

Islam and Rationalism

by

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about this book:

This book refutes the widespread view of the contradiction between Islam and rationalism. This book includes ten chapters within three parts. Part I demonstrates the relation between Islam and rationalism, proves that Islam calls for the working of the human mind, explains the issue of the mind and the sacred texts, and finally shows in a full chapter the impact of the wisdom of the heart on the wisdom of the mind.

Part II tackles the features of the Islamic rationalism, explains how Islam makes the guidance of the heart the path leading to faith, and that Islamic rationalism is more objective in comparison to other rational doctrines. Islamic rationalism is more benevolent in nature compared to unrestrained rationalism that could be easily misused.

Part III occupies nearly half of the book, and it revolves around the four issues posed by rationalism against Islam: 1) the existence of God and His attributes 2) the immortality of the human soul 3) the existence of the Day of Judgment, Hell, and Paradise 4) the prophecies and revelations.

**In the name of god the merciful and the COMPANIONATE
may god be thanked and may his grace and blessings descend upon
prophet muhammad**

Foreword

Many contemporary writers tend to understate the influence and value of religion in modern life, and lay top priority to tackle issues like technology , arts, national and international politics, material and economic problems...etc. as these topics are what preoccupy our society and the life, present and future of people. Religion comes last after all of these priorities, as a kind of formal obligation or as it represent cultural heritage and a symbol of glory in ancient eras.

Some writers tend to overlook religion as they are influenced by the European culture. Others have the same tendency as the only option left for them, as this was the sweeping trend and the rat race of modern life. The technological advancement in industry, the complexity of modern life with its material demands, the needs that exceed the means, and the availability of the means of enjoyment and satisfaction of desires left little room, marginal interest and little time for anything else, including religion.

The worst thing of this material dominance is that some people claim that there is no room for religion in modern life. Yet, religion is the only thing that would restrain the unleashed materialism and unbridled desires and lusts of the modern life. Religion is the only antidote against the chronic ailments of modern society, be it socialist or bourgeois. Any means to counteract the ailments of modernity without religion will never succeed, as materialism cannot be treated with anything material. If one treats materialism with more comfort, abundance, or luxury, this will never be enough or even preventive, and one tend to cast doubt on such treatment that will never control the excess, extravagance and unbridled lusts of modern life, which lead only to destruction.

The rational perspective demands the interference of religion to find the possible decisive cure of the ailments of materialism of modern life. This view is true and applicable on the western society and the eastern one as well. The Arab society puts special importance to religion, as it is deep-rooted in it, from the religion of the ancient Egyptians to the advent of Islam. Taha Hussein, for instance, is not a pro-religious thinker, but an advocate of enlightenment as said about him, yet he refused socialism that claims to establish justice and preserve it and capitalism that claims to respect liberty fully. He said, "There should be another doctrine in-between both extremes that merge the value of justice and the value of liberty on one hand and combines them with religion on the other hand, and makes religion the basis of a new human life that elevates itself above materialism to reach higher ideals. This doctrine should believe in the fact that human beings cannot live, be creative, or elevated unless they are connected with their divine origin via faith, confidence, and hope. If such doctrine emerges, this would be good to curb the unbridled passions of materialism.... and makes us enjoy a sufficient share of liberty and strive to establish justice on earth"1

To know the real place of religion in society and take it seriously, we should first examine the title of this book: we should know the stance of Islam toward rationalism and its support for the rational outlook to be the basis of a rational life. The proof of this is that Islam has named the pre-Islamic era in Arabia the Age of Ignorance, as Islam has intended to move

people from darkness to light. This book refutes the claim that Islam is against rationalism, and it is better to distance Islam from the daily affairs of life, and make it confined to mosques, rituals of worship and the relationship between the human being and God. This book reveals that such a claim is based on the stance of the European Church on the scientific approach that emerged in Europe. The Church had justified such stance based on its old heritage and the nature of Christianity itself, whose main concern is to deliver the human soul. No such justifications could be applied in Islam, except that some Islamic thinkers were so greatly influenced by the European civilization that it influenced their critical ability and their discernment.

This book demonstrates all the aspects of this question of Islam and rationalism, like the relation between the mind and the sacred texts, and the influence of the heart, that the Holy Quran regards it as the container of faith, on rationalism. This book tackles in full details the four questions posed by rationalism on religions: 1) the existence and exultancy of God 2) the immortality of the human soul after death and reckoning 3) Paradise and Hell as reward and punishment in the afterlife 4) prophecy and revelation. The book tackles these aspects thoroughly without making partial issues draw the attention from the totality of topics, and citing many views of European thinkers to convince those who would accept nothing but Western views and refuse other views expressed elsewhere. Lastly, the book covers the components of Islamic rationalism:

- a) Thinking and the mind as the way leading to faith.
- b) Objectivity and Sunna.
- c) Benevolence and righteousness.

We do not intend with this foreword to present the parts and chapters of this book, as this would take sheets and sheets, and the reader can easily know this by browsing through this book. What concerns us is a question that might occur to the mind of most readers. This book and its method of tackling the topics differ from the traditional ways typical of and familiar to Islamic writers, and this fact might disturb readers' temperament or prevent comprehension, as some readers prefer the traditional method of writing books as used in the Islamic library in the Arab world. We say to such readers that we stop drawing on what ancient scholars had written, as our ancestors did not know the new input in our life and our era. What is the value of a new book if it did not bring something new to add to old books? Islamic writers should stop drawing on centuries-old concepts and traditions, and thank whoever helps them to stop that habit instead of getting annoyed by him. This fact cannot be overlooked or ignored, and we should apply what we call for and leave the habit we advise against.

At first, I did not like to use the term 'rationalism', but it gained popularity and it denotes the concept we mean to explore its relation to Islam. Terms, anyway, are vehicles to convey ideas and should be used as long as discarding them for other concepts might not convey the meaning we seek.

Lastly, we would like to conclude this brief foreword on Islam and rationalism with a Quranic verse that elevates knowledge in a high stature and makes it a great divine bounty:

"Indeed, God bestowed a favor upon the believers when he raised up in their midst an apostle from among themselves, to convey His messages unto them, and to cause them to grow in purity and to impart unto them the divine writ as well as wisdom – whereas before that they were indeed, most obviously, lost in error" (3:164)

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PART I

The relation between Islam and rationalism

Chapter One: Islam proclaims reason

Chapter two: between the mind and sacred texts

Chapter three: the impact of the heart on the mind

This part tackles the relation between Islam and rationalism, and proves that Islam hails and proclaims reason and mind, due to special factors confined to Islam in comparison to other religions that were not compatible with rationalism in all aspects. Chief among these factors are the following:

- 1- The non-theological image of God that proves His existence and His attributes, but does not reveal His being and essence.
- 2- The miracle of Islam is a sacred book that moves people from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge, unlike the material miracles of previous celestial religions.
- 3- Lastly, the lack of a religious institution that would monopolize interpretations of sacred texts and keep stagnant thinking to defend its interests, as is the case of Jewish Rabbis and Christian clergy.

Chapter two of this part tackles the relation between the mind and the sacred texts, and shows that the purported clash between them is a European and ecclesiastical affair, whereas Islam does not deny the mind; on the contrary, it acknowledges its merit and makes it the origin of faith and a prerequisite to religious obligation and duties. Then this chapter shows the relation and discord between the Islamic thought and the Greek philosophy and that the latter had led the former to theological reasoning and a sort of scholasticism and then to mysticism and Sufism; hence the gap between the mind and the sacred text. This chapter asserts that there are areas that the human mind cannot reach or tackle like the realm of the afterlife and the divine being of God.

Chapter three tackles the impact of the human heart on the human mind, and reveals the meaning of the hearts that 'discern' as used in the Quranic expression, and its impact on the purity of the rational thought. This chapter shows that mind and abstract logic in themselves could not reach scientific achievements without a faith that has different nature in comparison to the nature of the mind. Many citations are mentioned in this chapter by many scientists, especially Blanc who devised the Quantum theory and Einstein who devised the theory of relativism.

Chapter One: Islam proclaims reason

It is not difficult for researchers to see the major dividing line between pre-Islamic era and post-Islamic era. This line in the realm of religions resembles the dividing lines in the history of the human civilizations. Such as the line with which the ancient Egyptian civilization emerged, then that of the Greek civilization, then that of Rome and the Roman civilization, and then lastly that of the 15th century European Renaissance that sowed the seeds which were reaped in the next five centuries. In each case, we find errors that herald the civilizational movement that presents its contribution to humanity. The whole world differed before and after the ancient Egyptians who presented to humanity the ABC of civilization, like the alphabet, papyrus, architecture, religion...etc. when the ancient Egyptian civilization degenerated, the Greeks emerged and presented their creative contributions in the fields of science and philosophy. When their civilization degenerated, the Romans emerged and at their time, 'all ways lead to Rome', but their centuries of dominance ended in degeneration that led to the medieval Dark Ages until the first rays of the renaissance in the Italian states that sowed the early seeds of the contemporary European civilization.

It is the same dividing line in the realm of religions.

There is a dividing line between pre-Islamic and pos-Islamic eras.

Before the advent of Islam, there were local, tangible gods, and the image of the gods was linked to local characteristics and creatures typical of the place or country. For instance, in ancient Egypt, the gods were the oxen, the cats, and the sun disc. In ancient Greece, the gods were like human beings with human desires and abilities of deities, and it was familiar that gods used to copulate with human beings and beget progeny of demi-gods, and hence the ancient image of the holy trinity in Greek mythology and ancient Egyptian history.

Even Judaism was influenced by local elements, and the Jewish people made the God of the Israelites exclusive to them apart from other nations. Christianity in its flourishing period went beyond the local limits as it discarded the influence of state systems and moved from its birthplace of revelation, and because its central ideas of love, compassion, and delivering the soul with glad tidings and faith, are human universal feelings. Yet, when Constantine the Roman Emperor hoisted the cross on the spearheads, Christianity took a European quality and Rome became its center. The simple image of God as preached by Christ himself was replaced by the divine image set by Saint Paul the Greco-Roman man. This image was some kind of a Hellenistic projection on Christianity, which had turned Christ into another Prometheus figure who had presented the secret of the fire to humanity and who was severely punished by the arch god Zeus. This Hellenistic idea was developed in the ancient Egyptian religion in the Ptolemaic era until the theory of the holy trinity was established.

Other religions relied on material miracles to gain believers. Moses performed miracles that we read in the Old Testament, Christ performed miracles that we read in the New Testament, and more miracles were

performed by his disciples. Other prophets of the Israelites performed miracles as well. Hence, material miracles, like raising the dead or curing the ill, and other supernatural phenomena became an essential part of religion and a way to convince people to believe in it.

Other religions were linked to the concept of religious institutions: like the Pharaonic temple and its priests, the Jewish temple and its Rabbis, and the Christian church and its clergy. It was not conceivable that religion may discard institutions and clergy, as religious matters were so ritualistic and complex that they entailed priests as mediators between the common people and religions with its secrets and rituals...etc. This system was comfortable for all parties concerned, as priests had interests in this mediation status and began to have authority on people to hoard money...etc. and common people saw in the priests' processions and rituals what coped with their idea of the status of religion and their inability to imagine the absolute, abstract idea of God. Rulers and monarchs made deals with clergy to dominate and control the masses, by giving clergy money or wealth to make use of their influence on people.

This image was fixed in the minds of intellectuals and scholars who studies world religions, and it made them deliver their severe judgments on religion, and distance it from the sphere of reason and mind. This was due to the complex theological image of God, the faith based on miracles, and the fact that the religious institution monopolized the interpretation of religion and prevented critical thinking of it.

These three components, i.e. the image of divinity, reliance of religions on material miracles and supernatural phenomena to gain followers, and the existence of the religious institutions as temples and priests, became fixed in the mind of intellectuals when they thought about religion in general as they are considered major and necessary components of any religion. This conception was the reason behind the severe judgment on religions by intellectuals, philosophers, and rationalists.

This image has changed totally with the advent of Islam.

Islam radically revolutionized the realm of religions that ended the three components of previous religions:

- 1- The embodying, limited, or ambiguous theological concept of God.
- 2- The faith based on miracles.
- 3- The religious institution monopolizing religious interpretation and holding the authority to rule, legalize, ban, and punish opposition and the emergence of acquired interests.

The first new concept in Islam was that its prophet who had called people to believe in it with the power of a sacred book whose verses were recited to them and they would be reborn spiritually and turn into new human beings with high resolve and rational minds.

People at the early time of Islam used to wait for material miracles to make them believe in this or that religion, and they demanded that the prophet would perform miracles to them, "And they say, 'Why has no miraculous sign been bestowed on him from on high by his Sustainer?'. Say,

'Behold, God has the power to bestow any sign from on high yet most human beings are unaware of this'," (37:6)

According to the Holy Quran, people had said:

"And so they say: 'O Muhammad, we shall not believe thee till thou cause a spring to gush forth for us from the earth. Or thou have a garden of date palms and vines, and cause rivers to gush forth in their midst in a sudden rush. Or thou cause the skies to fall down upon us in smithereens, as thou has threatened. Or till thou bring God and the angels face to face before us. Or thou have a house made of gold, or thou ascend to heaven – but nay, we would not even believe in thy ascension unless thou bring down to us from heaven a writing which we could read!' Say thou O prophet: 'Limitless in His glory is my sustainer! Am I, then, aught but a mortal man, an apostle?' " (90-93:17)

"Now those who are bent on denying the truth of the prophet's message say, 'Why has no miraculous sign ever been bestowed upon him from on high by his Sustainer?' Say, 'Behold, God lets go astray him who wills to go astray, just as he guides unto Himself all who turn unto Him'" (27:13)

"Yet they say: 'What sort of apostle is this man who eats food like all other mortals and goes about in the market-places? Why has not an angel visibly been sent down unto him to act as a warner together with him? Or 'why has not a treasure been granted to him by God?' Or 'He should at least have a bountiful garden, so that he could eat thereof without effort!' And so these evildoers say unto one another, 'if you were to follow Muhammad you would follow but a man bewitched!' " (7-8:25)

This differs from the episode when Jesus Christ invoked God to descend upon him and his people a table of food from heaven:

"...Send down upon us a repast from heaven: it shall be an ever-recurring feast for us - for the first and the last of us - and a sign from Thee. And provide us our sustenance, for thou art the best of providers " (114:5)

Of course, many people who wrote the history of the life of Prophet Muhammad told us many of his miracles, but no one of them ever told us that these miracles caused people to believe in Islam. The recurrent image is that the prophet Muhammad would recite the Holy Quran and people would believe in Islam. In this respect, the Holy Quran says, "***And yet they say, 'Why have no miraculous signs ever been bestowed upon him from on high by His Sustainer?' Say, 'Miracles are in the power of God alone, and as for me – I am but a plain warner. Why – is it not enough for them that We have bestowed this divine writ on thee from on high, to be conveyed by thee to them? For, verily, in it is manifested Our grace and a reminder to people who will believe.'***" (50-51:29)

Aisha, the wife of Prophet Muhammad once said a simple yet profound phrase: "Medina was conquered solely by the Holy Quran" and this was the greatest conquest ever done by mere recitation to make Islam set its roots in Medina. Hence, the battle of the word preceded that of the sword, and if Medina had not been conquered by the Holy Quran, the battle of Badr and other battles would not have occurred.

Islam has the advantage that it has bestowed on humanity, that it removed miracles as prerequisites of faith, when its miracle has become a

book, the Holy Quran. Instead of performing miracles that produce faith, faith in Islam performed miracles. Before Islam, the mind had submitted to the sacred texts, but with the advent of Islam, the sacred texts have submitted to the mind. In this unique historical moment when Gabriel revealed the very first word of the Holy Quran 'Read', Islam has been linked to thought and the life in Islam began as a call based on thought. As its miracle a book recited by all believers, then Islam is closely linked to the world of thought.

Miracles are no longer the path leading for faith; it is a book leading to the path of faith. This was the huge leap and the major step on the route toward mind and reason.

Islamic vision of divinity rid humanity of the pagan embodiment, theological complications, and philosophical hypotheses (as done by Aristotle and Plato). This does not mean that matters became simple and understood effortlessly like the formula $1+1=2$. Islam has made it like a higher ideal imagined by the philosophers after adding life, will, and perfection to it. This image is acceptable to the mind even if it cannot be proven by physical proofs. This image cannot be refused by the mind, as it is elementary that God Who created life is Himself Alive, and He leads us to perfection, as He is Perfection itself. The difference in this Islamic conception in comparison to the Christian one is that the latter was influenced by the ancient Egyptian religious idea of the holy trinity promoted more by the Ptolemaic rulers who were of Greek origin, carrying the Hellenistic culture of Mount Olympus that turned gods into human beings and deified human beings. With the spread of Christianity by the Greco-Roman Paul, the former adversary of Christianity and later its saint and founder, a holy trinity was established based on Egyptian and Hellenistic origins. It is difficult for the human mind to accept the concept of trinity as it mixes the elements of the divine nature and the elements of the human nature, and when the church tried to explain this concept, it added to the complexity of the matter.

In Islam, it is not a matter of non-acceptance but the shortcomings of the human mind make it difficult to reach the essence and nature of divinity, as it is the source and end of everything and it is the absolute high ideal that cannot be described by our human limited qualities.

This image, even if the mind cannot reach all its aspects and depth, is acceptable to the mind and reason. In fact, this image is acknowledged by the mind and reason, even if full details cannot be reached, but the mind can feel the side of truth in it and its necessity of perfection and existence. Yet, the mind cannot reach the knowledge of the nature of divinity. The Quranic verses demonstrate the image of divinity without arbitrariness or compulsion to make people feel comfort toward it and deduce from it meanings of liberty, compassion, truth, justice, and beauty. This is manifested if we compare this Islamic image of divinity to the complex Greek philosophical concept of divinity and proving the existence of God.

Islam provides the solution to this complex, thorny issue of divinity when it has presented an image of God acceptable to the mind, in a better way

than done by philosophers in their concept of higher ideals, as Islam added to the concept of divinity life, ability, will, and perfection. At the same time, this image is not a piece of information to be accepted without reasoning. This is the belief in the unseen concerning God, His qualities and His Being. The realm of the unseen cannot be reached by the human senses, and this fact inspires people to think and consider with passion, piety and modesty to feel the rays of divinity within the inspiring lines of the Holy Quran.

Hence, we can say that the right amount of knowledge concerning divinity and the unseen was revealed in Islam, so as not to present something contradictory to the rational mind, and keep the spirit of looking forward for knowledge and considering. The unknown and the unseen could be reached by reciting and considering the Quranic verses.

Islam does not need to establish a religious institution or clergy that would monopolize interpretations, as it has made the relation between people and God direct and without mediators. Islam resists the authority of clergy and monks and saw that they were nearly worshiped as partners of God, and it refuses the idea of interception and mediation, and that someone would have the authority to make people nearer to God. Islam abolishes all pagan methods like idols and shrines, and in so doing, it discards the idea of a religious institution.

That means that mosques is not like churches with its traditions and clergy of special knowledge, learning and training who know how to perform rituals and other secrets unknown to ordinary believers. This sort of knowledge in Christianity has to be taught in special schools and authorized by the lower and higher church authorities. This hierarchical pyramid of power is headed by the Pope in Rome and at its base deacons and priests. This hierarchy controls Christendom, and the Pope used to crown monarchs and issue compulsory decrees as the head of the church and holders of the keys to heaven. He used to excommunicate people as a kind of punishment by moral, spiritual death. If a decree issued to excommunicate someone, candles were lit and bells would toll until the decree was read, then candles would be put out and bells stopped, as a sign of spiritual death of the excommunicated person. This punishment of excommunication could be applied to even most powerful monarchs. It is well-known history when the emperor Henry IV stood barefooted at the doors of the Pope at the city of Canossa in 1077 for three consecutive days until the Pope condescended to forgive him. The journey to Canossa became the worst example of submission.

Mosques in Islam differ from Christian churches. The earth itself is a big, pure mosque, and there are no certain conditions to build mosques. The only structure that could be built inside mosques are pulpits of imams that might even consist of three steps, to make imams be seen by all rows of believers. Any Muslim can be an imam as long as he memorizes some verses of the Holy Quran, and being an imam does not bestow any sort of authority. Even the daily five prayers can be performed in mosques or anywhere else. Most people pray in their houses and workplaces. The scenes of the Egyptian

villager praying by the bank of the River Nile, and the Arab Bedouin praying amid the desert, are unrepeated in any other religions.

Islam has abolished old components of previous religions that resisted reason and the rational mind. Islam has become open for all kinds of thought, it does not refuse any thought or refused by any other thought. It has made people move away from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge. This is the interpretation of the words 'light' and 'darkness' by imam AL-Ghazaly in his book titled "*The Balance of Work*".

Hence, Islam was an announcement that humanity has attained the age of reason.

Someone might ask why did we Islam the first doctrine to proclaim the reason and the mind? Why it is not Greek philosophy in the era of Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates that hold that proclamation? No one can deny that the emergence of Greek philosophy proclaimed the age of reason but only to Athens, and not to the whole world. Islam has held its universal message of the book and the balance to all people, like the people of tyrants like Caesar and Persian Emperors, who were moved by Islam from darkness of ignorance to light of knowledge, whereas the Athenian philosophy was confined to the Greeks, and more specifically to free males while excluding women and slaves. When the Ptolemaic rulers established the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, it was an extension of the Athenian philosophy and it was purely Hellenistic culture, and they forbade local Alexandrian people to enter the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. Moreover, the Greek philosophy did not deny the mythological world of mount Olympus. Even Socrates went once to the Oracle of Delphi to seek its prophecies. Thus, this is contrary to the universality of reason presented by Islam to all people on earth. Before the first century of Islam, its branches of knowledge, like Islamic jurisprudence, Hadith, and interpretation were available to non-Arab Muslims. Even the compiler of Arab grammar in one book was a non-Arab called Sibawayh. Some of the well-known and respected imams were non-Arabs who could not pronounce certain Arab letters. This proves the open nature of Islam as it proclaims reason and mind, and as it carried the book of the Holy Quran without limits to all people of the world, to benefit from it and present their contribution to all humanity as well.

Here lies the major difference between the Islamic rationalism and the Athenian rationalism, as the former has proclaimed reason and mind for humanity. Islamic rationalism has one source, like Islam itself, which is God; hence, it has objectivity and absoluteness, and thus it can be accepted by humanity. As for Athenian rationalism, and so was European rationalism, originated from the European man and his circumstances, and hence their limitations.

CHAPTER TWO: between the mind and sacred texts

European and ecclesiastical heritage:

The contradiction or clash between the reasoning mind and the sacred texts is considered a European and ecclesiastical heritage, and this clash cannot be understood except within this light. Different natures of both the sacred texts and the reasoning mind do not necessarily mean they are contradictory. For instance, we cannot say that the eyes would clash with the ears, or that hearing contradicts seeing, as each has its own distinctive function, which in turn might complement one another. Yet, sheets and sheets of European history and thought show that it is a deep-rooted conviction that there is contradiction or clash between the reasoning mind and the sacred texts. This was manifested three centuries before the advent of Islam and continued until the early modern era, i.e. 15 centuries. This main constituent of European history is taken for granted in the European thought and it would be hard to change it or accept ideas opposite to it.

What facilitates understanding of this phenomenon is that the clash was not between Christianity and the mind, but between the church and the liberty of thought. This clash occurred because of the emergence of the church as a religious institution and the sole representative of Christianity. The Christian religion demands clergy to perform religious rituals and social services, like baptism, burial of the dead, prayers, marriage, offering oblation and charity, confessions...etc. that is why Christians cannot conceive their religions without the church, and they say about it, "Our mother the Church". This led to the monopoly of the religious professions, and personal interests began to crystallize in the church. When Constantine the Emperor converted to Christianity in 323 A.D., the church had the support of political authority, and dissenters were persecuted. In 385 A.D., the Spanish heretic Priscillian was sentenced to death by the order of Maximus the Emperor. Saint Augustine himself in 430 A.D. justified persecution based on words purportedly ascribed to Christ: "*Compel them to convert to your religion*". According to this logic, he agreed to punishing the heretic with exile, whipping, and fines. Saint Augustine had written a constitution for the church to follow to face any rational movement or thought. He says in his book titled "*Comments on the book of Genesis*" that, "...It is not conceivable to believe a view contradictory to the sacred texts, as their authority exceeds any reason of the human mind"².

In 390 A.D., the bishop Theophilus destroyed a library in the city of Alexandria. One century later, Saint Cyril, Theophilus's nephew, felt the danger of the cultural activity of Hypatia who used to teach mathematics and philosophy in the city of Alexandria, and her school sessions were full of audience. Saint Cyril incited the mob against her, and the mob attacked her on her way to her teaching sessions, tore her clothes and tore her body into pieces. In 529 A.D., Justinian the Emperor ordered to close all schools of philosophy. This approach continued even when the Greek studies flourished and the European society knew the philosophy of Averroes, and the European renaissance began. The church forbade John Baptist Porta to continue his studies in physics and chemistry in the second half of the 16th

century. Scientific research societies and academies at the time in Paris, London, Napoli, and Florence, were persecuted by the church, especially Del Shimento that began its sessions in Florence in 1657 under the auspices of the prince Leopold De Medici, and included the elite people of scientific research. The motto of this academy was 'Refuting any philosophical doctrine even if it was revered, and the necessity of studying natural phenomena in light of empiricism'. They applied this motto with enthusiasm, and their studies and research bore fruit. For instance, there are the contributions of Borelli in mathematics and Redi in physics and others in other branches of scientific research. All of them widened the scope of knowledge in fields like temperature, light, magnetism, electricity, gravity, digestion, pressure ...etc. their approach was right in scientific research, and their academy was a fortified bastion for new knowledge. Yet theologians accused them of being heretic infidels and the president of the academy was offered the position of a cardinal to dismantle the academy. The academy resisted its opponents like a bastion for 10 years before its fall. Its members resisted until their last drop of blood. Borelli, for instance, was persecuted and forced to beg when he went broke, and Oliva was forced to commit suicide to flee the torture of the Inquisition Court.³

Before this, Pruno was sentenced to death in 1600 because he believed the theories of Copernicus that were opposed by the Catholics and the Protestants. Pruno was the one who paved the way for the modern theory of nebula, but the court sentenced him to death without shedding his blood, that is why he was burned alive. In Florence, another reformer, named Savonarola, was killed in the same manner. With the emergence of printing, the Church began supervising and banning some printed books; for instance, the Pope Alexander V issued a decree in 1501 to ban printing books except with permission from the Pope. Henry VIII of France made printing without permission a crime punishable by death. Germany began censorship of printed books in 1529. Books were never printed in England during the reign of Elizabeth I except with permission. There were no print houses in England at the time except in London, Oxford, and Cambridge. Printing in England was supervised by the Star Chamber, and these restrictions were not removed until a century ago.⁴

With the new research in astronomy, a series of persecution ensued, from the persecution of Copernicus to the trial of Galileo. The Church was adamant in its refusal of new science due to fanaticism, narrow-mindedness, and ignorance, sticking to the Old Testament story of creation that shows the earth as a flat surface, and as the center of the universe. These matters were not in the main theological issues tackled by Christ and his disciples, yet these matters were the axis of the most powerful wave of persecution of science and mind. The stubbornness of the Church was exemplified by the sentenced uttered by one authority of the church, " the stability of the earth is a concept thrice sacred...we can tolerate the utter disappearance of souls, the denial of the existence of God and His incarnation in a human form, yet we can never tolerate the view that the earth revolves..."⁵. Others in the Church have defined the date of the creation of the world: at nine AM, 23rd of October in the year 4004 BC.⁶

The insistence of church authorities over such issues at that time, when horizons of knowledge opened in fields of geology, astronomy, physics, and the emergence of the evolution theory and natural selection, which were irrefutable, led to the opposition of church views. This led eventually to the defeat of the church and its alienation from the society. Its role was restricted to one hour every Sunday or in social occasions. The church lost its role as the scientific, social, and political compass of European society. This was considered a natural step and a prerequisite to modern progress and the emergence of secular states in modern age.

Accordingly, this idea of Christianity in European ecclesiastical heritage was considered applicable to all religions in the world, although Christianity was one thing, and the church was another thing, and Christianity was one thing, and the other world religions were another thing. This sweeping generalization was conveyed and applied blindly by Islamic thinkers who were influenced by European thought, and that made them consider Islam as a religion is opposed to rationalism, like all world religions. This is not true, and the same measure does not apply here.

Reason and mind in the Islamic thought:

Islam, like other religions, acknowledges the idea of divine revelation, but it is distinctive by being liberated from the three factors led to the abyss between religion and reason, mentioned in the previous chapter. The concept of divinity in Islam did not emerge from theology or an ecclesiastical hierarchy, nor the Islamic faith was based on miracles; thus, the early Muslim religious scholars had no objections or sensitivities to accept mind and reason as sources of wisdom. It was said, "Rulings of the mind are acceptable by the *Sharia* (Islamic legislature), and the mind is an inner prophecy, whereas the *Sharia* is the outer mind". Nearly all Muslims agree on the fact that the belief in God precedes that in prophecies, and so we believe in prophecies and sacred texts after we believe in God first. That is why one of the scholastic Islamic philosophers the first mission of the believer is to reach by reasoning to the idea of the existence of God to staunchly believe in it through the mind, and accordingly the belief in prophets and their sacred texts. Hence, Islam was firstly based on the rational outlook.⁷

Sheikh M. Abdou said, "The belief in God's existence should not be gained from sayings of the prophet or the sacred texts, but it should be gained through the mind first, and then comes next the belief in prophets". Sheikh Maraghy said, "Imitation should not be the basis of faith, otherwise it would be a faith without reasoning and work and God would not accept it". It is acknowledged that the mind is a prerequisite to faith, and that obligations of faith are not compulsory on mad people and children who have not attained to puberty. It is said as well that the faculty of reason is the balance of god on earth.

Ibn Taymiya wrote two books on the topic of the mind and the sacred texts, one of them titled "*The Refutation of the Claimed Contradiction between the Mind and the Sacred Texts*", and the other titled "*The Agreement Statement between the Mind and the Sacred Texts*". In both books, he proves that there could be no clash between the reasoning mind

and the sacred texts, and there is ample room for *Ijtihad* (reasoning and interpretive judgment) for other issues that would be new in life.

All Islamic doctrines place the mind in high status; especially the Zaydi doctrine set by imam Zayd Ibn Ali (Zayn El-Abdeen) Ibn Al-Hussein Ibn Ali Ibn Abu Talib. This doctrine was misinterpreted by Shiite Muslims and shunned accordingly by Sunnite Muslims, although it was worthy of appreciation.

Zaydi doctrine offers the resolved issue of the reasoning mind as expressed in the Holy Quran. This is mentioned in the manuscript in the Egyptian Book House titled "Gems of Chapters on the Origins of Zaydi Doctrine" by Sarim Al-Deen El-Wazir:

"Ijtihad is based on the rational, reasoning mind, and then the unanimous view of scholars, then what is known from the sacred texts and the Sunna, then what is generally accepted socially, then the general understanding and measurement of subject matters, and lastly the original innocence in things..."

Imam Abou Zahra refutes and dispels in his book titled "**Imam Zayd**" any doubts concerning the abovementioned statement, by saying:

"...We conclude that the reasoning mind and its decisive rational judgment are placed in the first rank above other sources of Ijtihad, even the Sunna and the Holy Quran. This would seem strange, but we shall explain it as follows.

The reasoning mind is placed above all as through it we reach the knowledge of God's existence, the prophecy of Muhammad, and the divine origin of the Holy Quran. Logically, this precedes using the Sunna and the Holy Quran in Ijtihad, as the reasoning mind proves their correctness.

We resort to the reasoning mind in Islamic Sharia if the Sharia has no answers to the subject matter in question. The reasoning, rational mind comes primarily before the sacred texts in three aspects.

Firstly, the determined and resolved matter of the reasoning mind which cannot be refuted, and that the judgment of the mind to legalize or ban something is something relative and not absolute.

Secondly, the reasoning mind is the basis of the Islamic discourse of facts like the belief in God His prophet, His book, and His miracles. The fact that the mind is a prerequisite to holding believers responsible for their actions comes after the Sharia. We conclude then that the judgment of the mind is not contradictory to what is in the sacred texts. For example, if the mind considers something as corrupt, without a text to legalize or ban it, then this thing is banned, as God does not like corruption for His believers. If the mind considers something as useful without a text to legalize or ban it, then this thing is legalized as long as it is not corrupt, because God is merciful to His believers.

Thirdly, the precedence of the reasoning mind is the basis of the general Sharia, but the mind comes later to the Sharia in matters legalized or banned clearly and specifically in the Sharia..."

The same author refutes the doubts cast on the precedence of unanimous view over the Sunna and the Holy Quran, saying:

"... *Sarim Al-Deen El-Wazir mentions in his book that the unanimous view was taken in the early era of Islam by the prophet Muhammad and his companions and followers. For example, all views agree unanimously on facts like: there are five prayers daily, on the number of prostrations (Raak'at) in each prayer, on the manner of prayer set by Prophet Muhammad, on fasting, alms (Zakat), pilgrimage...etc. There is no Ijtihad in such matters as they are taken for granted and they could not be opposed, and they are explained plainly in the Holy Quran and Sunna.*

Taking these facts for granted, and in a place of precedence over Ijtihad in the Holy Quran and Sunna, does not mean that the unanimous view is placed in precedence over the Holy Quran and Sunna. Prophet Muhammad advised us to use the mind and the unanimous view to judge things not mentioned in the Holy Quran and Sunna" ⁸

The author of the book titled "**Zaydi Doctrine**" mentions in his talk about El-Kasim El-Rasi that " *This doctrine was the first one to place the reasoning mind in precedence to the Holy Quran and the prophet Muhammad as both are known and acknowledged first through the mind, and both cannot be used to reach the mind. Hence, the mind is the main source for Fiqh in Zaydi doctrine, and although the rational tendency was first known in the **Mo'tazala** doctrine, but it does not place the mind in such high esteem as the case with Zaydi doctrine. The Zaydi doctrine says that even the truth of Prophet Muhammad is known by the mind as it discerns truth from falsehoods, and hence the mind is precedent to Prophet Muhammad, the Sunna and the Holy Quran. **Mo'tazala** and **Asha'era** doctrines, and Al-Razi who followed the latter doctrine, say that the reasoning mind is precedent to the sacred texts, whereas the main doctrines like **Al-Hanifiya** or **Al-Shafeiya** did not place the mind as a source for legislation precedent to the Holy Quran..."*⁹

El-Kasim El-Rasi said in his description of the reasoning mind, "...*the mind is a safe haven for thoughts and the best friend to keep secrets and ideas*"

Despite the fact that the Zaydi doctrine was plain and clear in stating and acknowledging the fact of the mind's precedence over the sacred texts, even the Holy Quran itself, yet the essence of other Islamic doctrines does not differ much from this fact. This appeared in tackling the case of the purported contradiction between the mind and the sacred texts, and the contemporary writer sheikh M. Soad Galal cited El-Razi and said:

"...*the problem is when the judgment of the mind would contradict the sacred text of the Holy Quran...*"

El-Razi mentions that in the interpretation of the Holy Quran, one would use the mind, like in the verse: "...when he came to the setting of the sun, it appeared to him that it was setting in a dark turbid sea..." (86:18) which means the beholder has seen this scene literally. El-Razi says that the mind is the origin and the Sharia is the branch of it, and if we believed in the vice-versa, then this is not true. It is through the rational mind that we prove the existence and oneness of God, and His attributes like liveliness, omniscience, omnipotence, will...etc. and His ability to send messengers to

people. Hence, even Sharia is based on the reasoning mind and not the vice-versa, which is wrong.

The contemporary writer sheikh M. Soad Galal explains that the vice versa is not true as we cannot prove the correctness of the Holy Quran by the existence of God or the vice versa, as this is false logic. The existence of God and the correctness of the Holy Quran are both proven solely by the mind, not by anything in the Sharia; hence, the Sharia itself can be true according to the mind as well.¹⁰

Islamic thought and philosophy:

It is a shame that that many Islamic thinkers made the wrong use of the encouragement of Islam to scientific thought in the only field that Islam bans considering; i.e., the attributes of God and the nature of His Being. The human mind cannot conceive this field, yet some Islamic thinkers specified a new branch of philosophy to deal with such knowledge, which is called the knowledge of **Kalam** (similar to Greek scholasticism: rational reexamination of faith based on Greek philosophical ideas). People of **Kalam** made use of the Aristotelian system of logic of premises, semantic meanings, patterns, definitions, limits, proofs, assessment, refutations...etc. to reexamine **Fiqh**.¹¹

In any simple book of the origins of **Fiqh**, we read that a thing cannot prove the existence or nonexistence of another thing, like the example of cleanliness before performing prayers, as performing ablution is not enough to perform prayers...etc.

The Salafist thought imbued the **Kalam** philosophy and the logical and philosophical methods of thinking infiltrated in the thought of most Salafist thinkers like, Averroes, Avicenna...etc.

Al-Ash'ari himself tried to conciliate the sacred text and rationalism and **Kalam** philosophy. One writer traces the infiltration of **Kalam** philosophy in the Islamic thought, and says:

"...After Al-Ash'ari, there was the judge Abou Bakr El-Baklani, who wrote books like **The Philosophical Premises, Gems of Wisdom**, on the **Kalam** philosophy of Al-Ash'ari. Later on, there was El-Niasabouri (420 - 478 A.H) who studied monotheism, **Fiqh**, and logic for 30 years and wrote books like **The Ultimate End** which is preserved as a manuscript in the Egyptian Book House, and **El-Shamel (The Comprehensive)** and its synopsis titled **Book of Guidance**. El-Niasabouri made use of the Salafist thought as well as Greek logic in his work tackling **Kalam** philosophy of Al-Ash'ari. Later on, there was his disciple, imam Al-Ghazali, the most important well-known Islamic philosopher, who died in 505 A.D. his contribution to the thought of Al-Ash'ari was to refute other philosophers who were being refuted before him by Al-Mo'tazala solely. Imam El-Khatib followed the steps of imam El-Ghazali in refuting philosophers and Al-Mo'tazala by the philosophy of Al-Ash'ari. Later on, the same philosophy and methods were used by Al-Baydawy whose book was titled **Al-Tawale'** who combined other philosophies with **Kalam** philosophy. Some of those who followed the footsteps of Al-Baydawy were non-Arab scholars and philosophers like Al-Taftazani and Al-Eigy".¹²

We can say that the experience of the Islamic thought in this field was unsuccessful, and holding solely to the sacred texts at the time was preferable to the reasoning mind. That was because Muslim philosophers studied the Greek philosophy to use it to prove the existence of God and His attributes. They used it to discuss many presuppositions and postulates. Later on, they tried to reconcile philosophy and faith, and they considered that wisdom brought religion and religion complements wisdom. Al-Safa brothers considered that Sharia was sullied by ignorant imposters and some aberrant ideas that should be purged by philosophy, as said by El-Sagastany. Islamic thought did not gain benefit by a book by Al-Faraby titled "**Two views of the Two Sages**" and says in it, "*God saved reasonable and rational people via these two sages, Plato and Aristotle, with their clear logic to refute falsehoods and prove things with irrefutable evidence, and their books have many principles on nature and questions of divinity...*" He did not even mention Islam and the message of Prophet Muhammad and the guidance of the Holy Quran and its proofs of faith that keep faith ingrained in the mind more that philosophical doctrine could keep.

This view of Al-Faraby and other philosophers who imitated him is rue concerning the Greek society, where there were no Quran or prophecy, and philosophers were quasi-prophets. This cannot apply in Islam after Prophet Muhammad and the Holy Quran, which presents new method and proofs suitable to humanity in all ages. Yet, the non-Arab origin of these Muslim scholars and philosophers led them to embrace the Aristotelian logic, as the Quranic logic was foreign to them. Their old sediments of foreign (non-Arab) thought led them to prefer the logic and wisdom of 'the two sages' to the divine wisdom of the Holy Quran. Yet, we might excuse them to a certain extent as they were suffocated by the dominance of traditional religious scholars in the Islamic thought at the time, which stifled any innovations.

Dr. M. El-Behy mentions the interpretation of Avicenna of the following Quranic verse: "***God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His light is, as it were, that of a niche containing a lamp; the lamp is enclosed in glass, the glass is shining like a radiant star: a lamp lit from a blessed tree - an olive tree that is neither of the east nor of the west - the oil whereof is so bright that it would well-nigh give light of itself even though fire had not touched it: light upon light! God guides unto His light him that wills to be guided, and to this end God propounds parables unto men since God alone has full knowledge of all things***"(35:24) and this interpretation was as follows:

"... light is either self-producing or taken from elsewhere and in both cases it leads to goodness. Avicenna says that 'the heavens and the earth' means the totality and the 'niche' means the material mind or the brain that contains the light of thought. The 'lamp' means for him the method to transmit thought, and the 'blessed tree' is the power of thought. The 'fire' for him means the Omnipotent Mind behind the world we see, this is the Omnipresent Being written about by Plato ..."13

It is understood that this strange interpretation is far from the intended meaning of this Quranic verse. The picture drawn by the Holy Quran is

absorbed by the soul and has the right effect without this bizarre, alien interpretation of Avicenna who was taught philosophies of Aristotle and Plato. This kind of 'interpretations' is in fact a way of adding convoluted and complicated meaning of the Quranic text, which in itself simple and persuasive, with a certain impact of its intonation and shades of semantic levels of meanings.

For example, this is a quotation from the Aristotelian book titled "**Physical Nature**" translated by Islamic philosophers:

"...the existent matter signifies something that exists, and shows its existence, as the matter either exists or do not exist, if the matter is white, that does not mean that the thing exists, nor the thing exists because it was nonexistent before, thus the white matter does not signify either existence or nonexistence, then the existent matter signifies many things"(!)

This passage, said the author¹⁴ is an effort wasted in utter nonsense, and the Islamic nation was harmed when some of its scholars abandoned the Holy Quran with its clear text and message and the easy Sunna to waste their time in interpreting the previous Aristotelian passage in the following paragraph:

*"...the existent matter can signify many existing things, which are primarily existent as an essential fact, and this is the essence of the true nature of things. Yet if the existent matter is something not essential but accidental, it would not signify lack of existence and it has to signify the essence of itself" (!)*¹⁵

Moreover, these philosophers added gratuitously in the field of Islamic **Fiqh** many problems of other faiths and religions, which did not exist in Islam overlook by it. These problems were central to their thought and treatises, which tarnished the lucidity and clarity of Islamic thought that depended on its easy way that reached every natural disposition and mental faculty.

At the end of his book titled **The Divine Side of the Islamic Thought**, Dr. M. El-Behy shows the tragedy of the Muslim thinkers who wanted to use the Greek philosophy to get a proof of God's existence:

"Muslim philosophers who roamed the East came with the deduction of the existence of God via the existence of the universe itself and the real world in addition to the evidence cited by religion itself, because of their acceptance of the Greek concept of existence. This was not done properly as they tried to conciliate Islam and philosophy in their rational endeavor and they adopted the same problematic issues inherent in the Greek thought, especially in the divine attributes of God mentioned in the Holy Quran and His divine knowledge of His realm.

Their philosophy could not be the basis of any religious guidance as it is not compatible with the thought and nature of religion. Their philosophy could not be the basis of a rational thought due to many vague, abstract, and convoluted ideas that were the result of merging many doctrines of philosophical thought.

If the Muslim philosophers knew the real value of the Greek philosophical thought and that it had been merged with poetry, legends and imagination, they would have preferred to formulate their own logic.

If they knew the result of their acceptance of the ideas of Plato and Aristotle in their interpretations of faith itself as a concept, they would have acknowledged that the Holy Quran is the only divine way to the hearts of the believers and the minds of the elite thinkers among people"¹⁶

If these genius minds focused its research on natural sciences like Ibn Al-Haytham, Al-Bayroni, and Al-Khawarizmi ...etc. Baghdad, the capital of Abbasid Caliphate, would have accomplished what Europe had reached in the renaissance era and human knowledge would have gained ten centuries of science and gained the guidance and teachings of Islam as well. If the **Mo'tazala** group who discussed the idea of God's divine justice discussed it about rulers or themselves, when they reached the throne and the rule, political degeneration would have been prevented and the methods of dialogue would have gained a model of argument to reach the true opinion without concerning their own views.

The futile discussion of the divine attributes of God brought nothing but struggle, chasm and division in the Islamic thought. These fruitless arguments did not benefit any true believers from ordinary people who believed in the Holy Quran like the companions of the prophet and they did not resort to mere philosophical questioning because the desired meaning had reached their hearts and filled it with faith and certitude. Other thoughts apart from this assurance and certitude would be aimless curious chattering with harmful impact. We agree in this respect with those who refused to tackle such novel issues like the divine attributes of God. Ibn Al-Jawzy says in his book titled "**The Favor of Ancient Religious Scholars on the Contemporary Ones**" (page 17):

"We should refuse to discuss and tackle novel issues like those tackled by the Mo'tazala thinkers, like the divine attributes of God and His Being in a rational method. That was more harmful than tackling the issues of fate, which is the action done by God toward people, whereas tackling His attributes is to discuss His Being and nature... "

The reaction to the experience of Islamic thought with Greek philosophy and the ensuing futile, harmful, and even absurd arguments of **Mo'tazala** thinkers is the movement of Sufism as was done, for instance, by Al-Ghazaly, and the other reaction was to resort to **Sunna** especially **Hadith**. Both Sufism and **Sunna** did not encourage rational minds in particular and hence the cultural climate that caused the tragedy of the sacred texts (i.e. **Hadith**) that were triumphant over the rational mind for centuries. This tragedy is tackled in the following paragraphs.

Between the texts of Hadith and the sources:

The Hadith was first haven for the Islamic thought after the futility of its experience with philosophy was apparent. This is symbolically represented by the victory of Ahmed Ibn Hanbal over the group of Mo'tazala thinkers. **Hadith** is the most sacred texts and traditions that passed to us, after the Holy Quran of course, but the ancient scholars were more concerned with the source and narrators of **Hadith** and not the actual phrasing of the text of **Hadith**. Collectors of **Hadiths** acknowledged that the exactness of the source and narrators of **Hadith** does not necessarily mean accepting a faulty

phrasing of the text of a *Hadith*, and that faulty phrasing of the text of a *Hadith* means it is inserted to real *Sunna*. Yet, they practically focused on the source and narrators of *Hadiths*, regardless of its phrasing, even of this phrasing contradicted the rational mind. All the branches of the science of *Hadiths* revolve around the source and narrators of *Hadiths*; their names, surnames, traits, characters...etc. as the branch of narrators. Another branch is the source of narration of *Hadiths*: their interpretation, phrasing, kinds, rulings, and narrators and their conditions.

We have to acknowledge that generations of ancient scholars did their best to present to us *Sunna* and *Hadiths* with the least amount faults and interpolations possible as they tried to verify the truth as much as they could. We cannot mention all their many methods in doing so in the limited scope of this book, but generally, their efforts revolved only around the source and narrators of *Hadiths* and not the meaning and phrasing of the texts of *Hadiths*. We cite the following example to prove this idea; here are their conditions and stipulations to accept a *Hadith* and its guidance and judge it as a true one:

The continuity of the sources and narrators is necessary in order to exclude *Hadiths* whose sources and chain of narrators are incomplete or doubted.

- 1- The narrators are not liars, cheaters, or with bad characters, as they should be truthful, pious and with good manners.
- 2- The narrators are regulators of sources of *Hadiths*.
- 3- The narrators are not of aberrant disposition; otherwise, one would doubt their words.
- 4- The words of the narrators are free of apparent elements of doubt, e.g. lack of the right sequence of narrators that is verifiable.

In sum, the true *Hadith* for ancient religious scholars must apply the five following conditions:

The *Hadith* narrators are truthful and righteous.

- 1- They are regulators of sources from the first to the last narrator in the sequence of narration.
- 2- The sequence of narration is true and verifiable.
- 3- The sequence of narrators is not aberrant

The sequence of narration is not doubted or faulty.¹⁷

Hence, the ancient scholars concerned themselves with verifying the sequence of narrators and they were not concerned if the phrasing of the text of a *Hadith* is contrary to the rational mind. They overlooked many principles that could be the reason for not accepting a *Hadith* with proper justification. Their focus on the sequence of narrators and not on the text itself of *Hadiths* that might sometimes go against the rational mind reached a level of denying the sanctity and holiness of the Quran and the prophet. Some ancient scholars accepted a false *Hadith* claiming that a Jew had once bewitched the prophet, made him once recite the Quran in a faulty way, and made him inserted a phrase after a certain verse.

That they acknowledged the truthfulness of such faulty, unacceptable narrative is a proof of the dominance of the importance of narrators'

sequence over the text itself and its meaning and phrasing. Even the sequence of narrators of this story is very weak and its sources are doubted.

Once the sources and narrators are cast in doubt, we cannot accept the story for a real **Hadith**. We must apply rational principles of thought as criteria to judge a **Hadith** to know it is true or false.

In addition to accepting weak sequence of narrators, strange tales as true **Hadiths**, and not judging critically and rationally their phrasing, some ancient scholars had presented to us thousands of strange **Hadiths** that are doubted and they cover endless ordinary, mundane topics and fields.

Later generations of religious scholars classified these **Hadiths**, as they tackled endless situations, in four main categories of action: legal, banned, unpleasant, and avoidable. Later on, with the passage of time, these strange, doubted **Hadiths** became part of the **Sharia** that had to be followed blindly. Muslims were obligated to imitated and follow the ancient scholars even if the required actions were outside the framework of worship and true **Sharia**. The mindset of contemporary Muslims became blind following of the texts and they were forbidden to think or choose. Imitation and blind following became the general accepted policy, and the faculty of reason stopped totally and it was rusted. A contemporary Muslim became like a robot controlled by doubted texts. In fact, this is the tragedy of the contemporary Islamic thought as it is overwhelmed by imitation and blind acceptance without thinking. This goes contrary to the guidance of the Holy Quran in this respect, as it denounces the monks and clergy that people made them semi gods who would legalize and forbid. The Holy Quran denounces clearly the blind following and imitations of ancestors, and such rigid thinking does as well against the teachings of Prophet Muhammad who always preferred the benefit and goodness for his followers. Prophet Muhammad ban disliked futile questioning that lead to nothing as he said clearly in this **hadith**, "*Leave me with what I have told you (of teachings) and ask for no more*". Yet, many narrators of **Hadiths** did not leave any action or word of Prophet Muhammad unless they record it for guidance and obligatory following. They missed the wisdom of the teachings of Prophet Muhammad as he encouraged people to think and consider the issues of everyday life, and said that if they would reach a good judgment they would be rewarded twice, and if their judgment turned out to be wrong, they would be rewarded once for using the reasoning faculty of mind. Blind following and imitation in everything is wrong even of the prophet as this goes against his **hadith** mentioned above. Hence, it is clear that God urges Muslims to think and use their mental faculty and warns them against the assumed authority of clergy and ancestors.

It is noteworthy that the second haven for the Islamic thought after the failure of its experience with Greek philosophy was Sufism. Sufism did not contribute anything to the rational mind. On the contrary, it had no limits and it went far unbridled in the mazes of ardent passion of the divine. It resulted in the introduction of legends and lore like the holy saints and sheikhs who performed miracles like walking on water, flying in the air to cover long distances...etc. among other superstitious, ignorant tales to

deceive the masses, and the shrines of the saints, martyrs and sheikhs who were made holy. Other strange Sufism mystical beliefs are infiltrated in the sermons of some mosques. Some organized bodies and orders were formed on mystical teachings and based on blind obedience to the sheikhs of the mystical order of Sufism who were made holy. These unfamiliar practices are foreign to true Islam and Sufism harmed Islam. It used strange non-Islamic, organizational disciplines to realize ends that most of them are based on infusing blind obedience, deepening imitation, and eradicating the will, character, and reasoning of people.

Between imitation and Ijtihad:

The conflict between the phrasing of *Hadiths* and verifying their sources and narrators was broadened in a general way in the conflict between imitation and *Ijtihad* (i.e. reasoning with the mind to reach religious judgments). Imitation was predominant for ten consecutive centuries and Ijtihad was strictly forbidden at the time as ancient scholars saw it brought nothing but trouble, chaos, and contradictory notions. Yet, when it comes to the matters and issues of everyday life, this cannot be bearable. There were supposed to be regulating tools like a higher council or court, but such tools were unknown at the time in the Arab, Islamic societies. Since these regulating tools were absent, scholars at the time saw it fit to ban *Ijtihad* and confine themselves to old doctrines that proved its validity with the passage of time. Non-religious, political factors, and other benefits and interests had led to the dominance of certain doctrines in certain regions.

What concerns us here is that imitation continued to thrive. Imitation was defined then as "*accepting the words of the others without asking for proofs*". Accordingly, imitators did not resort to the Sunna or to the Holy Quran, but resorted to the doctrine and ideas of their imams and sheikhs who were revered or sanctified. Imitation as a tradition was so powerful that even the only doctrine that resisted imitation – Al-Zaydi doctrine – sank to imitation by later followers and adherents. Al-Shawkani said in his book titled "*Opinions on Imitation and Ijtihad*", that " *...Zaydi doctrine followers in Yemen tried to reinstitute Ijtihad once more in the early days of this doctrine, but later generations brought more Zaydi zealots who glorified imitation of their imams and opposed Ijtihad based on the Holy Quran and Sunna and attacked violently and killed whoever do this...*". This was done even in a doctrine that at first encouraged Ijtihad, let alone other doctrines that call for blind imitation and called it obedience of God.

Due to banning of Ijtihad, the reasoning faculty was abandoned and some people left the teachings of the Sunna and the Holy Quran and preferred to them guidelines of their ancestors and old sheikhs. That was why Muslims had degenerated in the previous eras, as they shunned the Holy Quran, the source of their might, guidance and wisdom, and resorted to imitation of their ancestors and chose to follow words of clergy and those who sought worldly gains in the name of religion.

It is noteworthy to say that this phenomenon of degeneration of religious thought is not confined to Islam, but we find it in all ancient religions. This

even began before heavenly religions when the human mind was not mature enough, but the roots and sediments of this phenomenon are so deep that it became an integral part in the course of history. Heavenly religions came to deliver people from these distortions and deviances, yet the roots and sediments of this phenomenon in some eras were dominant or at least were present largely in heavenly religions. This impact applies to the three celestial monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. We might see it more in Catholicism than in Protestantism, but this effect is present, anyway. What lessened the harmful influence in Europe was that people there did not take Christianity seriously and its influence – both original and harmful – was weak. As for Islam, Muslims see it as the main constituent of their lives and they would never let go of it. Within this concept, initially, the true beneficial impact of Islam was present, and the harmful effect mentioned above was more powerful. In the Holy Quran we read, "**...the only true religion in the sight of God is self-surrender unto Him...**" (19:3) which means that God wants Islam to be a new, unique model to liberate people from harmful thoughts that sometimes cling to religions with the passage of time. Yet, Muslims reversed this Quranic verse and made Islam as the only religion and not in the sense of the word '*Islam*' i.e. self-surrender to God. Hence, Islamic teachings were liable to many suppositious, ignorant ideas and sediments linked to all previous religions before Islam liberated people.

Although Islam, more than any other religions, opposed paganism, superstition, supernatural miracles and imitation, yet the idea of imitation of ancestors prevailed for ages and Muslims with the passage of time deteriorated like followers of other religions. It was required that every century a great enlightened religious scholar would emerge to renew faith to Muslims, with varying degrees of success according to the surroundings and circumstances.

Domains of specialization:

The abovementioned facts do not intend to convey the idea that the human mind solely is the judging tool in the field of religion. Religion has a divine source of revelation, i.e. God. Revelation is an issue that cannot be proven, or even refuted, by the rational mind. This is because the existence of God is a rational self-evident truth acceptable to the mind, as God is the source of life, wisdom, rationality, and the end to which we reach finally. These divine gifts are the components of the human mind, created by God, and hence it is little wonder that revelation would reach people by God. This revelation does not contradict the components of the mind nor God's attributes. In fact, this makes the mind the link between God and people via the means of revelation. Yet, God is Unseen Himself by any human being, as the Holy Quran says, "**No human vision can encompass Him...**" (103:6), and another fact is that the human mind, due to its limitations, cannot fathom some attributes of God. We only know some of these attributes via the divine revelation, and this does not contradict the mind, but in fact agrees to its ways. Philosophy tried to discuss the nature and Being of God and His attributes were just mere outlines that led to nothing at the end and could not surpass certain limits and could not reach the unseen, unknown

realm of life after death. Hence, divine revelation came to complete this aspect lacking in the human mind.

The limitations of the mind to reach facts given by the divine revelation do not mean blind acceptance of what contradicts its rational principles that could not be abandoned. Hence, we conclude that the divine revelation cannot possibly be things that contradict the human mind. We have said earlier that the presupposition that the revelation is by necessity contradictory to the mind is a wrong notion. Islamic revelation agrees to the rational mind and its principles. The proof of this is that the Islamic idea of divinity is like the notion of divinity in the thought of Descartes and other European thinkers and philosophers who tried to discover the attributes of God.

The mind does not reject an issue just because there is no rational proof to it as long as it is not contradictory to the mind. Likewise, issues like the existence of God, Resurrection, Reckoning...etc do not contradict the principles of the mind. On the contrary, these issues agree with the rational preference of existence to nonexistence, justice to injustice. Yet, the Afterlife, Paradise and Hell are issues that contradict the sensory material outlook of the rationalist philosophers. Yet, the fact that these notions are not materially verifiable does not prove they are nonexistent. If immaterial, strange ideas can be refuted easily, people might not have believed, 200 years ago, that there could be airplanes, radios, cellular phones...etc. and they would accuse any one who would predict these invention of being insane and irrational. Likewise, concepts like the Afterlife, Judgment Day, Paradise and Hell...etc. should not be tackled rationally but accepted as they are, following the agnostic argument. Rationalist should acknowledge the fact that religion and divine revelation show to them aspects that can never be reached by the limitations of the human mind, and thus rationalism could go hand in hand with revelation to reach many aspects of the truth.

Rationalism cannot reject religion just because it cannot be proved by its tools. Likewise, religion should not deny rationalism by the faulty notion that it contradicts the mind and the religious knowledge. Rationalism was an archenemy of Christianity because it presented a view of creation opposite to what we find in the book of Genesis. If religions contain what might contradict rational thought and the principles of the mind, then this We should not prevent religion from tackling issue like natural, social and psychological phenomena, as long as this will not contradict the principles of the mind. That is because religion might reach to aspects unreachable by science. This does not mean that religion would replace science but it will reinforce it, and by necessity would not supplant rationalism. The best proof of this is many Quranic verses that have references to natural, social and psychological phenomena that may open new vistas for scientists to explore.

It is true that the Holy Quran says God has created the Earth in six days, but the Holy Quran mentions as well that days of God in His high realm above are different from days of people on earth, as some of His days might count 1000 or even 50000 years as mentioned in the Holy Quran. Other numbers and other notions like the Throne of God are mentioned in the Holy Quran to test the fickle believers in the early days of Islam and to be

symbols to convey meanings in an understandable manner to people. The narrative verse style of the Holy Quran is different from the narrative prose style of the Old Testament, which leaves no room for interpretation, unlike the case in the poetic style of the Holy Quran that allows room for different interpretations. This applied to God's attributes and actions mentioned in the Holy Quran. Fear of censure will not make us overlook this fact or never to mention it.

Anyhow, the domain of religion differs from the domain of science, and they should not mingle except on rare occasions or exceptions.

God's attribute and the Afterlife are domains of religion, and science however advanced cannot reach them, to verify or refute them, as science cannot investigate the supernatural realm or explore what is beyond the universe.

As for the many branches of science, such as mathematics, geometry, physics...etc. they are the domains of the mind to explore and present to us the latest aspects of the materialistic advancement.

This fundamental separate specialization of domains is based on the fact that the source of religious thought is both the wisdom of the mind and the wisdom of the heart, whereas the source of the scientific thought is solely the mind. Thus, we see the distinctive nature of each of them in their domains and tools by which each of them reach results. This point concerning the wisdom of the heart is tackled in details in the next chapter.

Thus remains two points to mention:

Firstly, Islam should incorporate human branches of knowledge in its domain. For instance, economy, sociology, and politics are scientific fields, but could serve religious aims and values to benefit people, as the neutral, abstract, and scientific outlook might not necessarily be beneficial to all people. The Islamic ideals like justice, benevolence, goodness...etc. are what distinguishes the Islamic rationalism from abstract rationalism. This point is tackled in the second part of this book.

Secondly, there is a third broad domain apart from the religious and scientific ones, which is the domain of arts and literature. It is nearer to the domain of religion than the domain of science is to religion, because one of its sources is the heart, and hence the common source between this domain and religion. Yet, each of them has a different nature, as art is without divine revelation and it is one hundred percent human. Hence, art can go unbridled without control in the realm of the imagination, unlike religion, which is supported by the divine source. As religion should not be a kind of art, arts should not be turned into a religion.

CHAPTER THREE: The influence of the heart on the mind

Every reader of the Holy Quran would notice that it uses the word 'heart' many times as a tool for thought and *Fiqh* (i.e. religious jurisprudence). The Holy Quran does not confine the mental faculty of reasoning in the mind but in the heart as well. This is exemplified in the following verses:

"...who have hearts with which they fail to grasp the truth, and eyes with which they fail to see..."(179:7)

"Have they never journeyed about the earth, letting their hearts gain wisdom..."(46:22)

"...Verily, it is not their eyes that have become blind – but blind have become their hearts that are in their breasts"(46:22)

"Will they not ponder over this Quran? Or are there locks upon their hearts?"(24:47)

"...their hearts have been sealed so that they cannot grasp the truth"(87:9)

"...God has sealed their hearts so that they do not know"(93:9)

"...for over their hearts We have laid veils which prevent them from grasping its purport..."(46:17)

In the previous Quranic verses, we see that knowledge and jurisprudence are related to the heart, and the hearts, which do not grasp the truth, are like blind eyes. In the following Quranic verse, hearts are described as containers of faith, piety, and serenity on one hand, and containers of deviance, doubt, and ailment.

"It is He who from on high has bestowed inner peace upon the hearts of the believers..."(4:48)

"...and in the hearts of those who followed him We engendered compassion and mercy..."(27:57)

"...God has caused your faith to be dear to you, and has given it beauty in your hearts..."(7:49)

"...for true faith has not yet entered your hearts..."(14:49)

"...our hearts are veiled from whatever thou callest us to, and in our ears is deafness"(5:41)

"...for their hearts are filled to overflowing with love of the golden calf because of their refusal to acknowledge the truth"(93:2)

"...those whose hearts are given to swerving from the truth go after that part of the divine writ which has been expressed in allegory..."(7:3)

"...the hypocrites and those in whose hearts was disease..."(49:8)

"...whose hearts have become a prey to doubt, so that in their doubting they waver between one thing and another"(45:9)

"...but for those in whose hearts is disease, each new message but adds another disbelief to the disbelief they already harbor"(125:9)

"...whatever Satan may cast to become a trial for all in whose hearts is disease and all whose hearts are hardened..."(53:22)

"...as for the true believers it is they in whose hearts He inscribed faith, and whom He has strengthened with inspiration..."(22:58)

"...their hearts are corroded by all evil that they were wont to do"(14:83)

These many references to the functions of the human heart in *Fiqh* (jurisprudence), knowledge, faith, and disbelief, raise the query of whether the Islamic rationalism is free from the influences that render it non-objective or make it lose its purity if it designs a role for the heart in such rational domains, which are usually attributed to the minds solely.

Some interpreters of the Holy Quran dodged that query by saying the word '*heart*' in this context refers to the mind¹⁸. Yet, this is unacceptable, as the Holy Quran mentions the word '*mind*' itself in other places and it has no reason to use the two words to mean one semantic meaning. The Holy Quran does not use words in random, but rather each word has a special meaning. The two words '*heart*' and '*mind*' have different senses of meanings and accordingly they are not interchangeable.

In our opinion, the Holy Quran wants to show its judgment in an issue that has multiple different opinions, which is the argument whether emotions are in the heart, as traditionally said, or in the mind and the brain. For each theory, there are many proponents, and some writers believed that emotions are the basis for any civilization. The Holy Quran wants to show that each of the mind and the heart has its own domain and both in Islam are complementary to each other and not in a state of conflict. The mind discerns what is right and what is wrong to accumulate science and knowledge, whereas the heart discerns the dichotomies of goodness and evil, of beauty and ugliness, of mercy and cruelty...etc. When the heart, and by necessity the emotional aspect, is guided and regulated by religion, it will not be a source of worry or harm, as the divine religion controls the unbridled, wild nature of emotions, and orient them toward positive values like benevolence, goodness, beauty...etc. and to avoid the negative notions like ugliness, evil...etc. In this respect, the wisdom of the heart converges with that of the mind, even if it has a different source, and it presents a distinctive addition to rationality. That is why we can say that hearts discern and grasp even if they do not use the tools of the mind to understand. The hearts have their sense in a way that we can say that a person feels and acts according to emotions first and then comes the role of the mind to examine these emotions to accept some of them, refuse some, and remain helpless toward some. In many cases, the wisdom of the heart would guide us by emotions in a better way in comparison to the mind, especially if the mind is confined to think through certain ideologies. Although biologically the heart is a blood-pump but blood might have secret ways in influencing people, yet undiscovered by science.

The human being is like a boat with the heart as the sailing, driven by emotions and sentiments either slowly or fast according to the degree of emotions in the heart. The mind is the steering gear in this boat used to avoid rocks or going astray, and guide the boat to a safe shore.

Some rationalists wonder at the role of the heart in the process of grasping and acquiring knowledge, others feel this role without knowing its secrets. The best scientist who tackled this point is Max Planck the German scientist who devised the quantum theory. He mentions in his book titled "*Where Is Science Going*" after discussing the quantum theory, the notion of causality and how the quantum theory will not impede it as some had claimed. Planck

has distinguished between the scientific activity and the psychological one, and he propounds that the scientific realm is just one aspect in the vista of the human intellectual thought. He says that the human imagination starts from reality, and then surpasses it more often than not. This reality is the origin in arts and music, but branches of science need a push of imagination as well. Imagination enables science to formulate hypotheses to be tested by empiricism to lead to other visions or certain hypotheses. He says, "*The first step which every specialized branch of science takes consists of a jump into the region of metaphysics*".¹⁹

In this jump, researchers would be sure of the basis of the hypothesis they reached. Rational, abstract thinking would not guide researchers to this especially that great discoveries were devoid of applicable, beneficial purposes. "*in other words, the fundamental principles and indispensable postulates of every genuinely productive science are not based on pure logic but rather on the metaphysical hypothesis - which no rules of logic can refute - that there exists an outer world which is entirely independent of ourselves*"²⁰. We know this outer world exists via our consciousness, which can be a sixth sense to people. This outer world affects everyone in a different manner. This is to be taken into consideration when tackling scientifically natural phenomena. The most important item in the scientific methods of thinking is to differentiate the outer aim under observation and the internal nature of the observer.

Planck asserts many times a certain point, in his book, which is that the spirit of unbiased seeking and longing for knowledge dominates and drives true scientists. This makes the difference between great scientists and researchers in a factory, for instance, who perform applied research to gain material benefits, and the former group perform their work with the soul of devotion and the steadfast quest for knowledge as they struggle to seek approaching it not even reaching it.

Planck concludes decisively that relativity theory does not eradicate the idea of the absolute; on the contrary, and ironically, the theory proves it. He said that there is no relativity unless measured by the absolute²¹. On the other hand, he proved the impossibility to reach the absolute, for it is the ideal we always place before us, and so it is unreachable. Yet, this is not a source of disappointment, as Lessing said that, "*reaching the truth is not what makes the researcher happy, it is the struggle and the quest for it*".

Planck criticized the positivist theory that says that sensory perception is the only source of knowledge. He says that two facts refute this: there is a real outer world and it is virtually unknown. These two facts allow the irrational (or mystical) element to exist side by side to natural and human knowledge. Branches of science need this mystical aspect (of the heart, imagination and the unknown realm of the absolute) to aid them in solving problems facing them discovering nature, the world, and the universe at large.

Planck tackled the relation between causality (representing the mind and knowledge) and the individual liberty. He said that causality could not reach the realm of the ego, the source of our hopes and pains. In terms of

principles, people can discover the causal relations of human behavior, but not totally or practically as the observer and the object of observation is one.

Some might believe that this inability is due to the limitations of human perceptions, but this is wrong, as if they say one cannot run to catch one's shadow because one is not running fast enough. Human behaviors that cannot be governed by causality law are related to a sound logical basis, like the premise that the part is never bigger than the whole. The distance between the individual liberty and causality is a fact proved by the human consciousness.

Planck refutes in his book the purported opposition between religion and science, as they complement each other. Science opens the portals of the psyche and links it to the spiritual realm of religion. Serious intellectuals know that the nature of the religious element is to be acknowledged and adapted if the power of the human soul is to function in a balanced manner. Real intellectuals, in all ages, were believers, even if they did not show their religious sentiments. This is not a mere coincidence. The best fruits of philosophy emerged as the result of linking understanding to the moral values.

The book ends in an interview with Planck and Einstein, under the title, "*Socratic Dialogue*". In this dialogue, the author refers to the doubts cast by people over science and religion. Planck says, "*the church could not offer a spiritual haven to people and so they deserted it for other trends*". He asked Einstein whether science would replace religion. Einstein said,

*"No, as science needs the spirit of belief. Whoever works seriously in the field of knowledge sees at the gate of the temple of science this motto hanging: 'Have Faith', as this faith is indispensable for any scientist. The scientist who deals with experiment results must have an imaginative picture about the law under observation, and decide for matters in an imaginative hypothesis. Mental faculties alone will not push any scientist forward as no order can emerge out of chaos unless by a constructive force. If the imaginative picture is broken, the scientist is to try to formulate another one, as it is indispensable, and so is faith. This imaginative vision and faith in the ultimate success are indispensable. The pure rationalist has no place here."*²²

Planck cites the wretched, impoverished life of Johannes Kepler the great German scientist, whose faith in the higher design behind existence and creation gave him strength. This staunch faith was the light of his life and made him perform his research in an infinite framework. If he is compared to Tycho de Brahe who had more means, we see him as a mere researcher and not a great scientist, this is because he did not believe in the eternal laws behind the universe. As for Kepler, he became the father of modern astronomy.

Another question posed by the author to Planck was that the quantum theory posed problems to the principle of causality, as it is to be reconsidered, and science could never reach the complete, absolute truth about nature. Planck said that this is true and that human arts and literature try to interpret existence, as we are part of nature. People always find themselves in face of the irrational, and if they do not have faith and if we

solved all problems using the human mind, then there would be no more art, literature, music, nor wonder at life and existence. Life would be boring and science will come to a halt, and might lose its allure, as there would be no more 'unknown things' to discover and seek. Science would lose its founding stone; i.e. the direct consciousness of the existence of an outer reality. *"As Einstein has said, you could not be a scientist if you did not know that the external world existed in reality, but that knowledge is not gained by any process of reasoning. It is a direct perception and therefore in its nature akin to what we call Faith. It is a metaphysical belief..."*²³

The words of Planck are similar to what is mentioned in the Holy Quran, as it perceives that dry, abstract rationalism was not the starting point of scientists. Rationalism is not systematic enough to drive people in their research. It is not a powerful force to go on in the quest for knowledge. Despite reaching results, they always face new problems. The spirit of divine faith should be in any scientist first to be the momentum for surmounting difficulties in research. This will link scientists to the universe and to its Creator. The vast outer realm is independent from us, and we can link ourselves to this mystical, absolute power via the heart (container of sensations and emotions) as the Holy Quran says, and not via the mind (place or abstract rationality).

Although Planck did not mention the word '*heart*' per se, but his words lead to it as a tool of discernment as mentioned in the Holy Quran. It is noteworthy that scientists of astronomy are the nearest to religion and faith. Both religious scholars and scientists of nature look at the sky. The former see it through the Holy Quran in its description of the heaven, the earth, the sun, the wind, the rain...etc. as proofs of the existence of God. The latter see the sky through the telescope, and they reach the deep faith like religious scholars when they see the natural phenomena by their eyes. Einstein's words do not differ much from religious scholars' words. This is the best proof of the influence of the heart on the mind. *"Even Einstein toward the end of his life claimed that propositions arrived at by purely logical means were completely empty of reality. He went on to say it is very difficult to explain this feeling to anyone who is entirely without it. I maintain that cosmic religious feeling is the strongest and the noblest incitement to scientific research"*²⁴

Before Einstein and Planck, Goethe advised his disciple Ackermann to think by his heart.

Another vision from the British thinker C. E. Joad, who was famous in the 1950s, and had written many books on philosophy, we find in the "***Rational Review***" in 1946 in an article titled "***On Being No Longer a Rationalist***". He said he was not a rationalist in the extreme manner and never believed that the material aspect is the only one of the existence. He was not a believer in the determinist or naturalist view of existence, either. Hence, he did not believe that science or the mind solely, is the only source of knowledge or the only criteria to know the truth.

Yet, Joad acknowledged the ability of the human mind to reach results that match reality, but with an important reservation. He said that the mind is not free or abstract. The mind is not a mental function of the brain as said

by materialists, who claimed that the brain is just an organ composed of millions of cells and its ideas are wrong or right as long as this organ is sound. By this criterion, we might say that the materialistic view might not be true as it is the result of the thinking brain.

Joad said that it is important to have an independent, powerful element to drive human behavior. He called it 'the human consciousness' that combines life and the material aspect. May be this began in an unconscious level and then it reached conscious level in the biological existence, experience of generations, and accumulated acquired factors passed to generations.

This consciousness is not confined to rationalism, but it extends to justice, nature, beauty...etc. i.e. values in short. Joad said if values were not unified, they would lose their influence. Joad said that evil is deep-rooted in the human psyche. He was influenced by the negative impact of the totalitarian systems and World War I and II. This is the source of the Christian concept of sin. People who understated evil as superficial factor were victims of naïve optimism of rationalism. He said the world would not enter a golden era under the banner of communism or psychoanalysts. This contradicts real facts, and if this contradiction was not resolved, humanity might fall into degeneration.

Joad expressed the stance of many European thinkers. Rationalism alone in its limitation and abstract, deterministic, and naturalistic view is not enough for any thinker to understand life, thought, and the universe. Rationalist thought is partial, unpersuasive and limited, and fail to quench the thirst for knowledge.

Joad tackled evil and sin like religions, at varying degrees. Islam shows these two concepts in a balanced manner. Islam does not underestimate evil and did not overlook goodness, but places them in dichotomies: temptations of devils and guidance of prophets, human weakness and divine aid. The power of evil showed the limitations of rationalism, as it could never lead the world, for evil forces would prevent this. Joad as a Christian overlooked the idea of the sacrifice that lessens evil and sin.

Joad quotes in his book titled "***The Recovery of Faith***" published in 1951, that is after five years from his article, what Bertrand Russell said in his book titled "***Logic and Faith***":

*"...the contradiction between the mind and instincts is illusory. These instincts lead to ideas and faiths, the mind has to either refute or defend them, and this is done by conciliating former ideas and faiths. The mind is the coordinating element, not a creative one. Russell says that the apparent contradiction between the mind and faith might occur to some people when the mind is weakened or when faith acquires a unilateral force. This contradiction is not essential between faith and the mind"*²⁵

Accordingly, Joad concludes that religion is the result of combining the mind with the intuition and it is wrong to attribute science to the mind alone, and to confine religion to intuition.

Demonstrating these views and the above-mentioned Quranic verses explained what was obscure or vague in this respect. The Holy Quran addresses the heart more than the mind in the aspect of faith in the process

of thinking. Islam presupposes the existence of faith derived from the heart for those who discuss any intellectual issues, even if this faith is of the abstract, objective truth. This kind of faith is the most elevated one, as it is nearer to the idea of God, and thus it converges with the mind principle of religion. This kind of faith gives a momentum to scientists to continue their research and makes it devoid of opportunism and limitations as much as possible as well as preventing it from turning into routine work by which rationalism might lose its objectivity.

Quranic references to hearts as containers of faith or disbelief, evil or goodness, mercy or cruelty...etc. are very clear. Bad hearts are exemplified in one place in the Quranic text by the wives of the prophets Lot and Noah, whereas good hearts are exemplified in the Quranic text by the Virgin Mary and the wife of the Pharaoh who raised Moses. God has revealed religions to hearts as the Holy Quran says, "***Trustworthy divine inspiration has alighted with it from on high, upon thy heart, O Muhammad, so that thou mayest be among those who preach***"(193-194:26) and has commissioned the divine message to prophets and not to philosophers. God has made contemplations, thinking, and consideration the proofs of religions. This is the common ground to combine the mind and the heart. God in the Quran considers the sound heart that is free of evil a major reason to survive in the Day of Resurrection, "***The Day on which neither wealth will be of any use nor children, and when only he will be happy who comes before God with a heart free of evil***"(88-89:26)

This meaning is expressed in many ***Hadiths***, like the following: "***The prophet pointed to his heart and said that piety is in here***". "***Piety is the good manners with people, and the evil is something that aches your heart and you fear people might see it***". "***Trust the judgment of your heart even if people present to your their judgment***". Finally, "***If the heart is sound, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupt, then the whole body is corrupt***". Ibn Hanbal said that if one receives two opposing judgment, one should trust one's heart and take the judgment one's heart prefers. Trusting one's heart is the proof of faith. Religious scholars see that the human intention is a prerequisite to all good deeds and acts of worships. The place of intention is the heart, and thus the intention, and the heart, is the spirit of the good deeds.

We cannot deny that the mind and its tool, science, are the light by which people differentiate between dichotomies like good and evil, guidance and deviance, right and wrong...etc. the mind solely is not enough to do so. The heart full of faith and belief is the required tool for this. Faith is the driving force to overcome weaknesses and lusts. Without this faith, life with its temptations like money and power would overwhelm the human psyche and put off the light of the mind. That is because the luminous glitter of worldly lusts is more powerful than the faint glimmer of the mind.

This aspect is part of the Islamic rationalism. Islam proposes its benevolent theory of rationalism. If the mind inspires people to follow evil or lusts, Islamic rationalism do not approve of that. This point will be further discussed in chapter six of this book.

Hearts are place of faith, belief, and emotions in Islam, but they are the sources of arts and literature as well. This point is not tackled in the Holy Quran, but it is a natural result of the hearts when they play their role in thought. Arts and literature have different mode and path from rationalism, but they create balance in life and complete and aspect that could not be completed by the dry abstract rationalism. Sound societies combine the sciences of the mind, the arts of the heart, and the guidance of faith.

In sum, the Quranic references to the human heart make it contribute to the human thought in three ways. Firstly, to give the human thought the momentum of faith so that it thrives. Secondly, it gives the element of benevolence and to ensure that objective rationalism would not veer toward evil. Thirdly, it enriches life with activities that cannot be derived by the mind alone, which are the arts and literature derived from the hearts.

PART II: THE COMPONENTS OF ISLAMIC RATIONALISM

Chapter Four: the first component: thinking as the way of FAITH

chapter five: the second component: objectivity and the ways of god

chapter six: the third component: benevolence and goodness

Some people might ask if there is an Islamic rationalism, and what the differences between it and other kinds of rationalism are. Rationalism does not mean necessarily the objective, abstract one applicable in all times and places. When rationalism tackles major problems of human beings, society, and the universe at large, it varies a lot in its methods, ways, and results. The expression 'Islamization of knowledge' is not thorough or exact, and of course, it is not objective, but this does not deny that Islamic rationalism has many distinctive components that distinguish it from other types of rationalist trends in other societies, like the bourgeois or communist society, for instance, and it does not contradict the principles of rationalism either.

Islamic rationalism differs from bourgeois or communist ones. Its distinctive features are that it has certain ends or aims; it is not neutral or abstract, for it is benevolent and refuses evil. This feature is taken up by Islamic rationalism from the principle of responsibility. The Muslim intellectual thinkers and scientists know that they are responsible before God of their results and ideas. The Quran says, "*Verily, thy hearing and sight, and heart – all of them – will be called to account for it on Judgment Day*"(36:17)

This sense of responsibility is not confined to Islamic rationalism, as it is found in communist rationalism. Yet, responsibility in Islamic rationalism is before God and it is based on pure faith and belief without fear of punishment or seeking rewards, whereas in communist rationalism responsibility is linked to authority and its ideology. The difference is so vast between the two cases.

This part tackles the relation between Islam and rationalism in three components: thinking as the way of faith, and the Islamic notion of objectivity and the ways of God, and the benevolent nature of Islamic rationalism.

Chapter Four: the first component: thinking as the way of FAITH

We have explained how Islam calls for the mind and thinking, and excludes material miracles to urge people to embrace faith. We have explained that the miracles of Islam is the Holy Quran and seeking knowledge is its main message, and this leaves little wonder at the fact Islam considers thinking as the way of faith. There are numerous Quranic verses that have different styles and diction, which convey this idea. There are many aspects to this notion:

a) The call for thinking:

"Has it, then, never occurred to them that there is no madness whatever in their fellow man? He is only a plain warner"(184:7)

"Have they never learned to think for themselves? God has not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them without an inner truth and a term set by Him, and yet, behold, there are many people who stubbornly deny the truth that they are destined to meet their Sustainer"(8:30)

"And who remember God when they stand, and when they sit, and when they lie down to sleep, and thus reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: " O our Sustainer! Thou hast not created aught of this without meaning and purpose. Limitless art Thou in Thy glory! Keep us safe from suffering through fire!"(191:3)

"Thus clearly do We spell out these messages unto people who think"(24:10)

"In this way God makes clear unto you His messages, so that you might reflect"(219:2)

"And upon thee too have We bestowed from on high this reminder, so that thou might make clear unto mankind all that has ever been thus bestowed upon them and that they might take thought"(44:16)

"And all such parables We propound unto men, so that they might learn to think"(21:59)

"Behold how many facets We give to these messages, so that they might understand the truth"(65:6)

"Will they not try to understand this Quran?"(82:4)

"all this have We expounded in this blessed divine writ which We have revealed unto thee O Muhammad, so that men may ponder over its messages, and that those who are endowed with insight may take them to heart"(29:38)

"Learn a lesson, the, O you who are endowed with insight"(2:59)

"Can, then, he who knows that whatever has been bestowed from on high upon thee by thy Sustainer is the truth be deemed equal to one who is blind? Only they who are endowed with insight keep this in mind"(19:13)

"But speak unto him in a mild manner so that he might bethink himself or be filled with apprehension"(44:20)

"...He makes clear His messages unto mankind, so that they might bear them in mind"(221:2)

"Let those who are endowed with insight take this to heart"(52:14)

"...Our revelation as a means of insight for men, and as a guidance and grace, so that they might bethink themselves of us"(43:28)

"Indeed We have caused this word of Ours to reach mankind step by step, so that they might keep it in mind"(51:28)

"Indeed have We propounded unto men all kinds of parables in this Quran so that they might bethink themselves"(27:39)

"Indeed many facets have We given to Our message in this Quran so that they who deny the truth might take it to heart"(41:17)

"Indeed many times have We repeated this unto men so that they take it to heart"(50:25)

"...We might make all this a lasting reminder to you all, and that every wide-awake ear might consciously take it in"(12:69)

"This verily is a reminder: let him who wills then set out on a way to his Sustainer"(19:73)

"Nay, verily, this is an admonition, and whoever wills may take it to heart"(54-55:74)

"Behold, it is We Ourselves who have bestowed from on high, step by step, this reminder, and it is We who shall truly guard it from all corruption"(9:15)

"Verily, they who are bent on denying the truth of this reminder as soon as it comes to them – they are the losers, for, behold, it is a sublime divine writ"(41:41)

"Yet, those who deny the truth say: 'O thou unto whom this reminder has allegedly been bestowed from on high, verily thou art mad!'"(6:15)

The Holy Quran urges us to use our mind and it uses frequently the expression *'do not you have a mind to heed?'* as an interrogatory style directed to those who refuse adamantly to believe. This indicates that the nonbelievers did not use their mind, the most precious tool of the human being. When they insisted on refusing, the Holy Quran depicts what they would say in the Afterlife, *"They say: 'Had we but listened to those warnings or used our own reason, we would not be among those who are destined for the blazing flame' "(10:67)*

The word *'mind'* occurs frequently in the Holy Quran, and so is the word *'knowledge'*, and it is used for the first time early in the Quranic text in the story of creation of Adam:

"Thy Sustainer said unto the angels: 'Behold, I am about to establish upon earth one who shall inherit it'. They said: 'Wilt Thou place on it such as will spread corruption thereon and shed blood – whereas it is we who extol Thy limitless glory and praise Thee, and hallow Thy name?' God answered: ' Verily, I know which you do not know'. He imparted unto Adam the names of all things, then He brought them within the ken of the angels and said: ' Declare unto Me the names of these things, if what you say is true'. They replied: 'Limitless art Thou in Thy glory! No knowledge have we save that which Thou hast imparted unto us. Verily, Thou alone art all-knowing truly wise'. He said: 'O Adam, convey unto them the names of these things'. And as soon as Adam had conveyed unto them their names, God said: ' Did I not say unto you, verily I alone know the hidden reality of the heavens and the earth, and know all that you bring

into the open and all that would conceal?'. When We told the angels, 'Prostrate yourselves before Adam!', they all prostrated themselves save Iblis, who refused and glorified in his arrogance, and thus he became one of those who deny the truth" (30-34:2).

The previous verses show the major importance of knowledge as God ordered the angels prostrate before Adam because he had the knowledge of names of things. Another verse to prove the importance of knowledge is the following: *"God Himself proffers evidence and so do the angles and all who are endowed with knowledge – that there is no deity save Him, the Almighty, the Truly Wise" (18:2)*

The previous verse shows that God says the knowledgeable people testify for His justice and wisdom. The following verse shows that natural scientists are God-fearing and more true believers because of their knowledge: *"...Of all His servants only such as are endowed with knowledge stand truly in awe of God..." (28:35).*

And God says to Prophet Muhammad in the Holy Quran: *"...God has bestowed upon thee from on high this divine writ and wisdom, and has imparted unto thee the knowledge of what thou didst know, and God's favor upon thee is tremendous indeed" (113:4)*

And to Jesus Christ: *"...I imparted unto thee revelation and wisdom, including the Torah and the Gospel..." (110:5)*

And to all believers God says: *"...God will exalt by many degrees those of you who have attained to faith and above all such as have been vouchsafed true knowledge" (11:58)*

God has sworn by the pen in the Holy Quran: *"Consider the pen and all that they write" (1:68)*

Another verse showing the importance of knowledge: *"The Most Gracious has imparted this Quran unto man. He has created man. He has imparted unto him articulate thought and speech" (1-4:55)*

Lastly, we should mention that the very first verses of the Holy Quran revolve around knowledge: *"Read in the name of thy Sustainer, who has created man out of a germ cell! Read – for thy Sustainer is the Most Bountiful One, Who has taught man the use of the pen and taught him what he did not know" (1-5:96)*

b) Doubt is a transitional phase toward certainty

Thinking and considering are indeed the tools of belief in God, as described in the Holy Quran, which sees doubt as a transitional phase toward certainty and not something contrary to the truth. The Holy Quran differentiates between this kind of doubt and another one that aims to shake certainty of faith. This type of doubt is refused by the Holy Quran and described as 'strange', while the other constructive one is mentioned in the story of Abraham: "...We gave Abraham his insight into God's mighty dominion over the heavens and the earth – and this to the end that he might become one of those who are inwardly sure. When the night overshadowed him with its darkness he beheld a star and he exclaimed, 'This is my Sustainer!', but when it went down, he said, 'I love not the things that go down. When he beheld the moon rising, he said 'This is my Sustainer!', but when it went down, he said, 'Indeed, if my Sustainer

guides me not, I will most certainly become one of the people who go astray!

When he beheld the sun rising, he said 'This is my Sustainer! This one is the greatest of all', but when it went down, he exclaimed, 'O my people! Behold, far be it from me to ascribe divinity as you do to aught beside God!' "(75-76:6).

Abraham shunned planets, the moon and the sun as deities and throw his doubts he reached the truth of God. God even did not consider the following request of Abraham as wrong or weakness: "*Abraham said: ' O my Sustainer! Show me how Thou givest life unto the dead!' God said: ' Hast thou then no faith?' Abraham said: 'yes, but let me see it so that my heart ma be set fully at rest'*"(260:2).

God even did not consider the following request of Moses as wrong or daring: "*When Moses came to Mount Sinai at the time set by Us, and his Sustainer spoke unto him, he said: 'O my Sustainer! Show Thyself unto me, so that I might behold Thee!' God said: 'Never canst thou see Me, however, behold this mountain; if it remains firm in its place then wilt thou see Me'. And as soon as his Sustainer revealed His glory to the mountain, He caused it to crumble to dust, and Moses fell down in a swoon. When he came to himself, he said: ' Limitless art Thou in Thy glory! Unto Thee do I turn in repentance and I shall always be the first to believe in thee "*(143:7).

God did not refuse to grant the request of the disciples to descend upon them a repast from heaven: "...'*O Jesus son of Mary! Could thy Sustainer send down unto us a repast from heaven?' Jesus said: 'Be conscious of God if you are truly believers!' They said: ' We desire to partake thereof so that our hearts might be of those who bear witness thereto!' Jesus said: ' O God, our Sustainer! Send down upon us a repast from heaven; it shall be an ever-recurring feast for us – for the first and last of us – and a sign from Thee, and provide us our sustenance, for Thou art the best of providers!'"(112-113:5)*

In many Islamic writings, we see the tackling of the issue of doubt. Despite the fact that the Holy Quran accepted a certain kind of doubt, but we do not find a systematic type to reach results before that of Descartes in the 17th century. Yet, we see doubt as a standpoint toward certainty in the writings of two grand Muslim scholars: Al-Ghazaly and Ibn Al-Haitham.

Al-Ghazaly describes in his book titled "*The Deliverer from Deviance*" his intellectual journey from doubt to certainty:

*"Since my early days of youth, and through my twenties and on to my fifties, I used to go through this difficult terrain with courage. I would think and tackle every possible issue or problem, and I would seek to know the secrets of every doctrine or group to know the true and the untrue statements. I used to know all about mystical thought of people and all ideas of groups and doctrines. I used to know all philosophical doctrines as well. I used to follow every argument of **Kalam** philosopher, and I followed worshippers to now about their orders of worship. I even talked to unbelievers and idle people to know their mindset...etc."*

The journey of Al-Ghazaly ended up by turning to mysticism as a kind of spiritual purity and he preferred Sufism to Kalam philosophy and corrupt scholars of the retinue of caliphs. This is the choice of those who seek the truth, and of those who shunned the material world. Yet, mysticism later on was corrupted in its turn.

The next passage is by Ibn Al-Haitham in his diary, as he clearly made doubt the standpoint to certainty. He wrote in the year 417 A.H.:

*"...in my early childhood I cast doubts on different beliefs of people, and the staunch adherence of every group to their ideas. I believed that the truth is one, and differences were in the way to approach it. When I reached a certain age when I can discern things with my mind, I dedicated my life to seek the truth and to dispel my too much doubts. I sought the aid of God to guide me in this journey and to piety and obedience to Him. I was like Galinous when he said in the seventh chapter of his book, addressing his disciple: 'I was guided in my youth, by inspiration of God or by coincidence or even by unknown force or even madness, to shun and abandon people and not to mingle with them. I longed to seek the truth and knowledge, and both make man nearer to God, in a better way than other things in life... I gained knowledge of different faiths, beliefs, and religions, but I end up with nothing valuable, and I did not reach the truth through them. I then thought that the only true things are the materialistic ones that could be understood rationally. I liked the ideas of Aristotle in logic, theology and natural sciences, and I liked his philosophy that begins by tackling matters wholly and then partially, and discussing the genres of matters with explanation of words and meanings. I liked the idea of measurement and its tools to explore subject matters, their origins, parts, characteristics, description, and the tools to prove hypotheses. I liked the nature of explaining proofs in natural phenomena, especially in his books **'The Universe and Corruption'**, **'On Higher Signs'**, **'On the Sky and the World'** and **'On the Psyche'**... I continued to explore the field of philosophy and its three branches: mathematical, physical, and theological, and I learned their principles and ideas. I knew then that the human nature is liable to corruption and destruction. I outlined what I learned from the three branches of philosophy and what I could not fully grasp until the year 417 A.H. ... "*

Such texts show how some Muslim scholars and philosopher adopted the methodology of doubt as a standpoint to reach certainty.

c) Prophets as teachers:

What suits the idea of thought and knowledge as ways of faith is the idea that prophets were teachers. Although other prophets before Islam used miracles, but this did not happen unless after people shunned prophets to preserve their acquired interests and to keep the status quo, which religions seek to change. Despite performing miracles, the traditional methods of prophets in conveying their message were persuasion, teaching and dialogue. Before the invention of printing, and when most people were illiterate, prophets' mission was to recite a divine book and explain the divine message orally to people. ""(151:2).

This verse re-occurred almost literally in (129:2), (164:3), and (2:62).

The best verse that depicts the role of Prophet Muhammad is the following: ""(164:3).

In all these verses, the Holy Quran shows prophets as teachers reciting the holy verses and divine guidelines to people. As teachers, prophets used different psychological methods of persuasion like stirring the mental faculty, relying on the mind, sound logic, answering questions...etc. Many Quranic verses begin with the phrase '*They ask you...*', and they contain a query and a response to it. Examples are so many: on the crescent (189:2), on the holy months (217:2), on wine and gambling (219:2), on spending (219:2), on the soul (85:17), on the mountains (105:18)...etc.

The following verses show the role of prophets in explaining the divine message: ""(19:5)""(4:14)""(39:16).

The Holy Quran shows in numerous verses, but the limited scope would not allow us to mention all of them²⁶, images of the dialogue between the prophets and their people, and other images on how prophets conveyed God's messages in a lenient, tolerant manner. ""(44:20)""(88:) ""(125:16)""(96:23) ""(33-35:41) ""(199:7) ""(130:20) ""(60:30) ""(12:31) ""(159:3).

The Holy Quran shows the role of prophets as teachers who save their people from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge.

d) The creation as a proof of the existence of the Creator:

The Holy Quran uses the proof of creation, creatures, nature, universe elements...etc. to prove the existence of God as the Almighty, Perfect Creator. This way makes thinking leads to faith. The Holy Quran cites any of God's creation to be a sign to stir the mental faculties and thinking of this sign, whether it is the sun, the moon, heaven, ants, bees, or flies, to know that it is impossible to exist without the Creator.

These Quranic verses arouse the thinking faculty of people and prove the miraculous creations of God, as He is the Creator of life, death, the universe, the sun, the moon, the human being and its stages of creation.

Notes

1 See the article titled "**Reconciliation Between Liberty, Justice and Religion**" of Dr. Muhammad Hassan El-Zaiyyat in *Al-Goumhuriyya* newspaper issue of 16-11-1989

2 See: **The Story of the Clash Between Religion and Philosophy**

By Dr. Tawfik El-Tawil, page 81.

This reference will be used in the next few paragraphs.

3 Ibid, pages 147-148

4 Ibid, page 152

5 Ibid, page 233

6 Ibid, page 197

7 See the article titled "**Sources of Islamic Sharia**", by Sheikh Abdullah Mustapha El-Maraghy, Al-Azhar inspector, published in the magazine '**The Orient Pulpit**', edition of 4th Shabaan 1375 A.H., 16th March 1956 A.D., page 3.

8 "**Imam Zayd**" by sheikh M. Abou Zahra, pages 331-335, with slight abridgement

9 "**Zaydi Doctrine**" by Dr. Ahmed Mahmoud Sobhi, page 137

10 *El-Hilal* Magazine, issue of January 1980, pages 43-44

11 Dr. Gaber El-Elwani *Islam: Source and Purpose of Knowledge* Page 216

12 Dr. M. El-Behy *The Divine Side of the Islamic Thought* part II page 4

13 Ibid page 20

14 Said M. Hassan, *A View on Islamic Thought* pages 43-44

15 Ibid

16 Dr. M. El-Behy *The Divine Side of the Islamic Thought* part II page 260

17 By Abdel-Moneim Al-Moubarak Hassan, page 22 "*An Outline in the Sciences of*

Hadiths

18 Yet, this interpretation – said by Ibn Abbas – might be partially true as modern science says that the frontal lobe in the brain combines thinking, recognition, sensation, and emotions

19 "**Where Is Science Going**" page 138

20 Ibid page 138

21 Ibid page 195

22 Ibid page 215

23 Ibid page 218

24 "**Dancing in the Light**" by Shieley McLain page 353

25 "**The Recovery of Faith**" C. E. Joad pages 114-115

26 For instance see dialogues of prophets Noah, Hud, Saleh, Lot, and Shuayb in (59-95:7)