THE DOCTRINE OF CERTAINTY IN THE
ISLAMIC METHODS OF INFERENCE

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The Doctrine of Certainty In The Islamic
Methods of Inference

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an articulate study on the modes of inference in the legal field. Observing the huge legacy left by early and modern jurists on Uṣūl al-Fiqh, one would find that the rules promulgated to regulate the operation of Ijtihād appears vacillating between certainty and uncertainty. A thorough examination of the criteria set by jurists to determine the accuracy of the legal proofs suggests that every thing appears to have been comprehensively tackled except "Certainty". A lack of an adequate theorization for certainty in the legal field is exactly what has prompted us to venture into this thesis.

This has led us to trace the roots of certainty in Uṣūl al-Fiqh as well as in ‘Ilm al-Kalām (Muslim theology), a matter that has unveiled various trends and sects adopting motley views on the authenticity of proofs. This has also uncovered the divergent and convergent scopes among jurists and theologians while referring to the certainty of the methods of inference.

The thesis examines certainty in almost the entire themes of Usul al-Fiqh. Yet, it selected the areas where certainty is conceivable and discarded where only speculation is achievable. The aim is to scrutinize the jurists’ views on ‘Certainty’ and how far the criteria set for it are accurate. It clearly differentiates between the various possible levels of certainty and how they can materialize in the genuine enactment of the law.
The thesis has unreservedly examined the criteria set by the jurists to determine the certainty of the legal text. The latter, being the backbone of inference, was subjected to a new study where Context (Siyāq) would be the solid platform determining its certainty. In this respect, a new method has been suggested to employ "Context" in order to achieve Certainty from the legal text. The theory of context propounded in this thesis can be effectively used to review the patterns of definitiveness and speculation settled by the classical methods of inference. This would include the elevation of the 'speculative' into 'the definitive' and the degradation of the latter into the former.

The thesis has also sought to examine certainty at the level of the agreeable sources of Shari 'ah (Qur'ān, Sunnah, Ijmā', and Qiyās). It tried to explain why Mutawatir and Ijma', for instance, are widely regarded by the bulk of jurists as the most definitive sources of Shari 'ah. It reviewed the said views and proposed new dimensions to assess the certainty of the agreeable sources. It even studied the possibility to elevate Qiyās, deemed speculative by the bulk of jurists, into a definitive source of Shari 'ah.

Lastly, the thesis unveils a trend advocating the full certainty of the methods of inference in Uṣūl al-Fiqh. It notices that Muslim history never ceased to produce jurists yearning for decisiveness and 'uniformity of inference' in the legal field. Yet, the thesis is not trying reviving perished schools of thought nor is it attempting to yield credibility to an unusual view. Through unfolding this trend, we are reconsidering ripe views delivered to unripe audience in a time when 'speculation' appears to be the main cause for the inadequacy underlying the modes of inference for many centuries.
Dedication

To my beloved parents who nourished me with the love of knowledge,

To my brothers and sisters,

To my brother Khalid, the hero, May Allah bless his soul and dwell him in heaven,

To my wife Ghalia and my two pearls, Aminah and Ala’,

To my brother Bachir, the companion in prosperity and duress,

To those roaming in quest of Certainty ...

I dedicate this thesis
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

By the grace of Allah (S.W.T), this thesis has been successfully completed after we have endured all the pain to come up with a study of innovative nature. As no one would thank Allah until he has thanked people, it is my honor as well as my duty to show gratitude to the people who have helped, in one way or another, in orienting or refining this thesis.

Most and foremost, a deep appreciation goes to my supervisor Prof. Dr. Maḥmūd Zuhdī for supervising this thesis. His wisdom and knowledge have been paving the way for this thesis to be a daring attempt and a distinguished study on one of the most difficult topics of Usul al-Fiqh. I am fully indebted to his valuable suggestions and constructive comments. I am equally indebted to Associate Professor MD. Saleh Hj. MD@ HJ. Ahmad, former Head Department of Fiqh and Usul al-Fiqh (University of Malaya) for his continuous support and the highly standard character he showed during my studentship in his respective Department. I should not forget to extend my acknowledgment to my colleague Dr. Abd al-‘Azīz Barghout for his outstanding support and useful suggestions. My thanks shall also be addressed to Dr. Qutb Muṣṭafā Sano of the International Islamic University (Malaysia) for his comments and special interest in my topic.

Last but not least, my special thanks go to my wife Ghālia whose help speeded up the completion of this thesis. She deserves a great appreciation for her patience, support and the tedious work she made to revise the whole manuscript.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Arabic Explanation</th>
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<tr>
<td>'</td>
<td>آئ</td>
<td>Al (not omitted in front of proper names).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>مص</td>
<td>مص</td>
</tr>
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**Vowels:**

* Long vowels:
  
  - أ | a | e.g.: Bushrā |
  - ب | Abi | e.g.: Abi |
  - ب | u | e.g.: Shurūq |
  - ب | i | e.g.: Jamīl |

* Short vowels:
  
  - أ | a | e.g.: Amal |
  - ع | u | e.g.: Mujāhid |
  - أ | i | e.g.: Rizq |

**Doubled:**

- ی | iyy | e.g.: Zayy |
- ی | uww | e.g.: Lawwāmah |
LIST OF ABBREVIATION

A.H after hijrah.
d. died
e.g., *exempli gratia*, for example
ed. edited by, editor (plural, eds)
edn edition number
etc. *et cetra*, and so forth
fig. figure (plural, figs)
ibid. *ibidem*, in the same place
n.d no date
no number
p. page (plural, pp)
s.a.w *Ṣalla Allāhu ‘Alayhi Wa Sallam*
s.w.t *Subḥānahu Wa Ta ‘ālā*
trans. Translated by
vol. Volume (plural vols)
vs. versus, against
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 & 2...............................page 63
Figure 3.................................page 64
Figure 4.................................page 79
Figure 5.................................page 170
Figure 6.................................page 182
Figure 7.................................page 183
Figure 8.................................page 295
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT i
DEDICATION iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMNETS iv
TRANSLITRATION TABLE v
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS vi
LIST OF FIGURES vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS viii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION 1
1.1 Literature review 7
1.2 Statement of the problem 21
1.3 The objectives of the research 22
1.4 The methodology of the research 23

CHAPTER TWO: THE CONCEPT OF CERTAINTY IN THE ISLAMIC THOUGHT 25
2.1 Definition and juristic implications 28
2.2 The roots of certainty and uncertainty in the Islamic legal system 31
2.3 The feasibility of certainty in the legal thought 35

2.4 Certainty between ʿUsūl al-Fiqh and ʿUsūl al-Dīn 55

2.4.1 Certainty in ʿIlm al-kalām (Muslim theology) 57

2.4.2 The integral dimension of certainty in both disciplines 82

CHAPTER THREE: CERTAINTY AND THE THEORY OF CONTEXT (SIYĀ Q) 91

3.1 The semantic certainty of the legal text 92

3.2 The context (Siyāq) and the certainty of the legal text. 128

3.2.1 The concept of Siyāq 129

3.2.2 The pillars of Siyāq 135

3.2.3 The periphery of the legal text. 144

3.3 Practicality of Siyāq and the certainty of the legal texts. 151

3.3.1 Elevation and degradation processes between Qaf ʿī (definitive) and Zannī (speculative). 151

3.3.2 The legal proof between definitiveness and speculation 156

CHAPTER FOUR: CERTAINTY AND THE AGREEABLE SOURCES OF SHARĪʿAH 166

4.1 Formal certainty of the divine text. 167

4.2 The logical certainty of Mutawātir (Recurrent report) 173

4.3 Certainty of Ijmāʿ (Consensus of opinion): 188
4.3.1 The definitive originality of ʿIjmāʿ

4.3.2 The certainty of the view concluded by ʿIjmāʿ

4.4 Certainty of Qiyās (Analogical deduction)

4.4.1 Taʿlīl (Ratiocination) and the certainty of Qiyās

4.4.1.1 Taʿlīl and the infallible sources of Sharīʿah

4.4.1.2 Taʿlīl and the rational modes of inference

4.4.2 The form and the substance (Māddah) of Qiyās: An emendable approach

4.4.2.1 Amendment at the level of the form of Qiyās

4.4.2.2 Amendment at the level of the substance of Qiyās

CHAPTER FIVE:
MAQĀSID AL-SHARĪʿAH: THE NEW DEFINITIVE FIGURE OF THE SCIENCE OF UŠŪL AL-FIQH

5.1 The Rational behind calling for a definitive science in the legal field

5.2 A brief historical account of the idea of Maqāsid

5.3 Al-Maṣlaḥah (Utility) and its classes

5.4 Al-Īmām al-Juwaynī and the certainty of Maqāsid

- Futility of the absolute Maṣlaḥah

- The certainty of Maqāsid

- How does the certainty of Maqāsid generate definitive rules?

- Certainty and the law of necessity (Ḍarūrah)
5.5 Al-Imām Abū Ishāq al-Shāṭibi and the certainty of *Maqāṣid*

- Al-Shāṭibi and the certainty of Induction

- The *Kullī* and the *Juz‘ī* and the justification of the Certainty of *Maqāṣid*

5.6 Moḥammad al-Ṭāhir bin ‘Āshūr and the certainty of *Maqāṣid*

5.7 Al-Juwaynī, al-Shāṭibi and Bin ‘Āshūr: A comparative analysis

CONCLUSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GLOSSARY
CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION