

Project of a Lifetime

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Islam is a comprehensive system of belief, encompassing a code of law, a moral framework, a set of actions, and a body of teachings, all enshrined in its religious text as it has been passed down to us. However, this text has been influenced by a variety of interpretations, resulting in the existence of conflicting "texts."

Islam was once a unified belief system, encompassing beliefs, laws, politics, rituals, society, ethics, and knowledge. However, over time, this unity eroded, giving rise to various conflicting "Islams." These include denominational Islam, political Islam, ritualistic Islam, nationalistic Islam, moral Islam, personal Islam, and even Islam of the elderly stems from the religion of mothers. Each understanding of Islam carries contradictions and inconsistencies, with some denying others. Denominational Islam, for example, contains multiple conflicting denominational Islams, as does political Islam with conflicting political Islams. Despite this diversity, all these "Islams" are based on one common understanding, the cognitive-epistemic Islam, which serves as the infrastructure for all other forms. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the nature of this Islam methodologically as it underpins all other forms.

The spiritual simplicity of Islam has been obscured by the complex innovations that have accumulated over the centuries. Therefore, there was a need for a counter-complexity that would lead us back to the original pure simplicity. We have not found anything suitable for achieving this goal except for researching the methodology, that is, the methodology in understanding Islam.

The project of "The Methodology in Understanding Islam" has a long history that extends to approximately three decades. We started

working on it in the mid-1980s and we talked about the reasons and details of it in some of the dialogues that were held with us. The project consists of five volumes as follows:

1 - علم الطريقة Science of methodology

2 - نُظم التراث Heritage systems

3 - النظام الوجودي Ontological system

4 - النظام المعياري Normative system

5 - النظام الواقعي Realistic system

The first volume represents a logical introduction to the study of religious systems and methodologies - and even science and thought in general - as included in the other four volumes. It is an independent project in itself, and its relationship with the other volumes may be similar to the relationship of Ibn Khaldun's introduction to his history book. The second volume serves as an introduction to studying Islamic intellectual heritage systems. While the third and fourth volumes contain details of these systems and methodologies. As for the fifth and final volume, it includes a new system that we proposed as an alternative to religious understanding.

Thus, the five volumes express two or three interconnected projects, all of which revolve around the problem of understanding. It is the Science of methodology as a logic for thought and religious understanding methodologies, and then the methodologies themselves, which are represented in both our intellectual heritage and the alternative we proposed. The Science of methodology is the first of these projects, followed by the heritage systems and methodologies, and finally the realistic system that we proposed as an alternative to those systems and methodologies. Its importance lies in linking religion to both reality and ethical values that were ignored by those systems. The result was that religion appeared in the mirrors of closure, violence,

and brutality. The consequences of this are still present today through misleading and excommunicating others, and killing them for the slightest reasons.

We worked on completing this five-volume project for many years, during which the majority of it was published under different independent titles, although some of them are related to each other. These titles include: "An Introduction to Understanding Islam," "The Logic of Text Comprehension," "Philosophy, Mysticism, and Religious Issues," "Rationalism, Textualism, and Religious Issues," "Discourse and Reality Dialectic," and "Understanding Religion and Reality."

In addition to these volumes, there are several published appendices, الاجتهاد such as: (Diligence, imitation, following, and consideration والتقليد والاتباع والنظر), (The epistemological rupture between the intellectual and the jurist and (The Problem of القطيعة بين المثقف والفقهاء), (The second part of the book (The approach to Hadith مشكلة الحديث). The second part of the book was also added منهج العلم والفهم الديني) science and religious understanding as an independent publication, although it was originally intended to be a chapter in the first volume on Science of methodology. Similarly, the book "The Problem of Hadith" was supposed to be a chapter in the fourth volume (the Normative system), but its size expanded and the space became limited, so we had to publish it as a separate book, summarizing what is relevant to the volume mentioned.

It should be noted that we wanted to explore the relationships between the two systems of islamic heritage (Ontological and Normative) in another volume, but time did not allow us to do so. Therefore, we only provided some indications of this meaning within the volumes related to the intended purpose.