Methodology for Presenting the Islamic Faith in the Contemporary Time

Mohamed El Sayed Mohamed Abdou[1], Mohammed Ebrahim Sakr[2]

[1]Kulliyyah Usuluddin and Sains Quran, Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah (UNISHAMS), [2]Sultan Ahmad Shah Pahang Islamic University (UNIPSAS)

Abstract

In this research, the two researchers discuss the most prominent Islamic schools that present the faith according to the methodology they have portrayed and pounded away to present, including the school of Al-Mutakallimin -Theologians- (a group of Muslim thinkers and theologians) and Salafism (a branch of Sunni Islam whose modern-day adherents claim to emulate "the pious predecessors" (al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ; often equated with the first three generations of Muslims), as well as the most prominent challenges facing the Muslim public in general in understanding the Islamic faith, then the supreme methodology for presenting the faith that combines the mind, heart and conscience. The research problem lies in answering the following questions: Is there a doctrinal method and approach that combines the theoretical and practical aspects? What are the tools that help a Muslim understand his faith to touch his heart and conscience? What are the reasons for the disconnection of a Muslim's behavior and morals from faith in his daily life? Moreover, the research aims to highlight the supreme approach that combines thought and conscience, as well as to suggest tools that help a Muslim establish his faith to touch his heart.

Keywords: Methodology, Faith, Al-Mutakallimin, Salafism

Introduction

The Islamic faith is the foundation and basis of Islam and we were guided to it by the revelation of Allah sent down to His Messenger -May Allah bless him and grant him peace. The Companions learned the faith from the Messenger of Allah -May Allah bless him and grant him peace- and he presented it to them in a pure style, without extraneous philosophical or Persian points of view, until it came to touch their minds and hearts, which had an impact on the lives they lived. Over time, the faith was tainted with strange terms introduced by philosophers and theologians, so that presenting the faith to Muslims -the common people and the educated- became such a sophisticated issue that only those who are engaged in the sciences of philosophy, logic, theology, and the subtleties of Sufism could understand it and decipher its terms. Rather, the subject of monotheism and faith has become a stumbling block that students fear, so instead of being called "Al-Aqida" as in Faith, it has become "Al-Taeqid"

as in to be Complex in their points of view, due to the abundance of rigid terms and the many differences between Islamic schools regarding the branches of faith upon which no action is built, but rather arguments, debates, and objections. Indeed, these vocals may be the most appropriate to confront people who use this weapon, but now this has become rare, and the experimental approach based on materialism has become dominant in our contemporary reality.

Definition of Al-Manhaj Method Linguistically
"Al-Manhaj" is a word derived from the verb "Nahaj". In Lisan Al-Arab, it is stated as in, "Nahj: path - Nahj: clear and obvious" and "Manhaj" means to clarify the path. Allah Almighty says, {To each of you We prescribed a law and a method.} (Surat Al-Ma'idah: verse 48); Ibn Abbas said, "This means a path and away". Therefore, it means the evident path that leads to the desired goal.

Definition of "Al-Manhaj" Method Terminologically
The definitions of the Method vary according to the notion of each group of people, but these definitions can be traced back to "the path leading to defining the truth in sciences utilizing a collection of general rules that dominate the course of minds and determine its operations until it reaches known results".

Definition of "Al-Aqida" Faith Linguistically
It has been mentioned in the books of language with several meanings, which are: binding, tightening, and intensity. It is stated in Asās al-Balāghah ("The Foundation of Eloquence"), "Aqd: complex and intricate structure and "Taeaqud Al-Sahab": clouds become complex knots". It is stated in Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasit that, "Al-Aqida is a ruling that is not subject to doubt by its believer, and in religion, it is the belief meant without action.

Based on the foregoing, it is clear that the linguistic meaning of "Al-Aqida" Faith revolves around connection, strength, and intensity, as it accompanies its holder and does not separate from him, and he does not separate from it easily even if he is exposed to abuse and various types of trials and there is no way to change what is in the heart except with a convincing argument.

Definition of "Al-Aqida" Faith Terminologically
The terminological definition of faith has varied among scholars. Some scholars followed the approach of the earlier late Ash'ari theologians, such as Imam Al-Iji, Al-Jurjani, and Al-Dawani. Imam Al-Iji defined it as; "A science that enables one to prove religious beliefs by presenting arguments and refuting doubts". Several contemporaries have agreed with this definition, such as Sheikh Al-Muti'i in his commentary on Al-Khuraidah, and Sheikh Alish in Al-Futuhat Al-Ilahiyyah. Accordingly, what is meant by faith here is the same belief that is found in the heart, in contrast to the practical rulings and legal applications that are concerned with the sciences of Sharia, jurisprudence, and systems.

Most Prominent Islamic Schools and Their Methodology for Presenting the Faith
Anyone who beholds our contemporary reality will find that many Islamic schools on the scene present the Islamic faith according to a method settled by these schools, whether this

method is close to the method of the Qur'an or far from it, suitable for the Muslim or not. In this research, I have chosen the most prominent schools on the scene, and they are as follows:

The School of Al-Mutakallimin
We mean by them those who are known by this name in our contemporary time, namely the Ash'aris and Maturidis. They were called "Al-Mutakallimin" because they "spoke about matters of faith that the predecessors were silent about". This description of "Al-Mutakallimin" was not specific to the Ash'aris and Maturidis only, but it was also a description of the Mu'tazila -those who went to extremes in giving precedence to reason over transmission- except that they ended at the hands of Imam Al-Ash'ari.

The school of "Al-Mutakallimin" emerged at the hands of Imam Al-Ash'ari (d. 324) and then his students and those who followed his school of thought. The purpose of this school was to defend the doctrine of the righteous predecessors, confront the excessive rational tendency of the Mu'tazila, and confront the Khawarij, Shi'a, anthropomorphists, and literalists. Imam Al-Ash'ari and those who followed his methodology after him until the fifth century "relied on transmission with all its depth in understanding it and on rationality with all its deliberation and caution in using it". This is what we consider in Imam Al-Baqillani's book, The Miracle of the Qur'an, when he responds to those who claim that proving the oneness of "Tawhid" of Allah Almighty is something that cannot be achieved except through reason, because the Qur'an is the speech of Allah Almighty, and it is not proper to know the speech until the speaker is first known.

However, from the sixth-century AH. to approximately the ninth century, a new phase began in the school of "Al-Mutakallimin", as theology was mixed with philosophy, major theological encyclopedias appeared, as did the phenomenon of interpretation and annotation, the use of Aristotelian logic prevailed, and the Mu'tazilite spirit and rational method were infiltrated into many Sunni schools of thought. Imam Ibn Khaldun spoke about the later of "Al-Mutakallimin", saying, "The later of "Al-Mutakallimin" mixed the issues of theology with the issues of philosophy, to present them in their discussions, and the subject of theology became like the subject of Allah's Knowledge and mixed between the issues of both, so it became as if they were one art. Then they changed the order of the philosophers in the issues of physics and the subject of Allah's Knowledge and mixed them, and presented the speech on general matters, then followed it with the physical and its dependencies, then the spiritual, and the speech became mixed with the issues of wisdom, and its books were filled with them as if the purpose of their subject and their issues were one, and this became confusing to the people, which is not correct because the issues of theology are only beliefs received from the Sharia as the predecessors transmitted them without referring to reason or relying on it".

The Salafist School of Thought
The term "Salaf" in linguistics refers to the past and the former. In Lisan Al-Arab, it is stated that: "Salaf" means the former. In Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasit, it is stated, "Everyone who preceded you from your fathers and relatives in age or virtue". Terminologically, it was stated in Kashshaf Al-Tahanawi that, "Salaf is the designation of everyone whose doctrine in religion is imitated and whose traces are followed, such as Abu Hanifa and his companions, for they are our predecessors". Imam Al-Bajuri also defined the term "al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ" as the righteous predecessors by saying, "those who came before us of prophets, companions, followers, and

those who followed them". Through this linguistic and terminological definition, we note that the term "al-salaf" predecessors are a term that is applied by later generations to earlier generations and is not known to the earlier generations themselves. This term is not based on a clear methodological basis, but rather it is a linguistic term that did not consider anything other than its linguistic meaning.

Contemporary scholars have differed in defining the meaning of the term "al-salaf" predecessors, and this is natural, because the Salaf is not a school of belief or jurisprudence, nor are they a doctrine with renewed features so that they can be confined to a specific framework. Rather, the term "salaf" is a term that the later scholars applied to the earlier scholars, and the earlier scholars themselves did not know it. Therefore, Prof. Rajih Al-Kurdi defined Salafism as having three meanings:

1- Temporal Salafism: It refers to the former folks of the Islamic nation, the Companions, and those who followed them in righteousness, and the followers of the followers from the people of the preferred centuries who are known for their virtue in the news of the Messenger -May Allah bless him and grant him peace.

2- Methodological Salafism: These predecessors had a method for understanding Islam, and it was the only method. Then other understandings occurred as a result of the entry of Non-Arabs into Islam and the entry of philosophy. Then Salafism became a sign of commitment to the methodology of the Companions and their followers in understanding Islam -without the modern understandings- so everyone who adheres to this method is a Salafi, no matter how advanced the ages are.

3- Salafism of Content: "The Salafi Methodology to taking texts and understanding them has produced scientific and behavioral attitudes, the most significant of which are related to issues of belief related to Allah, His Power, destiny, and the like. Whoever adheres to these contents with that methodology is a Salafi". Prof. Al-Bouti differed in defining Salafism, saying, "Salafism is a collection of ideological ideas and behavioral rules that were collected from the Islamic heritage established by previous scholars. This collection or selection was not based on a scientific examination but rather based on the whims of those who belong to it". This term is used in our contemporary time to refer to all those who follow Sheikh Muhammad Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab.

Based on the foregoing, it becomes obvious that the term Salafism is one of the terms about which there is no agreement on its content in intellectual circles in our contemporary Arab and Islamic reality. For some, it is synonymous with the efforts of Islamic reform, "where many classify Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and Al-Kawakibi as scholars of Salafist trends, and for others, Salafism is the opposite of progressivism, modernity, civility, and secularism" (Hani, 2011).

Characteristics of the Salafi School in Presenting the Faith
Not Taking into Account the Era In Which The Muslim Lives. We find that some institutions that adopt the Salafi methodology in dealing with issues of faith almost completely ignore the reality of the contemporary Muslim in terms of language, method, and challenges. The books studied in councils and lectures are books written by early scholars, most of which were authored to respond to those who disagreed with some chapters of faith, using the language of that era and its styles of dialogue. For example, in the field of Allah's Knowledge, we find that they delved into subtle metaphysical issues such as the attributes of the descriptive, and

they devoted much of their efforts and passions, and even wrote many books on them, such as Monotheism And Affirmation Of The Attributes Of The Lord by Ibn Khuzayma, 'Ar Radd 'alā Bishr Al Mirrīsi' by Al-Darimi, and Ar-Risalah at-Tadmuriyyah by Ibn Taymiyyah, and other books that dealt with issues that do not exist in our time, and did not constitute interest for the Muslim common folks, but rather these books are more like books of sects and disagreements.

Adding numerous issues related to the faith, which do not exist in revelation, and giving them a wide space in the map of Islamic faith.
Raising issues that are not controversial among the Muslim common folks today, such as the issue of the creation of the Qur'an and seeing Allah Almighty. If it were presented to them in the form of a report without reference to the controversy, it would be more beneficial.

The expansion of the use of expressions and rulings of ex-communication, declaring someone an infidel, and declaring someone an innovator, whether in the fundamentals or the branches, created a psychological barrier between them and their societies, which need education, awareness, and upbringing more than they need such rulings; until every beginner in seeking knowledge excommunicates and declares eminent scholars who have been seeking knowledge since their early childhood as innovators.

Methodology of the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah in Presenting the Faith
The Qur'an's Methodology in Presenting the Islamic Faith
There is no doubt that the method of the Holy Qur'an is unmatched and unrivaled in its style and presentation of the faith; "relying on a unique methodology characterized by precision and reasoning, clarity of evidence, simplicity of idea and depth of its impact, and the strength of its power over the human heart and mind alike. The Qur'anic methodology has avoided all forms of mental and intellectual complexity... which makes the faith a critical subject and rigid intellectual research that does not stimulate the innate potential of the human being, nor move his feelings, and which even if it succeeded in addressing the human mind, it neglected his soul and did not soften his heart" (Majid Zaki Al-Jallad, p. 332). It is more beneficial to combine the two best things. Therefore, the Holy Qur'an built its methodology in establishing the faith on several methods, including:

The Emotional Methodology
It is a method that is based on the heart and moves feelings and conscience. This method has been mentioned in the Qur'an in many ways on various doctrinal issues, including innate feelings. Man is created with faith and driven by his innate nature to search for the Creator of this existence and to believe in Him. Allah Almighty says, {And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." [This] - lest you should say on the day of Resurrection...} (Surat Al-A'raf: verse 172)

The emotional methodology has appeared in the Qur'an through methods of exhortation and intimidation, such as mentioning the horrors of the Day of Resurrection and the reward of deeds on the Day of Resurrection, and reviving the issue of faith and explaining its effect on man.

The Rational Methodology

The Holy Qur'an addressed the human cognitive and mental power, relying on evidence of creation, guidance, and care, and bringing abstract meanings closer by representing them in the world of sense and observation. The existence of Allah Almighty, the greatest doctrinal truth, was proven by directing the human gaze and heart to contemplate and consider the tangible scenes of the universe, such as the sun, moon, sky, and everything on earth. Allah Almighty says, {And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages …} (Surat Ar-Rum: verse 22).

The Dialectical Methodology

The Holy Qur'an has dealt with some issues of faith through the method of argument, such as the topics of proving the existence of Allah Almighty, His oneness and invalidating other forms of polytheism, proving prophethood, and other issues that the Qur'an has argued about, "and the argument that was used in the Qur'an is the good argument that is not reprehensible; based on revealing the truth, with correct evidence and proofs" (Atef Abdel Salam Awda, p. 53). Allah Almighty says, {Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in the best way.} (Surat An-Nahl: verse 125).

The Material Sensory Methodology

It is a methodology that is based on the senses, observations, and experiences. This methodology was used by talking about the supernatural signs, which are the sensory miracles that the prophets -peace be upon them- brought to indicate their truthfulness (Atef Abdel Salam Awda, p. 53).

The Declarative Methodology

The Qur'an has been used to clarify issues of faith, such as the issues of establishing and clarifying the names and sublime attributes of Allah, and issues of prophethood such as the selection of prophets and their exoneration from deficiencies and their infallibility, as well as establishing some issues of the Last Day. Therefore, the one who contemplates the Holy Qur'an's method of presenting issues of faith will notice the diversity that distinguishes the Holy Qur'an, as it uses various styles such as contemplation and reflection, establishing arguments and proofs, dialogue, and discussion, and giving examples and comparisons.

We would like to point out a significant issue in presenting the faith through the method of the Holy Qur'an; which is how to determine the appropriate method and style by which the topics of the faith are presented. Indeed, anyone who contemplates the methods we have previously referred to will find that each method is linked to the nature of the topics; this is because each doctrinal issue is suited to one approach rather than another. For example: topics of the unseen, such as Heaven, Hell, and devils, require the Declarative Methodology; since the mind alone is not capable of knowing them, while issues of the existence of Allah Almighty and His oneness -the Almighty and Majestic- are suited to the Rational Deductive Methodology, and so on.

The Sunnah's Methodology in Presenting the Faith

The Sunnah of the Prophet is the second source of Islamic legislation. It confirms and explains what the Holy Qur'an has brought. It has paid great attention to building faith in people's

hearts, so it addressed them with what the Holy Qur'an addressed them with. The styles and methods of the Prophet's discourse in addressing people in matters of their faith have varied.

The Instinctive Methodology and the emphasis on the evidence of the innate nature is the issue of faith in the existence of Allah Almighty; the Messenger of Allah -May Allah bless him and grant him peace- said, "Every child is born with a true faith of Islam (i.e. to worship none but Allah Alone) and his parents convert him to Judaism or Christianity or Magianism?" This hadith agrees with the words of Allah Almighty, {So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fitrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] people.}• (Surat Ar-Rum: verse 30).

Linking Faith Issues to Life Matters through people's behavior and actions. This is a common point between the Qur'an and the Sunnah; as the address is repeated in the verses with, {O you who believe...} and in the Sunnah with "By Allah, he does not believe…"

The Prophet -May Allah bless him and grant him peace- used the method of rational deduction based on the rules of contemplation, thinking, and rational reasoning to prove divine truths, the most significant of which is the existence of Allah Almighty, so he relied on two methods:
A. The method of contemplation and rational thinking to reach the correct results; and
B. The method of rational argument and using rational arguments to reach the desired results.

Either he can deduct from within himself when he contemplates his Creator, Glory be to Him, or a convincing argument can lead him to the Creator. The Prophet -May Allah bless him and grant him peace- emphasized through his guidance the adoption of the foundations of sound rational thinking, starting with avoiding blind imitation, and drawing attention to the necessity of evaluating the heritage and rethinking it.

In Sahih Al-Bukhari, Narrated Zaid bin Khalid Al-Juhani: "The Messenger of Allah -May Allah bless him and grant him peace- led the morning prayer in Al-Hudaibiya and it had rained the previous night. When the Prophet (p.b.u.h) had finished the prayer, he faced the people and said, "Do you know what your Lord has said?" They replied, "Allah and His Apostle know better." (The Prophet (p.b.u.h) said), "Allah says, 'In this morning some of My worshipers remained as true believers and some became non-believers; he who said that it had rained with the blessing and mercy of Allah is the one who believes in Me and does not believe in star, but he who said it had rained because of such and such (star) is a disbeliever in Me and is a believer in star.'"

The hadith refers to building systematic scientific thinking that is built on a foundation of sound rational thinking. Thus, the belief that these planets are the cause of rain is something that the mind denies, and sound logical thinking prevents. The mind concludes that behind the rain is a great divine power that surpasses the power of the planets. In this hadith, the Prophet-May Allah bless him and grant him peace- calls for reconsidering the heritage, rejecting blind imitation, completely submitting to what the fathers and grandfathers brought, and not following the ways of ignorance and the people of misguidance, because of their effect on disabling the mind.

These diverse methodologies and styles confirm to the teacher who presents the faith to people's understanding that he should not settle on one methodology or style; rather, he must use the methodology of the Qur'an and Sunnah in the diversity of methods and styles in addressing the mind and conscience according to the nature of the subject and the people.

Examples of Contemporaries who dealt with Faith through Planting and Studying
We previously mentioned the role played by our early scholars in defending Islam. They presented the faith in a way that suited the circumstances of their environment. Then the era that followed changed, but the style of the faith presentation did not change. Faith entered minds but not hearts, until Allah Almighty provided eminent scholars who awakened the faith in the minds and hearts of the Muslim common folks. We will present examples of these scholars.

Imam Badi' al-Din (Badi' Al-Zaman) Al-Nursi (1877-1960 AD.) and his Methodology for Presenting the Faith
The scholar Badi' Al-Zaman lived during the period of the fall of the Islamic Ottoman Caliphate, the waves of violent atheism that followed this fall, and the will of Western domination over the Islamic world; a domination that extended to the earth to absorb its wealth and extended to faith to remove it from hearts and fill them with doubts and misguidance. Imam Al-Nursi described this painful reality and critical situation when he said, "Whoever follows the time of the writing and publication of The Risale-i Nur finds that the nation, the nation of Islam, is passing through the darkest period of its life, as torrents of darkness, the darkness of violent seditions, sweep across all parts of the Islamic world, and doubts and false ideas invade minds and hearts from every direction, so souls are darkened and spirits are suffocated until hope is lost…".

Therefore, the characteristics of the environment in which Imam Al-Nursi lived are as follows:
i.   The tyranny of atheism and its followers in the face of faith and its people: In this sense, Al-Nursi said, "The people of misguidance and atheism display a strange rebellion and amazing foolishness to the point that makes a person regret his humanity, and this is to preserve their path that hinders the awakening of faith".
ii.   The prevalence of philosophical doubts that almost clouded the serenity of faith for its people: Al-Nursi described this phenomenon by saying, "The people of faith -at present- are in dire need of a noble and honest truth such that it cannot be a means to reach anything, nor dependent on anything, nor a way to reach other goals, nor can any purpose or intention be able to pollute it, nor can philosophy or doubts be able to reach it. Therefore, believers require such truth to guide them to the truths of faith, to preserve the faith of believers in this age in which the force of misguidance has intensified, and its doubts have accumulated for a thousand years".
iii. The prevalence of the phenomenon of slander and insults against the person of the Prophet -May Allah bless him and grant him peace- and his message, which is the reality that Al-Nursi described when he said, "In this era, a destructive and devastating attack began on Islam and the Qur'an from all sides, and slander began to be directed at the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad -May Allah bless him and grant him peace- and attempts were made to undermine that sublime and lofty self, while books were permitted that spread the poison of atheism and alienation from religion and morality, and praise and commendation were directed at the wretched enemies of Islam".

iv.   The prevalence of communist atheism beyond the borders of its original homeland and its threat to the truths of faith in the countries it has reached, including Turkey, "The youth are undoubtedly in dire need of firm and certain lessons in proving the existence of Allah Almighty and proving His Oneness, glory be to Him, and the elderly are likewise, as they read what the newspapers write about the Russians' attack on faith with the terrible attacks of atheism and the denial of the Great Creator".

These matters prompted Imam Al-Nursi to stand up to these attacks with his thoughts, mind, being, and movement. He brought out a generation that was raised on The Risale-i Nur until he established pure belief in the hearts of Muslims. He enumerated the methods of presenting it with the multiplicity of intellectual geographies and questions raised, "and he was convinced with certainty that the method of ancient theology was insufficient to respond to the doubts and suspicions about religion, so modern sciences should also be acquired." His diagnosis of the disease, while he was still a young man, prepared the atmosphere for the great Qur'anic service and the great Islamic work in the future, as Allah Almighty guided him after about thirty years to compose The Risale-i Nur, which renewed the science of theology. He then began to study books on modern sciences until he acquired their foundations in history, geography, mathematics, geology, physics, chemistry, astronomy, philosophy, and similar sciences. This was within a very short time. He explored the depths of these sciences by himself without the help of anyone and without resorting to a teacher to teach them to him".

Therefore, Imam Al-Nursi's methodology for presenting the faith is based on the following matters:
1. Commitment to the methodology of the Holy Quran;
2. Avoiding the debates of theologians on matters of faith; and
3. Reporting the facts of the faith in the language of his time and bringing them closer with living examples from the material sciences that people revered in his time. He used modern sciences to present matters of faith; therefore, we often find him guided by pharmacology, astronomy, medicine, or other sciences in explaining the topics of the faith, especially the subject of Allah's Knowledge.

Sheikh Mohammed Al-Ghazali (1917-1996 AD.) and his Methodology for Presenting the Faith
The reformer Sheikh Mohammed Al-Ghazali contributed to renewing the presentation of the faith by returning to the pure method, which is the Holy Qur'an. In his book: The Creed of a Muslim and other books, he presented a distinct method for dealing with the Islamic faith, which is based on the following matters:

First: Reducing the Theological Debate in the Creed Lesson. In his discussion of the science of monotheism, Sheikh Mohammed Al-Ghazali reduced the theological debate and the theological sects that, with their debate and terminology, brought about what confused the truth of the creed, and what clouded the clarity of faith, and distanced it from achieving its goals and objectives. Sheikh Al-Ghazali explains what he has become in his presentation of knowledge, saying, "I have made an effort -when I have undertaken to depict the Creed of a Muslim- to avoid the thorns of this disagreement. If I was able to fold it into the regular context, I folded it and ignored it. If I was forced to delve into it, I dealt with it reluctantly, and I mentioned what I found to be correct; however, I may ignore the opposite party but not

declare him an infidel, because of blatant ignorance -as it appeared to me- is the basis of many obscure scientific problems. Perhaps I have noticed a crookedness in the morals of some of the debaters, and violence in their style, so I prefer to forgive this rather than respond to the bad with the same because we are a nation that is very poor in terms of gathering and coalition. So let us refrain from these arguments, and unto Allah is our return".

In the context of discussing the attributes and presenting the statements of those who went to the interpretation that sometimes led them to anthropomorphism or nullification, the Sheikh says, "I wish that the early Muslims would stop engaging in battles of debate on the subject, or that some of them would clarify the other's point of view accurately."

In this context, the Sheikh reveals his doctrine of interpretation or lack thereof, saying, "I prefer the doctrine of the Salaf, and I refuse for the Islamic mind to engage in exhaustive research into what lies beyond matter, and I prefer the acceptance of verses and hadiths that include descriptions of Allah -may He be glorified- without interpretation".

Second: Review of the Science of Faith in Terms of Form and Content. One of the features of Sheikh Mohammed Al-Ghazali's method of the science of monotheism is that he reviewed it in terms of form and content; as he sees that the books on the science of monotheism that are popular among us now have failed to deliver their message in form and content.

Therefore, Sheikh Al-Ghazali -may Allah have mercy on him- presented in this book a good model in terms of form and content. He did not limit himself to theorizing or talking far from experience, but rather precisely noted down this example to be an application of theorizing. How often do we theorize in our lives about our issues and problems without establishing practical solutions and applied experiments for what we decide on in the theorizing? In terms of form, Sheikh Al-Ghazali formulated the topics of the science of monotheism in an impassive style, dazzling clarity, and captivating method that makes you not satisfied when you open the book until you reach the end. Indeed, Sheikh Al-Ghazali was known to be delicate in nature and pure in soul, a naturally gifted poet, a rare type of writer whose prose expressions you feel are composed poetry. However, he stripped the science of texts and footnotes and presented them in a simple form that can be read by the elite and the public and from which scholars and non-scholars can benefit.

As for the content, as we said, he purified it from the chaos of the theological sects and their dialectics, except within limited circumstances, and dealt with the issues of science in a way that produces its effects in the soul and heart as well as in the mind and thought equally. Furthermore, it is enough for you to read what he wrote in the chapter: "The Supreme Perfection"; where he discussed: power, will, wisdom, life, knowledge, hearing and sight, speech, and you truly are Allah. In his discussion of these topics, he avoided the theoretical issues raised by theologians that open opportunities for debate and disagreement and only produce barren ideas and poverty in the field of Islamic belief. He left all of this behind and discussed the manifestations of these meanings in the universe, in the soul, and the horizons in a way that pours faith into the heart and convinces the mind of what it is discussing. It is hard for me here to cite examples because the scope of speech is vast the examples are numerous and captivating, and all of them are expressive and clear, so it is better for the reader to check and review these topics in their original pages there (Al-Ghazali, 96-119).

Third: Return to the pure source; the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. This is one of the most essential features of the Sheikh in the science of Islamic Faith; as he would take directly from the texts and deal with them without distressing their clarity with anything that would extinguish their light and effect in the hands of controversy, riot, debates, and rational arguments, during which the faith was almost lost.

The Sheikh says, "Instilling the faith in hearts will not bear fruit and flourish except through the method of Islam itself. Unexpectedly, you read the fundamental sources of theological books, turn the long pages, and you can hardly find a verse or a hadith except for a few quotations, which appear like isolated flowers in the salty ground! Perhaps the lovers of abstract philosophical research have found rest in these books, and it does not matter! But this does not make us dispense with presenting the pure faith; truths that are closely connected to its primary sources".

Sheikh Mohammed Al-Ghazali benefited from the results of scientific research in his study on faith and employed it in the best way to indicate the existence of Allah, His power, and His dominance over what is in the universe, so he said in this regard, "The intelligent mind, honest research, and the idea that is free from purpose and is straight on the path inevitably lead their owners to Allah and make them stand in awe before the overwhelming feeling of His greatness and majesty. Indeed, it is foolishness and dullness for the foolish among people to think that faith is the result of a closed mind, or that the vastness of sciences and the breadth of human knowledge scratches the foundation of faith and weakens the connection with the Creator God."

Sheikh Al-Ghazali here combines -as is clear- benefiting from the results of scientific research with contemplation, reconsideration, reflection, and consideration of the evidence in the universe and horizons for the existence of Allah Almighty. Despite the abundance of this scientific and cosmic evidence, the world is loaded with deniers who reject the truth and disbelieve in Allah. Under the title "Power," the Sheikh says, "Do not think that anything in the universe is powerful in itself. Just as power first created it from nothing, it deposited in it its secrets and spread in it the effects that indicate it. Some of the deniers among the natural scientist's attribute what falls before their eyes of these dazzling signs to the purely unknown, or powers latent in the various materials and elements. This is shameful nonsense, a belittling of the mind, and a fallacy of reality. The light generated by the spread of electricity in wires, the movement resulting from the expansion of vapors in pipes, and the iron rising in the air because of the rotating fans changing the amounts of pressure around the plane—all of these do not raise the status of any of the created elements and grant it the rank of independent existence, aside from the wonderful creation".

These are some examples of scholars who combined reason, heart, and conscience in presenting the faith. Other examples followed the same approach as Imam Al-Nursi, such as Sheikh al-Islam Mustafa Sabri, Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Sheikh Sayyid Sabiq, Sheikh Muhammad Ayoub, and others who contributed to spreading the pure faith among Muslims.

Conclusion

Faith is the driving force of a man, and is what controls his directions, and determines for him that he should do and what he should avoid, and is what reveals to him the truths of things; moreover, it even represents Islam's answer to the three questions that have puzzled the minds of philosophers since ancient times: Who created man? What is the purpose of his existence? And where is his destiny? Therefore, considering this fierce attack on the Islamic faith by atheists and others, the following matters are necessary:

a) Calling for simplifying matters of faith, so that Muslims are only presented with clear, agreed-upon principles, and people are protected from classification and branching out. There is nothing wrong with having competent scholars who specialize in theology and differentiate between the infallible divine revelation and human thought, which is subject to error and mistake.

b) Scholars must address issues of faith by relying on the language, style, and methodology of the Qur'an in establishing faith and addressing the mind and conscience alike.

c) Avoid presenting the Islamic faith by responding to old opponents and dispelling their doubts; rather, it is necessary to revive the correct nature that exists in the souls of humans and treat and purify it with divine cures.

d) Scholars and preachers should consider the era in which the Muslim lives, and the concerns of its individuals, such as being concerned with confronting secularists and atheists and leaving the minor differences that lead to discord among the Islamic nation.

e) The necessity of benefiting from contemporary sciences, especially the definitive ones, which establish issues of faith in souls and prove the absence of conflict between Allah's legal words and His cosmic words; such as the miracle of the Qur'an in experimental, legislative, and social sciences.

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