

## Author's Foreword

### In the name of God the All-merciful, the Compassionate

I have been requested by some of our great scholars, a large number of our students and other believers to follow the guidance and example of the great scholars before us, in investigating a subject whose importance grows day by day. Earlier scholars used to append to their treatises either a brief or detailed introduction in proof of the existence of the Creator and the basic fundamentals of religion.

This was because any scientific study is only an expression of personal reasoning (*ijtihad*), attempting to comprehend the precepts of the sacred Islamic law (*shari'ah*) with which God the Exalted sent the Seal of the Prophets as a mercy to humankind. [1](#)

This expression, moreover, depends fully on the acceptance of these fundamentals: faith in God, the Revealer, the Prophet as Messenger and the message with which he was sent. These together constitute the basis and content of any scientific study, as well as the reason for humanity's need for it.

I complied with this request in the belief that therein, is God's pleasure, and because the need it would fulfill is great indeed. Nonetheless, I was faced with the following question. In what style should I write this introduction so that it should have the same degree of simplicity and clarity as the work for which it was originally prepared, that is, my book *al-Fatawa al-wadihah* (Clear Legal Opinions)?

I also wished the .book to be accessible to anyone capable of understanding the legal ordinances contained in the *fatawa*. I discerned, however, a basic difference between this introduction and the book.

Legal *fatwas* are simply the results of analogical reasoning (*ijtihad*) and deduction (*istinbat*) without the need for proof or analysis, while mere presentation in such an introduction would not suffice. It is imperative, therefore, to resort to verification (*istidlal*) because sacred law demands persuasion and conviction with regard to the fundamentals of religion.

The purpose of such an introduction must be the firm establishment of the fundamentals of, religion and its basic principles. This is possible only through argument, yet argument as well has its own., levels. Each level, even the simplest and most obvious, must be completely persuasive. Had human sentiment

(*wijdan*) been truly free, the simplest means of proof of the existence of the wise Creator would have sufficed. *Were they created out of nothing, or are they the creators ?*<sup>2</sup>

For the last two centuries, modern thought has not allowed human sentiment to remain liberated and pure. Hence the need for proof was made all the more imperative for those who have obtained some knowledge of modern thought and its special methods of investigation, in order for those gaps to be filled which simple obvious proofs would have filled had human sentiment been left unfettered.

I had before me two choices: the first was to write for those who still live with a free sentiment, untouched by the demands of modern thought, and thus require only simple arguments.

In that case, the idiom would be clear to the readers of the entire work, that is, *al-Fatawa al-wadihah* and the introduction to it. The second choice was to write for those who have come into contact with modern thought and have, to a greater or lesser degree, accepted its framework and attitudes with regard to theology. I decided that the second choice was more suitable.

Nevertheless, I endeavoured to be generally clear in what I wrote, bearing in mind the average university student as well as the reader of higher educational achievements. I have, as much as possible, avoided complicated terminology and the language of mathematics. I also avoided complex expositions. At the same time, I took into consideration the capacity for comprehension and retention of the more serious student, in that I have presented points of special significance with brevity, and have referred him to other of my works for greater depth, such as *The Logical Principles of Induction (al-Usus al-mantiqiyah li-istiqrā')*.

We likewise endeavoured to enable the less accomplished reader to find in the parts of the introduction a good source of clear ideas and convincing evidence. The first step in the scientific inductive argument for the existence of the Creator may be considered in itself sufficient on a general level. We shall first discuss the Revealer, then the messenger and finally the message. Success comes from God; on Him I rely and to Him I turn for help.

<sup>1</sup>. See Qur'an, 22:107. (Translator's footnote)

<sup>2</sup>. Qur'an, 52:35. All Qur'anic translations are those of the translator.

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