

Contemporary Creedal Studies and the Problem of Faith Effectiveness - A Critical Methodological Approach–

Hadjer Mansouri¹

¹ Lecturer Class B, University of Batna 1, Faculty of Islamic Sciences, Laboratory of Islamic Jurisprudence and updates of the age, Algeria, E-mail: hadjer.mansouri@univ-batna.dz

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the problem of faith effectiveness in doctrinal studies. It starts from the premise that the crisis in these studies is not a crisis in the content of the doctrine or its foundational beliefs, but rather it is essentially a methodological and epistemological crisis linked to the dominance of the abstract dialectical approach, the decline in considering the teleological dimension in the functional aspect of the doctrine, and the isolation of the doctrinal field from disciplined methodological interaction with other sciences. The study adopted the descriptive method to observe and diagnose the manifestations of the crisis, and the analytical and critical method to deconstruct the structure of the prevailing doctrinal discourse, reveal the features of stagnation and the reasons for the decline in effectiveness, and then explore possible horizons for renewal.

The study concludes that restoring the faith-based effectiveness of doctrinal studies depends on their ability to combine the authenticity of the source with the effectiveness of its application, thereby expanding its scope to include the issues of contemporary humanity.

This also involves reviving the functional dimension by focusing on the objectives that the creed was revealed to achieve, and by adopting a disciplined, methodological openness to various human sciences and knowledge, without compromising the fundamentals of the creed and the monotheistic source.

Keywords: Doctrinal studies, faith-based effectiveness, renewal, objectives of creeds, Islamic theology, epistemological integration.

Introduction:

Doctrinal studies are among the oldest fields of knowledge in the Islamic intellectual heritage. Since their inception, they have played a central foundational role in shaping the Muslim's understanding of faith and defending the principles of belief against the doctrinal and philosophical objections that accompanied the formation of religious consciousness throughout its various stages. Historically, this field of study has contributed to preserving the nation's doctrinal structure and regulating its relationship with other areas of knowledge and behavior, thus making doctrine a framework within which the civilizational vision of Islam is

organized.

However, the profound intellectual and civilizational transformations the world is witnessing have produced a new context that differs radically from the contexts in which classical theological studies were formed, both in terms of the nature of the questions posed and the epistemological structure that shapes modern human consciousness. Issues of meaning, identity, values, freedom, and human existence have taken precedence over abstract theoretical debate, leading to the question of the effectiveness of doctrinal studies and their ability to respond to these transformations, not only in terms of doctrinal defense but also in terms of civilizational development and value guidance.

Despite the numerous calls within modern and contemporary Islamic thought for a renewal of doctrinal studies, a closer examination of many of these proposals reveals that they have largely remained confined to general approaches or abstract reformist theorizing, without accompanying a profound methodological deconstruction of the prevailing doctrinal discourse or a critical examination of the dialectical method that has historically characterized this field of knowledge. Furthermore, some of these calls have veered towards one of two extremes: either a rigid adherence to the doctrinal heritage as a complete and closed structure, or a call to transcend it under the guise of modernity without a scientific framework that distinguishes between the constant and the variable. This has contributed to deepening the crisis rather than resolving it.

Hence, this research is based on the premise that the crisis afflicting contemporary doctrinal studies is not a crisis of the content of the creed or its fundamental tenets, but rather a methodological and epistemological crisis. This crisis is linked to the dominance of an abstract dialectical approach, a weak consideration of the teleological and functional dimensions of the creed, and a limited openness to the methodologies of other sciences. This situation has contributed to weakening the civilizational effectiveness of creed, confining it to a closed theoretical framework far removed from the issues and existential dilemmas of contemporary humanity.

From this perspective, the study's objective was to examine the reality of creedal studies in the modern era and identify their weaknesses, which have led to confining creed to mere abstract, heartfelt belief, divorced from reality. This, in turn, has affected the nature of creedal knowledge, which has become preoccupied with contentious issues, driven by dogmatism rather than a pursuit of truth, and detached from the challenges and problems faced by contemporary humanity. The study proceeded from these premises to construct a methodological approach aimed at demonstrating mechanisms for revitalizing creedal studies by reviving the faith-based effectiveness within them, which is considered the core and essence of these studies.

Accordingly, the study poses the following question: To what extent has the abstract, dialectical nature contributed to weakening the faith-based effectiveness of contemporary creedal studies, and what is the way to revive them according to an integrated, purpose-

oriented model that accommodates current epistemological shifts without compromising their fundamental creedal principles? This central question branches into several sub-questions, most notably:

1. What is the concept of doctrinal studies, and what is their importance?
2. What are the manifestations of the crisis facing contemporary doctrinal studies?
3. What problems has the dialectical method generated in the current reality?
4. How can the process of renewal be inclusive of the constants, the heritage, and the transformations that humanity is experiencing in this era?

To answer these questions, the study adopted a descriptive approach to observe the reality of contemporary doctrinal studies and diagnose the manifestations of stagnation and detachment from reality within them. It also employed a critical analytical approach to deconstruct the dialectical and abstract structure of this field of knowledge and uncover the reasons for its dominance. Furthermore, it examined the overall functions of doctrine and its effects on the development of individuals and society, enabling the study to propose practical approaches for renewing doctrinal studies and activating their civilizational role in reality.

The study was organized into three sections. The first was dedicated to establishing the concept of doctrinal studies and clarifying their importance. The second addressed the manifestations of the methodological crisis in the contemporary context. The third section explored the prospects for renewing doctrinal studies in light of objectives, epistemological integration, and methodological openness. The study concluded with a summary of the most important findings.

Section One: The Concept and Importance of Doctrinal Studies:

First: The Concept of Doctrinal Studies (Linguistically and Technically):

The Linguistic Concept: The word "doctrine" (aqidah) in its original linguistic usage is derived from the triliteral root (عقد), which denotes tightening, binding, and strengthening. This meaning is found in major linguistic dictionaries. In **Lisan al-Arab**, it states that the word 'aqd' (contract) is the opposite of 'hal' (dissolution), and it is used for both physical objects and abstract concepts. For example, one might say, "He tied the rope," or "He made a firm decision regarding the matter," meaning he firmly believed in it. **Ibn Manzur** said: "'Aqd' is the opposite of 'hal' (dissolution). 'Aqada ya'kuduhu 'aqdan' (he made a contract)... and it is said, 'I tied the rope, so it is tied...' and 'He made a covenant or oath,' meaning he confirmed it... and 'I made a contract regarding the rope, the sale, or the covenant, so it was concluded. 'Aqd' means covenant, and its plural is 'uqud,' which are the most binding of covenants."¹; This linguistic root indicates steadfastness, certainty, and unwavering resolve. All these meanings converge on the concept of tightening, which is the opposite of loosening. As al-Zubaidi said: "What the leading scholars of etymology have stated is that the origin of 'aqd' is the opposite of 'hal,'... then it was used for various types of contracts, including sales,

¹Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, (Dar Sader, Beirut, 4th edition, 2004), vol. 10, pp. 220-221.

and then it was used for firm determination and unwavering belief"². This makes the word 'aqidah' (creed) denote that which the heart firmly and unbreakably holds.

The word "study" in Arabic signifies pursuit and perseverance with the intention of understanding and mastery. Hence the saying, "He studied knowledge," meaning he persisted in it and repeated it until its features became clear. Ibn Manzur says, "He studied the book, he studies it, a study and a research, and he studied it... as if he resisted it until it yielded to his memorization... And it was narrated from Ibn Abbas regarding the Almighty's words, 'And thus We explain the verses, and that they may say, "You have studied."' He said its meaning is... that they may say that you have studied, meaning you have learned... And I studied the book, I study it, a study, meaning I made it easy for me to memorize through frequent reading until it became easy for me to memorize... And from this comes 'I studied the surah,' meaning I memorized it."³, Based on this, the term "study" implies systematic and organized engagement with issues for the purpose of learning.

The technical definition: From the linguistic definition we have presented for creed, we can understand its general meaning, which refers to everything that a person's heart firmly believes in, regardless of its correctness or error, believing in it with unwavering certainty, unmixed with doubt. The specific meaning of creed refers to two areas:

First: Islamic creed: which represents the set of issues related to God, the world, and humanity, in which a person believes with absolute certainty and without doubt. It includes the six pillars of faith, which are: belief in God, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and belief in divine decree and predestination, both good and bad. Imam Mahmoud Shaltout says: "The creed is the theoretical aspect that is required to be believed in first and foremost, a belief that is beyond doubt and unaffected by suspicion. By its very nature, clear texts converge to establish it, and Muslims reach a consensus upon it... The Qur'an expresses the creed as faith and the Sharia as righteous deeds. In the Islamic context, the creed is the foundation upon which the Sharia is built... Therefore, there is no Sharia in Islam except with the existence of the creed, just as there is no flourishing of the Sharia except under the umbrella of the creed... (which represents) that moral force that inspires respect for the Sharia, observance of its laws, and acting in accordance with it without needing the aid of any force outside the self."⁴, Based on these linguistic and terminological meanings, it becomes clear to us that the concept of creed is inseparable from the meaning of effectiveness, which is translated into action and work. The linguistic connotations of the word "contract" (عقد) as signifying firmness, tightening, and binding—actions of both the heart and limbs—indicate that true faith is not limited to mere belief in the heart, but extends its influence to encompass

²Muhammad Murtada al-Husayni al-Zubaydi, Taj al-'Arus min Jawahir al-Qamus, ed. 'Abd al-'Aziz Matar, (Dar al-Turath al-'Arabi, Kuwait, 2nd ed., 1414 AH/1994 CE), entry for 'aqd, vol. 8, p. 394.

³Ibn Manzur, Lisan al-Arab, (Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, 1st edition, 2008), Vol. 3, p. 59.

⁴- Mahmoud Shaltout, Islam: Creed and Law (Dar Al-Shorouk, 18th edition, 2001), pp. 9-10.

all the limbs, compelling them to act accordingly. This is what Mahmoud Shaltout alluded to when he emphasized the strong connection between Islamic law (Sharia) and creed (Aqeeda), which is considered its foundation and an internal driving force compelling the limbs to adhere to its requirements (Sharia).

Second: The Science of Creed: The science of creed has several names, each linked to intellectual factors and issues that concerned it within the historical context of its emergence. Among these names are the science of the foundations of religion, because creed and its discussions are the basis and origin of religion; the science of monotheism, which is a case of naming something by one of its parts, and monotheism is the first pillar of faith; and the science of theology, due to its emphasis on its defensive function and dialectical nature. All these names point to the science of creed, which Ibn Khaldun defined as: "A science that includes argumentation about the articles of faith using rational proofs and refuting innovators who deviate in their beliefs from the doctrines of the Salaf and the Ahl al-Sunnah."⁵ , As for Adud al-Din al-Iji, he sees it as: "A science that enables one to prove religious doctrines by presenting arguments and refuting doubts. By doctrines, he means the belief itself, not the action, and by religion, he means that which is attributed to the religion of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him."⁶ , What unites the two previous definitions is this science's concern with formulating rational proofs and its defensive function, and the starting point for this is the established articles of faith, divinely revealed. In the context we are discussing, we will adopt a concept of creedal science that is closer to the procedural concept, which, as Dr. Ammar Jidil states, indicates three interconnected levels:

First: (Objective): This refers to the subject matter of Islamic creed and its topics, represented in theology, prophethood, and matters of revelation.

The second aspect (functional): relates to the civilizational function of these tenets; that is, the psychological effects and behavioral consequences of the belief on the believer, which manifest in lived reality.

The third aspect (methodological): relates to the mechanisms employed in establishing the belief itself, most notably the theoretical and practical proofs offered by the minds of those who argue or those against whom the arguments are made.⁷

This leads us to the term "**doctrinal studies**," which refers to the field of knowledge concerned with examining the foundations of faith and major issues of belief, in terms of establishing them, presenting their textual and rational proofs, defending them, and refuting the doubts raised about them. In other words, it is an extension of the science of creed, whose

⁵Wali al-Din Abd al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Khaldun's Introduction, ed. Abdullah Muhammad al-Darwish, (Dar al-Balkhi, Damascus, 1st ed., 2004), vol. 2, p. 205.

⁶Adud Allah Abd al-Rahman ibn Ahmad al-Ayji, Al-Mawaqif fi Ilm al-Kalam (Alam al-Kutub, Beirut, n.d.), p. 7.

⁷The Authenticity of Renewal in the Study of Creed, Ammar Jidil, Al-Ahyaa Magazine, Issue 5, 1423 AH (2002 CE), pp. 187-189.

practitioners have focused on addressing issues of faith from the perspective of demonstration and debate with the aim of persuasion and defense. Referring to the functional aspect of doctrinal studies necessitates highlighting the importance of research in this field.

Second: The Importance of Research in Islamic Creed:

The importance of creedal studies stems from the significance of their subject matter, which is to acquaint humanity with its Creator and to correct any deviations or disturbances in perception and belief. Therefore, creed is considered the foundation of all righteousness and perfection in the life of the individual and society. Ibn Taymiyya said, "The foundation of righteousness is monotheism and faith, and the foundation of corruption is polytheism and disbelief."⁸. From this perspective, creedal studies have attained a central position in the intellectual and scholarly life of Muslims, as they strive to defend and promote the fundamentals of the religion. Their importance can be highlighted in the following points:

1. The renewed need for creedal studies in every era, as each historical period has its own intellectual problems and challenges, especially in light of the openness we experience. This necessitates a renewed examination of the methods of presenting creed and preparation to confront these challenges in a manner appropriate to its nature and the demands of reality.
2. Demonstrating the status of religion and correcting misconceptions and ideas by presenting the truths of faith based on sound scientific and rational principles, thus revealing the truth and refuting heresies, doubts, philosophies, and deviant methodologies.
3. Confronting intellectual deviations with a sound scientific approach, because doctrinal studies represent a scientific and methodological framework through which various intellectual currents, atheistic tendencies, and distorted interpretations of religion can be addressed objectively, without emotionalism or fanaticism. This is especially important given that the fundamental role of specialists in doctrinal studies, both past and present, is to counter these ideas with a methodology that does not compromise fundamental principles and constants, nor does it transgress the principles of reason. This is particularly crucial in an era characterized by the rapid spread of ideas and the wide reach of their audience. Therefore, anyone who undertakes this task must possess the necessary scientific capabilities to champion the truth.
4. Elevating society through scientific research and specialized doctrinal studies, by making scholarly contributions and avoiding superficiality, blind imitation, or adopting opinions out of conviction rather than conviction. The greatest influence comes from the discourse emanating from scholars and intellectual leaders, and

⁸Taqi al-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyya al-Harrani, *Majmu' al-Fatawa* (Al-Ubaikan Library, Riyadh, 1st ed., 1419, 1998), vol. 9/382.

specialized scientific research contributes to qualifying researchers for this role⁹.

Based on the above, the importance of doctrinal studies does not stem solely from the nobility of their subject matter, as it is a divine law characterized by its inherent immutability; rather, it also stems from their function in building awareness and guiding civilizational action. This is because they express a dynamic and living faith capable of reviving the nation and its civilization, and they possess the ability to extricate the nation from its current state of civilizational stagnation. However, the stagnation and methodological closure witnessed in contemporary doctrinal studies have limited their ability to perform this function and weakened their presence in addressing the issues of reality. This highlights the need to reconsider ways of renewing them in a way that restores their effectiveness, which is represented in the ability of faith to build man in his various spiritual, moral, intellectual and social dimensions, and to move him towards civilizational contribution in his reality, because faith is not alive except by moving from the meanings of belief to the meanings of action, which is manifested in reforming the condition of man - the individual - in this world and the hereafter, and whose effects appear on society in the form of achieving civilization and building.

Section Two: Manifestations of the Crisis of Effectiveness in Contemporary Doctrinal Studies:

We previously indicated that doctrinal studies represent the field of knowledge concerned with examining the foundations of faith and major issues of belief, in terms of establishing them, explaining their textual and rational proofs, and defending them against doubts raised about them. Therefore, they occupied a prominent place in the intellectual and civilizational development of the nation, due to the role they played over centuries in consolidating faith and preserving the fundamentals of religion. This reveals the methodological characteristics associated with their emergence, foremost among them being their dialectical and defensive nature. Doctrinal engagement from an early stage was linked to establishing rational arguments and refuting opponents. This contributed to deepening the connection between doctrinal studies and the image that portrays them as a theoretical science whose aim is to address issues of faith from the perspective of demonstration and debate, rather than addressing them as a system of values and functions that influence individual and collective behavior. This led to a decline in their active presence and a weakening of their civilizational impact.

This reflects the intellectual stagnation that has resulted from a combination of historical and methodological factors, leading to a state of intellectual rigidity and detachment from reality and its issues, after having aimed to build bridges of communication between faith, thought, and humanity. What are the most significant manifestations of this decline in

⁹A group of researchers, *The Making of Doctrinal Thinking*, edited by: Sultan bin Abdul Rahman Al-Amiri (Takween for Studies and Research, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 3rd edition, 1439-2018), pp. 20-21-22.

doctrinal studies?

1- Stagnation and Inertia:

To observe the stagnation afflicting doctrinal studies, we will examine the reality of doctrinal discourse among Muslims, particularly in the Maghreb, with Algeria as a case study. Doctrinal thought and writing in these regions have been influenced by historical circumstances that began with the arrival of Islam in the Maghreb. At that time, the understanding of fundamental and subsidiary principles was relatively straight forward, much like the preachers who brought Islam (both as a creed and a civilization) to the region. This was due to the Maghreb's geographical location at the edge of the world, far from the major centers known for their intellectual diversity¹⁰. Consequently, the spread of Islamic doctrine was superficial, especially during the Almoravid era, when they adopted the Salafist approach¹¹, which rejected interpretation in dealing with ambiguous texts and the application of reason in the manner of the theologians.

However, the political and intellectual transformations that Algeria witnessed, with the rise of the Almohad state under Ibn Tumart, who was influenced by various schools of thought and theological opinions, especially the Ash'ari school of thought of al-Ghazali, which had a significant impact on his approach—evident in his rejection of the literal interpretation of ambiguous texts and his adoption of the method of allegorical interpretation¹²—led to the introduction of rationalism into the treatment of matters of doctrine. Despite differing opinions regarding Ibn Tumart's approach, what concerns us here is his role in introducing rationalism into argumentation and interpretation. This is the point at which the conflict began between the Salafist trend, represented by Ibn Taymiyya, who rejected and harshly criticized the Almohad doctrine, and the rational Ash'ari approach¹³, which sought to reconcile reason and revelation by employing methods of debate and argumentation to refute opponents.

However, the introduction of this approach did not halt the Salafist movement; rather, it reignited internal sectarian conflict within Algerian society, particularly after the Ash'ari school of thought became intertwined with Sufism. Some in Sufism took this to extremes, straying from its Sunni framework derived from the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Each side then sought to impose its own methodology and label those who disagreed as deviant, thus emptying theological studies of their essence by reducing them to abstraction. Instead of serving as a unifying force for the nation, these studies became a

¹⁰Abdul Majid Al-Najjar, *Al-Mahdi Ibn Tumart: His Life, Opinions, Intellectual and Social Revolution, and His Impact on Morocco*, (Dar Al-Gharb Al-Islami, Beirut, 1st Edition, 1983), pp. 46-48-49.

¹¹The same reference, p. 38.

¹² Abd al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun, *Al-Ibar wa Diwan al-Mubtada' wa al-Khabar*, (Dar al-Kitab al-Lubnani, Beirut, n.d.), Vol. 6, p. 466.

¹³Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmo' al-Fatawa*, vol. 6, p. 260.

source of division and fragmentation.

Over time, this conflict permeated the academic sphere, where discussions often amounted to little more than rehashing contentious issues in a biased and unjustified attempt to champion a particular opinion, school of thought, or methodology. Or, it involves rehashing old issues and doubts in a traditional, heritage-based framework, without any renewal in the language of discourse or methods of presentation, in a way that aligns with the mindset of the audience in this era. This has led to a disconnect from reality and its contemporary intellectual challenges, and a decline in the effectiveness of faith-based studies, especially since these studies focus on doctrine as a system of conceptual, internal issues that the recipient is expected to acknowledge and defend.

2- Disconnection from Reality and Intellectual Challenges:

One of the most prominent problems plaguing contemporary doctrinal studies is their detachment from reality. Many of these studies are characterized by an abstract, conceptual approach that overshadows the functional dimension of doctrine. As Al-Najjar observes, the reality of these works reveals a sharp decline in connecting doctrinal issues to their real-world contexts, and the dominance of a dry, abstract style that lacks the dynamic context in which they arose. This context reflects the dynamic dialogue and interaction between doctrine, as derived from its textual sources, and the political and social events unfolding in the lives of Muslims¹⁴. Consequently, many studies simply reproduce the same answers without development or consideration for the nature of intellectual and cultural transformations. Doctrinal studies have thus shifted from engaging with societal issues to engaging in abstract theoretical debates, which has directly contributed to the stagnation and inertia afflicting contemporary doctrinal studies.

This has led to a decline in the ability of doctrinal discourse to address contemporary humanity and answer its pressing questions, which are no longer limited to proving God's existence or the validity of prophethood, but rather encompass modern existential issues such as evil, identity, values, and the meaning of existence. This has been clearly reflected in university institutions, which are fundamentally intended to cultivate competencies capable of contributing to the material, intellectual, and moral development of society by applying acquired knowledge to address real-world problems, moving beyond passive imitation and succumbing to misleading whims and desires¹⁵. However, academic doctrinal studies often remain captive to sectarian disputes, causing some research to focus on revisiting old issues or defending opinions and positions out of fanaticism, rather than addressing current intellectual challenges. As a result, theological heritage, in some of its forms, has become an end in itself,

¹⁴Abdul Majeed Al-Najjar, *Towards a Contemporary Islamic Philosophy*, (International Institute for Islamic Thought, 1st edition, 1994), p. 326.

¹⁵Othman Amin, *The Role of Universities in the Modern Era*, Al-Asala Magazine, Issue 4, October 1971, Year 1, pp. 20-22.

rather than a source of knowledge that can be used to understand reality and renew doctrinal discourse. Overcoming this disconnect from reality requires redirecting doctrinal studies toward their fundamental function of building Human beings, and the fortification of their awareness against contemporary intellectual challenges, and the shift from merely preserving and reviving heritage to employing it critically and systematically in a way that contributes to restoring the effectiveness of doctrine, making it an influential force in intellectual reform, civilizational development, and confronting contemporary challenges.

3-Weakness of cognitive integration between doctrine and other sciences:

The weak cognitive integration between doctrinal studies and other sciences is one of the most prominent factors that has contributed to the decline in the effectiveness of this field of knowledge in the modern era. This field has remained hesitant to benefit methodologically from other fields of knowledge, under the pretext of preserving the integrity of doctrine and maintaining its constants. This has led to a kind of intellectual stagnation that has limited its ability to interact with emerging intellectual issues. This stems from the exclusionary mindset adopted by specialists during their training, where they refrain from learning about different intellectual and philosophical schools of thought, under the pretext of achieving doctrinal harmony. This has produced a one-dimensional education that does not allow the student to be open to others, and has led to an intellectual isolation that has hindered doctrinal studies from their function in a comprehensive understanding of humanity and existence.

The weak integration between doctrine and other sciences does not only represent a methodological flaw, but also expresses a deeper crisis related to understanding the civilizational function of doctrine itself, because the method of exclusion and isolation leads to freezing the doctrinal discourse and separating it from the issues of humanity and the changing reality. When talking about isolation, it is worth noting that it has two forms; The first, internal, has led to a disconnect between Islamic sciences. This disconnect stems from the neglect of many researchers in the field regarding the nature of Islamic teachings, which are considered "an intricate and interwoven fabric, where creed, worship, ethics, and various forms of interaction are intertwined."¹⁶ This interconnectedness allows Islamic sciences to possess an open methodology that enables their integration. However, the reality of Islamic studies reveals a significant separation, particularly between jurisprudence, ethics, and creed. The latter has been confined to the realm of the heart, despite being the foundation of outward actions, which necessitate strong sincerity and devotion rooted in firm and correct belief. Islamic sciences, however, link outward actions to jurisprudence and ethics, separating them from creed. This has caused them to lose the meaning of purification (tazkiyah) and its requirements for outward and inward reform, both individually and socially.

The second form of isolation deprives creedal studies of rich intellectual resources, rendering them incapable of analyzing contemporary phenomena and engaging with emerging

¹⁶Muhammad al-Ghazali, How to Deal with the Qur'an, (Nahdat Misr, 7th ed., 2002), p. 71.

issues. Therefore, Abdelmajid Meziane called for transcending what he termed "rigid Salafism," which refuses to listen to the world and its diverse cultural innovations and developments. He argued that to avoid succumbing to this challenge, we must keep pace with scientific and intellectual advancements. He further explained that the innate belief in monotheism is not a dormant instinct in the age of science; rather, it is "an innate tendency for continuous self-examination of the human conscience after a profound understanding of all the causes of deviation and all the intellectual temptations that arise from within ourselves, from those who are at peace with us, and from those who are hostile to us from various cultures." This demonstrates the fallacy of the belief that openness to different schools of thought and orientations poses a threat to sound doctrine and leads to a loss of identity and deviation from the correct path¹⁷. Achieving integration at this level enables doctrinal knowledge to benefit from diverse intellectual currents, scientific discoveries, and the social and human sciences. This is a crucial point to consider during the training of researchers, so that they are capable of issuing objective judgments based on in-depth studies grounded in freedom of thought, not in the intellectual confinement of rigid adherence to a single methodology.

This is what calls us to pay attention to the issue of renewing doctrinal studies, which has become a cognitive and methodological necessity, aiming to restore the civilizational function of doctrine and enable it to contribute to understanding man and reality and to confront contemporary intellectual challenges so that it can overcome the manifestations of weakness it suffers from, and be able to revive the spirit of doctrine and its objectives.

Third Section: Prospects for Revitalizing Contemporary Doctrinal Studies

Having identified the crisis of effectiveness plaguing contemporary doctrinal studies, a crisis fundamentally rooted in methodology and function, stemming from the dominance of dialectical logic and the detachment of doctrinal discourse from its existential questions, confining it instead to a theoretical framework of belief that does not extend beyond the realm of the heart, we must explore ways to restore effectiveness to this field of knowledge. This necessitates examining avenues for its renewal, a scientific and methodological imperative to reclaim its capacity to confront current intellectual challenges. What, then, is the meaning of renewing doctrinal studies, and what are its dimensions?

First Requirement: The Concept of Renewal in Doctrinal Studies:

The Concept of Renewal Linguistically: the word "new" (al-jiddah) is derived from "al-jiddah," the opposite of "al-balā" (wear and tear). In Lisan al-Arab, it states that "jadda al-thawb" (the garment) and "al-shay'u" (the thing) are "jadda" (new), with a kasrah on the "j", meaning they have become new, the opposite of "al-khalaq" (wear and tear). It can also mean "cut" or "severed." For example, Arabs say "milā'ah jadid" (a new sheet) without the final

¹⁷Abdul Majid Mazyan, The Trust of Unity and Humanity in Contemporary Islamic Thought, Al-Thaqafa Magazine, Issue 89, September-October 1985, Year 15, p. 25.

"hā'" and "thawb jadid" (a new garment), meaning something newly cut or severable.¹⁸

Terminologically: The concept of renewal varies in its terminology depending on the intellectual foundations upon which it is based. We note here that the discussion of renewal in the context of our study has no relation to those who adopt the idea of a cognitive break with the traditional structure, based on the belief that the latter is no longer capable of responding to the questions of contemporary man. This makes renewal indicative of a new epistemological framework unrelated to the old, a trend whose features can be observed in some contemporary thinkers such as Mohammed Arkoun, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, and Abdelmajid Charfi.¹⁹

But we will speak of renewal that is not based on the logic of rupture or abolition, but rather stems from the principle of preserving fundamentals and constants, while reconsidering the three dimensions it encompasses: renewal at the level of subject matter, function, and methodology. Thus, the general meaning of renewal, as Al-Qaradawi states, is: "An attempt to return it to what it was when it originated and emerged, so that despite its age, it appears new. This is achieved by strengthening what has weakened, repairing what has worn out, and mending what has been torn, until it returns as close as possible to its original form. Renewal is not about changing the old nature or replacing it with something new and innovative."²⁰ Rather, it is about reviving the original after the manifestations of antiquity have overwhelmed it. It is not about creating something from nothing, but about returning something to its original state and purifying its essence from the impurities that have clung to it and altered its features. It is therefore linked to the flexibility of the mind and its ability to deal with new situations, and to modify the old to align with the new²¹, so that knowledge and sciences, especially those related to creed, can adapt to the renewed social, political, historical, and scientific realities of each era, in order to revive the effectiveness of faith. Dealing with human existence and civilizational development.

Therefore, discussing renewal in doctrinal research and studies does not concern the doctrine itself as fixed truths established by text, neither added to nor subtracted from; rather, it concerns the scientific study of those truths—that is, the science of doctrine—represented by the three levels mentioned previously—and the ways in which it is presented. This study aims to elucidate the truths of religion with evidence that reassures the modern mind and the new intellect, for humankind can only form certainty through matters proven by facts²². If a

¹⁸Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, vol. 2, p. 84.

¹⁹See: Arkoun, *Islamic Thought: A Scientific Reading*; Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, *Discourse and Interpretation*; Abdelmajid Charfi, *Islam and Modernity*.

²⁰Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *For a Rightly Guided Awakening to Renew Religion and Revive the World* (Dar al-Bashir for Culture and Science, n.d., 2016), p. 28.

²¹Ahmed Amin, *Fayd al-Khatir* (Kalimat Arabiya for Translation and Publishing, Cairo, 2012), 8/127.

²²Wahiduddin Khan, *The Islamic Revival (Conditions and Methodology)*, translated by Muhsin Uthman al-

flaw arises in the theoretical understanding of the origin of these doctrines, or in the practical application of their content, then it becomes necessary to consider reviving or correcting the cognitive content, with its realistic dimensions manifested in the stance towards the current cultural landscape and civilizational moment. The foundation and driving force behind all of this is the origin of the belief itself, which serves as the reference point for comparing the desired stance with the existing one²³. Thus, renewal is not limited to the objective aspects of doctrinal studies to align with human needs, but also includes a re-examination of its aims, functions, and methodologies. These levels are not related to the exclusion of the heritage, which must be utilized and developed to meet the needs of the age, making it more capable of addressing humanity and engaging with its intellectual and existential issues.

From the foregoing, we can discern the levels concerned with renewal, which "is not limited to incorporating new issues but extends to all aspects of its cognitive framework, encompassing: issues, objectives, methodologies, subject matter, language, and structures."²⁴ Therefore, renewal in doctrinal studies is considered a comprehensive project aimed at restoring the effectiveness of this discipline so that it can fulfill its function in building awareness and keeping pace with the transformations of reality. This is achieved through three dimensions. The main point, which we will explain in the following section:

The second requirement: Dimensions of renewal in doctrinal studies:

The objective dimension (the epistemological content of the creed): When discussing renewal on an objective level, we must first distinguish between the major and the minor. The former leaves no room for interpretation or disagreement, while disagreement on the latter does not lead to declaring the opponent an unbeliever or a sinner, because it pertains to the elements of interpretation within Islamic creed, not to the authentic texts that are definitively established and unambiguous in meaning. It relates to the branches of Islamic law that have led to differing opinions, necessitating intellectual coexistence among the various methodologies within the Arab and Islamic world.²⁵

Therefore, we find that Ibn Taymiyyah, in his work "Refuting the Conflict Between Reason and Revelation"²⁶, establishes a criterion for distinguishing between fundamental principles and subsidiary matters. He maintains that no one among the Muslims should be declared an unbeliever in matters such as: Is God Almighty knowing through knowledge or

Nadawi, (Dar al-Sahwa for Publishing and Distribution, Cairo, 1st edition, 1405/1984), p. 102.

²³Ammar Jidil, The Authenticity of Renewal in the Study of Creed, p. 189.

²⁴Faramzirq Qaramalki, Ahad, Analysis of the Concept of Renewal in Islamic Theology, trans. Habib Fayyad, Al-Muntalaq, no. 119, 1997–1998, pp. 18–23.

²⁵Ammar Jidil, The Authenticity of Renewal in the Study of Creed, pp. 190–192.

²⁶Ibn Taymiyya, Refuting the Conflict Between Reason and Revelation (Al-Ahram Center for Translation and Publishing, Cairo, 1st ed., 1409 AH/1988 CE), p. 74.

through His essence? Or is He the creator of human actions? This is because the validity of the religion does not depend on knowing these matters, and if He were, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) would have clarified them. Thus, error in these matters is not considered apostasy. So, we have defined the legitimate scope for independent reasoning and renewal within doctrinal studies, which includes the speculative aspect of creed and its various branches of theology. However, the definitive aspects that point to the fundamental issues and questions are not open to disagreement or renewal, as they are among the established principles from which doctrinal studies proceed.

We then move on to explaining the importance of moving beyond preoccupation with issues that have exhausted their historical purpose and turning towards issues that touch upon the reality of humanity and its contemporary questions. Isolation from these traditional issues and immersion in partial theological matters that no longer have a direct impact on building faith or addressing the problems of reality has led some contemporary thinkers, such as Muhammad al-Ghazali, to criticize this and call for directing scholarly efforts towards issues more closely connected to humanity and its intellectual problems²⁷. This does not mean, however, a complete rejection or exclusion of the heritage and its issues and questions. Indeed, we cannot speak of renewal without a critical engagement with that heritage, which includes understanding, analysis, scrutiny, and examination, employing the findings of modern knowledge and methodologies in logic, philosophy, and the sciences.²⁸ This critical engagement with the heritage represents a crucial step in renewing the epistemological content of the faith.

Following this, the scope of topics must be broadened, no longer confined to the three branches of Islamic theology— theology, prophethood, and revealed knowledge—but must encompass the humanities in general, since humanity is the central focus of the faith. Shibli Nu'mani states in this context: "The ancient science of theology was solely concerned with the study of Islamic doctrines because the objections of those who opposed Islam in that era pertained to doctrines. However, in the present time, it examines the historical, cultural, and ethical aspects of religion."²⁹ This means that renewal at this level necessitates, in addition to rearranging and reformulating traditional topics, broadening the scope of interest to encompass new doctrinal issues such as atheism, ethics, the relationship between religion and science, as well as questions of identity and humanity. As for theological pronouncements that were formed within specific historical, cultural, and political contexts, they reflect the level of awareness and knowledge prevalent in their era and cannot be adopted indefinitely because they are not absolute truths valid for all times and places. This requires re-reading and evaluating them in light of emerging questions and challenges.

²⁷Al-Ghazali, *Islam and Arab Culture in Our New World*, Islamization of Knowledge Journal, No. 7, p. 146.

²⁸Abdul-Jabbar Al-Rifai, *Introduction to the New Theology* (Hindawi Foundation, n.d., 2024), p. 185.

²⁹Shibli Al-Nu'mani, *The New Theology* (National Center for Translation, 1st ed., 2012), p. 182.

Theology in its first stage was not an abstract science isolated from reality, but rather it arose in response to real problems experienced by Muslims. The crisis began when those issues were stripped of their historical and realistic contexts and turned into rigid school curricula. Al-Najjar says in this context: “The image in which theology reached us is a school image that began to take shape when this science stopped growing after the fourth century. At that time, theological issues were arranged according to an abstract, logical, and rational conception of the relationship between them. Theology was structured in the way it was recorded in the books after the fifth century, and its issues were stripped of their real circumstances represented in the incidents and events from which they emerged, and were written in a dry, declarative style that had no trace of the real context in which they grew.”³⁰ , This shows us the importance of renewing the cognitive content of the doctrine and restoring the realistic spirit in it, by directing doctrinal studies towards the intellectual and human issues raised by the age, instead of being content with reproducing old problems, and paying attention to issues that touch the reality of man and his challenges, which makes faith more effective and able to perform its function in building awareness and contributing to addressing contemporary crises, instead of confining it to that abstract conception and heartfelt belief only.

Therefore The objective dimension is considered the first step in renewing doctrinal studies to ensure their effectiveness in practice. This step necessitates a set of conditions, namely a balance between authenticity and modernity. While doctrine is constant in its essence, due to its divine source, its presentation requires adaptation to the various social, intellectual, and scientific developments that humanity encounters. This adaptation encompasses the variable aspect, enabling it to accommodate emerging issues without compromising fundamental principles and constants. Therefore, the new framework for doctrinal studies requires integrating the heritage within a modern epistemological framework that offers interpretations of revelation in light of contemporary human issues, without compromising the essence or objectives of faith. This allows for the adaptation of these studies to human social conditions and contemporary cultural, political, and economic environments, which are characterized by rationality, openness, and critical thinking. The path to achieving this balance lies in distinguishing between the constant and the variable, between divinity and humanity, and between religion and human knowledge, thus enabling the assimilation of new achievements in the humanities, social sciences, and experimental fields.

The Functional Dimension (The Purposeful Dimensions of Faith): The purposeful functional dimension is considered one of the most profound levels of renewal because it moves faith from the realm of theoretical debate and intellectual pronouncements to the realm of effectiveness and reform. This is achieved by invoking the goals that the foundations of faith were revealed to realize in human life. When discussing the purposes (maqasid), it is

³⁰Abdul Majeed Al-Najjar, Towards a Contemporary Islamic Philosophy, p. 326.

worth noting that they initially crystallized in the field of Islamic jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*) to denote: "The meanings and wisdom observed by the Lawgiver in all or most aspects of legislation, such that their observation is not limited to a specific type of Sharia ruling."³¹, Researchers in this field have defined the general purpose of Sharia as: "The development of the earth, the preservation of the order of coexistence within it, and its continued well-being through the righteousness of those entrusted with it, their fulfillment of their duties of justice and integrity, intellectual and practical soundness, the improvement of the land, the extraction of its resources, and the management of benefits for all."³²

If this is the general purpose of Sharia, then the purposes of faith represent the foundation upon which it is built. It is inconceivable to achieve civilization or reform without establishing a framework of faith that guides humanity and defines its goals, as we explained previously. From this perspective, we can speak of doctrinal objectives that complement the general purpose of Islamic law (Sharia), because the objectives of these doctrines represent the wisdom and goals toward which the foundations of faith aspire. They aim to reform the human condition at its various existential, emotional, intellectual, and behavioral levels, enabling individuals to fulfill their role as stewards of the earth and achieve civilization in accordance with the principle of monotheism.

In this context, Dr. Ammar Jidil emphasizes that: "Doctrinal objectives are clear and sought after by Islamic texts. These objectives are united by the centrality and pivotal role of doctrine in guiding the Muslim's life toward improvement... Every aspect of a Muslim's social, civilizational, educational, psychological, and cultural life is inextricably linked to their faith, which forms the basis of their worldview and their relationship with humanity in general."³³, Hence, invoking the objectives of Islamic beliefs is one of the most important approaches to renewal in doctrinal studies at the functional level, given its role in revitalizing their effectiveness in reality. This is especially true since belief, in its essence, expresses a dynamic and living faith that came to fulfill humanity's interests in this world and the hereafter. The most dangerous affliction to doctrinal thought is its separation from those aims and objectives for which religion came to achieve. For belief, in its essence, is a life project that aims to cultivate a free human being, conscious of God, and responsible for the betterment of the earth. This is achieved through building a moral conscience that guides human behavior, which is the foundation of constructive action.

To illustrate the role of the objectives of Islamic beliefs in moving doctrinal studies from theory to application and effectiveness, we will refer here to the general objectives of Islamic belief, which are comprehensive axes encompassing all the specific objectives of the

³¹Muhammad al-Tahir ibn Ashur, *The Objectives of Islamic Law*, (Al-Istiqamah Library, Tunisia, 1st edition, 1366 AH), p. 50.

³²Allal Al-Fassi, *The Objectives and Virtues of Sharia*, (Dar Al-Gharb Al-Islami, Allal Al-Fassi Foundation, 5th edition, 1993), pp. 45-46.

³³Ammar Jidil, *The Authenticity of Renewal in the Study of Creed*, p. 193

beliefs, pertaining to each pillar of faith. We begin with the objective of **Monotheism**, which is considered the core of belief. Its impact is not limited to affirming the oneness of God Almighty, but rather, its firm establishment in the heart means liberating the believer from all forms of submission to other than God, whether intellectual, social, political, or economic. Thus, monotheism establishes an inner freedom based, as Taha Abd al-Rahman states, on conscious and responsible choice, whereby behavior becomes ethical, stemming from conscience and will, not merely from external coercion or formal adherence to laws.³⁴

If monotheism establishes the value-based framework for behavior, then **Purification** represents the mechanism that translates that framework into ethical construction through self-discipline and the development of a sense of responsibility. The creed thus becomes the foundation for forming a morally aware personality, conscious of its purpose in life. This is evident in the sense of responsibility instilled by the creedal system, linking human behavior to its ultimate consequences in the hereafter. This makes the creed a cornerstone of ethics and legislation, and a source of intrinsic motivation for reform.³⁵ Furthermore, purification represents the practical process by which values move from the level of belief to the level of behavior, becoming rooted in inner conviction and self-discipline, not merely in external constraints.³⁶

The objective of **Civilization** (or development) represents the practical extension of monotheism and purification, as it transfers the impact of faith from the individual level to the social and civilizational level. In the Islamic conception, humankind is God's vicegerent on Earth, responsible for its improvement according to the principle of civilization, which cannot be achieved in isolation from the foundational faith that guides and regulates its aims, making it a fruit of sound faith and purified conduct.³⁷ Thus, the objectives of faith are integrated within a coherent functional framework, starting with monotheism, which liberates humanity from various forms of false servitude and establishes its value system; purification, which builds its moral character; and civilization, which translates these values into social and civilizational practice.

In this way, doctrinal studies are transformed from mere theoretical knowledge into an active reforming force that contributes to building the individual and society. The more doctrinal studies reclaim their liberating, purifying, and civilizational functions, the greater

³⁴ A group of authors, *Islamic Ethics and the System of Trust: Approaches in the Philosophy of Taha Abd al-Rahman*, edited by Muhammad Hasas and Mu'taz al-Khatib (Center for Islamic Legislation and Ethics Studies, Doha, n.d., 2020), p. 83.

³⁵ Muhammad al-Mubarak, *Towards a Happy Humanity* (Dar al-Fikr al-Mu'asir, Beirut, n.d., 1970), p. 58.

³⁶ Un groupe d'auteurs, *L'éthique islamique et le système de confiance : Approches philosophiques de Taha Abd al-Rahman*, p. 85.

³⁷ Taha Jabir al-Alwani, *Les objectifs du droit islamique* (Dar al-Hadi, Beyrouth, 1re éd., 1421 AH/2001 CE), p. 158.

their capacity to contribute to addressing contemporary problems and confronting the challenges facing humanity. Thus, we move from confining doctrinal studies to a defensive and persuasive framework to a broader framework represented by reformist practice, and from a science concerned with theological issues to a science that deals with human and reality issues, and proves that faith is a civilizational activity and not merely an emotional stance.

The Methodological Dimension (Mechanisms Adopted in Constructing and Presenting Doctrinal Knowledge):

The renewal of doctrinal studies, with the aim of restoring their effectiveness in addressing current intellectual and civilizational challenges, does not stop at merely renewing their topics or restoring their purposive functions. Rather, it extends to renewing the methodologies and mechanisms by which doctrinal knowledge is constructed and presented. The effectiveness of doctrinal discourse is not only linked to the soundness of its content, but also depends on the method of its production and the tools employed by specialists in this field to address the issues and problems raised by reality. This is emphasized by Abdul-Jabbar al-Rifai, who believes that renewal does not simply mean including new topics; it also encompasses renewing the research method, its approach, its results, and its objectives. Researchers in this field rely on new epistemological premises and data, which are addressed with methodologies and tools that are compatible with them. This makes doctrinal knowledge more relevant to the needs of contemporary humanity and its existential questions.³⁸

This approach finds its foundation in the Quranic methodology, which links faith with contemplation of the self and the universe, making reflection on the cosmos and humanity a gateway to establishing certainty, as in the Almighty's words: "We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth." (Fussilat 53) and His words: "Have those who disbelieved not considered that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, then We separated them?" (Al-Anbiya: 30). These two verses together establish the principle of openness to the data of human knowledge in building faith-based awareness, and make cosmic and scientific reasoning an authentic Quranic pillar that calls for benefiting from natural and cosmic evidence and the achievements of various sciences, and keeping pace with their methodologies so that we can employ them in the service of doctrinal studies and their objectives.³⁹

Reconsidering the mechanisms of producing doctrinal knowledge, according to the principle of integration between Reconstructing the relationship between reason and emotion in the production of doctrinal knowledge, drawing on diverse sources and dimensions of knowledge, is a crucial step in the renewal process. Prioritizing one over the other leads to neglecting a fundamental function of doctrine. Therefore, we must focus on achieving their

³⁸ Abdul Jabbar al-Rifai, Introduction à la nouvelle science du Kalam (Fondation Hindawi, s.d., 2024), p. 94.

³⁹ Ammar Jidil, L'authenticité du renouveau dans l'étude du credo, pp. 197-198.

integration⁴⁰, especially since doctrine does not merely aim to construct mental perceptions; rather, it seeks to cultivate the individual in their psychological, spiritual, and behavioral dimensions. This aligns with human nature, which distinguishes between material and spiritual existence. This necessitates combining the power of rational argument with the effectiveness of emotional influence, enabling doctrinal discourse to persuade and purify—both inwardly and outwardly—simultaneously.

Furthermore, methodological renewal requires liberation from methodological stagnation and a disciplined openness to diverse approaches capable of contributing to the study of doctrinal issues and topics, and analyzing their contemporary challenges. These approaches include hermeneutics, semiotics, empiricism, history,⁴¹ and others that allow for their study from multiple perspectives appropriate to the nature and complexities of current epistemological questions. This must not contradict the specific nature and epistemological character of the doctrinal subject. This is especially important given that early theologians relied on rational methods of argumentation and debate, built upon logical principles and premises, to address issues and questions. These methods, however, cannot encompass the vast number of intellectual challenges facing the Muslim mind today. This necessitates a plurality of approaches to address various contemporary issues and problems.

When discussing methodological openness, the first point to consider is the importance of drawing upon the heritage and methodology of our early scholars in dealing with diverse issues and questions. They were distinguished by their encyclopedic knowledge, stemming from their comprehensive view not only of Islamic sciences but also of various other disciplines. This view is based on an integrated perspective, united by the single goal of arriving at the truth. This is particularly evident in the discussions of theology, where rational arguments were built upon various sciences to convince minds of the truth of faith, defend it, and counter the doubts raised against it.

Thus, we establish the interdependence between science and faith, making theological discourse accessible to both deniers and those firmly grounded in belief, in the spirit of "so that my heart may find peace." For the Muslim is not immune to the challenges of faith. Regarding those questions that science answers, it also needs something to increase its certainty in an age of scientific thinking based on observation and experimentation.⁴² This is a fundamental Qur'anic requirement, as it elevates the status of reason and calls us to contemplate and reflect upon the universe, and to embrace the achievements of modern science and its discoveries. Thus, methodological renewal becomes a revival of the Holy Qur'an's approach to rational argumentation, linking the unseen world with the seen world

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 197-198.

⁴¹ Faramerzq Qaramalki, Ahad, Analyse du concept de renouveau à Kalam, pp. 18-22.

⁴² Wahiduddin Khan, La religion face à la science, trad. Zafarul Islam Khan, (Al-Mukhtar Al-Islami, Le Caire, 4e éd., 1978), p. 4.

within an integrated epistemological framework that makes these faith-based, unseen knowledge more reliable and certain.

Hence, methodological renewal becomes a necessity, not an academic luxury. No matter how sound a doctrinal content may be, it has no value if it remains bound to those traditional methodologies that render it incapable of engaging with contemporary humanity and its existential issues and questions. This is what Abdul-Jabbar al-Rifa'i expressed in his explicit call to shift the study of doctrine from being an ideology that proceeds from fixed axioms with no purpose other than to prove beliefs and refute opponents' arguments, to an epistemological task that analyzes The reality of faith and the entirety of religious experience.⁴³

This compels us to transform the static heritage into a dynamic source of knowledge by reading it scientifically and systematically in a way that aligns with the needs of contemporary humanity. In this context, we will point to two examples from theological tradition; at first glance, they may appear to address archaic issues that seem irrelevant today. However, upon deeper reading of these matters and by examining the findings of empirical science and modern thought, we find a strong connection between them, such as the argument from contingency and its relation to the Big Bang theory, or the issue of the createdness of the Quran and its relation to modernist thought, which posits the historicity of the Holy Quran.

AT LAST, we say that the availability of these elements in the renewal process lends doctrinal studies both faith-based effectiveness and realism. This does not mean transgressing the divinely revealed constants, nor excluding the doctrinal heritage that occupies a prominent place in Islamic thought. Rather, it means preserving our monotheistic identity based on those divine constants, and then employing them in a way that serves Muslim societies first, and then humanity as a whole, as it confronts various challenges. This is achieved by expanding the thematic framework of these studies to encompass all issues related to humanity and linking them to the functional, purpose-oriented aspect that gives meaning to these studies, while remaining open to diverse methodologies and approaches that align with these topics and the established religious framework.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, after traversing its three stages, this research leads us to a single conclusion: that doctrinal studies do not suffer from a lack of faith-based content, but rather from a deficiency in how that content is presented and applied. This deficiency extends across the thematic, functional, and methodological levels, ultimately leading to what we have termed a crisis of faith-based effectiveness. This crisis stems from the dominance of dialectical and abstract approaches, coupled with a decline in considering the practical aims and functions of faith. Consequently, doctrinal studies have lost their essence and weakened their connection to human reality, confining many of them to the realm of pronouncements and defenses, instead

⁴³ Abdul Jabbar Al-Rifai, Introduction au Kalam (théologie islamique), p. 68.

of building awareness, guiding behavior, and contributing to civilizational reform. In light of the foregoing, the most important findings can be summarized in the following points:

- Faith-based effectiveness represents a fundamental criterion for evaluating doctrinal studies. This effectiveness is not achieved merely by pronouncements of faith theoretically, but rather by applying it to behavioral guidance and civilizational development.
- Renewing doctrinal studies requires the integration of three interconnected dimensions: the objective dimension, by expanding the scope of doctrinal inquiry to encompass the issues of contemporary humanity; the functional dimension, by restoring the purposive aspect that the creed was established to achieve; and the methodological dimension, by developing mechanisms for constructing and presenting doctrinal knowledge.
- The purposive approach is a crucial entry point for reconnecting the creed with its liberating, purifying, and constructive functions, thus moving it from the realm of abstraction to the realm of practical application.
- Emphasis should be placed on a disciplined methodological openness to the various methodologies of the humanities, social sciences, and experimental sciences, employing them in a way that does not contradict the fundamental principles of Islamic doctrine, but rather contributes to strengthening its capabilities in presentation, interpretation, persuasion, and defense, enabling it to keep pace with current intellectual transformations.
- Attention should be given to the doctrinal heritage, which still holds significant epistemological and methodological potential. Benefiting from this heritage requires moving beyond merely recalling its conclusions to drawing inspiration from its mechanisms of thought and independent reasoning. In conclusion, restoring the faith-based effectiveness of doctrinal studies depends on their ability to combine the authenticity of the reference and the effectiveness of the revelation, while preserving the constants and being open to the variables of reality, in a way that revives the essence of the doctrine, its spirit and its purposeful dimension, which has a major role in human and civilizational development, and makes it an active element in civilizational development, and in confronting the intellectual and civilizational challenges that we witness in our reality.

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