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## **Maqasid al-Sunnah: a Method for Research and Knowledge**

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

The meaning of Sunnah as a method and approach helps us clarify the dimensions of the Islamic wholistic worldview. Sunnah is not just sayings, but actions, approvals and living practices that distinguish the history of Islam and its system of beliefs, legislation and ethics. Hence, Sunnah in this context encompasses even the prophetic conducts outside the legislation framework; it includes even the biography of the Prophet; as it cannot be dispensed with to complete the features of the wholistic Islamic approach that combines sayings and actions, theory and practice. The Islamic texts provide extensive knowledge about Muhammad SAAW as a Messenger, husband, father, leader, negotiator, neighbour, and friend. These texts also described several aspects of Prophet Muhammad's life that helped guide us and shed light on his approach to managing various psychological circumstances. We found testimonials of his conditions in times of joy and sadness, happiness and death, defeat and victory, embodying the prophetic approach in its comprehensive and humane sense. The reader of the Sunnah finds himself before a prophetic model that conveys the message of heaven to earth, and a humane and valuable model that embodies the divine message on earth.

The bulk of the research on Sunnah has focused mainly on the prophetic model while neglecting the humane aspects of the life of Prophet Muhammad SAAW, which is often confined to studies of the Prophet's biography according to a specialized perspective. These studies habitually deal with either the authenticity or weakness of hadiths, historical biographical that looks at the chronological sequence, jurisprudential that considers the legislative dimension, doctrinal that seeks the faith and creed dimension, or other areas that deal with the Sunnah according to its functional viewpoint. Therefore, it can be said that we have not yet achieved the scientific accumulation to elevate the Sunnaic dimensions to a methodological echelon that transcends specializations.

We have found valuable attempts to extract the Qur'anic epistemological methodology, yet no equivalent attempts have been made to uncover the levels and divisions of the Sunnaic epistemological methodology. Knowing that Muhammad SAAW was a walking Qur'an on earth, as narrated by the Mother of the Believers Aisha RAA, is of a comprehensive eloquence, as it reveals to us the visible and perceptible dimension of the verses of the Holy Quran. However, investing in the Sunnah in this manner and according to this conception was not at the desired level.

I believe that the start should be from integrating the biography of Prophet Muhammad SAAW into the overall methodological work, as it represents a practical account of the Holy Quran, and it shares with the Sunnah the meaning of method; which makes it a method of understanding and interpretation, of application and implementation. Therefore, the biography of Prophet Muhammad SAAW equips us with the methodological aspects to understanding the Quran and its revelation and deriving the theoretical foundations to build a comprehensive “panoramic” conception of religion by reflecting upon the Sunnaic model of implementing the Qur’an, its interaction with spatial and temporal contexts, and its challenges in changing human perceptions.

Therefore, we need to revisit the position of the biography of Muhammad SAAW in the Islamic reference map, as it is the bearer of the prophetic trusted model and the foundation for applying religion in different contexts.

Today, we need to re-read the biography of our prophet Muhammad SAAW, as a “method” that sets the rules for understanding the Holy Quran, extracting its higher purposes, and setting the rules for its application while taking into account geography and history; instead of reading it as a “story” that narrates the history of a ‘great man’ which resulted in it being dominated by historical narration and the absence of the dimensions of guidance and emulation.

In this opening, I would like to note the distinguished Moroccan philosopher Taha Abdel Rahman and his endeavour to present an ethical reading of the Prophet’s biography, through which he went beyond the methodology of the modernists who attempted to correct the narratives of the biography and its chronological sequence, as well as the methodology of jurists who deduced the dimension of the legal rulings, which are undoubtedly essential steps. Instead, Taha Abdel Rahman proposed the philosophical trust-based methodology that is founded upon the ethical dimension using contemplation as a methodological basis for looking at the biography and its events as signs, not just as phenomena, to reveal the moral values and spiritual meanings contained in the signs of the prophetic biography and achieve the objective of its emulation.

In this context, the seventh issue examines the objectives of the Noble Prophetic Sunnah, in an attempt to shed light on the meaning and values of the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad SAAW. Dr Anas Al-Sarmini participated in this issue with a valuable study entitled: “The Prophetic Sunnah in Light of Imagined in Religion: Methodological Criticism or Ideological Projection?”, Dr. Muhammad Asbihi also contributed with an important paper on extracting the features of the objective of social justice and the mechanisms for activating it in the Prophetic Sunnah. This issue also features a group of valuable studies, outside the issue main theme, including Prof. Dr Jasser Auda's study on “The Objectives as a Basis for an Integrated Framework and Methodology”, Dr Abdul Rahim Ait Abdul Salam's study entitled: “The Problem of Advancing and Delaying Between Preserving Religion and Preserving the Human Seld: Methodological Rules and Objective-based Benefits”,

and also an article by Dr Muhammad Abdullah entitled: “Purification: Concept and Dimensions”. Moreover, this issue is adorned with a valuable book review by Najma Al-Zaghrioui of Clara Valli’s recently published book entitled “L’islam Des Temps Modernes: Retour Aux Origines. Etude Des Finalités De La Loi Islamique d’Ibn Achour”. We also have a valuable translation of Dr Al-Marakiby's article on Modernity and the Transformations of Maqasid Discourse: Towards a Fluid Fiqh? by Dr Mohammed Eriouiche. The seventh issue is concluded with a scholarly dialogue I conducted with Prof. Dr Muhammad Nasiri, professor of Sunnah and Hadith at Dar Al-Hadith Al-Hassania in Rabat, about the Sunnah and the methods of its understanding and application.

At the end of this editorial opening, I want to thank Dr. Mawloud Mohadi for his follow-up, keenness and dedication throughout preparing this issue, and Dr. Zaid Barzinji for his kind management and valuable guidance and support. I also want to thank the editorial team: Prof. Dr. Yasser Tarshany, Dr Addi al-Rahman, Dr Ahmed Syukran, and Dr. Aulia Rahmat.

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Editor-in-Chief

