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## FEATURES OF DOGMATIC THEOLOGY IN TRADITIONAL (SUNNISM) ISLAM

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## ABSTRACT

*This article highlights the features of dogmatic theology (ilmu-l-akaid) from the point of view of representatives of traditional (Sunni) Islam. It conveys information that the main sources of dogmatic theology, which can be cited as an argument, from the point of view of representatives of traditional Islam are the Qurʻān, Sunnah and decisions of righteous ancestors (al-salafu-s-salihin). In addition, the article lists 10 features of dogmatic theology that are illuminated according to arguments from the sacred sources of Islam. The early and late representatives of "ahlu-s-sunna wa-l-djama`a" in the preparation of theological treatises paid much attention to the above features. Besides, the article cites as an example the words of one of the first eponyms of traditional Islam - Abū Ḥanīfa and his treatise "al-Fikh Al-akbar".*

An analysis of the opinions of traditionalist scientists ("ahlu-s-sunna wa-l-jama`a") shows that the status of any science is determined by what significant topics are discussed in it. And the science of dogmatic theology (ilmu-l-`aqaid - علم العقائد) is one of the fundamental and basic knowledge in Islam. Because this science teaches how to believe in Allah, His angels, holy books, prophets, judgment day and predestination.

There are many works on the science of dogmatic theology, which are attributed to scientists from among the "righteous ancestors" (as-Salafu-s-salihin - السلف الصالحون)<sup>1</sup> [ 1:632 ]. Along with short treatises that were convenient for students to memorize, understand and fully comprehend, voluminous works with reliable and fundamental arguments were also compiled, to refute the views of non-traditional (muḥtadi - مبتدع) representatives of Islam.

When transmitting their teachings in treatises on dogmatic theology, the eponyms of Sunni Islam and their followers strictly relied on 3 main sources. This is the Koran, considered the holy Book, it is the very first and truthful source in Islam, as stated in the verses: " **Whose**

<sup>1</sup>This is the name given to Muslims of the first generations, to whom later tradition refers when establishing the tenets of doctrine and law. Among them are the companions of the Prophet Muhammad (ashhabu-l-kiram), their followers - tabi`uns and followers of tabi`uns (taba`a-tabi`uns).



speech is more truthful than the speech of Allah? "( an-Nisa, 87 ) . The next source is the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, which consists of his actions (fi`l - **فعل**), his statements (kaul - **قول**) and unspoken approval (takrir - **تقرير**). The Quran says: **" If he had attributed certain words to Us, We would have grabbed his right hand (or grabbed him tightly), and then cut his aorta "** (al-Haqqa, 44-46). And the last source is the understanding of the "righteous ancestors", the period of which the Prophet indicated in his hadith [ 2:1111 ] . The difference between supporters of traditional Islam and representatives of non-traditional Islam is that the former, as an argument in the science of dogmatic theology, accepted the understanding of the Koran and Sunnah from the companions of the Prophet. Describing the "righteous ancestors" in the verses of the Koran it says: **" Allah is pleased with the first of the Muhajirs and Ansars who were ahead of the rest, and with those who followed strictly behind them. They are also pleased with Allah "** (at-Tawbah, 100).

It should be noted that the verses of the Koran and the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad, which report on the topics of dogmatic theology, do not fall under the rule of "abolition" (nasih - **ناسخ** and mansukh - **منسوخ**). In addition, in elucidating issues of a dogmatic nature, such methods of argument as "ijtihad" (zeal - **اجتهاد**), "ra' y" are not allowed (judgment - **رأى**) and others.

Scholars of traditional Islam expressing their thoughts in treatises on doctrine, based on the above sources, they developed some rules and paid attention to the following features of the science of dogmatic theology:

1. In dogmatic theology, messages about secret (gaibiyat - **غيبات**) knowledge are studied. All pillars of faith (iman) [ 2:24 ] are considered information of a hidden nature. And the believer (mu ' min) learns about this knowledge with the help of the holy sources of Islam. The Koran says: **" He has the keys to the unseen, and only He knows about them "** (al-Anam, 59);

2. Dogmatic theology in Islam is considered knowledge of the divine character (tawqifi - **توقيفي**). This means that all topics studied are related to information sent down from above (the Quran and Sunnah) and the method of "ijtihad" (zealousness) of any scientist or making changes to these messages is considered inappropriate. What is said in the Quran: **" Among the people there are those who argue about Allah without knowledge, and follow every rebellious devil "** (al-Hajj, 3);

3. The given messages in dogmatic theology in Islam adhere to the middle (wasatiya - **وسطية**) character. There are such beliefs: **" The Jews said: "The hand of Allah is bound." It is their hands that are fettered and they are cursed for what they have said (or may their hands be fettered and may they be cursed for what they have said) "** (al-Maida, 64), which describe Allah with various flaws. Others: **" Those who say: "Allah is the Messiah, the son of Maryam (Mary) "** (al-Maida, 72) deify their prophets did not believe. Still others: **" Did he really turn the gods into the Only God? Truly, this is something amazing!" Noble people from among them left with the words: "Go and endure for your gods. Truly, this is a certain plan (or something desired). We haven't heard about this in the latest religion. This is nothing more than fiction "** (Sad, 5-7) associate partners with Allah. And the extreme ones: **" They said: "There is only our worldly life. We die and are born, and**



**nothing destroys us except time** ” (al-Jasiyya, 24), and they completely deny the existence of Allah. Islamic Sharia, in the realm of dogmatic theology, follows a middle path, relying on messages that are conveyed only in sacred sources;

4. Dogmatic theology does not change, and it is impossible to apply the method of analogy (qiyas - قياس) to it over time, as in legal-theological (fiqh - فقه) topics. If, during the time of the Prophet Muhammad, a person accepted Islam, voiced his faith, citing words of testimony, then today this statement remains unchanged. Or, the name of the angel Gabriel (Jabra` il ) also did not change over time. The Quran says: “ **Today I have perfected your religion for your sake, completed My mercy towards you and approved Islam for you as a religion** ” (al-Maida, 3);

5. Dogmatic theology does not contradict common reason. In the Koran you can find many verses that call for reflection: “ **Indeed, in this are signs for those who have understanding** ” (Ta Ha, 54);

6. Each topic of dogmatic theology is supported by arguments. If a believer is asked to believe in something for which there is no evidence, he is not obliged to accept it. The Koran says: “ **They said: “No one will enter Paradise except Jews or Christians.” These are their dreams. Say: “Bring your proof if you are telling the truth** ” (al-Baqarah, 111);

7. There are no contradictions or oppositions in the themes of dogmatic theology. Ayat of the Quran: “ **Don’t they think about the Quran? After all, if it were not from Allah, then they would find many contradictions in it** ” (an-Nisa, 82) explains the fact that the sacred sources of Islam, sanctifying sacred knowledge, have no contradictions;

8. The themes of dogmatic theology are understandable to all categories of people. What the Prophet Muhammad said: *“I leave you on a bright path. Nights that are as bright as day. Only lost people stray from this true path”* [ 3:16 ] . In the Koran, it was said that it is understandable to everyone: “ **We have made the Koran easier for remembrance** ” (al-Qamar, 17);

9. The dogmatic theology of Islam is accepted without complications by every person of sound nature (الفطرة). The Koran conveys information about this nature: “ **Turn your face to religion, professing monotheism. This is the innate quality with which Allah created people. Allah's creation cannot be changed. This is the right faith, but most people do not know it** ” (ar-Rum, 30);

10. Dogmatic theology answers all the most important questions of man. People ask themselves questions: “Why was I created in this world? What will happen to me after my death? Is there life after death?” and try to find answers to them. The dogma of Islam answers such important questions in simple and understandable language. From the point of view of Islam, the Creator of all things, himself answers all these questions in sacred sources, as stated in the Koran: “ **Won’t He who created know this, if He is Perceptive (or Good), Knowledgeable?** ” (al-Mulk, 14).

By studying the dogmatic treatises compiled by representatives of “Ahlu-s-Sunnah wa-l-Jama`a” one can make sure that they touch on the above-mentioned features. One of the very first eponyms of traditional Islam, Abu Hanifa, in the treatise “al-Fiqh Al-akbar” attributed to him, mentioning the sources of dogmatic theology, focuses the attention of the reader and



student of this science on the Koran: " We know Allah as we should know Him , according to His description of Himself in His Book, with all His attributes " [ 4:11 ] . Or, "He has a Hand (yad - يد), Face (uwajh - وجه) , Essence (nafs - نفس), as mentioned in the Quran. The mention in the Qur'an that Allah has all this implies that it is among His attributes, and one should not question the qualities of these attributes (bi la keif - بلا كيف). It is impossible to say that His Hand represents His Power or the Endowment of Bountiful Gifts, because such an interpretation requires the negation of the attribute" [ 4:6 ] .

The conclusion of all the above information is that representatives of "ahlu-s-sunnah wa-l-jama`a" have always adhered to the tradition that the Prophet Muhammad laid down for them when covering the topics of dogmatic theology.

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