



RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Contemporary Religious Thought and Its Challenges between Stagnation and Renewal (A Doctrinal Study)

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: Sep 26, 2024 Accepted: Oct 31, 2024 <b>Keywords</b> Religion Stagnation Renewal	This research addresses the issue of renewal in religious thought and its contemporary challenges between stagnation and renewal. The study clarifies key terms such as religion, religiosity, stagnation, renewal, and thought. It concludes that there is a clear distortion in concepts among the general public, leading to a deviation from the correct understanding. Renewal is divided into praiseworthy and blameworthy types. Praiseworthy renewal has conditions and guidelines, as does stagnation, where certain religious constants must not be altered. There is, however, space for ijthad (independent reasoning) and thought within the boundaries of Islamic law, which are explained in detail, supported by evidence from the Qur'an and Prophetic Sunnah.
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## INTRODUCTION

### Research Problem:

This study seeks to answer several key questions, including:

- What are the causes of the inadequacies in religious thought?
- How can we restore the effectiveness and role of religion in our lives and face contemporary challenges to religious thought?
- How can we renew our religious thought and keep pace with modern times without compromising our core principles?
- What is the importance of renewal in religious thought?
- What are the conditions and guidelines for proper and praiseworthy religious renewal?

### Significance of the Study:

This study illustrates:

- That the distance between people and the correct understanding of Islamic law, and their detachment from the pure sources of knowledge, has led to a deficiency in understanding, which reflects on the current state of the Ummah (nation) and its civilizational decline.
- That religious renewal is a broad term that can be used with both positive (good) and negative (bad) intentions, making it essential to understand the conditions that govern the renewal process.

- The importance of this renewal in advancing the Islamic nation and helping it keep pace with other civilizations.

## PREVIOUS STUDIES:

1. Bastami, Muhammad (2015) Said: the Concept of Religious Renewal.
2. Ata, Ibrahim Muhammad (2012) Religious Renewal: Its Concept, Conditions, and Educational Effects.
3. Al-Dasouqi, Muhammad Al-Sayyid (2007): Renewing the Understanding of Religion.

This study differs from previous ones in its conciseness without sacrificing depth, addressing all aspects of the topic without redundancy, and providing proper religious foundations.

## Study Outline:

The research is organized into two sections and a conclusion, as follows:

- Research Summary
- Introduction
- Section One (Introductory Overview): Terms and Concepts in the Study (Religion and Religiosity, Renewal and Stagnation, Keeping Up with Modernity, Thought).
  - Chapter One: Terms of the Study.
  - Chapter Two: The Importance of Renewing Religious Thought, the Dangers of Stagnation, and the Conditions for Modernity.
- Section Two: Is There a Problem in Understanding Religion in Our Contemporary Reality? (Diagnosis, Causes, and Examples)
  - Chapter One: The Historical Development after the Prophet's Death and Its Impact on Religious Thought.
  - Chapter Two: Presenting a List of Qur'anic Verses that Illustrate the Gap Between the Text and Reality.

Conclusion.

## Introduction:

Praise be to Allah, Lord of all the worlds, and may peace be upon the righteous, those who follow guidance. I testify that there is no deity but Allah, the True and Clear Sovereign, and that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, the trustworthy Prophet sent as a mercy to all creation. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, his family, and those who follow them with excellence until the Day of Judgment.

By examining the reality of contemporary religious thought, we cannot overlook the fact that there are issues in understanding several key aspects, whether in concepts, creed, jurisprudence, or personal development. This has cast a shadow on the contemporary Islamic reality and its intellectual challenges.

It is worth noting that the challenges and issues faced by religious thought today are not new but rather the result of historical accumulations and events that have significantly influenced its trajectory.

Given the importance of religion and its role in our lives, it is necessary to reconsider certain significant issues in our religious thought and understanding to restore the active role of religion in our lives and to lead our nation into the long-awaited era of progress and advancement.

It is essential to note that revisiting some of our religious concepts and ideas, renewing Islamic thought, and keeping pace with modernity does not mean abandoning our fundamental principles and beliefs, such as matters of creed, acts of worship, and the foundational rules of transactions.

Thus, this study came to address some of the most pressing questions, including:

- What are the causes of the inadequacies in religious thought?
  - How can we restore the effectiveness of religion and its role in our lives, enabling us to face contemporary challenges to religious thought?
  - How can we renew our religious thought and keep pace with modern times without compromising our core principles?
  - What is the importance of renewal in religious thought?
- We ask Allah that this work is done sincerely for His sake.

## ❑ Section One: Terms and Concepts

### Introduction:

It is crucial to shed light on the terms related to the topic of religious renewal and its challenges, and to clarify the differences between some of them, so that the research's intent becomes clearer and easier to understand, without confusion between what is sacred and what is human effort and intellectual output.

### Chapter One: Terms

1. Religion
2. Religiosity
3. Renewal
4. Stagnation
5. Keeping up with the times
6. Thought

### First: The Meaning of Religion and Religiosity:

Defining what is meant by religion is significant for several reasons, including what we currently experience in our era, where the concept of religion has been minimized to merely acts of worship, isolated from real life. Additionally, some contemporary Islamic movements focus on certain aspects of religion while neglecting others. Some focus only on issues of governance and politics, while others concentrate primarily on matters of creed and intellectual concerns. Undoubtedly, this reduction of religion to certain aspects may create the misconception that religion is limited to those areas only, hence the importance of clarifying the term, even if it is well-known among scholars.

#### • Definition in Language:

In linguistic terms, "religion" (الدين) varies based on usage. For instance, "dāna" means to dominate, govern, manage, or hold accountable. Hence, it can imply judgment or recompense, as in Allah's statement: *"Master of the Day of Judgment"* (Malik Yawm al-Din). "Religion belongs to Allah" means sovereignty and judgment belong to Him. The expression "dāna lahu" means to submit and obey, while "dāna bi al-shay'" means to adopt it as a religion or doctrine (Ibn Manzur, 1992).

In summary, the linguistic meaning of "religion" in Arabic denotes a relationship between two parties, where one holds the other in reverence and submission. When applied to the first party, it denotes submission and obedience; when applied to the second party, it denotes command and authority. When viewed in terms of the bond between both parties, it refers to the system that governs that relationship (Darraz, 2013, p. 26).

#### • Definition in Terminology:

It is "the belief in the existence of a transcendent, metaphysical, sentient, and volitional entity that governs human affairs, a belief that prompts prayers with this supreme entity through supplication in hope and fear, in submission and reverence. In other words, it is the belief in a divine essence worthy of obedience and worship" (Darraz, 2013, p. 49).

Thus, religion is the belief in Allah and submission to Him in all that He has legislated for His servants. Religion consists of principles, values, guidance, and virtues.

- **Definition of Religiosity:**

Religiosity is the human condition of intellectual interaction with religious texts, involving acceptance and rejection, and it varies in form depending on different understandings and applications of these texts.

**Second: The Meaning of Renewal and Stagnation in Religious Thought, and Keeping Religion Relevant to the Times.**

Knowing that religion consists of texts that contain principles, values, and guidelines, and that religiosity is a human condition of interaction and *ijtihad* with those texts, we move on to the next step, which is clarifying the meaning of renewal and stagnation in religious thought:

**Renewal in Religion** is "new *ijtihad* in understanding religion and its texts, within the known legal boundaries, aiming to introduce something new, without settling on a fixed, unchangeable interpretation, and adapting to changes in time and place" (Al-Malkawi, 2015, pp. 128-135).

Since change is a universal truth, with time constantly advancing, it is enough to note that the passage of time is a key factor in the changes that affect individuals and shape their views of things. Muslims continuously ask their Lord to increase them in knowledge, and Islamic history has witnessed the development of sciences and a steady growth of knowledge. At no point in Islamic history did society feel that the need for a new interpretation of the Qur'an had ended.

Scholars continued to write commentaries, and Allah continues to send to this Islamic nation those who renew its understanding of religion every century. All of this indicates that renewing the understanding of religion is a fundamental part of Islamic knowledge. It is a praiseworthy and necessary endeavor that revitalizes religion, facilitates the application of scripture to contemporary reality, and shifts focus from addressing individual, minor issues to tackling broader, more significant matters that concern the entire nation and humanity at large.

Perhaps the most important manifestations of renewal are:

1. Utilizing contemporary sciences in natural, social, psychological, and educational fields to understand the meanings and objectives of religious texts, and developing understanding in light of them. In fact, renewal may involve drawing inspiration from the meanings and objectives of texts from the outset.
2. Renewal also occurs through using modern means that are more effective in reaching people's hearts and minds.
3. Renewal can be found in research and analysis of new issues and contemporary legal matters that affect people's lives.
4. Renewal may also be found in the methods that serve principles and systems left general in Islam, as these methods may change from time to time, such as the specific details and tools related to governance.

However, the meaning of stagnation in the religious thought is:

Stagnation means "remaining fixed and closed off to a certain understanding of religion, one that does not change with the times and ages" (Al-Malkawi, 2015, pp. 128-135).

It is a blameworthy trait for an individual, group, or nation. It is illogical for people to adhere to a single fixed way of understanding their religion, forming their ideas, and applying their rulings across different countries and eras.

There is no doubt that clinging to outdated forms of understanding is no longer sufficient to demonstrate the relevance of religious thought to life and reform contemporary reality. This diminishes the value of religious thought and forces people to seek alternative ways of thinking. Therefore, there is no excuse for those who confine themselves to historical interpretations that no longer fit contemporary reality, especially since Islam is suitable for every time and place, and it remains capable of reform as long as the door to *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) is open for those who are qualified.

### **Third: Thought and Contemplation:**

"Thought" (فكر) in its plural form (أفكار), and (تفكير) (thinking) refers to the process of engaging the mind with known matters to arrive at an understanding of the unknown. The root of the word "thought" appears eighteen times in the Holy Qur'an, all in verb form. It is clear that contemplation (تفكير) does not merely refer to fleeting ideas that occur in the mind, but rather to conscious, repeated reflection (Al-Malkawi, 2015, pp. 22-23).

Ibn Ashur (1993) says, "Contemplation (التفكير) is a deliberate effort in thinking; it is the process of engaging in thought and repeatedly pondering the meanings of evidence for the truths." (p. 26).

Thought has also been defined as "the use of the mind to examine a matter in order to reach a new opinion on it" (Suwaydan, 2000, pp. 25-30).

Thus, if thought is applied to political matters, it becomes political thought. If it is applied to economic matters, it becomes economic thought. And if applied to social matters, it becomes social thought.

### **Chapter Two: The Importance of Renewal and the Dangers of Stagnation, and the Conditions for Modernity:**

- Why is there an urgent need to renew religious thought in our contemporary reality?
- What are the dangers of clinging to a fixed pattern of understanding religion?
- What are the proofs for the permissibility of renewing religious thought?
- Does renewal contradict the hadith of the Prophet (PBUH): "He who innovates something in this matter of ours (i.e., Islam) that is not of it will have it rejected (by Allah)."?
- Does religious renewal have specific conditions and fields?
- Or are its doors wide open without restriction?

In truth, the justifications for renewal in religious thought are various, while the effects of stagnation and closure are extremely dangerous to our lives.

Here are some reasons that highlight the necessity of religious renewal in our current reality:

1. The development that humanity is experiencing today on all intellectual, political, economic, educational, and psychological levels, and the spread of communication between nations, poses a significant challenge for us to understand our religion in light of these new realities and to benefit from them.
2. Our religious thought has been infiltrated by strange ideas, both old and new, whether in creed, jurisprudence, or spiritual development, or in history. This requires us to re-examine these ideas and purify our thought from them.

On the other hand, stagnation and closure in religious understanding and a refusal to renew will lead to catastrophic results, such as:

1. Accusations that religion is not suitable for all times and places, leading people to seek other ideologies to fulfill their needs.
2. A failure to utilize contemporary sciences and tools in the service of religion.
3. Islam becoming alienated from real life, necessitating renewal in how it is presented and understood.

When we look at the eras of Islam, starting from the time of the Prophet (PBUH) and the Rightly Guided Caliphs and those who followed, we find numerous examples of renewal in every means that served the religion. The Prophet (PBUH) commanded his companions to learn the most advanced methods of warfare in their time, introducing catapults and siege engines to the army. 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) gathered the people for Taraweeh prayers after it had only been prayed for three nights during the Prophet's time, out of fear that it might become obligatory. He also renewed the Muslim calendar by introducing the Hijri calendar and adopted the system of administrative bureaus from the Persians. 'Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) compiled the Qur'an and distributed it to the cities. Imam al-Shafi'i (may Allah have mercy on him) changed some of his legal rulings when he traveled to Egypt, due to the change in time and place, not due to a change in the evidence or proofs.

And I will mention two pieces of evidence that encourage renewal and *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) in religion, due to their significance:

1. Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "Allah will raise for this community at the end of every hundred years the one who will renovate its religion for it." (Sunan Abu Dawood, 1995, p. 109).
2. 'Amr bin al-'Aas (RA): He heard Allah's Messenger (PBUH) say, "When a judge gives a ruling, having tried his best to decide correctly, and is right (in his decision), he will have a double reward; and when he gives a ruling having tried his best to decide correctly, and is wrong (in his decision), he will have a single reward." (Sahih al-Bukhari, 2000, p. 108).

What greater encouragement for renewal and *ijtihad* is there than the fact that even someone who errs in *ijtihad* is rewarded? And what greater encouragement for renewal is there when Allah has made it an ongoing *Sunnah* (habit) in the nation of Islam, whether undertaken by individuals or groups?

As for the hadith of 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), who reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "He who innovates something in this matter of ours (i.e., Islam) that is not of it will have it rejected (by Allah)." (Sahih Muslim, 1990, p. 1343), it does not contradict renewal in religious thought. The prohibition in this hadith refers to introducing new beliefs, acts of worship, or principles that have no basis in our religion. This is considered a blameworthy innovation (*bid'ah*) and is not the same as renewal in religion. Ibn Rajab (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "What is meant by *bid'ah* is something introduced with no basis in the Shari'ah (Islamic Law) to support it. However, anything that has a basis in the Shari'ah is not considered *bid'ah*, even if it is termed an innovation linguistically" (2001, p. 127).

Renewing the understanding of texts in light of contemporary knowledge and sciences, and using modern means to serve religion and its message, is a praiseworthy renewal that is even necessary. It keeps religion alive, relevant, and reformative in every time and place. Especially that Allah has made many legal texts open to multiple interpretations, and if He (Allah) had wanted to send down clear, definitive texts on every matter, He could have done so. Furthermore, Allah has provided us with general principles in some texts and left it to us to apply them according to our time, using suitable means, such as applying the principle of consultation (*shura*), determining the system of governance, and setting methods for selecting a leader.

### Conditions and Guidelines for Renewal:

At the end of this section, it is essential to clarify the conditions and guidelines for renewal, so that it does not become a gateway for either excess or negligence in religion under the guise of renewal or adherence to principles. For example:

- It is not renewal to confine religion to the mosque.
- It is not renewal to oppose the hijab.
- It is not modernity to apply religion only when dealing with Muslims while disregarding it with non-Muslims in the name of modernity.
- It is not adherence to principles to reject the advancements humanity has achieved in human and technical sciences.

A balance between excess and negligence is necessary. Ibn al-Qayyim (1991a) explains some conditions of renewal and *ijtihad*: "He whoever gives fatwas (legal rulings) to people based only on what is written in the books, without considering their customs, traditions, times, places, circumstances, and conditions, has gone astray and led others astray. His harm to religion is greater than that of a doctor who treats all people, regardless of their differences in lands, customs, times, and nature, based on what is written in a single medical book, without taking their specific conditions into account. This ignorant doctor and ignorant mufti are the most harmful to people's religions and bodies. And Allah is the one whose help is sought" (p. 66).

Among the important guidelines for renewal are:

- The renewer must follow a clear methodology in *ijtihad*, with awareness of linguistic rules and an understanding of the objectives of Shari'ah, always keeping in mind its purposes.
- The renewer must distinguish between constants and variables, and between means and objectives. Creed, acts of worship, foundational legal principles, and the objectives of Shari'ah are constants that cannot be altered. However, this does not prevent the use of contemporary means and sciences in presenting and conveying them to people. The mechanisms that implement the principles of interactions between people and the methods of governance, however, are subject to change over time.

Ibn al-Qayyim (1991b) says: "There are two types of rulings":

- The first type does not change regardless of time, place, or the *ijtihad* of Imams (Islamic Jurists). This includes the obligations of duties, the prohibitions of what is unlawful, the prescribed punishments in Shari'ah for crimes, and so on. These do not allow for change or *ijtihad* that contradicts their established rulings.
- The second type changes according to what the situation demands, in terms of time, place, and circumstance, such as the different forms, traits, and degrees of discretionary punishments. The lawgiver varies them based on what serves the best interest" (pp. 330-331).

The renewer must continue to stay updated on contemporary sciences and technologies and utilize them to serve religion.

### • Section Two: Is There a Problem in Understanding Religion in Our Contemporary Reality? (Diagnosis, Causes, and Examples)

Chapter one: The Historical Path of Events after the Prophet's Death and Its Impact on Religious Thought:

When presenting the issues in religious thought and its challenges in contemporary reality, it is important to first mention some significant historical events that the Islamic nation experienced after the Prophet's death. These events influenced the trajectory of Islamic knowledge and thought. Proper diagnosis of the problem is the first step toward finding solutions to intellectual challenges, especially in the religious sphere. Simple rhetorical remedies will not suffice. So, what are the major historical events and challenges whose echoes still resonate today?

- The first challenge Muslims faced after the Prophet's death was determining the mechanism for transferring political authority. The Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away without appointing a successor or specifying a method for selecting one. The Ansar were the first to consider this matter, saying: "We will organize the affairs and choose one from among us to be the Caliph (leader) of the Muslims," as reported by al-Bukhari in the story of Banu Sa'idah. However, Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) quickly addressed the issue, and the pledge of allegiance to Abu Bakr was completed. 'Umar later described this event as a "fateful occurrence, the consequences of which Allah protected us from" (Al-Sultan, n.d., pp. 50-50:30).

After this momentous event, Muslims had to be notified to establish a clear mechanism for succession, but this was not achieved during the time of Abu Bakr, 'Umar, or those who followed.

- The second challenge Muslims faced was the absence of a mechanism to resolve disputes with the ruler. We all know how the conflict between the people of Kufa and Egypt with Caliph 'Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) escalated, leading to his siege for over 20 days and his eventual martyrdom. This issue persisted afterward, with rulers being assassinated, overthrown, or poisoned.
- The third challenge was the "Great Fitnah" (civil strife) and the internal armed conflict between Muslims, which continued into the Umayyad and Abbasid periods, both of which witnessed numerous internal revolts. Muslims failed to develop a mechanism for resolving internal disputes.

#### The Important Negative Effects of Historical Events in the Umayyad and Abbasid Eras:

Among the most significant negative impacts of historical events during the Umayyad and Abbasid periods is the emergence of negative ideas that continue to affect religious thought today. In the Umayyad era, due to the harsh realities of certain policies, such as luxury, the concept of predestination and justifying the status quo emerged. Then, the idea of postponement came about, suggesting that faith is merely belief in the heart and verbal affirmation, aimed at avoiding judgment on actions. Furthermore, the idea of "bad times" was introduced, asserting that no era comes without being worse than the one before it. Lastly, ideas promoting withdrawal from harsh realities and abandoning worldly affairs emerged due to despair over change.

During the Abbasid era, the Mu'tazila movement emerged and flourished as a reflection of that period's intellectual atmosphere. Their five principles became key intellectual expressions. These included:

- The concept of Tawhid (Oneness of God): This was a response to those who leaned towards anthropomorphizing God's attributes. However, the Mu'tazila's philosophical reply did not fully align with the views of the Quran and Sunnah.
- The concept of Divine Justice and the creation of human actions: This stood as a rebuttal to the concept of predestination (jabr).
- The "intermediate position" (Al-Manzilah Bayna al-Manzilatayn): It stated that a person who commits a major sin is neither a disbeliever nor a true believer, which was aimed at confronting rulers who were guilty of major sins.

- Enjoining good and forbidding evil: This was developed to counteract the doctrine of postponement, which delayed judgment on sinners.
- The doctrine of divine promise and threat: They believed that those who commit major sins would remain in Hell eternally, countering the idea that sinners would eventually be released from Hell.

During the Umayyad and Abbasid periods, the political system's dominance over scholars at times, and jurist's fear of political authority, clearly impacted our legal heritage regarding politics. We rarely find discussions in legal texts about freedom, justice, and the rights of Muslims. Jurists operated under surveillance; what would happen to them if they published works on these topics?

The pinnacle of political persecution occurred during the Abbasid era in the inquisition (Mihna) of Imam Ahmad, who was flogged during the Inquisition of the Creation of the Quran. After this ordeal and Imam Ahmad's realization that the bloodshed must cease, he issued his famous fatwa stating that anyone who rebels against an imam whom the people have agreed upon, whether through approval or coercion, has split the community and opposed the prohibitive texts, thus dying a pre-Islamic death. This led to an abnormal tunnel where oppression and injustice became acceptable from rulers in exchange for security, and this matter was rationalized religiously rather than stating that the interest required it.

The summary of the above historical events concerning religious thought and awareness includes several important issues:

1. The cessation of the application of consultation (shura).
2. Conquest became the only means to obtain authority.
3. The growth of the concept of predestination.
4. The growing of the idea of surrendering to reality and withdrawing from it.
5. The development of jurisprudential and foundational sciences in political climates characterized by some form of despotism.

## Chapter Two: A List of Verses Illustrating the Gap between Text and Reality

This section will present several Quranic verses as a list that encompasses important concepts mandated by these noble verses. We will then evaluate our understanding and application of these verses in reality.

The goal of this presentation is to grasp the magnitude of the challenges in understanding religious thought and to recognize the significant gap between reality and Quranic texts, hoping this will inspire us to carry the banner of renewal in religious thought and face its challenges.

1. Allah, the Exalted, says: "**the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy**" (Quran, Al-Fatiha: 3). We recite this noble verse daily from Surah Al-Fatiha, which shows us Allah's mercy towards His servants. The question is: Are we now a mercy to the worlds or to some of us in practice? Where is this concept in our actions and thoughts? Have some Muslims become a burden to people?
2. Allah says: "**Read in the name of your Lord who created:**" (Quran, Al-Alaq: 1). Where do we stand in the race for knowledge? Isn't knowledge one of the most important conditions for renaissance?
3. Allah says: "**[Prophet], say, 'produce your evidence'**" (Quran, Al-Baqarah: 111). How precise are our methodologies in verifying and examining intellectual phenomena? Do we dismiss the authority of ancient tradition when it is not based on evidence, replacing it with the authority of proof and reasoning?
4. Allah says: "**and they will each return to Him on the Day of Resurrection all alone.**" (Quran, Maryam: 95). Are we cultivating individual responsibility and accountability among our members regarding their actions, or are we nurturing conformity and sycophancy?

5. Allah says: "Fight in God's cause against those who fight you" (Quran, Al-Baqarah: 190). Is the concept of fighting confined to aggression, or is it the opposite? Where does it stand in our perceptions?
6. Allah says: "**but they continue to have their differences**-" (Quran, Hud: 188). How do we engage with the right to differ from others? How do we manage it, and what do we do with each other when it occurs?
7. Allah says: "**and made you into races and tribes so that you should recognize one another**" (Quran, Al-Hujurat: 13). How well do we know the nations of the earth and introduce ourselves to them? How far have we come in the ethics of acquaintance?
8. Allah says: "**Say, 'this is my way: based on clear evidence, I, and all who follow me, call [people] to God- glory be to God!-**" (Quran, Yusuf: 108).

Do we truly have insight into religion, humanity, and reality in the field of Da'wah (Islamic propagation)?

The answer to the concepts presented in these noble texts points to a problem in our religious thought, whether at the level of understanding or application. The reality is that we have a clear shortcoming in the areas addressed by the verses, and only a few of these verses have been fully implemented. The gap between the reality and some of the texts is vast. This should not lead us to despair but rather to realize that we have a problem in religious intellectual challenges. We have many duties to face these challenges and to renew religious thought.

#### ❑ **Conclusion: Key Findings and Recommendations**

After this journey through the legacy of our religious thought, I record the following important findings:

1. The crisis of thought in general, and religious thought in particular, is the root of all crises. We must boldly, bravely, and consciously engage with the world of thought to serve our religion, intellect, nation, and lives.
2. Opening up to the sciences of our era, including political, economic, legal, social, and educational sciences, is a key element in renewing our religious thought.
3. Renewing our religious thought does not mean abandoning our foundational beliefs and acts of worship.
4. Prejudiced fanaticism, narrow-mindedness, isolationism, and blind following of others are among the most dangerous diseases threatening our religious thought. It is essential to free the mind from these constraints so that we may have enlightened and effective thinking.
5. There are several areas where religious renewal can be manifested.
6. Stagnation in religious thought is a blameworthy trait for individuals, groups, or nations.
7. Some of the reasons that demonstrate the need for religious renewal in our present reality include:
  - A. The development of humanity.
  - B. The infiltration of strange ideas that are foreign to the Quran and Sunnah, which requires re-evaluation and purification of our thought.
1. Encouraging religious renewal does not mean innovating new beliefs or acts of worship but rather employing the principles of Shari'ah in the interests of the Ummah (Islamic nation), pushing it toward progress.
2. For this renewal to be accepted and disciplined, certain conditions must govern it, such as:
  - A. The renewer must follow a clear methodology in ijtihad (independent reasoning), with awareness of linguistic rules and an understanding of the objectives of Shari'ah.
  - B. The renewer must be able to distinguish between constants and variables.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. We must understand Islamic Shari'ah (Law) correctly, as Allah revealed it.

2. We must know the religious constants in order to hold firmly to them and avoid tampering with them.
3. We must work on praiseworthy religious renewal within its established guidelines.

And with Allah lies success.

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