

CHAPTER IV

THE PRINCIPLE OF KNOWLEDGE

I. NEITHER SKEPTICISM NOR THE "FAITH" OF CHRISTIANS

In today's world, and especially in the West, skepticism has grown to very grave proportions. It is the dominant principle among the "educated" and is found quite often among the unlettered who emulate the "intelligentsia" in their societies. This spectacular spread of skepticism is partly due to the success of science which is seen as the continuing victory of the empirical, over the religious, mind. The latter is defined as that which adheres to notions taught by the Church. In the opinion of the empiricists, the Church lost its *magisterium*, or authority to teach the truth, a long time ago. It was an authority of which the Church was never worthy, precisely because its position is necessarily dogmatic; i.e., it assumes certain propositions to be true without first subjecting them to empirical testing and critical examination. The Western world, and all those who emulate it, are still intoxicated by that easy victory of the scientific mind over the Christian Church. Under its transport, they jump to the false and double generalization that whereas all religious knowledge is necessarily dogmatic, all ways to the truth must be empirical, finding their ultimate confirmation only in the given of sense, as presented by the controlled experiment. Anything not so confirmed, they hasten to conclude, is doubtful; and, if it is thus unconfirmable, is necessarily false.

Dogma, therefore is in their view adherence to a view known to be unconfirmable in experience, and hence worthless. Truth is unknown and unknowable. Faith, in consequence, is an act, a decision, by which a person resolves to accept as true that which is *scandalon* (stumbling block to the mind)! Pascal described it as a "wager" which one makes

¹ Jews want miracles for proof, and Greeks look for wisdom. As for us, we proclaim the crucified Christ, a message that is offensive to the Jews and nonsense to the Gentiles. St. Paul, I Corinthians 1:22-23.

on something the veracity of which forever escapes him. The irreligious among the Christians have described the Christian faith as the blind man's belief in a black cat in a dark room where there is no cat. In the nineteenth century, at the apogee of this intoxication induced by the victories of science, Schleiermacher, a German theologian, advised his fellow Christians in reply "to the despisers of religion"² to base the Christian truth not on fact, or critically observe reality, but on subjective experience. The revolution of romanticism had apparently completed its domination of the European consciousness. Even God, in the romantic view, is to depend for His reality upon the feeling of the experiencing subject of faith.

That is why the Muslim should never call his *īmān* "belief" or "faith." When used in a general sense, these English words carry today within them an implication of untruth, of probability, of doubt and suspicion. They carry some validity only when they are ascribed to a particular person or group. Even then, they mean only that that person or group holds a certain proposition to be true. Never does either term mean that such a proposition is true. Obviously, this is the exact opposite of the meaning of the term *īmān*. This term, deriving from *amn* (security), means that the propositions it covers are in fact true, and that their truth has been appropriated (i.e., understood and accepted) by the mind. In Islamic as well as Arabic parlance, a man can be *kādhīb* (lying) or *munāfiq* (cheating); but *īmān* cannot be false in the sense that its object is nonexistent or otherwise than it purports to say. That is why *īmān* and *yaqīn* are synonymous terms. Before *yaqīn* one may deny, and may question, the truth. But when *yaqīn* is present, the truth is as established and convincing as sensory evidence.³ It has become indubitable; the only response possible to the person who continues to doubt is *Voilà!* (see here for yourself!). *Yaqīn* therefore is certainly of the truth, as apodeictic as it can come. *Īmān* is hence "conviction," absolutely free of doubt of probability, of guessing and uncertainty. It is not an act, not a decision, not a resolution to accept, or put one's trust in, that which is not known to be true, a wager to place one's fortune in this rather

² Friedrich D. Schleiermacher, *Religion - Speeches to Its Cultural Despisers*, tr. John Oman (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1958) pp. 94 ff.

كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ (الناكث: ٧-٥)

³ Rather if you only knew the truth with apodeictic certainty, you would then be convinced of the reality of hell as you would when beholding it with your very eyes (102:5-7).

than that basket. *Īmān* is something that happens to man, when the truth, the factuality of an object strikes him in the face and convinces him beyond doubt of its truth. It is of the nature of a geometrical conclusion which, given the antecedent premises, one recognizes its truth and inevitability; or as the Quran has put it, an object whose existence is doubted, is produced and placed before the spectators for all to see and touch.⁴

Unlike the faith of the Christians, the *īmān* of Islam is truth given to the mind, not to man's credulity. The truths, or prepositions, of *īmān* are not mysteries, stumbling blocks, unknowable and unreasonable but critical and rational. They have been subjected to doubt and emerged from the testing confirmed and established as true. No more pleading on their behalf is necessary. Whoever acknowledges them as true is reasonable; whoever persists in denying or doubting is unreasonable. This cannot be said of Christian faith, as it were, by definition; but of the *īmān* of Islam, it is a necessary description. That is why Allah (SWT) described the truth of Islam in these terms: "(With this revelation) the truth has become manifest; falsehood is confuted, just as it should be ... Wisdom is now manifestly shown; error is something else."⁵ The reasonableness of Islam consists in its appeal to the mind at its critical best. Islam is not afraid of counterevidence nor does it operate in secret, exercising its appeal to some "gut" feeling, some "inner" doubt and uncertainty, some wishful anxiety or desire for the realities to be otherwise than they actually are. The claim of Islam is public. It is addressed to reason, seeking to convince it of the truth, rather than to overwhelm it with the incomprehensible,⁶ to coerce it into surrender by that which "passes all understanding."⁷

⁴ The contrast of Islamic *īmān* is strongest with the faith of Pascal who argued for faith as a wager which one places on an outcome which is by definition unknowable. Whereas in Pascal's thinking, man can never be demonstrably convinced of Allah's existence, of His commandments, and final judgment, Islam has taken up the challenge to give such demonstration. Every form of argument was hence used by Muslims to bring about such rational conviction. The arguments from creation and change, from design and purpose, and from the moral consciousness received their best formulation in the Qur'an.

وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا (الإسراء: ٨١) ... قَدْ بَيَّنَّ الرَّشِيدِينَ الْآلِيَّ ... (البقرة: ٢٥٦)

⁵ Say, O Muhammad, the truth is now manifest: untruth is confuted, as it should be (17:81)... Truth has become [by this revelation] manifestly distinct from error (2:256).

⁶ Contrast this rationalism of Islam, its insistence on clear and distinct proofs, its admiration and promotion of knowledge and wisdom, its exhortation to science and the discovery of the patterns of Allah (SWT) in the whole of creation, in nature, in the sky, in the human psyche, with Paul's description of faith in Christianity in I Corinthians 1.

⁷ I Corinthians 1:1-20.

II. *ĪMĀN*, A GNOSEOLOGICAL CATEGORY

Īmān, it should be said in conclusion, is not merely an ethical category. Indeed, it is firstly a cognitive category; that is to say, it has to do with knowledge, with the truthfulness of its propositions. And since the nature of its propositional content is that of first principle of logic and knowledge, of metaphysics, of ethics and esthetics, it follows that it acts in the subject as a light which illumines everything. As al Ghazālī has described it, *īmān* is a vision which puts all other data and facts in perspective which is proper to, and requisite for, a true understanding of them.⁸ It is the grounding for a rational interpretation of the universe. It itself, the prime principle of reason, cannot be nonrational or irrational and hence in contradiction with itself. It indeed is the first principle of rationality. To deny or oppose it is to lapse from reasonableness and hence from humanity.

As principle of knowledge, *al tawhīd* is the recognition that Allah, *al Haqq* (the Truth) is, and that He is One. This implies that all contention, all doubt, is referable to Him; that no claim is beyond testing, beyond decisive judgement. *Al tawhīd* is the recognition that the truth is indeed knowable, that man is capable of reaching it. Skepticism which denies this truth is the opposite of *al tawhīd*. It arises out of a failure of nerve to push the inquiry into truth to its end; the premature giving up of the possibility of knowing the truth. As an epistemological principle, it is a counsel of despair, resting on the apriori assumption that man lives in a perpetual dream where no reality can ever be distinguished from unreality. It is inseparable from nihilism, or the denial of values, for the apprehension of values requires the acknowledgment that man may reach the truth of values. Whether what is claimed to be a value is indeed so, whether it is realized or violated in a given instance, and whether the given instance is in fact what it is described to be, are questions without which no valuational claim could be ascertained. Unless it is possible to answer them with certainty, i.e., to know the truth of them, the knowledge of value founders. The valueness of a value, its instantia-

⁸ Abū Ḥamid al Ghazālī, *Al Munqidh min al Dalāl* (Damascus: University Press, 1376/1956), pp 62-63. Here al Ghazālī says that *īmān* does not deny, contradict, or go against the evidence of reason but confirms it. "...I sought a cure for my doubt, but it was impossible except with rational evidence. However, no evidence stood unless it was based on the primary sciences [metaphysics]. And since the bases of these sciences were not secure, their conclusions and anything built upon them were equally insecure... But after (i.e., under, or with *īmān*)... all these rational foundations [of science and metaphysics] became secure, rationally sound and acceptable, fully supported by their foundations in knowledge" (p. 62).

tion in the given situation, may be just as subject to doubt as any other datum. Unless one begins, therefore, with an assumption contrary to skepticism, namely, that the truth may be reached regarding these matters, nihilism becomes inevitable.

III. UNITY OF GOD AND UNITY OF TRUTH

To acknowledge the Godliness of God and His unity is to acknowledge the truth and its unity. Divine unity and the unity of truth are inseparable. They are aspects of one and the same reality. This becomes evident when we consider that truthfulness is a quality of the proposition of *al tawhīd*, namely, that God is One. For if truth was not one, then the statement "God is One" could be true, and the statement "some other thing or power is God" could also be true. To say that truth is one is therefore to assert not only that God is One, but that no other god is God but God, the very combination of negation and assertion that the *shahādah* conveys. *Lā ilāha illā Allāh*.

As methodological principle, *al tawhīd* consists of three principles: first, rejection of all that does not correspond with reality; second, denial of ultimate contradictions; third, openness to new and/or contrary evidence. The first principle rules out falsehood and deception from Islam, as it lays everything in the religion open to inspection and criticism. Departure from reality, or failure to correspond with it, is sufficient to vitiate any item in Islam, whether it be a law, a principle of personal or social ethics, or a statement about the world. This principle protects the Muslim against opinion, i.e., against making an untested, unconfirmed claim to knowledge. The unconfirmed claim, the Quran declares, is an instance of *ẓann* (deceptive knowledge), and is prohibited by God,⁹ however slight is its object. The Muslim is definable as the person who claims nothing but the truth, who presents nothing but the truth, even at his own peril. To dissimulate, to mix the true with the false, to value the truth less than one's own interest or that of his kin, is as hateful in Islam as it is contemptible.

The second principle, namely, no contradiction on one side, and paradox on the other.¹⁰ This principle is of the essence of rationalism.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّهُ بِبَعْضِ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ ... (الحجرات: ١٢)

⁹ O People who believe! Avoid suspicion of your fellows. Even a little suspicion is a crime (49:12).

¹⁰ For more analysis of this point, see this author's article and response in *Al Ḥaḍarrah al Islāmīyah*, chap II, n. 1.

Without it, there is no escape from skepticism; for an ultimate contradiction means that the truth of either contradiction can never been known. Surely contradiction does happen in the thinking and speech of men. The question is whether or not contradiction is avoidable, another principle or fact overarching the contradictories in terms of which their contradiction can be solved and their differences composed.

The same is valid when contradiction occurs between revelation and reason. Islam not only denies the logical possibility of such contradiction, but it furnishes in the second principle under discussion a directive for dealing with it once it occurs in the understanding. Neither reason nor revelation may lord it over the other. If revelation was prior, there would be no principle with which to differentiate between one revelation and another, or between two claims of revelation. Even the simple contradictions, the disparities, or apparent incongruencies between the letter of any two statements or positions claimed to be revealed, would not be soluble. No revelation would thus want to deprive itself of the means of harmonizing itself with itself, of putting its own house in order. On the other hand, revelation may run counter to reason; i.e., to the findings of rational examination and cognition. Where such is the case, Islam declares the contradiction not ultimate. It then refers the investigator either to review his understanding of the revelation, or his rational findings, or both. Having rejected the contradiction as ultimate, *al tawhīd* as unity of truth requires us to return the contradictory theses with the intention of looking into them once more. It assumes that there must be an aspect which had escaped consideration and which, if taken into account, would compose the contradictory relation. Equally, *al tawhīd* requires us to return the reader of revelation—not revelation itself—to revelation for another reading lest an unobvious or unclear meaning may have escaped him which, if considered, would remove the contradiction. Such referral to reason or understanding would have the effect of harmonizing not revelation *per se*—revelation stands above any manipulation by man!—but our human interpretation of it. It makes our understanding of revelation agree with the cumulative evidence uncovered by reason. On the other hand, acceptance of the contradictory or paradoxical as ultimately valid appeals only to the weak-of-mind. The Muslim is a rationalist as he insists on the unity of the two sources of truth, viz., revelation and reason.

The third principle of *al tawhīd* is unity of truth, namely, openness to new and/or contrary evidence, and protects the Muslim against

literalism, fanaticism and stagnation-causing conservatism. It inclines him to intellectual humility. It imposes upon him to append to his affirmations and denials the phrase *Allāh a'lam* (Allah knows better!), for he is convinced that the truth is bigger than can be totally mastered by him at any time.¹¹

As the affirmation of the absolute unity of God, *al tawhīd* is the affirmation of the unity of the sources of truth. God is the Creator of nature from whence man derives his knowledge.¹² The object of knowledge is the patterns of nature which are the work of God.¹³ Certainly God knows them since He is their Author; and equally certainly, He is the source of revelation. He gives man of His knowledge; and His knowledge is absolute and universal.¹⁴ God is no trickster, not a malevolent agent whose

... وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَعِلْمًا أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ (الأنعام: ٨٠) اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ يَنْزِلُ السَّمَاءَ يَنْزِلُ الْأَمْثَرُ يَنْزِلُ السَّمَاءَ أَنْ اللَّهُ عَلَّمَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَقَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ عَلَّمَ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا (الطلاق: ١٢) إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مَنْ يَضِلُّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ (الأنعام: ١١٧)

¹¹ The knowledge of my Lord encompasses all things. Will you not mind His commandments (6:80)... It is Allah Who created the seven heavens and the seven corresponding earths. His commandment permeates them all, that you may know that He is Omnipotent: that He knows each and every thing completely (65:12)... Your Lord knows better who strays from His path and who is rightly guided (6:117).

¹² This is the meaning of the Qur'an's description of the world, or the phenomena or nature, as full of *āyāt*, signs, ("sign: lit., index or evidence") of Allah. In all these instances, the Qur'an is referring to an inference which is obvious to those who have the mind to see, between creation and its Creator, Whose existence and constant activity is implied by the phenomena of nature.

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِلْمُوقِنِينَ (الذاريات: ٢٠) هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسُ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّ فِي آخِلَاتِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالنَّبَاتِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ (يونس: ٥)

¹³ The earth is full of signs evidencing the work of Allah. They are perceived by those who are certain of the truth (51:20)... It is Allah Who gave you the sun and moon for light; who ordered them in their orbits that you reckon the seasons and years. He created all this in truth; and He clarifies the evidence to those who have the mind to know... In the succession of day and night, as in all that Allah created in heaven and earth, are evident signs to those who fear Allah (10:5-6).

... لِمَنْ اللَّهُ كَاتِبٌ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَعِلْمًا أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ (النساء: ٣٢) ... وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَعِلْمًا أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ (الأنعام: ٨٠) وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ... (البقرة: ٣١) الَّذِي عَلَّمَ الْقَلَمَ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ (العلق: ٥-٤)

... وَعَلَّمَكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَزَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْقُرْآنَ لِتُعْلَمُوا (البقرة: ١٥١)

¹⁴ Allah is knowing of all things (4:32)... The knowledge of my Lord encompasses all things. Would you not heed His commandment? (6:80)... Allah taught Adam the names [essences] of all things (2:31). He taught him the use of the pen. He taught him what he did not know (96:45)... Allah taught you the Book [religion] and wisdom. Yea, He taught you what you would never know otherwise (2:151).

purpose is to misguide and mislead. Nor does He change His judgement, as men do when they correct their knowledge, their willing, or their decision. God is perfect and omniscient. He makes no mistakes. Otherwise, He would not be the transcendent God of Islam.

IV. TOLERANCE

Al tawhīd is the acknowledgement that God alone is God. This, we have already seen, means that Allah (SWT) is the ultimate source of all goodness, of all value. To assert this is therefore to hold God as ultimately good; i.e., as the highest good for the sake of Whom every good thing is good. Allah (SWT) gives the good its goodness, value its valueness. The goodness of the source of ultimate goodness cannot ever be in doubt. One must always assume that whatever Allah (SWT) has disposed, He has disposed it for a good purpose which is His own. To hold the opposite is to deny *al tawhīd*. That is why the Quran emphatically prohibited the Muslims from thinking ill of God,¹⁵ and condemned those who do in no uncertain terms. Allah (SWT) does not create us to torture and to misguide us. Nor did He give us our faculties of knowledge, our instincts and desires, to lead us astray. What we recognize with our senses is true, unless our senses are evidently deformed or sick; what seems coherent to our common sense is true unless it is proved otherwise. Similarly, what our instincts and desires want is basically good unless God has expressly forbidden it. *Al tawhīd* prescribes optimism on the epistemological and ethical levels. That is also what we call tolerance.

As an epistemological principle, optimism is the acceptance of the present until its falsehood has been established; while as an ethical principle, it consists of accepting the desires until the establishment of their undesirableness.¹⁶ The former is called *sa'ah*; the latter, *yusr* (ease,

وَيَعَذِّبُكَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ الظَّالِمِينَ بِاللَّهِ ظَلَمَ السَّوْءَ عَلَيْهِمُ دَائِرَةُ السَّوْءِ
وَعَذَابُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا (النحل: ٦)

¹⁵ Allah will certainly punish the pretenders, the associationists, and those who think ill of Allah, whether males or females. Theirs is the circle of evil; They have incurred Allah's wrath and His curse. For them, He has prepared the worst fate, the eternal fire (48:6).

¹⁶ Inspired by this principle, the jurists of Islam have laid down the principle that, "Generally, all things are permissible except those which have been prohibited by Allah" as a foundation for the law.

tolerance). Both protect the Muslim from self-closure to the world, from deadening conservatism. Both urge him to affirm and say yea to life, to new experience. Both encourage him to address the new data with his scrutinizing reason, his constructive endeavor, and thereby to enrich his experience and life, to move his culture and civilization ever forward.

As a methodological principle within the essence of *al tawhīd*, tolerance is the conviction that God left no people without sending them a messenger from among themselves to teach them that there is no god but God and that they owe Him worship and service,¹⁷ to warn them against evil and its causes.¹⁸ In this regard, tolerance is the certainty that all men are endowed with a *sensus communis* enabling them to know the true religion, to recognize God's will and commandments. It is the conviction that the diversity of religions is due to history with all its affecting factors, its diverse conditions of space and time, its prejudices, passions and vested interests. Behind religion diversity stands *al dīn al ḥanīf* (the primordial religion of God) with which all men are born before acculturation makes them adherents of this or that religion.¹⁹ Study of the history (in the plural) is what tolerance requires the Muslim to undertake with a view, first, to discover within each the primeval endowment of God,²⁰ which He had sent all His apostles at all places and times

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِي (الذاريات: ٥٦)

¹⁷ I have not created the *jinn* and humankind but to serve Me (51:56).

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ فَبِأُولَئِكَ نَنْظُرُ وَكَيْفَ كَانَتْ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ (الاحقاف: ٢٠)

¹⁸ Unto each and every *ummah* We have sent a messenger to teach them to serve none but Allah and to avoid evil. Some were rightly guided by Allah. Others were misguided and earned the evil consequence. Go out into the world, and see for yourselves what were the consequences of unfaith (16:36).

¹⁹ "I have been sent as a prophet to preach tolerant *Ḥanīfism*." In answer to the question, Which of the [past] religions do you like best? the Prophet (SAAS) answered: 'Tolerant *Ḥanīfism*,' or the religion of Ibrahim." The *ḥadīth* has been reported by Ibn 'Abbās (al Zubaydī, *Taj al Arūs*, s.v. *Ḥanaf*, vol. 6, p. 78); al Imam Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, summary of: al Ḥafiz al Mundhirī, *Mukhtaṣar Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ed. Muhammad Naṣir al Din al Albani (Kuwait: al Dar al Kuwaytiyah li al Ṭibā'ah, 1388/1969), vol. 2, p. 249, *Ḥadīth* No. 1982.

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَوِيمُ وَلَكِنْ بَاطِلٌ كَثَرٌ أَلَّا يَعْلَمُونَ (الروم: ٣٠)

²⁰ And turn yourself to the primordial religion as a *ḥanīf*, true to the innate religion with which Allah endowed all humans. Immutable is Allah's creation. This natural endowment is universal and immutable for Allah's human creatures. It is the true and valuable religion, but most people do not know (30:30).

to teach; and second, to emphasize this primordial religion and draw men to it, with comeliness and arguments ever more sound.²¹

In religion—and there can hardly be anything more important or prior in human relations—tolerance transforms confrontation and reciprocal condemnations between the religions into a scholarly investigation of the genesis and development of the religions to the end of separating the historical accretions from the original given of revelation. In ethics, the next all-important field, *yusr*, immunizes the Muslim against any life-denying tendencies and assures him the minimum measure of optimism required to maintain health, balance and a sense of proportion, despite all the tragedies and afflictions which befall human life. God has assured us, “With hardship, We have ordained *yusr*.”²² And as He commanded us to examine every claim and make certain before judging,²³ the *usūliyyūn* (doctors of jurisprudence) had recourse to experimentation before judging as good and evil anything desired which is not contrary to a clear divine injunction.

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجِدْ لَهُمِ الْيُسْرَىٰ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ (الحل: ١٢٥)

²¹ Call unto your Lord with wise argument and comely exhortation. Dialogue with others and present to them the better view. Your Lord knows who has strayed from His path and who is rightly guided (16:125).

... يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ ... (البقرة: ١٨٥)

²² Allah wants your life to be full of ease, not of hardship (2:185).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَسُوقٌ مِّنَ الْكُفَّارِ فَعَبِّئُوا بِآيَاتِ الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَأَبْغَىٰ وَأَثَرُهُمْ أَخْزَىٰ لَكُمُ الْمَوَاقِيتُ (الحجرات: ٦)

²³ O believers! If the unrighteous come to you with news, do not believe them and investigate for yourselves. Otherwise, you will be led to aggression without justice, and you will regret having committed your deeds (49:6).