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XXVI.7 That one must not decide by the precepts of religion when the question has to do with those of natural law

- The Spirit of Law - Book XXVI. On laws in the relation they must have with the order of things on which they bear -
Date de mise en ligne : vendredi 7 septembre 2018

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VI.7 That one must not decide by the precepts of religion when the question has to do with those of nature

The Abyssinians have a very severe fast of fifty days which weakens them so that for a long time they are incapable of any action ; the Turks do not fail to attack them after their fast. [1] Religion should, in favor of natural defense, put limits on these practices.

The Jews were commanded to keep the Sabbath, but it was stupidity on the part of that nation not to defend itself when its enemies chose that day to attack it. Cambyse, besieging Peluzium, placed in the first line a large number of animals which the Egyptians held to be sacred : the soldiers of the garrison dared not shoot. Who does not see that natural defense is of a higher order than all the precepts ?

[1] *Recueil des voyages qui ont servi à l'établissement de la Compagnie des Indes*, vol. IV, part 1, p. 35 and 103.