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Towards an Inclusive and Integrative Qur'anic World View (QWV)

Professor Muhammad Alhasan Biraima

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Defining The Concept Of A World View

- ❖ A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) that we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being.

The Main Questions Of A World View

1. What is prime reality—the really real?
 2. What is the nature of external reality- the world around us?
 3. What is a human being?
 4. What happens to a person at death and after death?
 5. Why is it possible to know anything at all?
 6. How do we know what is right and wrong?
 7. What is the meaning of human history?
- ❖ Answering these questions is a process of theorizing.

The Downfall Of The Modern Scientific World View

- ❖ International Summit on Post-materialist science, spirituality and society (February 7-9, 2014)- *The Manifesto:*
 1. The modern scientific worldview is predominantly predicated on assumptions that are closely associated with classical physics. *Materialism*—the idea that matter is the only reality—is one of these assumptions. A related assumption is *reductionism*, the notion that complex things can be understood by reducing them to the interactions of their parts, or to simpler or more fundamental things such as tiny material particles.

2. During the 19th century, these assumptions narrowed, turned into dogmas, and coalesced into an ideological belief system that came to be known as “*scientific materialism*”. This belief system implies that the mind is nothing but the physical activity of the brain, and that our thoughts cannot have any effect upon our brains and bodies, our actions, and the physical world.

3. The ideology of scientific materialism became dominant in academia during the 20th century. So dominant that a majority of scientists started to believe that it was based on established empirical evidence, and represented the only rational view of the world.
4. Scientific methods based upon materialistic philosophy have been highly successful in not only increasing our understanding of nature but also in bringing greater control and freedom through advances in technology.

5. However, the nearly absolute dominance of materialism in the academic world has seriously constricted the sciences and hampered the development of the scientific study of mind and spirituality. Faith in this ideology, as an exclusive explanatory framework for reality, has compelled scientists to neglect the subjective dimension of human experience. This has led to a severely distorted and impoverished understanding of ourselves and our place in nature.

6. Science is first and foremost a non-dogmatic, open-minded method of acquiring knowledge about nature through the observation, experimental investigation, and theoretical explanation of phenomena. Its methodology is not synonymous with materialism and should not be committed to any particular beliefs, dogmas, or ideologies.

7. At the end of the nineteenth century, physicists discovered empirical phenomena that could not be explained by classical physics. This led to the development, during the 1920s and early 1930s, of a revolutionary new branch of physics called quantum mechanics (QM). QM has questioned the material foundations of the world by showing that atoms and subatomic particles are not really solid objects—they do not exist with certainty at definite spatial locations and definite times. Most importantly, QM explicitly introduced the mind into its basic conceptual structure since it was found that particles being observed and the observer—the physicist and the method used for observation—are linked. The physical world is no longer the primary or sole component of reality, and that it cannot be fully understood without making reference to the mind.

8. Psychological studies have shown that conscious mental activity can causally influence behavior, and that the explanatory and predictive value of agentic factors (e.g. beliefs, goals, desires and expectations) is very high. Moreover, research in psychoneuro immunology indicates that our thoughts and emotions can markedly affect the activity of the physiological systems (e.g., immune, endocrine, cardiovascular) connected to the brain. In other respects, neuroimaging studies of emotional self-regulation, psychotherapy, and the placebo effect demonstrate that mental events significantly influence the activity of the brain.

9. Studies of the so-called "*psi phenomena*" indicate that we can sometimes receive meaningful information without the use of ordinary senses, and in ways that transcend the habitual space and time constraints. Furthermore, psi research demonstrates that we can mentally influence— at a distance—physical devices and living organisms. Psi research also shows that distant minds may behave in ways that are *nonlocally* correlated, i.e. the correlations between distant minds are hypothesized to be *unmediated* (they are not linked to any known energetic signal), *unmitigated* (they do not degrade with increasing distance), and *immediate* (they appear to be simultaneous). These events are so common that they cannot be viewed as anomalous nor as exceptions to natural laws, but as indications of the need for a broader explanatory framework that cannot be predicated exclusively on materialism.

10. Conscious mental activity can be experienced in clinical death during a cardiac arrest (this is what has been called a "*near-death experience*" [NDE]). Some near-death experiencers have reported veridical out-of-body perceptions (i.e. perceptions that can be proven to coincide with reality) that occurred during cardiac arrest. NDErs also report profound spiritual experiences during NDEs triggered by cardiac arrest. It is noteworthy that the electrical activity of the brain ceases within a few seconds following a cardiac arrest.

11. Controlled laboratory experiments have documented that skilled research mediums (people who claim that they can communicate with the minds of people who have physically died) can sometimes obtain highly accurate information about deceased individuals. This further supports the conclusion that mind can exist separate from the brain.

12. Some materialistically inclined scientists and philosophers refuse to acknowledge these phenomena because they are not consistent with their exclusive conception of the world. Rejection of post-materialist investigation of nature or refusal to publish strong science findings supporting a post-materialist framework are antithetical to the true spirit of scientific inquiry, which is that empirical data must always be adequately dealt with. Data which do not fit favored theories and beliefs cannot be dismissed a priori. Such dismissal is the realm of ideology, not science.

- 13.** It is important to realize that psi phenomena, NDEs in cardiac arrest, and replicable evidence from credible research mediums, appear anomalous only when seen through the lens of materialism.
- 14.** Moreover, materialist theories fail to elucidate how brain could generate the mind, and they are unable to account for the empirical evidence alluded to in this manifesto. This failure tells us that it is now time to free ourselves from the shackles and blinders of the old materialist ideology, to enlarge our concept of the natural world, and to embrace a post-materialist paradigm.

15. According to the post-materialist paradigm:

- a)** Mind represents an aspect of reality as primordial as the physical world. Mind is fundamental in the universe, i.e. it cannot be derived from matter and reduced to anything more basic.
- b)** There is a deep interconnectedness between mind and the physical world.
- c)** Mind (will/intention) can influence the state of the physical world, and operate in a nonlocal (or extended) fashion, i.e. it is not confined to specific points in space, such as brains and bodies, nor to specific points in time, such as the present. Since the mind may nonlocally influence the physical world, the intentions, emotions, and desires of an experimenter may not be completely isolated from experimental outcomes, even in controlled and blinded experimental designs.

- d)** Minds are apparently unbounded, and may unite in ways suggesting a unitary, One Mind that includes all individual, single minds.
- e)** NDEs in cardiac arrest suggest that the brain acts as a transceiver of mental activity, i.e. the mind can work through the brain, but is not produced by it. NDEs occurring in cardiac arrest, coupled with evidence from research mediums, further suggest the survival of consciousness, following bodily death, and the existence of other levels of reality that are non-physical.
- f)** Scientists should not be afraid to investigate spirituality and spiritual experiences since they represent a central aspect of human existence.

16. Post-materialist science does not reject the empirical observations and great value of scientific achievements realized up until now. It seeks to expand the human capacity to better understand the wonders of nature, and in the process rediscover the importance of mind and spirit as being part of the core fabric of the universe. *Post materialism is inclusive of matter, which is seen as a basic constituent of the universe.*

17. The post-materialist paradigm has far-reaching implications. It fundamentally alters the vision we have of ourselves, giving us back our dignity and power, as humans and as scientists. This paradigm fosters positive values such as compassion, respect, and peace. By emphasizing a deep connection between ourselves and nature at large, the post-materialist paradigm also promotes environmental awareness and the preservation of our biosphere. In addition, it is not new, but only forgotten for four hundred years, that a lived transmateral understanding may be the cornerstone of health and wellness, as it has been held and preserved in ancient mind-body-spirit practices, religious traditions, and contemplative approaches.

18. The shift from materialist science to post-materialist science may be of vital importance to the evolution of the human civilization. It may be even more pivotal than the transition from geo-centrism to heliocentrism.

A Qur`anic World View (QWV) For A Postmaterialist Science

1. The Composition of the Religion of Islam (*The Five Universals*)

- ❖ To be derived chronologically from the following verse:

﴿لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ﴾ (آل عمران)

(Certainly did Allah confer [great] favor upon the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from themselves, reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom, although they had been before in manifest error).

1. The stock of revealed knowledge (علم) about Allah (SWT) and about His creation,
2. “Iman” and the ensuing purification of the self,
3. The stock of practical prophetic knowledge (السنة القولية) about life on earth,
4. Action (good deeds) based on the stock of practical revealed knowledge (السنة العملية).

➤ What is the fundamental domain of good deeds?

﴿إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَّهَا لِنَبْلُوَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا﴾ (الكهف، 7)

(Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed- Kahf; 7).

➤ What is it on the earth that Allah (SWT) made it “adornment” to test man for good deeds?

﴿الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا﴾ (الكهف)

(Wealth and children are [but] adornment of the worldly life. But the enduring good deeds are better to your Lord for reward and better for [one's] hope- 46).

- ❖ Thus “*Wealth*” and “*Children*” are the fundamental entities, both for the sustenance of human life and as an allurement to test mankind for good deeds.
- ❖ From the above deductive steps we derive the *Five Universals* of Islam, with the “*Self*” mediating the *consciousness* domain (K, I) and the *action* domain (W, C):
 1. “Knowledge” (K)
 2. “Iman” (I)
 3. “Self” (S)
 4. “Wealth” (W)
 5. “Children” (C)

2- The Systemic Relationship Between The Five Universals Of Islam:

- ❖ The five universals (K, I, S, W, C) are not independent of each other, but causally related, with “*Iman*” as the primary intended goal to be preserved by dynamically controlling the systemic interaction of the other four entities. They have a systemic interactive relationship that results in the creation of the Islamic (*Tawhidi*) social system as an empirical reality (إقامة الدين). This systemic relationship is also the core of the Tawhidi Worldview, which is a conceptual subsystem of the Qur`anic Worldview as we will see below.

3- QWV For A Postmaterialist science (A Schematic Model)

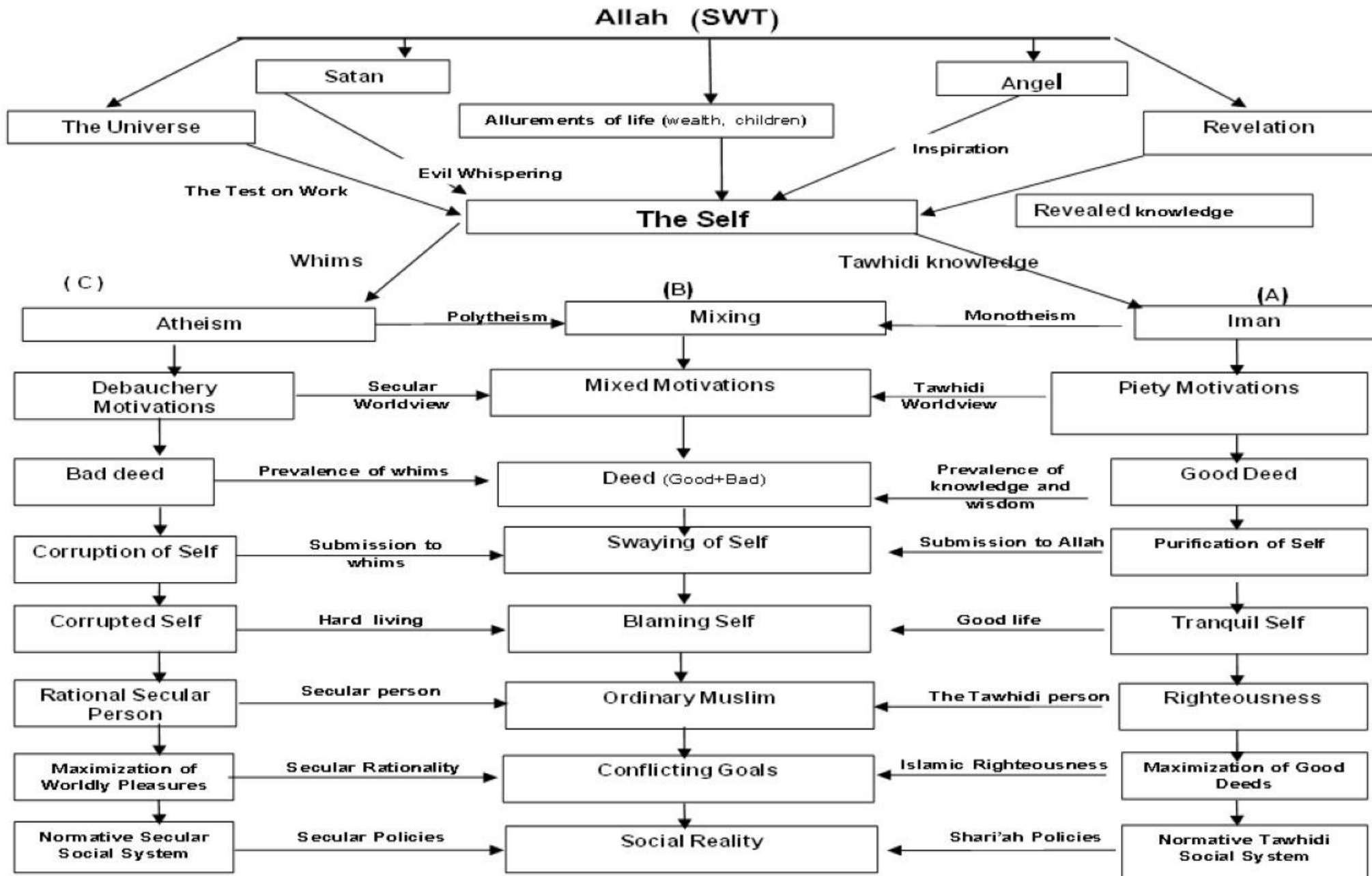
❖ Fig-1 depicts the Qur`anic world view (QWV), theoretically derived by the author from the holy Qur`an (*available on demand*).

Notice:

Firstly, the decisive role of the *Five Universals of Islam* (K, I, S, W, C) and their interactions (*social systems*) in the determination of the (QWV);

Secondly, the central role of the human “*Self*”, with its qualities of “*transgression*” and “*piety*” in dividing the QWV into two sub-worldviews, the *Tawhidi* Worldview (column A) and the *Secular* Worldview (column B);

A Qur'anic Worldview



Thirdly, the fundamental role of the universal “*Knowledge*” in the *differentiation* between the Tawhidi and the Secular worldview. The first is *Tawhid-based* and *knowledge-driven*, the second is *worldly pleasures-based* and *whims-driven*;

Fourthly, the decisive role of “*Integration*” of knowledge in QWV. This can be seen from the convergence of multi-sources of knowledge {Allah (Angels, Qur`an, Universe, Earthly Realities)} on the “*Self*”, and the emergence of Tawhidi knowledge as a cognitive output resulting from ontological and epistemological integration of knowledge derived from these sources.

❖ The following figures depict the emergent social subsystems of QWV.

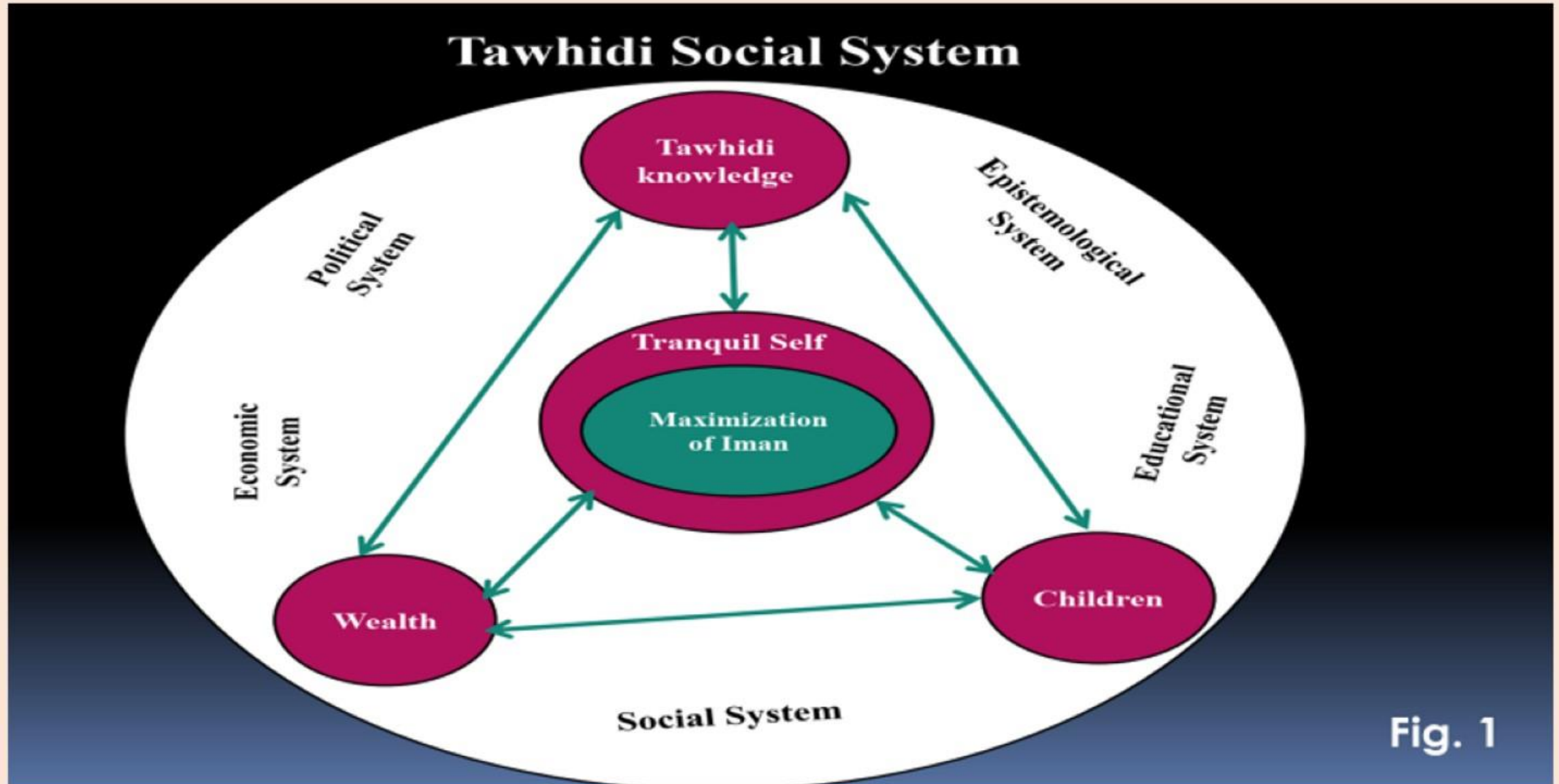
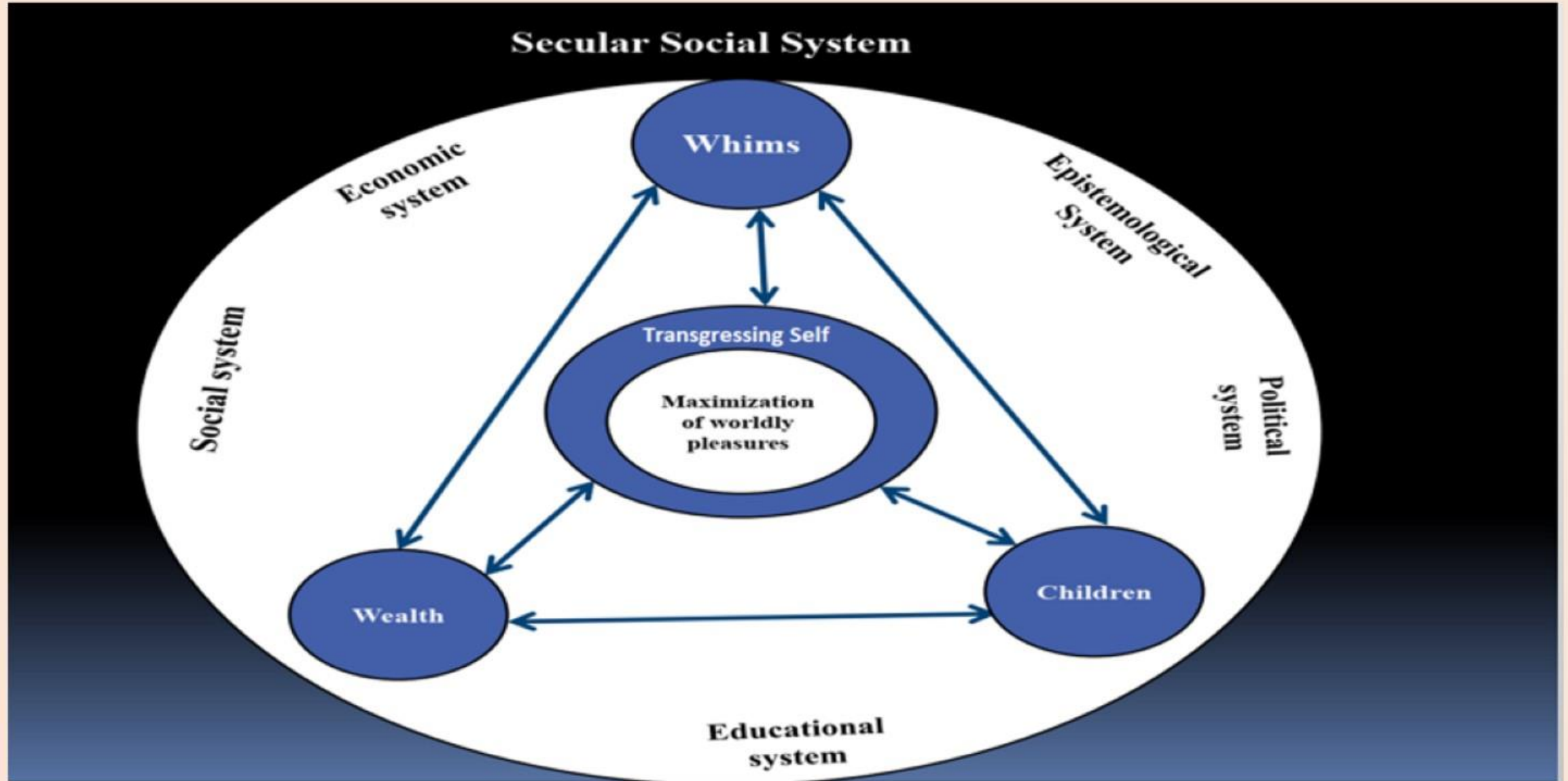


Fig. 1

Fig-3



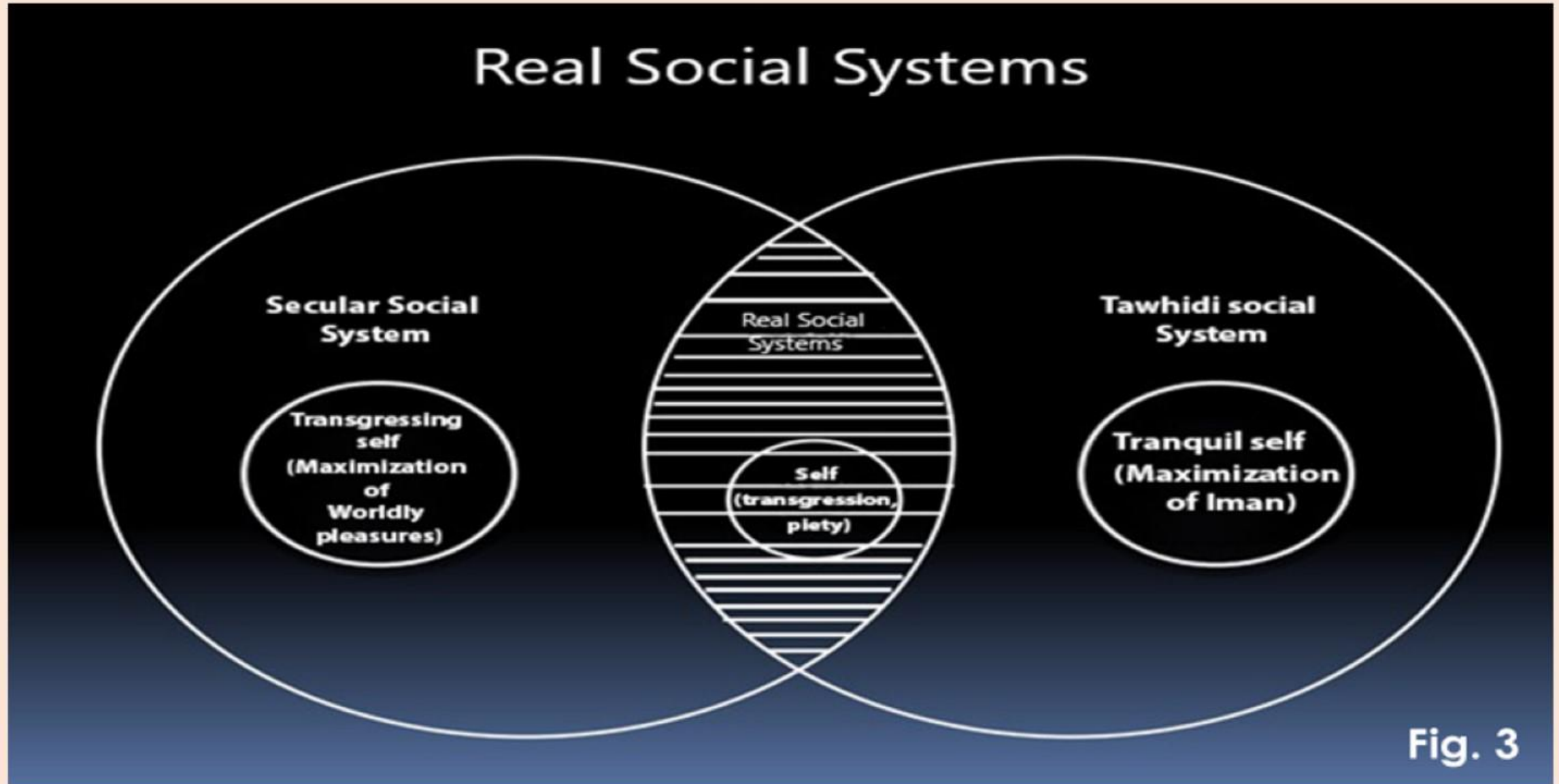


Fig. 3

❖ The QWV implies the following types of knowledge:

- 1- Knowledge about Knowledge,
- 2- Knowledge about Allah (SWT),
- 3- Knowledge about Revelation,
- 4- Knowledge about Angels,
- 5- Knowledge about Iman,
- 6- Knowledge about the Cosmos,
- 7- Knowledge about Jinn,
- 8- Knowledge about human being,
- 9- Knowledge about Wealth,

10- Knowledge about Children,

11- Knowledge about the systemic interactions between the components of the QWV, internal and external,

12- Knowledge about the emergent knew subsystems as a result of these systemic interactions.

❖ The acquisition of these types of knowledge is obligatory for Muslims because it is implied by the ontology of QWV.

The QWV As A Worldview Of Complex Systems

❖ Definition of Relevant concepts

1. Complex Systems

A system is a complex object every part or component of which is connected with other parts of the same object in such a manner that the whole possesses some features that its components lack- that is, emergent properties.

- A system may be conceptual or concrete but not both. A conceptual system is a system composed of concepts linked together by logical or mathematical relations. Classifications and theories are conceptual systems.
- A concrete, or material, system is one composed of concrete things linked together by nonconceptual ties, such as physical, chemical, biological, economic, political, or cultural links. Concrete systems that stand for or represent other objects, such as languages, texts and diagrams, may be called symbolic or semiotic.

2. Ontology

Ontology as a branch of philosophy is the science of what is, of the kinds and structures of objects, properties, events, processes, and relations in every area of reality. “Ontology” is often used by philosophers as a synonym of “metaphysics” (what comes after the Physics). Sometimes “Ontology” is used in a broader sense, to refer to the study of what might exist; “metaphysics” is then used for the study of which of the various alternative possible ontologies is in fact true of reality.

3. Epistemology and Methodology

Epistemology, or the theory of knowledge is the field of research concerned with human knowledge in general-ordinary and scientific, intuitive and formal, pure and action-oriented. And methodology- not to be mistaken for methodic, or a set of methods or techniques- is the discipline that studies the principles of successful inquiry, whether in ordinary life, science, technology, or the humanities.

4. Paradigm

In his book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Kuhn defines a scientific paradigm as: “*universally recognized scientific achievements that, for a time, provide model problems and solutions for a community of practitioners, i.e. what is to be observed and scrutinized, the kind of questions that are supposed to be asked and probed for answers in relation to this subject, how these questions are to be structured, what predictions made by the primary theory within the discipline, how the results of scientific investigations should be interpreted, how an experiment is to be conducted, and what equipment is available to conduct the experiment*”.

5. Systemism

5.1- Definition

A systemic mindset stems from “Systemism”, the worldview that the universe consists of systems, in its integrity and its parts, from the atomic scale to the astronomical scale, from unicellular organisms to the most complex species, humans included, and from the physical world of perceptible matter to the conceptual realm of our human mind. “Systemism” offers us the best framework to systematize and infuse order in our everlasting quest to make sense of the world around us and develop and deploy our knowledge about this world in meaningful and productive ways. It also helps us optimize our engagement with others and bring about processes and products that none of us can produce on her/his own independently from others.

5.2- System schema

We define a system of any sort, in both the physical world and the conceptual realm of human knowledge, in accordance with a four-dimensional schema that specifies the system's *scope*, *constitution*, and *performance* in the context of an appropriate *paradigm*.

5.2.1- The scope of the system

- a. system “*domain*”, or the field or area in which it exists and is of importance;
- b. system “*function*”, or the specific purposes it is meant to serve in that domain;

5.2.2- The constitution of the system

- a. system “*composition*”, i.e., its primary or pertinent constituents that may be physical or conceptual entities inside the system, and that are relevant to its function, as opposed to secondary entities that may actually be part of the system but that may be ignored because we deem them irrelevant to the system function;
- b. system “*structure*”, i.e., primary connections (interactions or relationships) among primary constituents that determine how the system serves its function;

- c.** system “*environment*”, i.e., its primary agents or primary physical or conceptual entities outside the system, other systems included, along with their primary individual properties, that may significantly affect the system structure and function, and that may be separated into two clusters, local in the immediate vicinity, and global in relatively distant or remote areas;
- d.** system “*ecology*”, i.e., primary connections (interactions or relationships) between individual primary agents and constituents, and/or between the system as a whole and its environment, that significantly affect how the system serves its function and affects the environment.

5.2.3- The performance of the system

- a. the system “*processes*”, i.e., dynamical actions (operations, mechanisms, or maneuvers) which constituents, and/or the system as a whole, might be engaged in, on their own (isolated system) and/or under external influence (of the environment), in order to serve the function of the system following specific rules of engagement;
- b. system “*output*”, i.e., products, events, or any other effect that the system actually brings about, on its own or in concert with other systems, as a consequence of its ecological interactions and processes, and that may fall within or beyond the scope originally set for the system.

Examples of Systems in the Qur`anic World View

1. Man As A Complex System Of Subsystems

- 1.1- The human “*soul*” as a system of divine qualities designed for man;
- 1.2- The human “*body*” as a material system designed for man;
- 1.3- The human “*self*” as an emergent system of the fusion of the two systems of *body* and *soul*;
- 1.4- Man in his “*integrity*” and wholeness as a system resulting from the interaction between his components (self, body) and his environment (wealth, children, earth, skies, Jinn, angels) and Allah (SWT) .

2. The Qur'an As A Complex Conceptual System Of Knowledge

﴿الرَّ كِتَابٌ أَحْكَمْتُ آيَاتُهُ ثُمَّ فَصَّلْتُ مِنْ لَدُنِّ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ﴾ (هود)

(Alif, Lam, Ra. [This is] a Book whose verses are perfected and then presented in detail from [one who is] Wise and Acquainted(1)» [Hud: 1]

﴿أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا﴾ (النساء)

(Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an? If it had been from [any] other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction(82)» [An-Nisaa: 82]

- ❖ The Qur'an, in its textual integrity, is a closed system of true divine knowledge, but in its conceptual dimension it is an open system of meaning, with the following characteristics:
 - 2.1- *System domain*: entire existence (Allah SWT and His evolving creation in the visible and invisible worlds);
 - 2.2- *System function*: providing sustained relevant authoritative knowledge (K) to the human self (S) in its evolutionary course of history in order to achieve and sustain Iman (I) in the domain of consciousness and to realize its potentialities in the domain of action (W, C);
 - 2.3- *System composition*: the entire verses of the holy Qur'an,

- 2.4- *System structure*: logical and semantic bonds;
- 2.5- *System environment*: man in his cognitive, affective and volitional capacities, together with his semiotic systems;
- 2.6- *System ecology*: the narrative of various scholars, in different disciplines, in dealing with the holy Qur`an, and the Islamic heritage in Sharei`ah knowledge;
- 2.7- *System processes*: conceptual systems have no processes of their own, but rely on the mental processes of humans when dealing with them;

2.8- *System output:* authoritative knowledge in the following domains:

- 1- Knowledge about Knowledge,
- 2- Knowledge about Allah (SWT),
- 3- Knowledge about Revelation,
- 4- Knowledge about Angels,
- 5- Knowledge about Iman,
- 6- Knowledge about the Cosmos,

- 7- Knowledge about Jinn,
- 8- Knowledge about human being,
- 9- Knowledge about Wealth,
- 10- Knowledge about Children,
- 11- Knowledge about the systemic interactions between the components of the QWV, internal and external,
- 12- Knowledge about the emergent knew subsystems as a result of these systemic interactions.

- As a closed textual system the Qur'an influences other systems but is not influenced by them.
- We should read the Qur'an as a knowledge system comprehensively through the lens of its worldview.
- Deriving theories and hypotheses about the world from the holy Qur'an will not affect its authenticity and integrity as a divine source of knowledge because it is guaranteed by Allah (SWT).

- Human knowledge derived from the holy Qur`an is fallible, therefore it must be corroborated empirically.
- Our systemic reading of the holy Qur`an through its worldview should continuously enrich and expand this worldview, thus enriching and expanding our knowledge of the world. This will further expand and enrich our understanding of the holy Qur`an, and the knowledge derived from it.

Man as an Example of Systemic Islamic Integration of Knowledge

❖ The following verses will furnish the exposition:

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي خُلِقُ بَشَرًا مِّنْ صَلْصَلٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ ۚ ۲۸ فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ ۚ ۲۹﴾

«And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, "I will create a human being out of clay from an altered black mud(28) And when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My [created] soul, then fall down to him in prostration."(29)» [Al-Hijr]

﴿وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَّةٍ مِّنْ طِينٍ ۚ ۱۲ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ ۚ ۱۳ ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظْمَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ ۚ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ ۚ ۱۴﴾ (المؤمنون).

«And certainly did We create man from an extract of clay (12) Then We placed him as a sperm-drop in a firm lodging (13) Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump [of flesh], and We made [from] the lump, bones, and We covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him into another creation. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators (14)» [Al-Muminun: 12-14]

﴿وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ۚ فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا ۗ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن زَكَّاهَا ۙ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَن دَسَّاهَا ۚ ۱۰﴾
(الشمس)

«And [by] the soul and He who proportioned it(7) And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness(8) He has succeeded who purifies it(9) And he has failed who instills it [with corruption](10)» [Ash-Shams: 7-10]

Systemic Constitution of man

❖ Types and hierarchy of subsystems:

1.1- Physical system

1.2- Chemical system

1.3- Biological system

1.4- Spiritual system (divine qualities created for man)

1.5- psychological system

1.6- social system

- ❖ Integration of these subsystems through interaction such that each level of system depends on systems below and above it.
- ❖ Man in his wholeness is not just the making of his systemic components, but also as a result of his continuous interaction with systems of his external environment (wealth, children, earth, skies) and with the world of the unseen (Jinn, Angels) and above all with his Creator, Allah (SWT). Many people do not believe in the world of the unseen, but postmaterialist science, as shown above, does.
- ❖ Please, see (fig.5) in the next slide for this ontological reality of man derived from the QWV.

Fig-5

**Domain of Human
Social Action**

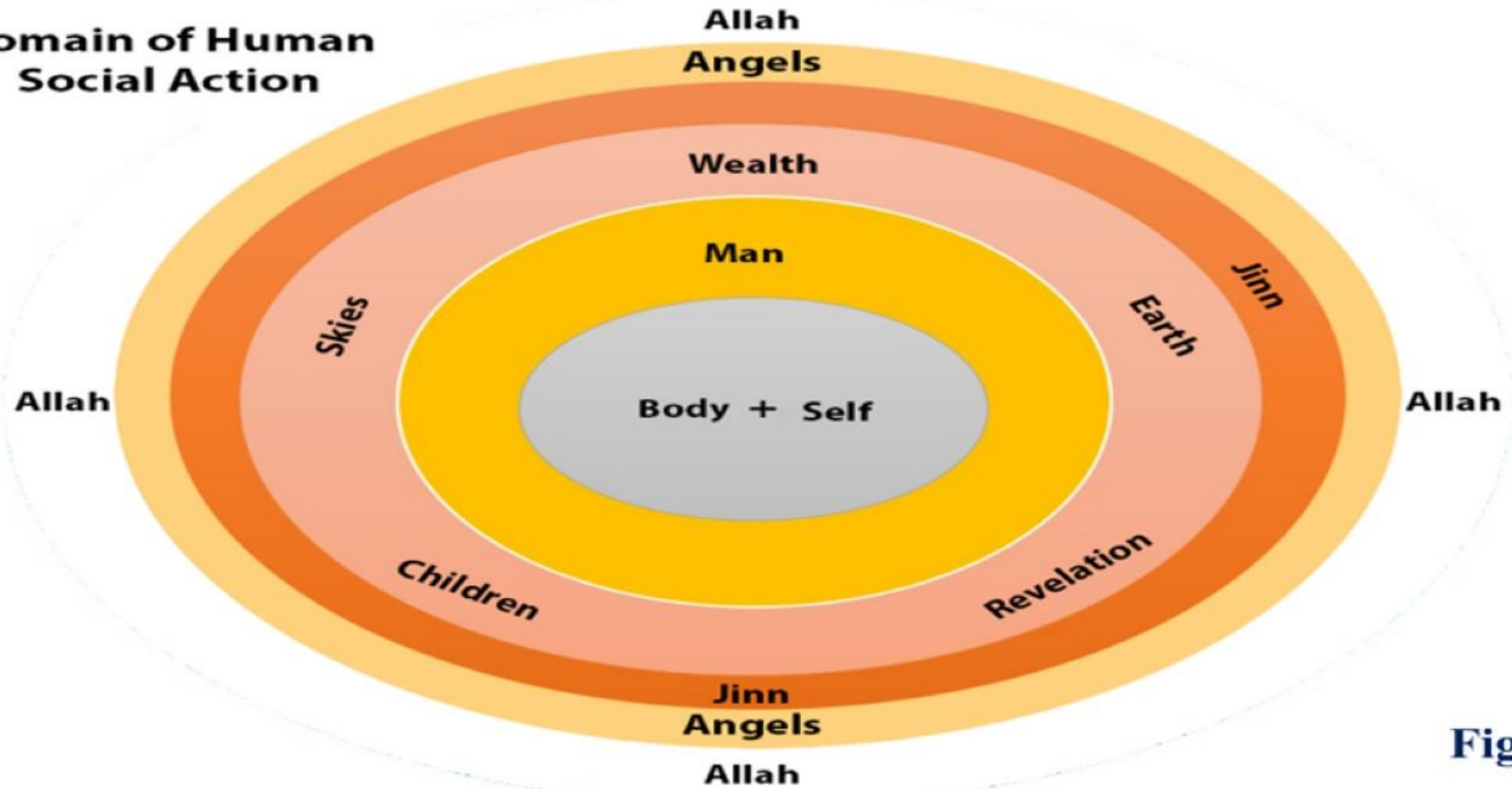


Fig. 5

End Of Slides

الحمد لله رب العالمين