

Dr. Mustafa Cerić važi za jednog od najuticajnijih muslimanskih ličnosti današnjice. Završio je Gazi Husrev-begovu medresu u Sarajevu, a diplomirao na Univerzitetu Al-Azhar u Kairu, Egipat. Doktorirao je na Čikaškom univerzitetu pred uglednim muslimanskim učenjakom Fazlur Rahmanom. Predavao je na Međunarodnom institutu islamske misli i civilizacije u Kuala Lumpuru u Maleziji pod vodstvom prof. Naquib Al-Attasa, te kao gostujući profesor na Svjetskom univerzitetu za islamske nauke i obrazovanje, Amman, Jordan. Vodio je Islamsku zajednicu u Bosni i Hercegovini kao reisu-l-ulema i vrhovni muftija (1993 – 2012) u ratu i miru; njegovo vodstvo je imalo veliki utjecaj na domaća i međunarodna pitanja koja se tiču istine, pravde, mira i pomirenja. Dr. Cerić je zagovornik međukulturalnog angažmana, kao i mirovni aktivist; dobitnik je *UNESCO-ove nagrade za mir*, nagrade *Theodor-Heuss-Stiftung*, *Sternbergove nagrade*, nagrade *zaklade Eugen Biser*, nagrade *za životno djelo asocijacije UK Muslim Social Scientist*, nagrade *Fondacije Ducci...* Napisao je *Deklaraciju evropskih muslimana*; predvodio muslimansku delegaciju inicijative *Zajednička riječ* u Vatikanu; član je *Odbora savjesti* koji se bori protiv poricanja holokausta; član je Upravnog odbora *Muslimanskog mirovnog foruma*, Abu Dabi; specijalni savjetnik šejha Abdallaha bin Bejje; počasni predsjednik *Svjetske konferencije 'Religija za mir'*; uvršten je među 50 najuticajnijih muslimana u svijetu.... Redovni je član Kraljevske akademije Al al-Bajt (Jordan), a jedan je od osnivača i redovni član BANU-a (Bosna). E-Mail: cericmustafa@gmail.com

Dr. Mustafa Cerić is considered one of the most influential Muslim figures of today. He completed the Gazi Husrevbeg Madrasa in Sarajevo and earned a scholarship to Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. He received his doctorate from the University of Chicago by the mentorship of the eminent Muslim scholar Fazlur Rahman. He lectured at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, under the leadership of Prof. Naquib Al-Attas; was a Visiting Professor at the World University of Islamic Sciences and Education, Amman, Jordan. He led the Islamic Community as the Grand Mufti (Raisul-ulema) of Bosnia (1993-2012) in war and peace; his leadership had a major impact on domestic and international issues concerning truth, justice, peace and reconciliation. Dr. Cerić is an advocate of intercultural engagement as well as a peace activist; he won the *UNESCO Peace Prize*, the *Theodor-Heuss-Stiftung Prize*, the *Sternberg Prize*, the *Eugen Biser Foundation Prize*, the *UK Muslim Social Scientist Association Life Achievement Prize*, *Ducci Foundation Prize*... He wrote *Declaration of European Muslims*; led the Muslim delegation of the *Common Word initiative* to the Vatican; he is a member of the *Committee of Conscience* against Holocaust denial; he is a member of the Board of *Trustees of Muslim Peace Forum*, Abu Dhabi; he is a special adviser to Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah; he is Honorary President of *World Conference Religions for Peace*; he is listed among the 50 most influential Muslims in the world ... He is a full member of the Royal Academy Al al-Bayt (Jordan), and is one of the founders and full member of BANU (Bosnia). E-Mail: cericmustafa@gmail.com



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Mustafa CERİĆ

O PRIRODNOJ VJERI (AL-ĪMĀN) I FORMALNOJ RELIGIJI (AL-DĪN)

ON NATURAL FAITH (AL-ĪMĀN) AND FORMAL RELIGION (AL-DĪN)

Abstract

This article is focused on the interplay of natural faith (*al-īmān*), formal or artificial religion (*al-dīn*), and the art of politics (*fannu-l-siyāsah*) in Islam. Trust in God is primordial faith (*al-īmān*), which is shared by all human beings in the conception of their creation by God who breathes His soul (*al-rūḥ*) into each and every human being as a potential trust in Him. Thus, trust in God is the matter (*hyle*) of faith. The faith is not yet the form (*al-ṣūrah* or *al-shakl*). The form of the matter of faith becomes religion (*al-dīn*), after it has been shaped by the art of theologians as an artificial theology, which is not necessarily wholly compatible with the primordial matter (*hyle*) of faith, but it cannot be said that the form (*al-ṣūrah* or *al-shakl*) of religion (*al-dīn*), as formal or artificial theology, is totally void of the matter or substance of the natural faith (*al-īmān*). The art of politics (*fann al-siyāsah*), a politics that uses or abuses naturally born faith (*al-īmān*) and formal religion (*al-dīn*) is to preserve continuity and encourage change in history. In this process of continuity and change, many forces in Islamic history were at play and many crises arose as a result. This article is an attempt to identify these “forces”, focusing on the phenomenon of historical and contemporary deviations of “extremism” in the world of Islam.

Key words: Islam, pure faith (*al-īmān*), formal religion (*al-dīn*), dictate of faith, covenant of faith, Taliban, *Sharīʿah*.

ON NATURAL FAITH (*AL-ĪMĀN*) AND FORMAL RELIGION (*AL-DĪN*)

Introduction

It has been my deep concern since I had entered into the field of religious studies as a young pupil at the Islamic Madrasa in Sarajevo, then as a student at the Al-Azhar University in Cairo, and, of course, later on as a postgraduate student at the University of Chicago to figure out if there is an innate nature of faith that is shared by all humanity. To be precise, I wanted to know the difference between a natural faith and a formal or artificial religious theology. But, first, is there a difference between the two? I felt somehow in my deep consciousness that there was a difference between the two because of the drastically divergent and deviant streams in religious and theological interpretations of faith as a matter of collective background and personal experience.

Furthermore, I felt that if humanity comes to the original terms with a natural faith that is common to all human beings, it would be easier for humanity to accept the fact that we humans are a single humanity because God is the One and the Same Creator of all the universe, nay the multiverse, and within it the whole humanity. The very idea that we share the same core and the same substance of trust in God as an innate item in our soul, moves us closer to each other and inspires us to cooperate with each other for good. After all, God is the light of heavens and earth and His light touches everything and everyone on earth. God is love as well. His love reaches every human being whether he/she is aware of it or not. Unlike the animals and plants, the humans are additionally equipped with God's light in their mind, i.e., in their human reason that cannot but tackle with everything around regardless whether this would be good or bad for humanity. Of course, the most challenging of all is human thought about God as God is hidden from man's sight but man feels God's presence in his soul as an innate sense of his trust in God.

If we accept the premise that all human beings share the same potential of trust in God, which is a natural faith as such, then begging the question (*petitio principia*) is whether the premise assumes the truth of conclusion. If fact, it does assume the conclusion that all men are equal in their original or innate ability to trust in God even before they are exposed to a divine word. In fact, the role of the divine word or revelation is to shape the natural matter (*hulê*) of faith (*al-īmān*) into the form of religion (*al-dīn*), i.e., the divine law (*al-sharī'ah*).¹ This idea is explicit in the Holy Qur'ān in the verses: 44, 46, 47 and 48 of the 5th Chapter *Al-Mā'idah*:

44. Surely, God revealed the Torah, wherein there is guidance and light. Thereby did Prophets – who had submitted themselves (to God) – judge for the Judaized folk; and so did the scholars and jurists. They judged by the Book of God for they had been entrusted to keep it, and bear witness to it. So (O Jews!) do not fear men but fear Me, and do not barter away My signs for a trivial gain. Those who do not judge by what God has revealed are indeed the unbelievers.

46. And We sent Jesus, the son of Mary, after those Prophets, confirming the truth of whatever there still remained of the Torah. We gave him the Gospel, wherein is guidance and light, and which confirms the truth of whatever there still remained of the Torah, and a guidance and admonition for the God-fearing.

47. Let the followers of the Gospel judge by what Allah has revealed therein, and those who do not judge by what Allah has revealed are the transgressors.

48. Then God revealed the Book to you (O Muhammad!) with Truth, confirming whatever of the Book was revealed before, and protecting and guarding over it. Judge, then, in the affairs of men in accordance with the Law that Allah has revealed, and do not follow their desires in disregard of the Truth which has come to you. For each of you God has appointed a Law and a Way of life. Had Allah so willed, He would surely have made you one single community; instead, (He gave each of you a Law and a Way of life) in order to test you by what He gave you. Vie, then, one with another in good deeds. Unto Allah is the return of all of you. He will then make you understand the truth concerning the matters on which you disagreed.

This explicit Qur'ānic plurality not only of formal religions but also of “divine laws” (*sharī'ah*) and “a way of life” (*minhāj*) is the most convicting proof for a shared natural faith (*al-īmān*) in competition with a formal or artificial religion (*al-dīn* or *al-islām*), which might become an extreme and exclusive ideology influenced by unreasonable politics. On this very point I have found an interesting analysis by my professor Fred Donner from the University of Chicago on the development road of the early Muslim community from “Believers” to “Muslims”. Namely, Donner argues that Muhammad, a.s., and his followers initially saw themselves as a community of Believers (ar. *al-mu'minūn*), a community to which all who had a strong faith in the One God and the Day of Judgment belonged. Furthermore, Donner argues that the root of Islam lies in what we might call the “Movement of Believers,” started by Muhammad, a. s., as a religious reform. This movement emphasizes strict *tawhīd*, monotheism, and righteous conduct in accordance with God's revealed covenant/law. Thus the “movement of believers” in the early years of Islam included righteous

¹ I am echoing here the Aristotle's doctrine of matter (*hulê*) and form (*eidos* or *morphê*). Highly influential in the development of Medieval philosophy, Aristotle's hylomorphism has also enjoyed something of a renaissance in contemporary metaphysics.

Christians and Jews, because like believers in the Qur'ān, both Christians and Jews were monotheists and agreed to live righteously according to their revealed law, the *Tawrāt* (Tora) and the *Injīl* (Gospels).² The belief that Muslims form a separate religious community, different from Christians and Jews, emerged a century later, when the leaders of the belief movement decided that only those who held the Qur'an as the final revelation of the One God and Muhammad, a.s., as the last messenger of God, were legitimate Believers-Muslims. This decisively separated them from the monotheists, who identified themselves with the Torah or the Gospel.³

Here I found the puzzle intriguing. I am intrigued to know why and how the shift from a natural faith or belief that is common to all humans is being altered as such to become so unnatural that it sometimes does not resemble to itself anymore? Really, the question is how this natural faith is being transformed into a formal or artificial religion/theology with diametrically different conclusions not only by formal different religious traditions but also by the followers of the same formal religion? Indeed, our question should be as to how the religion (*al-dīn*) of the same divine (natural) root becomes an exclusive dangerous ideology supported by hazardous politics?



ILLUSTRATION ~ *Qur'ān* (Arabic calligraphy) as the final revelation of the One God and Muhammad as the last prophet of God.
ILUSTRACIJA ~ *Kur'ān* (arapska kaligrafija) kao konačna objava Jednog Boga i Muhammeda kao posljednjeg Božijeg poslanika.

² An interesting example may be noted in my experience (2006) at the Madison Lubar Institute at the University of Wisconsin, where I gave a lecture on the *Ten Commandments as a Basis for Meaningful Judeo-Christian-Muslim Dialogue*. Namely, I based my lecture on a test for listeners by reading them ten sacred quotations, asking them to rate which of these quotations are from the Torah, which are from the Gospels, and which are from the Qur'ān. The answers varied. But when I told them that all ten quotations were verses from the Qur'ān only, they were surprised. The intention was to show how similar, if not identical, is the *tawhīd*, monotheistic idea naturally inherited in all three Ibrahim/Abrahamic traditions.

See link available by 26.09. 2022:

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiyqYeOkbL6AhX0_7siHXSODAcQFnoECBoQA-Q&url=https%3A%2F%2Fhuber.wisc.edu%2Farchive%2F2005-06%2F10Commandments.html&usg=AOvVaw0Tx9zZl29AbZSHBzquSjvA

³ See: Donner, Fred: *From Believers to Muslims: Confessional Self-identity in the Early Islamic Community*, *Journal of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences*, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Journal 50-51, 2002-2003, p. 9-53.



ILLUSTRATION ~ *The Great Abu Sa'ud Teaching Law* – Folio from a *Divan* of Mahmud `Abd-al Baqi (detail). Iraq, Baghdad, mid-16th century. Metropolitan Museum, acc. num. 25.83.9.

1. In Search for Natural Faith

I am sure, the Jews and Christians have their own internal theological differences and extreme groups that should be their own internal concern. We are told in a *ḥadīth*, narration by the Prophet Muhammad, a.s., which was reported by 'Awf bin Malik that the Prophet said: "Jews were divided into 71 sects. One of them is in Heaven, seventy of them are in Hell. Christians are split into 72 sects. Seventy-one of them are in Hell, the one is in Heaven. I swear to Allah whose mighty hands hold the Muhammad's will, beyond any doubt, my *ummah*, nation, will be divided into 73 sects. One will be in Heaven, seventy-two will be in flames. 'Oh, the Messenger of Allah! Who are they?' 'They are *al-jamā'ah* (the group or community that holds themselves together)'."⁴

Obviously, I will not dwell on the Jewish and Christian theological differences and extreme groups. I am concerned with natural faith of Islam and its formal or artificial religious/theological interpretations that are sometimes unrecognizable to its original nature. Indeed, I want to find my innate sense of trust in God in order to be able to deal with a formal or artificial belonging to a theology, whatever it might be. Because the belonging to a particular religious group (*al-jamā'ah*) is not necessarily genuine faith but may be a delusive loyalty to deceitful leaders of a fake ideology. In fact, I want to prove to myself, before anyone else, that 'faith' is an innate trust in God, which is common to and shared by all mankind. I want to grasp the idea that 'faith' is a self-evident entity just as 'Being' (Heidegger's 'Sein') "is all concepts the one that is self-evident". Paraphrasing further Heidegger's notion of indefinability of 'Being', we may say that "whenever one comports oneself towards entities, even towards oneself, some use is made" of 'Faith', i.e., 'Trust' in God; "and this expression is held to be intelligible 'without further ado', just as everyone understands 'The sky is blue'..."⁵ Thus, like 'Being' (*al-wujūd*), 'Faith' (*al-īmān*) is the most obvious spiritual entity, and yet it is the most hidden both essentially and conceptually. Just as there is no

⁴ Mevlüt Özler divides the different narrative versions of the 73 sects *ḥadīth* into four groups: 1. Narratives declaring only the number of sects into which the Muslim community will divide (al-Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Māja, al-Nīsābūrī, al-Bayḥakī, Ibn Ḥibbān), 2. Narratives saying that only one sect will be saved while the other will be in Hell (al-Dārimī, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal), 3. Narratives explaining the exact identity of the saved sect (Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Māja, al-Tirmidhī, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, al-Nīsābūrī), 4. Narratives stating that all sects will be in Heaven except for one only (al-Ajlūnī, al-Suyūṭī, 'Alī al-Qārī, Ibn 'Arrāq).

For these narratives, see Özler, Mevlüt: *İslâm Düşüncesinde 73 Fırka Kavramı* (İstanbul: Nün, 1996), pp. 21-28. Another researcher, Ahmet Keleş, evaluates the narratives of the 73 sects *ḥadīth* under five groups: 1. Narratives stating that the Islamic community will divide into various sects, 2. Narratives determining identities of sects that will go to Heaven and Hell, 3. Narratives describing the saved sect that will go to Heaven, 4. Narratives describing the sects that will go to Hell, 5. Narratives suggesting to follow the community (*al-jamā'ah*).

For details, see Ahmet Keleş, *73 Fırka Hadisi Üzerine Bir İnceleme*, Marife 5/3 (2005), pp. 25-45. None of the narratives of the 73 sects *ḥadīth* is mentioned in al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and al-Nasā'ī. For further details of the different narrative versions of the 73 sects *ḥadīth* and the investigation of narrators, see İsmā'īl b. Muḥammad al-Ajlūnī, *Kashf al-khafā'* (Beirut: Dar iḥyā al-turāth al-'arabī, 1932), pp. 149-151; Abdullah Eren, *İftirak Hadislerinin Tahrir, Tahkik ve Yorumu* (M.A. Thesis, Uludağ University, 1998); Sayın Dalkıran, *Yetmişüç Fırka Hadisi ve Düşündürdükleri*, EKEV Akademi Dergisi 1/1 (1997), pp. 97-116.

See, Kadir Gömbeyaz, *The Influence of the 73 Sects Ḥadīth on the Classification of Theological Sects in Islamic Heresiographical Literature*, *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 14/2 (2005): pp. 147-160, footnote 1.

⁵ Heidegger, Martin: *Being and Time* (translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson), Harper & Row, 1962, p. 23.

need to define 'Pure Being' because of its self-evidence, there is no need to define 'Pure Faith' because of its self-evident manifesto. Thus, faith is natural state of human soul. For, what is pure and self-evident is definable in itself; and what is definable in itself has neither genus nor species that would define it in relation to other entity of a different trait. 'Pure Faith' is a gift of God about which the human mind has nothing to say but to accept it as it is or neglect or reject it.⁶

Being an innate state of human spirit, the trust in God or faith in a broad meaning is not acquired in experience, but it is given by birth. Therefore, *turn your face to the natural way of creation (fiṭratallah), the way that all people were created by God because there is no alteration of God's creation..."*⁷; Indeed, *every child is born in a natural way of God's creation ('alā fiṭrah)..."*⁸.

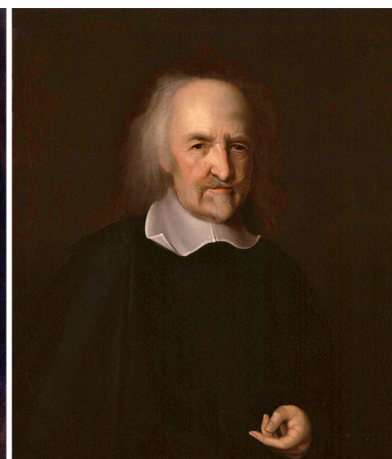
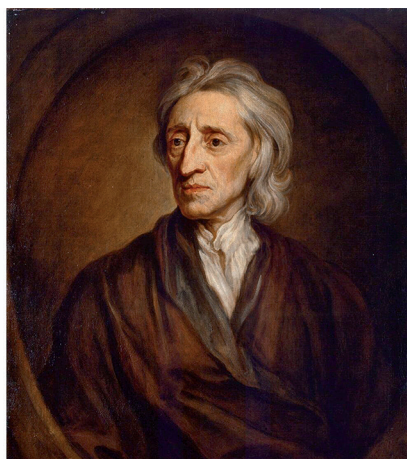


ILLUSTRATION ~ Aristotle: ... *the idea of faith as a soul by birth tabula rasa*; John Locke: ... *man is born with an innate mental structure, of which selfishness is the most obvious*; Thomas Hobbes: ... *the natural state of man is 'war of all against all'*.

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Aristotel: ... *ideja vjere kao duša po rođenju tabula rasa*; John Locke: ... *čovjek se rađa s urođenom mentalnom strukturom, od koje je sebičnost najočitija*; Thomas Hobbes: ... *prirodno stanje čoveka je 'rat svih protiv svih'*.

Although ancient philosophers, such as Aristotle and the Stoics, had the idea of *tabula rasa*, it was not widely elaborated though until the eleventh century when the Persian Muslim philosopher Ibn Sīnā (980-1037) forged his phrase *al-ṣafḥah al-bayḍā'* ("white paper" or "tabula rasa"). The Andalusian philosopher and novelist Ibn Ṭufayl (1105-1185) developed Ibn Sīnā's idea of *tabula rasa* into a theory of reflective experiment by showing the development of the mind in a wild boy on a desert island.⁹ In the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) introduced this idea or theory of *tabula rasa* into Christian theological and philosophical thought from Aristotle and Ibn Sīnā. In the modern age, further elaboration of the idea of the theory of *tabula rasa* is attributed to John

⁶ See: Barret, Justin L.: *Born Believers, the Science of Children's Religious Beliefs*. Atria Books, 2012.

⁷ *Qur'ān*, 30:30

⁸ *Ḥadīth*, Abu Hurayrah.

⁹ Ibn Ṭufayl: *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān (The Living Son of the Awake)*. See: Goodman, Lenn Evan: *Ibn Tufayl's Hayy Ibn Yaqzān*. The University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Locke (1632-1704), who believed that all knowledge comes from experience, because our soul is by birth a “tabula rasa” without prior rules. Therefore, every soul or every mind is free to shape itself of its own free will on the basis of its own experience. Unlike John Locke, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), believed that man is born with an innate mental structure, of which selfishness is most obvious. Hence, Hobbes considered the natural state of man to be “a war of all against all” (“bellum omnium contra omnes”), as well as his infamous remark that “man is wolf to man” (“lupus est homo homini”).¹⁰

Contrary to this pessimistic view of the nature of man, the Islamic perspective of man is that in his pure nature lies an innate trust in God, his natural faith. This natural faith of man is the grace of God’s spiritual breathe (*naḥkhaḥ rūḥiyyah*) into man’s pure soul as well as a dictate of his pure mind. Two epic witnesses testify to this fact. One is called the ‘Living Son of the Awake’ (*Ḥayy ibn Yaḳẓān*) and the other is called the ‘Noble Son of the Speaker’ (*Fāḍil bin Nāṭiq*). The story of the former was narrated by Ibn Ṭufayl,¹¹ and the story of the latter was reported by Ibn al-Nafīs.¹² They both borrowed the idea of natural theology¹³ of Ibn Sīnā,¹⁴ who had imagined the ‘Living Son of the Awake’ before them.¹⁵ Ibn Sīnā’s ‘Living Son of the Awake’ does not resemble Robinson Crusoe, nor does Daniel Defoe¹⁶ resemble either Ibn Ṭufayl or Ibn al-Nafīs. Robinson Crusoe is an adventurer at sea on a desert island, while Ibn Ṭufayl’s *Ḥayy ibn Yaḳẓān* is a curious human being on a desert island in search for the truth of his human nature and the nature around him. Defoe’s hero is an adventurer who had one wish only and that is to survive on a desert island while expecting a salvation from someone else. Ibn al-Nafīs’ *Fāḍil bin Nāṭiq* is not an adventurer. He is a boy who is born spontaneously without his mother and father on a desert island. Ibn al-Nafīs is aware that there are people who do not accept that man can be born without father and mother. Nevertheless, he is determined to tell the story of a human being who came out without a mother and father.

¹⁰ See link available on August 12, 2021: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwipjlv0p-KvyAhXZ_rslHe6xCKIQFnoECB8QAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fbooks.google.co.cr%2Fbooks%3Fid%3DO_QyCDsmdZsC&usg=AOvVaw2-hjZxXzi-54CAo2_PrGgWV

¹¹ Ibn Ṭufayl (1105-1185) is an Arab Andalusian Muslim polymath, writer, philosopher, theologian, physician and vizier. He is best known as the author of the book: *The Living Son of the Awake*, which is considered by many to be the first philosophical novel in the history of literature.

¹² Ibn al-Nafīs (1213-1288) is one of the most recognized physicians in the history of medicine. He discovered pulmonary blood circulation or small blood flow. He is believed to have written his first theological novel: *Al-Risālah al-Kāmilīyyah*, which is in the West translated as: *Theologus Autodidactus*.

See: al-Qurashī, Ibn al-Nafīs, ‘Alā’u al-Dīn ‘Alī bin al-Haram: *Al-Risālah al-Kāmilīyyah fī al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyyah*, (*Theologus Autodidactus of Ibn al-Nafīs*), Oxford, Max Meyerhof & Joseph Schacht, At the Clarendon Press, 1968.

¹³ Natural theology, once also termed physico-theology, is a type of theology that provides arguments for the existence of God based on reason and ordinary experience of nature

¹⁴ Ibn Sīnā (980-1037) was a leading Muslim philosopher and Neoplatonist of Persian descent. In addition to being a leading philosopher, Ibn Sīnā was also an astronomer, chemist, geologist, ḥafīz of the Qur’an, Islamic psychologist, Islamic theologian, logician, paleontologist, mathematician, *maktab* teacher, physicist, poet and scientist. Ibn Sīnā is also the author of the book: *Ḥayy ibn Yaḳẓān*, which was the inspiration for Ibn Ṭufayl to write his book *The Living Son of the Awake*. It should be mentioned that Shahabuddin Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl between 1191 and 1208 wrote a book entitled *Qīṣṣat al-ghurbat al-gharbiyyah*, which resembles *Ḥayy ibn Yaḳẓān*.

¹⁵ See: Amin, Ahmad: *Ḥayy ibn Yaḳẓān – Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Ṭufayl, al-Sahruwardī*. Al-Āfāq, 2018.

¹⁶ Daniel Defoe (1659-1731) was an English writer, journalist and pamphleteer. He was born as Daniel Foe, the son of London butcher James Foy, but later added *de* – to his surname, to sound more elegant. His most famous novel is *Robinson Crusoe* (1719).



ILLUSTRATION ~ The role of the divine word or revelation is to shape the natural matter (*hulê*) of faith (*al-îmân*) into the form of religion (*al-dîn*), i.e., the divine law (*al-sharī'ah*).

Thus, Ibn al-Nafis' Fāḍil bin Nāṭiq ('*Noble Son of the Speaker*') tells the story of a hero, called the Perfect (Kāmil), who is spontaneously born without a father and mother after a flood on a lonely island with a temperate climate and an abundance of plants, fruits and vegetables. The flood brings to the island new ingredients of clay, which is deposited in the cave, whereby a fermentation takes place, from which the organs of the human body are formed, from which man is created. In the cave one feels the air, which gives the heart breath or spirit (*rūḥ*), which when mixed with purified blood gives a vital soul, which keeps Kāmil alive in the cave until he strengthens so that, like a chicken from an egg, he can go out in a white world.

Unlike Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, who, as a baby grows up with the help of a gazelle, Ibn al-Nafis' Kāmil emerges from the cave as a boy alone and begins life without anyone's help. Ibn Ṭufayl's hero himself comes to know about fire and learns for himself what shoes and clothes he needs, while Ibn al-Nafis' hero learns all this from his visitors. Perhaps unintentionally, but Ibn al-Nafis in this way emphasized the idea, unlike Ibn Ṭufayl, that life becomes civilized only in human society. After all what the Living Son of the Awake had seen and experienced, he comes to the conclusion that man can understand the nature of his soul and reach the essence of God through his pure unaided mind.

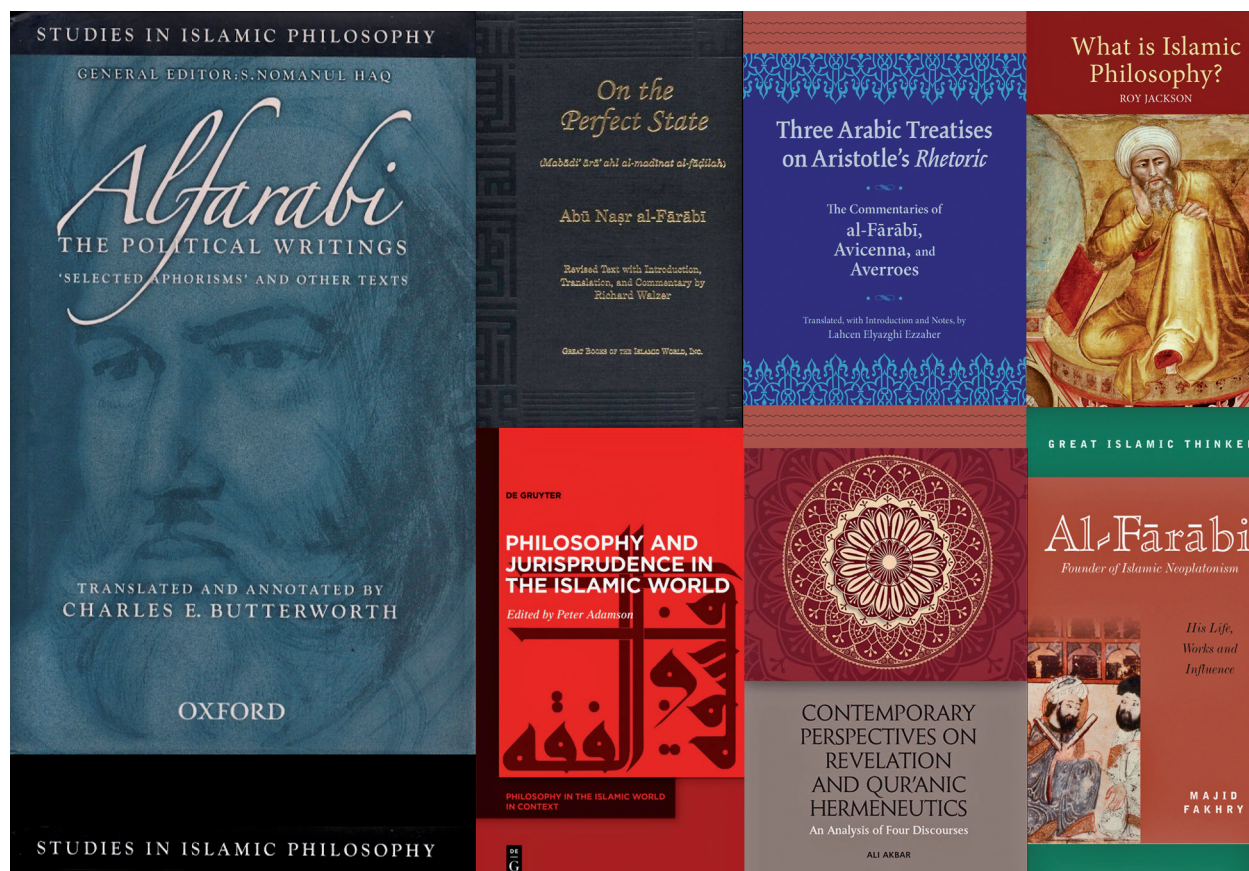


ILLUSTRATION ~ Part of the issue on Islamic philosophy in the Western market.
 ILUSTRACIJA ~ Dio izdanja o islamskoj filozofiji na zapadnom tržištu.

Ibn Nafis' "Perfect Man" does not deny the power of the pure mind, but man still needs the help of God's messengers, especially with regard to the organization of the human community. Thus, Ibn Nefis's hero reveals not only the necessity of man's piety and social solidarity, but also the necessity of a periodic prophetic appearance. Ibn Tufayl's hero meets a community of believers or God's trustees who follow God's previous messengers and prophets. Ibn Nafis does not mention any religion by name, but it is understood that it is Islam, which is not only the last authentic dictate of religion for all times and places, but it is also the surest answer to the question of how to believe, how to act and how one might be saved.

Obviously, through this unique philosophical-romantic genre, Ibn Tufayl intended to point out the difference between formal or traditional belief, which is based on symbols, allegories or metaphors, and philosophical-mystical or artistic-elitist belief, which relies on pure mind or pure immediate cognition, which is achieved by persistent exercises of the pure soul. However, Ibn Tufayl was not the first one to make that distinction. Al-Fārābī (870–950) was most responsible for something like this in Islamic philosophy, who thought that revelation (*wahy*) can be understood as a combination of the highest philosophical knowledge with the highest form of prophecy. Al-Fārābī does not dispute the functionality of revelation to the masses, but prefers reason, which serves the intelligent elite. Ibn Nafis, on the other hand, had another intention, and that was to refute the opinions of the Muslim philosophical elite, above all Ibn Sīnā, an elite who had fallen too much in love with their minds. In particular, says Ibn Nafis, the life (*sīrah*) of the last Messenger of God is a paradigm, based on the principle of "the best or always the best solution for all life situations".

2. Natural Faith *vis-à-vis* Divine Dictate

I have brought these two stories of Ibn Tufayl and Ibn Nafis to show the potential power of the innate nature of faith (*al-īmān*) as compared to the power of formal or instructive religion (*al-dīn*) as a divine dictate or imperative. For as much as is it is natural, faith is a divine dictate as well. So, the real challenge for man is to grasp and accept this God's absolute dictate: 'Be – and it is'. From the first 'Pure Being' as the 'light of all lights' (*nūrun'ala nūr*) to the last 'Pure Faith' as the 'salvation of all salvations', man is impowered to believe that God is the First and the Last (*al-awwal wa al-ākhir*), that He is the Immanent and the Transcendent (*al-zāhir wa al-bāṭin*) at the same time. Man has that power, but he may not have the will to follow his belief in the absolute truth as a foundation for all other truths. Therefore, the proposition: "faith is a dictate" makes sense for those who willingly accept the first proposition: "God is the absolute Lord of all worlds", i.e., not one uni-verse but many – multi-verse. There are people who understand it but do not accept it, just as there are those who accept it but do not understand it. We are interested here in those people who formally accept that God is the First and foremost *al-āmir*, the One who calls man to certain actions and *al-Nāhī*, the One who distracts man from certain actions. But they, extremists, do not comprehend fully the ultimate purpose of divine commandments which aim at making the brotherhood of

humanity. They are the ones we want to subject here to critical observation in the light of the critique of the pure faith to which they refer. I am aware that they reject our observation and our criticism because they are confident that only they are on the right path, which we do not comprehend. But even if we understand somehow their “right path,” we would not be theirs because they are not ours. Therefore, this is not about their and our faith, but about their and our affiliation. People are not separated by faith because faith is the common value of all. People are separated by belonging because belonging is a private value of a certain group. Faith is the light of the mind; affiliation is the blindness of reason; darkness arises when the light is turned off. Belonging to an alienated group begins when pure natural faith is lost.

As important as it is for man to understand and accept that faith is God’s dictate for his action or inaction, it is so important that he knows the difference between God’s and man’s speech or God’s and man’s commandments. On this detail the whole question of pure faith, pure mind, and pure hand is featured. When he says, “God has spoken or commanded,” man is in a position to rise to the “light of all lights” or to fall into the “abyss of all abysses.” It is that bridge, which is thinner than a hair and sharper than a saber, over which man should walk not only on that eternal due day, but also on this passing test time. This earthly bridge is neither a privilege nor a curse of any particular faith, but it is a common temptation for every faith. But in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries of the *Milād*, the birth of Isa/Jesus, a.s., which corresponds to the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries of *al-Hijrah*, migration of the Prophet Muhammad, a.s., from Mecca to Medina, Islam and Muslims face this temptation more than any other formal religion in the world. Muslims today are faced with the temptation of the meaning of pure faith as opposed to an impure religion of irresponsible groups who claim to defend Islam. God’s pure faith of Islam was clouded by impure human minds to such an extent that even the purest minds were not left unaffected. Perhaps there is consolation here in that that many in the world have given up or are on their way to give up the faith as such and therefore they are not concerned with either pure faith or impure religion, except Muslims, who do not give up their innate trust in God. It appears that they are the loudest of all in a defense of their religious beliefs. But the question is whether Muslims do it in a way that others understand them or, perhaps, there is no way for others to understand them no matter how religiously they present themselves. In a world where faith is not a first-rate value, it is not easy to be a believer. But this must not be a reason for the unclean mind to defile pure faith because others do not appreciate the smell of your faith, nor understand the taste of your mind, nor enjoy the justice of your hand. In order to return the will and love for the faith to those who have given up the faith, you must show them with the heart of your love, with the mind of your clear thoughts and with the hand of your justice that faith raised you to be a truthful man, who has the heart of love, who has the mind of understanding and who has the hand of justice of all people of good will. All people are God’s creatures. God knows why He created them.

Other people of faith have had the same challenge as Muslims have today, but the challenge that the Muslims face today is the most difficult of all. This challenge is not in theory, but in practice. If anyone in this world has a Holly Book in which everything is written from the beginning to the end of human life on earth, then Muslims have that Book.



ILLUSTRATION – A two-page copy of the Qur'ān – the heritage of Muslims where everything was explained to them; a book in which they were warned about the danger of an impure human mind that pollutes pure faith.

They inherit God's Book in which everything is explained to them; in which they are warned of the danger of an impure human mind, which defiles pure faith; in which they are suggested how to import a pure heart that believes, a healthy mind that thinks, and a righteous hand that acts into one whole. What happened in the meantime? Where and when the connection between a pure heart, a healthy mind and a just hand was broken in Muslims? That connection certainly existed. This connection of the Muslim heart, mind and hand was cared for by people who were also aware that God is *al-Āmir*, the One who calls for honorable deed and *al-Nāhi*, the One who deters shameful act. The difference is not in the Qur'anic message, nor in the Sunnah teaching and practice. The difference is in the background of those who read the message upside down, those who misunderstand God's commandments, and those who misapply the commandments in a way that does not connect the pure feeling of the heart with the healthy thought of the mind with the moral action of the hand.

It is in vain to invoke the pure feeling of the heart, the sound thought of the mind, and the moral action of the hand against those who invoke the Book of God and the practice of the Prophet without a sense of pure faith. Although a minority, they spread the impression that they are dominant in the faith, a faith that is neither without a pure heart, nor without a common sense nor without a righteous hand, but it is without a clear idea, which could stop the insensitivity, insanity and helplessness. It is not our intention to deal with the French poet André Breton, who gathered artists around his "**Manifesto of Surrealism**" at the beginning of the last century, calling them to "the dictates of thought, without control of reason, beyond any aesthetic or moral preoccupation," but to point out that this idea is very similar to the idea of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), who call for "the dictates of faith, without control of meaning, beyond any ethics or morals." Breton's former call for the "dictate of thought without reason and morality" has remained at the level of artistic imagination or naive folly, but the call for "the dictate of faith without reason and morality" today leaves no one indifferent and serene, especially non-Muslims. The play around the "mindless dictates of faith" is neither artistic imagination nor naive folly, but an existential challenge to which Muslims must respond with existential conviction and freedom.

Of course, by actualizing the question of the "dictates of faith" or the "faith of dictates," we consciously open one of the most difficult theological dilemmas since man has existed on earth. It is man's need to hear a voice outside of himself. This need is not an accident but an innate sense of his consciousness, as his addiction to someone who is somewhere and absolutely superior to him. This state of man's situation is a paradox because he is at the same time free and dependent on something beyond him. Indeed, this paradox confuses man the most and prevents him from realizing his true position in the world. Just as he thinks that he is absolutely free, an absolute force appears, which returns him to a state of relative freedom, but also when he thinks that his destiny is fatally dependent on someone, a rebellion against dependence on anyone appears in him. Man knows that he is not alone on earth. He is aware that he belongs to someone who created him. But he doesn't know who. In the quest to find out to whom he belongs outside and above himself, man listens to some voice from above, which is compatible with his voice from within about how he can believe, how he can think, how he can act and how he can be saved. The secret, then, is in that voice, which man hears outside himself, but also within himself; the secret is in that dictation, which man

receives with faith that it is a dictation from the one who is to lead him to success in this world and salvation in the Hereafter. Not only have different generations of peoples throughout history listened to the voice differently and received the dictation differently, but different individuals have also heard different voices from heaven. That is how it used to be. But today not only the usual heavenly voice descends to earth, nor is only authentic heavenly dictation sent from heaven. Today, voices rise from the earth to the sky as dictations, which then return to the earth, so many are confused, because they are not able to distinguish the right from wrong voices they hear from the sky, nor are they able to distinguish right from wrong dictates. They are incapable of resisting to the false voices and false dictates that are spreading across heaven and earth today. Everything is mixed in their heart and mind, so the hand becomes unjust. That is why it is necessary to return to pure natural faith, which purifies the human heart, clears the human mind and cleans the human hand of injustice.



ILLUSTRATION ~ Prophet Noah, a.s., built the ark of salvation according to the dictates of pure faith.

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Nuh, a.s., je sagradio brod spasa po diktatu čiste vjere.

There is neither a stronger dictation nor a stronger motive than the dictation and the motive of pure faith. Noah, a.s., built a ship by the dictates of pure faith; Ibrahim, a.s., was dictated by pure faith to sacrifice his son; Musa, a.s., confronted Pharaoh by the dictates of pure faith; Isa, a.s., suffered all by the dictates of pure faith; Muhammad, a.s., by the dictates of pure faith left everything in Mecca to save everyone in Medina. It is not difficult for those in charge of affirming pure faith as a dictation to defend this claim. Those who are already in faith, or are with faith in their souls as unquestionable truth, accept the dictates of pure faith as a final thing in which there is no doubt

and no discussion. In fact, this is the meaning of religious dictate: without question it is the ultimate Divine good. God is good and therefore everything God commands is good in itself. There does not have to be an immediate clear benefit or gain from the Divine commandment, but the soul must be submissive to receive and carry out the commandment – immediately. About how much a commandment is a benefit or a gain, man will know later or will never know, but he will always believe that every commandment of God is both useful and gainful for him. God created man and that is why He knows better than man what is best for him. Man is ignorant. He needs to be constantly reminded of this in order to understand that he must read and learn to know and understand where his place is in the world. If he tries to compete with God, man is loser. Not because God does not allow him to know the truth, but because in the moment of forgetting his position in relation to God, his Creator, man thinks that he is self-sufficient, as well as that the Creator hinders him on the path of knowing everything although he is not able to know even himself. It is clear that only when Man knows himself, can he know his Creator, and thus his place in the world. The Sufi, Muslim mystic, would say: *man ‘arafa nafsahū fa qad ‘arafa rabbahū* (“He who knows himself, has known his Lord”). But by his nature, man likes to know what he needs not know and what he needs not be concerned with rather than what he should know and what he must be concerned with. Most of all man must know “who and what he is” and he must be concerned with “why he is here and now”.

3. Natural Faith *Vis-à-vis* Covenant

So far, I have compared the natural faith with the dictate of faith in order to show a possible shift from the pure matter of faith (*al-īmān*) to the form of religion (*al-dīn*) of theology nay ideology. As much as it is noble in its purpose, the dictate of faith, if not properly comprehended, might be a disaster. It depends on the state of human soul, heart, mind and hand how the dictate of faith will be worked out in history.

Now, we would like to compare the natural faith with the idea of divine covenant with man or the man’s covenant with God. First, let’s say that a covenant is a pure theory of faith, just as a law is a pure theory of law. Under the term “pure theory of faith” I want to emphasize that it is necessary to define faith by removing all the elements that do not belong to pure faith, which makes faith impure. It is a methodological basis by which pure faith frees itself from foreign elements, which obscure its purity and spoil its beauty. At first glance, this seems both normal and understandable, but in history it has been neither normal nor understandable. It was normal to attribute to faith much that did not belong to it. Namely, it was normal to ascribe to faith all that came to man’s mind to emphasize himself and his thought; and it was understandable that faith justifies all so that man may rule over the world. Hence, there is a constant need to protect or cleanse the pure faith from foreign elements, which by its nature do not belong to it. This should be done theoretically, methodologically and practically in order to preserve its purity, its beauty and its sublimity, similarly as the Austrian theorist of law Hans Kelsen warned that law, as a basis for regulating interpersonal relations in society, must be cleansed of elements that do not belong to it.

Kelsen observed that during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries law lost its purity, I would say its innocence, because it methodologically blended with disciplines such as psychology, sociology, ethics, and political theory. If this is the case with the law, then what about faith, which is much more susceptible to the manipulation of human arbitrariness and abuse.¹⁷

Indeed, it is much harder to preserve the purity or independence of faith which is like a true gem and which hides itself in the deepest part of the human soul, but also sometimes reveals itself, as a false gem in the shallowest human “will to power”, than to preserve the purity or innocence of law which is born as a deepest human desire for social order, but is also violated from the shallowest human corruption and complacency. As much as faith is “pure law” (“nomocracy”), so much is the law “pure faith” (“democracy”). These two values are so interdependent that it is not possible to imagine faith without a law, nor a law without faith. That is why Kelsen’s thesis on the “pure theory of law” is interesting, just as it is his need to purify legal science from all elements, which strictly do not belong to law, is worthy of our attention. In fact, this imposes on us even more the task of purifying religious science from all elements, which strictly do not belong to the natural faith, because it becomes much more important and much more meaningful. Indeed, we believe that the Last Divine Covenant – the Qur’ān is the ultimate attempt to purify the faith from all these elements, which do not belong to it strictly, theoretically, methodologically and practically.

But it should be emphasized that a covenant precedes a law, just as a regulation precedes the final bill. A covenant is apodictic¹⁸ while a law is a casuistic regulation.¹⁹ Apodictic religious precept, as a covenant, is a commandment (*al-amr*) or prohibition (*al-nahy*) in the form of imperatives: “say”, “respect”, “keep”, “do” this and that ... and “you shall not do” or “don’t do” this and that ... Say: “God is One!” “Respect your parents!” “Stick to the rope of God!” “Do good to others!” But also: “You shall not kill!” “You shall not steal!” “You shall not fall apart!” “You shall not spoil!” These negative imperatives are much stronger in apodictic law than positive ones, because the implications indicate man’s natural tendency to do what he must not do, i.e., “kill,” “steal,” “lie,” “be corrupt,” and so on. This is why man is warned not to do it even though it is in his nature because it is illegal. Thus, apodictic law is an eternal covenant of God about which there is no debate. It has no expiration date. Apodictic law is the eternal commandment of God. Apodictic law is not an applied law, but an unconditional and unaltered covenant from God to man, as well as man’s vow to God that he has received a message, which should always be present in his mind and consciousness. On the other hand, casuistic law is an applied law of God, derived from God’s apodictic law, which is usually in the form of a conditional: “if ...” this *protasis* occurs, “then ...” it will be

¹⁷ Kelsen, Hans: *Pure Theory of Law*. University of California Press, 1967.

¹⁸ *Apodictic* (Gre. *apodeiktikos evidentiary*), in ordinary speech: resolute, determined, sure; in logic *apodictic judgment*: in Aristotle the evidentiary judgment as opposed to a problematic one. In Immanuel Kant mathematical axioms are apodictic because they are based on a priori awareness of their necessity.

¹⁹ *Casuistic* (lat. *casus*: fall case). Casuist law arises as a right for certain needs of an individual or society in the light of God’s apodictic law. It is an inductive law on a case-by-case basis on the basis of which a legal norm is adopted, and not a deductive law, where legal norms are already known and serve to adopt the necessary legal sub-norms on the basis of them.

that *apoptosis*. Casuistic law is closest to inductive or Anglo-Saxon law, which is derived from specific life cases as opposed to deductive or Roman law, which is mainly based on established legal axioms, from which other legal sub-norms can be derived as needed. This deductive or inductive methodology in law is present in *Shari'ah* law in such a way that the Qur'ān contains both an apodictic and a casuistic covenant or legal narrative.



ILLUSTRATION ~ The seal of God in the soul of man is indelible, just as the seal of God in the book of God is indisputable. Excerpt from the Qur'an, Persia, 10-11. century, Dallas Museum of Art.

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Pečat Božiji u duši čovjeka je neizbrisiv, kao što je neosporan i pečat Božiji u knjizi Božijoj. Odlomak iz Kur'ana, Perzija, 10.-11. stoljeće, Dallas Museum of Art.

In fact, the exegetical discipline of *asbāb al-nuzūl* (the cause-and-effect reason for God's revelation of certain verses) represents one of the best ways to understand the Qur'ānic-votive or Qur'ānic-legal message both in terms of apodictic-deductive and in terms of the casuistic-inductive method, which makes it easier for the human mind to comprehend the difference between the eternal and the transient, between the unchangeable and the changeable, between the living and the non-living, between the reasonable and the unreasonable ideas and practices in the life of man who took a vow to God that he will be aware of God's presence as he is aware of himself, for without self-awareness, man cannot be aware of God. In fact, everything that "is" in this transient world makes sense to man as much as man is aware of it. God lives and acts regardless of whether man has an awareness of God, but man's life and man's actions have no meaning if there is no man's awareness of God. Man knows this, but sometimes he does not admit it while here in this transient world. But ultimately this recognition awaits him in the Hereafter.

In the Holy Qur'ān the word *mīthāq* ("covenant") is mentioned 25 times. Here is an example of *mīthāq*, a covenant made by God Almighty with the sons of Isrā'īl, a covenant transmitted by the Qur'ān from the Torah (the "Old Testament"). This covenant is valid for all times as well as for the entire humanity: – *And when we took from the sons of Isrā'īl vow: (1) that you will worship no one but God, the One and Only God; (2) that you will be benefactors to your parents, (3) that you will be benefactors to your relatives; (4) that you will be benefactors to orphans; (5) that you will be benefactors to the poor; (6) that you will speak kind words to people; (7) that you will maintain a connection with God through prayer (ṣalāh); (8) and that you will set aside from your property for the common good (zakāh). But you have renounced that vow, except for one minority.* ²⁰

Of course, each of these eight covenant norms, which God Almighty prescribed to the sons of Isrā'īl in the Old Testament ("Tawrāt") and which God Almighty repeats in the Last Testament ("Qur'ān"), represents the culmination of apodictic-deductive law and morality. This eternal covenant contains a complete worldview, as a general view of the world. This worldview encompasses the highest principles of life. One who consciously accepts these votive principles may have a certain image of the world, which may be in line with M. Heidegger's thought that "the worldview is a pre-ontological shaping of the image of the world" or the innate power to have a picture of the world, a picture that allows him to decide on the basis of it the essential questions of the meaning and significance of the world. Because the understanding of faith and morals is derived from the worldview, ideals, life principles from which political, ethical, aesthetic, ecological and other beliefs are derived. The thought and belief that God is One as a votive norm obliges man to freedom from slavery to false gods, who are all around him in one false world. Therefore, freedom is not a choice, but a votive mandate for man to be what he is in relation to God the Highest, and that is that he must accept God's gift of freedom as the highest votive value. That is why this first votive norm is a condition of all other votive norms. For, he who is aware of the One and Only God, is aware of his obligation to parents, relatives, orphans and the poor ... is aware of the value of the beautiful word ...

²⁰ Qur'ān, 2:83.

is aware that maintaining a relationship with the Creator is the surest way to be mentally healthy and spiritually rich ... is aware that working for the common good is a value, which makes a person happy...

Our argument here is obvious, namely, that there are two seals of the covenant of faith between God and man, man and God. One is imprinted in the soul of man, and the other is written in God's book for man. God Almighty imprinted both seals with his "hand".²¹ Man is bound by these two votive seals of pure faith, whether he is aware of them or not, and whether he fulfills them conscientiously and responsibly. Man has the God-given gift of the mind, which has the power to read the vow of faith in his soul; man has a God-given intelligence, which has the power to understand the book of God. If man did not have the gift of the mind, then the vow of faith in his soul with the seal of God would make no sense. Likewise, if man did not have the gift of intelligence, then the vow of faith in God's book would have no purpose. The seal of God in the soul of man is indelible, just as the seal of God in the book of God is undeniable. The secret of pure natural faith (*al-īmān*) is in the Divine touch of the human soul to recognize in itself the Divine votive gift of formal and normative religion (*al-dīn*); the secret of pure faith is in the Divine inspiration of the mind to recognize in the Book of God the Divine votive grace of divine law as a formal and normative may of human individual and societal life.

4. Deviation from Pure Natural Faith

It is hard to determine precisely when and how the deviation from the pure natural faith occurs. However, it might be assumed that it starts when the dictate of faith is being abused and the covenant of faith is being broken. But who is the judge to decide that someone has abused the dictate of faith and has broken the covenant of faith? We are told that God Almighty is the only judge in these matters in the Hereafter so that we humans should not dispute with each other here and now because it could lead us to hostility against each other. We should be tolerant with each other while dialoging with each other. We should avoid passing harsh judgements on each other in matters of faith, belief and religion. Because no one is pleased to be cursed or excommunicated from his/her faith community no matter what he/she sin might be. Being aware of this physiology of man, Sheikh al-Islam Mustāfa Ṣabrī issued this interesting fatwa of his time:²²

One who actually drinks wine and commits *al-zinā* (adultery) is not considered as to be a *kāfir* (infidel) as long as he believes that it is *ḥarām* (forbidden). The perpetrator of this act is only a sinner (*fāsiq*) but not *kāfir*, while

²¹ This phrase "God's hand" must not be taken literally, but must be understood metaphorically, as interpreted by Muslim rationalist, such as Fakhruddin al-Rāzī, in the sense that it is the notion of "God's power" and by no means "God's hand" as the "bodily organ".

²² Mustafa Sabri Efendi (1869-1954) was one of the last Sheikh al-Islam in the Ottoman Empire. He was repeatedly appointed to the position of Sheikhu-l-Islam for several months and removed during 1919 and 1920. He was eventually exiled to Egypt, where he spent the rest of his life. He died in Egypt, where he was buried. The last, 131st in a row, Sheikh al-Islam in the Ottoman Empire was the Honorable Mehmet Nuri Efendi from 1920 to 1922, when the official institution of Sheikh al-Islam was definitively abolished. In Bosnia, this institution was replaced by the institution of Rais-l-ulama or the Grand Mufti of Bosnia in 1882.

the one who does not actually drink wine nor does he commit adultery, but believes that these acts are *ḥalāl* (permissible), i.e. he believes that drinking alcohol and adultery are not sins is considered to be an infidel (*kāfir*).²³

Regardless of the specific reason, this Ṣabrī-effendi fatwa is the most drastic expression of the theological dilemmas faced by the Muslim community from the very beginning, i.e., the community of Muslim '*ulamā*'/scholars or theologians. In fact, it all began with the assassination of the third rightful caliph, 'Uthmān bin 'Affān (644–656). After that, the debate over who was, in fact, a “true or pure Muslim” never ended. The same question is now as it was then: “what is pure faith?”; “where is pure faith hidden?”; “how is pure faith proven and shown?”; “who is competent or authorized to assess the quality of pure faith?”; “is pure faith the same as pure deed, or is pure faith separate from pure deed – morality?”; “Does pure faith increase or decrease?”

The first to come out with an answer to these difficult questions were the Kharijites. The Kharijites (ar. *Khawārij*, sing. *Kharījī*) were the first recognizable rebellious sect in Islam. Their identity is imposed at a time when the Muslim '*ulamā*' have tried to define a state in which a Muslim can sometimes deviate from the ideal norms of Islam, but still retain the right to be called a “Muslim”. It is on this issue that the Kharijites had an extremely exclusive view in the sense that one who commits a grave or mortal sin has departed from pure faith (*al-imān*) and formal religion (*al-dīn*). He is an apostate (*al-murtadd*) from pure faith. Therefore, he deserves the death penalty. This exclusive and unsustainable attitude of the Kharijites was the reason for the wise and responsible Muslim '*ulamā*'/scholars to stand up in defense of the “realistic faith” in terms of preserving the “realistic Muslim community” from extreme Kharijites, whose views began to call into question the entire Muslim community and society. That is why they were given the name “khawārij”, which means those who have defected from the mainstream community (*al-sawād al-a'azam*).

Thanks to the early conscientious Muslim '*ulamā*'/scholars, the Kharijites were theoretically or apologetically defeated quickly, but the remains of their latent militant attitudes had not disappeared. They had been threatening the peace and security of the mainstream Muslim community until the end of the eighth century AD. Historically, the Kharijites have remained only as a bad example to the orthodox Muslim '*ulamā*'/scholars in their argument for “realistic faith,” which does not resort to *takfīr*, an utter denial of the faith of others. The '*ulamā*' used an argument against *takfīr* the *ḥadīth*, narrative, of the Prophet Muhammad, a.s, who said: “If one denies the faith to his brother, then one of them is an infidel”. (*Idhā kaffara al-rajulu akhāhu fa qad bā'a bihā ahaduhumā*).²⁴

The most challenging response to this drastic Kharijite extremism came from the Murj'ites (ar. *Murdj'iah*). The Murj'ites are also one of the early sects in Islam, who rebelled against the Kharijites by proclaiming their theological teaching on sin, which is diametrically opposed to the Kharijite, in the sense that they delay the

²³ See: Ṣabrī, Muṣṭafa: *Mawqif al-'aqli wa al-'ilmi wa al-'ālimi min rabb al-'ālamīn wa 'ibādhi al-mursalīn*. al-Maktaba al-aṣriyyah, Beirut, 2018, p. 16.

²⁴ *Ḥadīth* by Muslim.

judgment of sin while leaving it to God's judgment on the Day of Judgment because God is only competent to judge people about their inner faith and their outer behavior. This Murj'ite theological doctrine was specially in use between the assassination of Caliph 'Uthmān bin 'Affān and the assassination of the fourth rightful Caliph 'Alī bin Abū Ṭālib (656-661). Consequently, the Murj'ite doctrine played a crucial role in the maintenance of the Umayyad dynasty, established in Damascus by Mu'āwiya ibn Abī Sufyān (661-680). Mu'āwiya, therefore, introduced the dynasty into the institution of the *caliphate*, which has never again returned to its original purpose and function, by authorizing his son Yazīd bin Mu'āwiya (680-683) to succeed him on the merits of family affiliation, not on the merits of religious and moral consistency. This could not go unnoticed by Muslim '*ulamā*'/scholars, who saw this as a challenge to explain the relationship between pure faith (*al-īmān*) and formal religion (*al-islām* or *al-dīn*) in the theory of faith and the practice of morality.



ILLUSTRATION ~ A debate among Muslim *ulema*/scholars over the relationship between pure faith (*al-īmān*) and formal religion (*al-islām* or *al-dīn*).

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Rasprava muslimanske *uleme*/učenjaka oko odnosa između čiste vjere (*al-īmān*) i formalne religije (*al-islām* ili *al-dīn*).

The Kharijites, as we have seen, had been defeated, while the Murj'ites were neither fully accepted nor completely rejected. Furthermore, while the Kharijite doctrine threatened the physical existence of Muslim society, the Murj'ite doctrine relativized the essence of the Muslim system of moral thought and practice. It can be said that Murj'ites had an amoral attitude towards public morality, in the sense that they avoided making moral judgments about human behavior.²⁵ It is this premise that the Murj'ites have derived their conclusion: "pure faith" has nothing to do

²⁵ In ethics, as the science of morality, we have terms: "moral", "immoral", and "amoral". "Moral" term indicates to a acceptable standpoint of what is good, just, and beautiful act; contrary to that is the term "immorality" as an unacceptable bad, unjust and ugly act. "Amoral" term, on the other hand, is an act about which there is no moral judgment. Thus, the Murj'ites can be said to have

with “good deed,” namely, that “pure faith” (*al-īmān*) is not the same as formal religion “*al-islām*”, which means that *al-īmān* has its independent essence in relation to *al-islām*, i.e. faith and practice are two different concepts and thus faith and morality are separate entities. Hence, the Murj’ite view that “pure faith” does not increase or decrease under the influence of “good deed,” or “bad deeds”, but pure faith is the primordial value with which man is born, lives and dies provided man is aware of it in his heart. He does not necessarily confirm this by his work.

Thus, the *fatwa* of the one of the last Ottoman Sheikh al-Islam Muṣṭafa Ṣabrī Effendi was adopted in the spirit of the Murj’ite doctrine that “pure faith” is not essential part of “good deed”, or “bad deed”. However, one must be aware of a bad deed to be sinful *ḥarām* (forbidden) or not. What is happening in the Muslim world today it can be seen in the context of these two conflicting moral attitudes, the Kharijite and the Murj’ite, which today’s Muslim ‘*ulamā*’/scholars seek to transcend by offering the idea of *Al-Wasaṭiyyah*, the middle inclusive ground or an integral path. This is primarily important for Muslims who live in plural mixed communities and societies both in the West and in the East.

The current moral crisis in the world is largely the result of the triumphant return of formal religion or theology to the world stage after it was, more than a century ago, thrown to the end of its inability to meet the demands of the times. It sounds paradoxical, doesn’t it? Was not the return of religion from atheistic-communist “prison” at the same time the return of religion to moral “freedom” to choose good? Unfortunately, it is not. Contemporary religious or theological thought has not only morally stunted, but has become morally unsustainable because, in a moral sense, it loses the purpose of its existence. Today’s formal or instructive religious thought is not in dialogue with the opposite non-religious views, which would help it to see itself in a mirror. Indeed, formal religion today is not in dialogue with anyone. Today, from a moral point of view, formal religion is in conflict with everyone except with those who need its political and amoral support. Why did the critics of religious thought withdraw? We need them today more than ever to cleanse the pure faith of impure religious thought, which makes compromises at the expense of moral conscience. Religion is in crisis today not because it does not exist, but because it exists in the wrong way and in the wrong place. In the same way as before, the purification of religious or theological thought is not possible from the outside but from within, provided that those within the formal religious or theological circle recognize the danger from the outside. For now, those who are inside have no fear, and those who are outside have neither knowledge nor courage to deal with religious issues. But pure natural faith must speak out again, because the human soul cannot tolerate Lucifer’s deception for long. The first condition for a real cure is the recognition that there is a disease. Therefore, let us admit: religious or theological thought is in crisis because the world has been ruled by a moral crisis, which comes as a result of using pure natural faith for the needs of an unclean conscience.

Concluding this article, we witness the return of the Taliban to Kabul in Afghanistan was announced. Everyone was surprised even the Taliban themselves by their swift victory after twenty years of denial and condemnation by the world because of the 11th September of 2001. The twenty years of war against the alleged Taliban terror ended by

advocated an “amoral” attitude towards public morality, which is very close to the current state of moral and civilizational state of mind in the world.

a coming back of the Taliban to the power of the Afghan state in Central Asia. Now, the world is in great fear of the Taliban's rule although no one knows yet what their coming to power means. But one thing is certain, their arrival means the abolition of democracy in Afghanistan. This is certainly the biggest and most appealing challenge not only for Muslims, but for the whole world – the Taliban abolishing or redefining “democracy” as a manner of state crafting. The main question for Muslims now is: what are the foundations and obstacles to democracy in Islamic political thought? The answer to this question can be obtained from a focus on two politically relevant Islamic concepts: *shūra* (consultation) and *bay'ah* (a conditional oath of allegiance given to a new ruler). These two concepts of power are in the Taliban option. The Taliban believe that these two concepts can be reinterpreted to constitute the theoretical basis of electoral democracy in Islam. It will be interesting to hear the Taliban's anti-democratic arguments in Islamic political thought in favor of “divine sovereignty”. Was it not, after all, also in Christian political theology in Europe, not so long ago, that the dominant thesis was of “divine sovereignty,” according to which God is the supreme authority and that all things are under God's control? God is “the sovereign Lord of all by the indisputable right [of] the creator ... the owner and possessor of heaven and earth”.



ILLUSTRATION ~ Although Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid promised on 17 August 2021 that the Taliban would honour women's rights within Islamic law, violence against women continues. No good future for Afghan women under the Taliban.
(Sanchita Bhattacharya, EastAsiaForum, 4 September 2021.).

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Iako je glasnogovornik talibana Zabihullah Mudžahid obećao 17. augusta 2021. da će talibani poštovati prava žena u okviru islamskog zakona, nasilje nad ženama se nastavlja. Nema dobre budućnosti za afganistanske žene pod Talibanima.
(Sanchita Bhattacharya, EastAsiaForum, 4. septembar 2021.).

I believe that Christians, not only in Europe but around the world, will be able to remain indifferent to this Taliban challenge of taking away relative sovereignty over human life from man and surrendering it to the absolute

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sovereignty of God, to whom it belongs. Of course, it will be interesting to listen to a discussion on this eternal moral and political topic of who is “the owner and possessor of heaven and earth,” and who is the owner and possessor of human life on earth – God or man. The arrival or return of the Taliban may provide a reason for this debate – no one knows the solution yet. It is now a matter of more heart than mind. The human mind said everything it had. We are left only with the feelings of the heart, the feelings which are the most hidden and mysterious.

Furthermore, many Afghans are afraid of the Taliban *Sharī'ah* law. However, we still don't know what kind of *Sharī'ah* the Taliban are referring to. But we know how the Taliban practiced *Sharī'ah* twenty years ago when they were in power. Such application of *Sharī'ah* is unacceptable according to the letter and spirit of *Sharī'ah* itself. Thus, the infamous Taliban *Sharī'ah* from the past was anti-*Sharī'ah*, which means that the authentic *Sharī'ah* has five fundamental unquestionable norms for all times and all places. These norms are: 1) the right of every man to life (*al-nafs*); 2) the right of every man to religion (*al-dīn*); 3) the right of every man to liberty (*al-'aql*); 4) the right of every man to property (*al-māl*); and 5) the right of every man to honor (*al-'ird*). This is the basic meaning of *Sharī'ah* that is defined by great Muslim minds in the freedom of their spirit and in a state of their political and military power, as their right and moral duty to protect minority communities in their majority Muslim environment. One who ignores or denies that meaning of *Sharī'ah*, works against *Sharī'ah*, including banning female children from schooling. Apparently, the Taliban have given up on that ban, but they have not yet given up on interfering in women's lives in an unacceptable way. I agree, the West is not a model of how women should be dressed, but neither is the model of the “Taliban” *niqāb*, where a woman's personality is covered up. Isn't the *hijāb* or *maḥram* a model, where a woman covers her head but reveals her face as her noble personality? After all, what is in someone's head is much more important than what is outside on someone's head. The Qur'ānic teaching is clear: “Clothes of a moral character in piety are the best.”



ILLUSTRATION ~ What does their future hold? AFP
ILUSTRACIJA ~ Što nosi njihova budućnost?