lie in wait for them at every*

ambush. But if they repent, establish prayer, and give Zakat, then let them go their way. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." (9:5)

On this base, the *Sharia* of *Jihad* was established, and on the verse of *Shura*, the *Sharia* of governance was built - on the guardianship of the wise individual over the group. The base of the pyramid was not democracy but was closest to it at a time when democracy was unknown and society was unprepared for it.

And the base of the pyramid in that matter was not socialism, but it was the closest form to socialism at a time when its scientific concept was yet unknown and society was unprepared to practice it.

If humanity, over fourteen centuries, has traveled a vast distance toward maturity, entering the age of adulthood and leaving behind the age of childhood, and if, by Allah's grace and this maturity, it has become capable - materially and intellectually - of embracing socialism and democracy, then Islam must be preached at their level. This means ascending from the rigid base of the *Shari'ah* of the First Message to a less rigid one, moving gradually toward the summit, which will always remain in the realm of individual responsibility. And the lowest level of the new base is the entry into socialism by prohibiting individual ownership of the means and sources of production, whether by a single person or a small group in the form of a partnership. This opens the doors of legislation toward socialism.

And the lowest level of the new base is the entry into democracy by ensuring the right to vote for every citizen, male and female, upon reaching a certain age, as well as the right to run for office. This opens the doors of legislation toward democracy.

And this process is what is called the development of legislation. It is an ascent from a secondary text, drawing as much elevation as possible toward an original text - an ascent from one text to another.

And there is legislation that overlaps between the First Message and the Second Message, such as the laws of worship. This is subject to development only in a way that keeps its summit open to the levels of individual laws, for each person who ascends - by Allah's grace and through mastering imitation - to realize their individuality, distinguishing them from the collective herd.

The collective *Sharia* is not the foundation; rather, the foundation is the individual *Sharia*, just as the individual, not the collective, is the original unit. However, due to people's deep-rooted familiarity with communal living and the strong influence of the herd instinct, they have come to believe the opposite. Thus, when you speak to them about individual laws, they find it strange and unsettling. There is another reason as well - individual *Sharia* belongs to the rank of adulthood and responsibility. People are still like children; they prefer that others bear responsibility for them and find comfort in remaining unaccountable. Even when they do take on responsibility, it is within the herd and along familiar paths. But for an individual to stand alone, bearing responsibility as a singular entity and forging an untrodden path, this is daunting and finds little readiness or inclination in their hearts.

The gateway to the Second Message is the First Message, except for what undergoes legislative development. This development does not apply to acts of worship, except for *Zakat* with fixed amounts. This is because it was not originally a fundamental act of worship but was prescribed due to people's limited capacity for a higher form. Otherwise, the true act of

worship in *Zakat* is that of the Prophet. No development applies to the law of exchange (*mu'awadah*), as it is fundamental and built upon the unchanging foundations of religion. Development applies to transactional laws (*mu'amalat*), such as fundamental individual rights, economic and political systems, and all aspects tied to societal transformations. These systems, which rapidly evolve, must keep pace with society, maintaining vitality, adaptability, and the capacity for renewal, growth, and progress. All of this has been previously indicated in this book.

The essence of the second message is vitality, evolution, and renewal. The seeker on its path must continually refresh their thoughts and emotions - every day, indeed every moment of every day and night. Their highest ideal in this is Allah's own description of Himself: *"Every day He is bringing about a matter."* (55:29) Yet, He is *"not distracted by one matter from another."*

When one enters through the gateway of the testimony *"There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah,"* they strive to ascend by perfecting the imitation of the Prophet to the level of *"So know that there is no god but Allah"* (47:19). Then, through this mastery, they elevate their testimony of *tawhid* until they abandon the testimony itself, seeing that the witness is the witnessed. At this point, they behold *"Allah bears witness that there is no god but Him, as do the angels and those endowed with knowledge, upholding justice. There is no god but Him, the Almighty, the Wise."* (3:18).

Here, they stand at the threshold and are addressed directly, without a veil: *"Say: Allah! Then leave them to plunge in vain discourse and play."* (6:91). And "Say" here means "Be!" - this is the station of individual laws. When the seeker ascends the ranks of the second message through the gateway

of the first, as explained, they will have traversed the sevenfold path - from *Islam* to *Iman*, to *Ihsan*, to *Ilm al-Yaqin* (knowledge of certainty), to *Ayn al-Yaqin* (vision of certainty), to *Haq al-Yaqin* (truth of certainty), and back to *Islam* anew. Then, they begin again at a higher level, continuing this cycle endlessly.

Islam is a spiraling ascent, beginning for us in collective law and ending with Allah, beyond place and beyond limit. The one ascending this path is in constant rise toward "*the Lord of Ascending Steps*" (70:3), increasing in knowledge with every moment and, accordingly, deepening their submission to Allah. Through this, their thoughts and emotions are continually renewed. Reaching the stage of individual law is inevitable for the seeker on this ascent, and it is not an unattainable station. Yet, the true test of perfection, for which souls strive, is that one's reality be with Allah and that their individual law be an extension of that reality. But how distant, how distant that goal remains! This is a journey into the infinite. There is no idealism in this statement, for in its scientific aspect, it has descended to human reality, drawing people toward the absolute - each according to their level of knowledge. They ascend a ladder whose steps are as numerous as souls, for "*above every possessor of knowledge is one more knowing*" (12:76), until knowledge ultimately reaches "*the Knower of the Unseen*" (9:78).

This means that a person's share of perfection has no limit, absolutely. The promise of human perfection is the rank of divinity. Yet, the path to achieving this is not built on idealism but rather on tangible reality, through the practice of worship and interactions in daily life, as previously explained in detail. It is sufficient for a person to know that Allah has reserved for them a perfection of thought and feeling beyond what any eye

has seen, any ear has heard, or what has ever crossed the heart of any human being.

All praise is due to You, O Allah, as You are worthy of it - abundant, pure, and blessed praise.

For the revival of Islam

To fully grasp the idea of this Islamic revival, we recommend, in addition to reading this book, reading the following books, which are available at alfikra.org:

The Message of Prayer, Islam, There Is No God but Allah, and The Path of Muhammad.

Reading *The Path of Muhammad* is only complete when it is acted upon, for: "Whoever acts upon what they know, Allah grants them knowledge of what they did not know."

*All these books are available in Arabic and English, except *There Is No God but Allah*, which is only available in Arabic.

This Book

“In this introduction, I do not intend to engage in a detailed discussion of the book’s various topics. Rather, my aim is to establish a key premise: Islam comprises two messages - a first message based on the *branches* of the Qur’an, and a second message that builds upon its *fundamentals*. The first message has already been elaborated, whereas the second awaits its elaboration. This will occur when its man comes and when its nation comes. And this coming is inevitable: ‘*This is a decree that your Lord has made inevitable.*’ ”

This Book

“It would be a grave mistake for anyone to assume that the Islamic Sharia of the seventh century, with all its details, is entirely suitable for application in the twentieth century. This is because the difference between seventh-century society and twentieth-century society is beyond comparison, and the knower (al-‘ārif) has no need to elaborate on it in detail; it speaks for itself.

Thus, we are faced with one of two possibilities: Either Islam, as conveyed by the infallible (the Prophet) and contained between the covers of the Qur’an, is capable of encompassing the potential of twentieth-century society and guiding it in the fields of legislation and ethics; or its capacity has been exhausted, having stopped at organizing seventh-century society and those similar societies that followed. In that case, twentieth-century humanity would have to abandon it and seek solutions to its problems in other philosophies, and this is something no Muslim would ever accept. Nevertheless, Muslims are unaware of the necessity of developing the Sharia.”

This Book

“Muslims say that the Islamic Sharia is complete, and this is true. But its completeness lies in its ability to evolve, to absorb the energies of individual and social life, and to guide that life along the paths of continuous progress, no matter how much that individual and social life may attain in activity, vitality, and renewal.”