

## Methodological Analysis of Philosophical Arguments in the Proof and Elucidation of Doctrinal Principles

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to address a methodological gap in the field of philosophical arguments related to doctrinal principles, motivated by the need to develop a systematic framework for the rational elucidation of religious beliefs. Utilizing a descriptive-analytical approach and a comparative study of Islamic philosophical texts, the author investigates three inferential methods: deductive, inductive, and synthetic. The primary objective of this research is to identify the most effective reasoning method for proving and clarifying doctrinal principles, considering the capacities and limitations inherent in each approach.

The findings indicate that while the deductive method possesses a robust logical structure, it is insufficient for explaining all dimensions of doctrinal matters. The inductive method, due to its probabilistic nature, also fails to provide conclusive proof. In contrast, the synthetic method—intelligently integrating reason, revelation, and intuition—emerges as the most comprehensive approach, capable of leveraging the strengths of multiple methods to present a holistic understanding of doctrinal truths.

The ultimate contribution of this study is the proposal of a novel model in the philosophy of religion that enriches the theoretical discourse and offers a practical framework for addressing contemporary challenges and doubts concerning religious beliefs.

**KEYWORDS:** Philosophical arguments, Methodology, Doctrinal principles, Deductive, Inductive, Synthetic.

### INTRODUCTION

The relationship between methodology and doctrinal principles constitutes a fundamental axis in Islamic philosophy. Doctrinal principles—including monotheism, prophethood, and eschatology—not only form the foundation of intellectual and religious systems but also provide a suitable framework for philosophical and analytical inquiry. In the contemporary world, which faces the proliferation of new challenges and doubts in the realm of religious beliefs, a methodical elucidation of the philosophical foundations of faith has become particularly significant. A precise understanding of these principles is unattainable without philosophical methods, as many doctrinal concepts are metaphysical in nature and extend beyond direct human experience.

Islamic philosophy, with its rich tradition of philosophical reasoning, has consistently sought to harmonize reason and revelation, thought and faith. Nonetheless, despite the richness of the Islamic philosophical heritage, there exists a noticeable research gap regarding the systematic methodological analysis of philosophical proofs and the comparative efficacy of

different reasoning approaches. This gap is especially evident in the evaluation of deductive, inductive, and synthetic methods.

This study addresses the fundamental question of the capacities and limitations of these three reasoning methods in the proof and elucidation of doctrinal principles, and explores how their integration can yield a comprehensive methodological framework. The deductive method, rooted in Aristotelian logic, moves from general premises to specific conclusions, providing a firm foundation for the demonstration of doctrinal principles. The inductive method, progressing from particulars to universals and relying on observation and experience, facilitates the analysis of the order of the world and reinforces the foundations of faith. The synthetic method, by intelligently integrating diverse epistemic tools, offers a multidimensional and comprehensive analysis.

The aim of this article is to provide a precise methodological analysis, highlighting the advantages, limitations, and applications of each method in proving doctrinal principles. Employing a descriptive-analytical approach and drawing upon primary texts in Islamic philosophy, this research seeks to present a systematic framework for philosophical reasoning, offering innovative strategies to enrich the discourse in the philosophy of religion. The findings suggest that combining these methods can lead to more rigorous, comprehensive, and widely acceptable arguments, providing practical guidance for philosophical and religious research.

The structure of the article is as follows: after clarifying foundational concepts and examining the role of methodology in philosophy, it analyzes the three methods and their applications in the domain of doctrinal principles. Finally, it summarizes the findings and proposes a novel framework for the integration of these methods in the philosophy of religion.

## 1. Concept and Significance of Method in Philosophy

### 1.1 Concept of Method

The term *method* is derived from the Greek word *methodos*, which itself consists of *meta*—meaning “along” or “after”—and *bodos*, meaning “path” or “way.” Thus, its fundamental meaning is to traverse a path toward a goal in an organized and sequential manner (Kazemi, 1995: 28). In other words, the concept of method refers both to the path itself and to the rules and tools required to follow it. In Arabic, the term *method* is often translated as *manhaj*, and methodology as *manhajīya*.

In technical and specialized usage, a method or *methodology* refers to a rational—and sometimes non-rational—process employed by the human mind to acquire knowledge or describe reality. In a broader sense, a method denotes the use of any appropriate instrument to achieve a specific goal. More precisely, it can be defined as a set of strategies that guide individuals toward uncovering the unknown or a collection of tools and techniques that facilitate the transition from ignorance to knowledge (Saroukhani, 1996: 24).

Within philosophy, method can be defined as “a systematic set of principles and rules for the acquisition of knowledge.” These principles serve as instruments for analyzing complex issues and understanding truths in a structured manner. Method in philosophy not only determines how answers are obtained but also affects the quality and validity of those answers. According to al-Farabi, method in philosophy is a tool for deriving certainty, and its distinction from other approaches lies in the reliance on pure reason and the use of systematic argumentation (Al-Farabi, 1949: 34).

### 1.2 Significance of Method in Philosophy

Some scholars argue that the study of methodology, including philosophical methodology, is crucial for understanding various fields of knowledge. They consider the scope of philosophical critique to be extensive, asserting that philosophy's role in relation to other sciences is to elucidate their foundational principles and identify their valid methods. From this perspective, philosophy, through its unique methods, extends into areas such as religious beliefs, customs, and social and political issues.

Bertrand Russell, for instance, notes that philosophy, using its distinctive methodology, critically examines the principles applied in science and everyday life, accepting them only in the absence of reasons for their rejection (Fathollahi, 2014: 15). Similarly, René Descartes emphasizes the importance of method, arguing that one should never engage in scientific inquiry or the pursuit of truth without a method, as research without methodological rigor is ultimately fruitless (Dadbeh, 1990: 83).

Consequently, philosophical methods hold particular importance in guiding rational thought and ensuring that reasoning produces coherent and valid results. As Avicenna (Ibn Sina) points out, philosophy attains certain knowledge only through the use of systematic methodological tools (Hamid, 1998: 40). This significance is further amplified in the domain of religious sciences, where topics such as the existence of God and eschatology, due to their abstract nature, necessitate precise and logical methodologies.

### 1.3 Method in Philosophy

In analyzing the philosophical method, it is essential to note that every discipline possesses a specific methodology that enables the achievement of its objectives. Philosophical methodology, in its broadest sense, is a reason-based approach that operates independently of religious or empirical presuppositions. This method has been employed from ancient times, in the works of Plato and Aristotle, to the Islamic philosophers such as al-Farabi and Avicenna. For instance, Avicenna asserts that truth can be accessed solely through self-evident principles and rational inquiry (Avicenna, 2009: 12). According to Yazdanpanah, the Peripatetic (Mashsha'i) philosophy is derived from a discursive and rational method, relying exclusively on logical argumentation and eschewing intuitive or aesthetic methods in philosophical analysis and explanation. At this stage, philosophical knowledge can be regarded as mono-methodological, relying purely on intellect for the discovery of truth (Yazdanpanah, 2010: 30/1).

This emphasis on pure reason is prominently observed in the Peripatetic school, whose leading figure among Islamic philosophers is Avicenna (Ibn Sina). This philosophical tradition depends entirely on logical reasoning and rational argumentation to attain truth and understand philosophical issues. In the introduction to *Hikmat al-Isbraq*, Suhrawardi classifies these philosophers as "*Hakim bihathth 'adim al-talib*", meaning that they rely solely on rational methods to apprehend the realities of existence (Suhrawardi, 2001: 11).

Meanwhile, other philosophical approaches emerged that, in addition to rational methods, employ intuitive means to reach truth. In this perspective, illuminationist and intuitive methods are considered essential for discovering the truths of existence. In such schools, access to the reality of things is not achieved exclusively through pure reason (Motahhari, 2013: 149/5). The leading figure of this philosophical movement in the Islamic world is Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi, known as the Sheikh of Illumination (*Shaykh al-Isbraq*). He maintains that alongside intellect, intuitive knowledge—attained through purification and refinement of the soul—allows access to the inner reality of the world, which is its true essence.

A third philosophical methodology combines rational, intuitive, and transmitted (*naqli*) approaches. This integrative approach is evident in the philosophy of Mulla Sadra (*al-Hikmat al-Muta'aliya*). According to Professor Javadi Amoli, the essential elements of Transcendent Theosophy consist of rational argumentation, mysticism, and the Qur'an (Javadi Amoli, 1996: 13/1). It is important to note that Mulla Sadra's philosophy is not eclectic; rather, it constitutes a distinct and independent philosophical system. Although various intellectual traditions influenced its formation, it represents a coherent and autonomous framework. Thus, the Transcendent Theosophy employs a combined methodology—rational, intuitive, and textual—for discovering reality and proving the existence of God. This integrative method rests on a fundamental principle emphasized by Mulla Sadra and his followers: reason, mysticism, and revelation are inseparable. Through this methodology, Mulla Sadra aims to resolve disputes among philosophers, mystics, and theologians on foundational theoretical and doctrinal issues, harmonize various intellectual currents in Islamic thought, and successfully address critical philosophical questions.

In conclusion, philosophy, given its diverse schools, encompasses different methodological approaches. Each philosophical school, consistent with its own principles, adopts one or more specific methods for attaining knowledge and truth.

## 2. The Relationship Between Method and Doctrinal Principles

The discussion on the relationship between method and doctrinal principles examines how philosophical methodologies are employed to elucidate, describe, and substantiate the foundational beliefs of a religious system, particularly Islam. Doctrinal principles such as **Tawhid** (Oneness of God), **Prophethood**, and **Resurrection** not only form the conceptual and religious backbone of the system but also provide an appropriate framework for philosophical inquiry. This section explores the position of doctrinal principles within the philosophical system and emphasizes the necessity of utilizing philosophical methods to analyze and justify these principles.

### 2.1 Position of Doctrinal Principles in the Philosophical System

The role of doctrinal principles within a philosophical system, especially in Islamic philosophy, is central, as they not only define the conceptual framework of this philosophy but also facilitate a deeper understanding of the relationship between reason and religion. Principles such as Tawhid, Prophethood, and Resurrection constitute the core epistemological foundations of Islamic philosophy and are closely linked to key philosophical domains such as ontology, epistemology, and anthropology.

These principles shape the primary tenets of religious thought and guide Islamic philosophy toward rigorous reasoning and analytic depth. For instance, within the framework of Islamic philosophical thought, **Tawhid** is regarded as the first ontological principle. In Peripatetic philosophy, particularly in the works of Avicenna (Ibn Sina), the concept of God as the *Necessary Existent* forms the foundation of all his intellectual endeavors (Avicenna, 2009: 116). From this philosophical perspective, God is presented as the absolute reality upon which all beings depend for their existence (Avicenna, 2016: 3/18).

Similarly, Mulla Sadra (Sadr al-Din Shirazi), drawing on the theory of *Unity of Existence* (*Wahdat al-Wujud*), elevates Tawhid to a higher metaphysical horizon, where created beings are considered merely manifestations of a single divine existence.

The principle of **Prophethood** is also treated philosophically. Avicenna, in his theory of the *Active Intellect*, regards prophets as individuals who attain revealed knowledge through the use

of the Active Intellect (Yathribī, 2006: 379). This perspective situates Prophethood beyond merely religious assertions, linking it to a rational-philosophical framework. In contrast, Transcendent Theosophy (*Hikmat al-Muta'aliya*), as a later development in Islamic philosophy, attempts to relate the role of Prophethood to the essential movement of the human being and the elevation of existence (Sadra, 2006: 8/13).

The doctrine of **Resurrection** has also been extensively analyzed in Islamic philosophy. Avicenna distinguishes between spiritual and bodily resurrection, critiquing superficial beliefs about the afterlife and affirming spiritual resurrection as an essential principle for human beings. Mulla Sadra, through his theory of *substantial motion* (*al-barakat al-jawhariyyah*), explains how the soul and body achieve bodily resurrection as part of existential evolution. Such analyses extend Resurrection from a purely religious domain into the rational and philosophical realm.

In conclusion, doctrinal principles within Islamic philosophical thought not only reinforce the epistemic foundations of religion but also provide a framework for dialogue between reason and revelation. By employing philosophical methods and rational argumentation, these principles establish a structured foundation that elevates religious discourse to a universal and reasoned level.

## 2.2 The Necessity of Employing Philosophical Methods in Doctrinal Principles

The necessity of applying philosophical methods in the proof and elucidation of doctrinal principles can be appreciated from several perspectives:

**A. Rational and universal demonstration of doctrinal principles:** Philosophical methods primarily employ rational and logical reasoning to play a crucial role in substantiating doctrinal principles. In metaphysical and religious matters, such as proving the existence of God or the reality of resurrection—phenomena that cannot be directly observed or empirically tested—philosophical proofs are both useful and effective. For example, the *Proof of Possibility and Necessity*, which relies on the logical concepts of possibility and necessity, demonstrates the necessity of a *Necessary Being*. This proof is acceptable purely on philosophical grounds, without reference to sacred texts, and is thus independent of religious tradition. Such proofs are not confined to theological circles and can be appreciated and applied in secular contexts as well.

**B. Elucidation and analysis of complex religious concepts:** Beyond proving doctrinal principles, philosophical arguments play a significant role in analyzing and precisely describing complex religious concepts. Concepts such as the attributes of God, which have long been debated among theologians, as well as concepts related to the afterlife, require philosophical tools and reasoning for proper understanding. For instance, Mulla Sadra, using the concepts of *substantial motion* (*al-barakat al-jawhariyyah*) and the *union of the intellect and the intelligible*, provides a philosophical explanation of resurrection.

**C. Explication of doctrinal details:** In many cases, philosophical proofs are necessary for analyzing the details of doctrinal principles. For example, regarding divine justice, Islamic philosophers such as Avicenna and Mulla Sadra employed philosophical and rational methods to provide precise descriptions of this concept. Such detailed analyses are indispensable for a comprehensive understanding of religious doctrines. Without philosophical reasoning, the understanding of intricate aspects of belief would remain incomplete.

**D. Addressing contemporary challenges:** Given the expansion of science and technology and the emergence of various modern doubts, doctrinal principles must be defended rationally and systematically. Philosophical methods, in particular, play a pivotal role in responding to contemporary religious crises. Issues and challenges, such as the existence of God or life after

death, in light of new scientific theories—e.g., evolution and quantum physics—require philosophical inquiry and rational argumentation.

In summary, the application of philosophical methods is not only essential for the rational defense of foundational beliefs but also vital for accurately elucidating complex religious concepts, analyzing doctrinal details, and responding to modern intellectual challenges. By providing reasoned arguments and proofs, philosophy positions doctrinal principles as logical and rational constructs that can be presented within a global and universal framework.

### **3. Philosophical Methods in the Proof of Doctrinal Principles**

In examining the methodological foundations of philosophical proofs related to doctrinal principles, the selection and analysis of three primary methods—deductive, inductive, and synthetic—are particularly significant. Collectively, these methods represent the most important rational tools for elucidating and validating religious beliefs. The deductive method relies on its logical and certain structure, the inductive method on empirical and observational evidence, and the synthetic method integrates both approaches while also incorporating intuitive and textual dimensions. These three methods not only reflect historical usage and prominence in philosophical texts but also complement one another by covering different epistemic dimensions, thereby enabling a more comprehensive analysis of doctrinal issues. From Avicenna to Mulla Sadra, these methods have served as the principal tools for reasoning about key doctrinal matters such as divine unity, prophecy, and resurrection. A precise understanding of these methods is therefore essential for any research in the philosophy of religion.

#### **3.1 Deductive Method**

Among philosophical methods of reasoning, the deductive method occupies a central position. This section addresses three main topics: the definition and philosophical status of the deductive method, its distinctive features, and practical examples of its application in proving the existence of God.

##### **3.1.1 Definition and Philosophical Status of the Deductive Method**

The deductive method, also known in logic and philosophy as the *sylogistic method*, refers to a mode of reasoning in which a necessary conclusion is derived from the logical combination of several premises (Mozafar, 1978: 198). The fundamental condition for the validity of this method is the truth of the premises and adherence to the rules of deduction. More precisely, by combining true propositions according to logical principles, one arrives at a true and valid conclusion. In other words, the deductive method, as one of the most fundamental philosophical approaches, traces a path from general principles to specific results. In this method, the premises—either self-evident or based on self-evident truths—serve as the foundation for deducing new conclusions. This reasoning tradition, rooted in Aristotelian logic, was employed by Islamic philosophers such as Al-Farabi, Avicenna, Suhrawardi, and Mulla Sadra, and developed into one of the most effective epistemic tools in Islamic philosophy.

##### **3.1.2 Features of the Deductive Method**

The deductive method possesses several distinctive features that are essential for its proper understanding and application:

**A. Reliance on rational axioms:** Philosophical deduction rests on fundamental rational principles such as causality, the impossibility of contradiction, and the principle of identity.

These principles occupy a foundational position in Islamic philosophy and constitute the cornerstone of philosophical reasoning.

**B. Movement from general to particular:** In this method, reasoning begins with general rules and principles and proceeds to analyze specific phenomena. For instance, in the *Proof of the Truthful Ones*, the general concept of *Necessary Being* is employed as a philosophical truth, with contingent beings interpreted as manifestations of this general reality (Yathribi, 2009: 417–418).

**C. Inseparable connection with logic:** The deductive method adheres at all stages to systematic logical rules, from syllogistic structure to proposition analysis. This characteristic protects philosophical deduction from common errors found in non-logical reasoning.

**D. Independence from textual or historical sources:** This method relies solely on pure rational intuition for its proofs and does not invoke scriptural texts (such as the Qur'an or Hadith), although such texts may be used to confirm and reinforce the results obtained. This independence allows the deductive method to be applied in interreligious and secular discussions.

**E. Universality of results:** Provided that the premises are correct and the rules of deduction are followed, the conclusions derived through the deductive method possess universal validity and are applicable across cultures and historical periods.

Given these characteristics, the deductive method is among the most important and widely accepted approaches in philosophical reasoning.

### 3.1.3 Application of the Deductive Method in Proving the Existence of God

In Islamic philosophy, the deductive method is particularly exemplified in the *Proof of the Truthful Ones* (*Burbān al-Ṣiddiqīn*), one of the most profound and rigorous arguments for the existence of God. In this proof, the philosophical concepts of *possible being* (*mumkin al-wujūd*) and *necessary being* (*wājib al-wujūd*) serve as the premises of the argument.

Avicenna elaborates this proof in *al-Shifā'*, and Mulla Sadra develops it further in *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah*. Mulla Sadra deepens the argument by showing how the concept of *existence* as a fundamental reality directly implies the *Necessary Being*, with all other entities being mere manifestations and reflections of this singular truth (Sadra, 1427: 6/27). By analyzing the notion of existence and its division into necessary and possible, while rigorously observing logical rules, the argument reaches the necessary conclusion of the existence of a Necessary Being.

Thus, the deductive method, due to its high degree of rational precision and independence from non-rational sources, plays a unique role in philosophical reasoning. In examining doctrinal principles, particularly the existence of God and the analysis of fundamental concepts such as the Necessary Being, it provides a reliable and effective tool. The universality and timeless validity of this method have solidified its position within the epistemic framework of Islamic philosophy.

### 3.1.4 Limitations of the Deductive Method

Despite the high status of the deductive method in Islamic philosophy, it faces fundamental limitations that must be understood for a comprehensive grasp of its application. The most critical limitation is the method's complete dependence on the truth of its premises. If the premises are false or unreliable, even strict adherence to logical rules will yield conclusions that lack credibility. This issue is particularly significant in complex philosophical debates, where premises are often contested.

Moreover, the deductive method primarily relies on the analysis and combination of pre-existing concepts and has limited capacity to discover entirely new truths, as it focuses more on elaborating existing knowledge than opening new epistemic horizons.

The abstract nature of the deductive method and its distance from empirical experience constitute another important limitation. By relying on general and abstract concepts, it may be inadequate for understanding experiential or practical aspects of certain issues, especially those closely linked to human experience. Additionally, the inherent complexity of this method and its requirement for philosophical and logical expertise make it difficult for non-specialists to understand and apply, limiting its broader usability.

Many philosophers also argue that the deductive method alone is insufficient to explain all dimensions of existence, particularly spiritual and mystical matters, because some truths can only be apprehended through intuitive or direct experiential insight.

Finally, given its technical and specialized nature, the deductive method is less effective in persuading general audiences unfamiliar with philosophical concepts. Awareness of these limitations encourages the integration of multiple reasoning methods, demonstrating that a comprehensive philosophical approach requires the simultaneous use of various methods, with a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each.

### 3.2 Inductive Method

The inductive method is one of the most fundamental approaches to knowledge and reasoning in science and philosophy, in which the mind moves from observing particular instances to reaching general conclusions. By examining and repeatedly observing phenomena and specific cases, and identifying shared characteristics among them, a general rule is formulated, which can then be applied to other similar cases. In other words, induction is a type of generalization from particulars to universals and relies primarily on direct observation and empirical experience.

#### 3.2.1 Definition and Status of the Inductive Method in Philosophy

Induction can be understood as a process through which the human mind, by examining multiple specific instances, arrives at a general rule or principle. This method is based on experience, observation, and the analysis of empirical data, allowing us to derive general laws and principles from the study of natural and social phenomena.

Muzafar, in his book *Logic*, defines induction as the process by which the mind, through examining numerous particulars, attains a general and universal judgment (Muzafar, 1357: 256). In other words, the mind analyzes multiple specific cases to extract or infer a general conclusion. Thus, induction is reasoning from the particular to the general, whereas in deduction, reasoning proceeds from the general to the particular (Allameh Helli, 1386: 264). Accordingly, induction consists of arriving at a general judgment based on what has been observed and confirmed in specific instances.

If all particular instances of a phenomenon are examined, this is referred to as *complete induction* (*istiqrā' tam*). This type of induction is similar to a *divided syllogism* and yields certainty; hence, it is applicable in philosophical proofs. If, however, only some instances are examined, it is called *incomplete induction* (*istiqrā' nāqis*), which produces probable knowledge and is mainly used in dialectical reasoning and non-definitive debates (ibid.).

The inductive method has wide applications in philosophy, particularly in epistemology, philosophy of science, ethics, and political philosophy. In these fields, induction serves as a tool for moving from empirical data to general theories and laws. Consequently, induction plays a crucial role in expanding human knowledge and forming rational and coherent beliefs.

Historically, philosophers such as Francis Bacon in the seventeenth century emphasized the importance of induction as the foundation of the new scientific method. Bacon, by critiquing the traditional Aristotelian deductive approach, proposed induction as a means to discover scientific truths and explain natural laws, establishing it as the basis of modern scientific philosophy. He argued that only through repeated observation and experience could one derive general and certain laws regarding nature (Capaldi, 1372: sh 48).

Thus, the inductive method is not only one of the most important tools of philosophical thinking but also forms the foundation of modern scientific methodology. By linking experience and reason, it provides a pathway for discovering universal laws across various domains of knowledge.

### **3.2.2 Characteristics of the Inductive Method**

The inductive method is one of the fundamental forms of reasoning in philosophy and empirical sciences, distinguished by several key features that allow researchers to move from specific observations to general laws:

1. **From Particular to General:** Researchers begin with the observation of specific instances, identify common characteristics, and infer a general rule. This process is the inverse of deduction, which moves from general to particular.
2. **Probabilistic Nature:** Unlike deduction, which yields certain results, induction produces conclusions that are probable. Unobserved instances may contradict the observed pattern. However, the greater the number and accuracy of observations, the higher the confidence in the resulting generalization.
3. **Emphasis on Experience and Direct Observation:** Empirical data and direct observation form the foundation of inductive reasoning. Without empirical evidence, no valid generalization can be made.
4. **Repeatability and Testability:** The reliability of inductive conclusions depends on their ability to be replicated under similar conditions and verified through repeated experiments.
5. **Generality and Applicability:** Inductive results should be sufficiently comprehensive to apply to all similar instances.

Thus, the inductive method acts as a bridge between observation and theory, playing a central role in the production of knowledge and enabling the discovery of general laws from particular experiences.

### **3.2.3 Applications of the Inductive Method**

The inductive method, due to its flexible and experience-based nature, has extensive applications across scientific, philosophical, and religious domains.

In the empirical sciences, induction serves as one of the fundamental tools for discovering natural laws. Scientists, through repeated observation and systematic recording of experimental results, move from particular phenomena to general principles. For example, physicists, by studying the motion of objects and the forces acting upon them, formulated general laws such as the law of gravity or the laws of motion. Thus, induction forms the foundation for the development of general theories and scientific laws and is essential to the progress of science (Haqi, 1389: sh11).

In philosophy, induction holds a special status. Philosophers utilize empirical data to explain general concepts in fields such as ontology and epistemology. By observing relationships among phenomena and applying rational analysis, they strive to achieve a deeper understanding of reality and the structure of existence. This approach brings philosophy closer to experience and observable reality, freeing it from mere abstraction (ibid.).

In the religious domain, induction also plays a significant role. Many Islamic commentators and theologians employ this method in interpreting the Qur'an and the prophetic traditions, extracting general principles and universal teachings from multiple instances. The Qur'an repeatedly invites humans to observe and reflect upon natural phenomena, deriving from the order and harmony of the universe evidence for the existence of a wise Creator. Such invitations to observation essentially encourage the use of inductive reasoning in understanding matters of faith.

Moreover, in the realm of religious beliefs, the inductive method, albeit indirectly, serves a reinforcing and explanatory function. In proving the existence of God, Muslim philosophers have reasoned from the order and purposiveness of the universe, arguing that such a harmonious system cannot be the result of chance but indicates the presence of a superior intellect and power that created the world with purpose and design. In demonstrating prophecy, by examining the lives, character, honesty, and miracles of prophets, it becomes evident that these individuals possess qualities that distinguish them and render them worthy of prophethood. Thus, induction in matters of faith functions not as a definitive proof but as a rational tool to reinforce religious beliefs and elucidate the structure of religious doctrine.

#### **3.2.4 Limitations of the Inductive Method in Religious Beliefs**

Despite its extensive applications in empirical and philosophical sciences, induction faces significant structural limitations in the domain of religious beliefs. These limitations arise from the probabilistic nature of the method and the specific characteristics of religious doctrines, which demand certainty and definitiveness.

The primary limitation of induction in religious matters is its inability to generalize results fully to all principles of belief. Induction relies on observations of limited and particular instances to reach general conclusions. However, these conclusions are always probabilistic, since there may exist exceptional cases that contradict the observed pattern. This is particularly problematic in religious beliefs (such as monotheism, prophecy, and the afterlife), which require complete certainty and cannot be based solely on probabilistic reasoning.

A second critical limitation is induction's dependence on the quantity and quality of observed instances. If the data are incomplete, inaccurate, or insufficient, inductive conclusions can be severely misleading. In religious matters, this limitation is even more pronounced, as human access to evidence is mostly confined to the material world, while religious concepts often pertain to realities beyond the physical realm.

A third limitation is the potential neglect of important variables and influencing factors. In religious beliefs, this can lead to incomplete or even contradictory inferences, as many metaphysical and immaterial truths lie beyond the scope of direct human observation. This issue is particularly evident in discussions concerning divine attributes and other metaphysical subjects.

A fourth limitation is the intrinsic reliance of induction on observation and experience, whereas philosophical and religious subjects are largely metaphysical and extend beyond sensory experience. This methodological mismatch implies that induction alone cannot adequately satisfy the reasoning requirements in the domain of religious beliefs.

Given these limitations, the inductive method cannot serve as an independent and definitive means for proving religious principles. At best, it functions as a supplementary tool alongside deductive and demonstrative methods. Its value lies in establishing logical connections between specific observations and general laws, yet it must always be remembered that induction is a tool, not an end. To achieve a comprehensive understanding of religious principles, it is necessary to combine induction intelligently with deductive and demonstrative

reasoning. This integrative approach enhances the strengths and compensates for the weaknesses of each method. Ultimately, the application of induction in religious studies demands precision, caution, and full awareness of its inherent limitations.

### 3.3 The Combined (Synthetic) Method

The combined method occupies a central role in philosophical knowledge and religious beliefs, particularly in the realm of doctrinal principles. Understanding this method is essential for the demonstration and explanation of core beliefs and for analyzing philosophical issues. Essentially, the combined method represents a key approach in this domain because it draws upon multiple epistemic sources—sensory, rational, and intuitive—to analyze and resolve matters of belief. In this section, the nature, position, characteristics, applications, and limitations of this method are examined.

#### 3.3.1 Nature and Position of the Combined Method in Philosophy

The combined method is recognized as one of the most prominent and effective approaches in philosophical and religious sciences. Its primary objective is to create coherence and harmony among diverse epistemic sources. In this method, the researcher systematically employs two or more cognitive tools—such as reason, transmitted knowledge, intuition, and experience—simultaneously to explain or prove a matter. The method specifically seeks to establish a logical and coordinated relationship among rational propositions, textual sources, and other cognitive tools, ultimately yielding a more precise and comprehensive conclusion. This coordination can take the form of direct integration of different elements or the separate analysis of related elements followed by their synthesis (Soleimani Behbahani, 1396: sh. 101). The fundamental purpose of the combined method is to mitigate the limitations and weaknesses of individual methods while optimally leveraging their strengths.

In general, combined methods in philosophy refer to the systematic and logical integration of diverse epistemic tools, including:

- **Rational methods:** deductive and inductive reasoning,
- **Textual methods:** references to authoritative texts and documented sources,
- **Intuitive methods:** insights derived from inner or spiritual intuition.

Within Islamic philosophy, particularly in the school of *Hikmat al-Muta'aliyah* (Transcendent Theosophy), the combined method manifests in philosophical, Qur'anic, and mystical dimensions. In Islamic theology (*kalam*), it is employed in rational-textual forms, especially for proving doctrinal principles. By integrating rational logic with textual evidence (e.g., religious texts) and, at times, inner intuitive insights, this method facilitates the development of stronger, more rigorous, and comprehensive arguments for philosophical and theological discussions.

Such approaches hold profound significance in Islamic philosophy because they allow scholars to address fundamental doctrinal questions—such as the existence of God, the reality of the afterlife, and the proof of prophethood—from both epistemological and ontological perspectives. By enabling the simultaneous utilization of multiple epistemic sources, the combined method provides a framework for attaining a holistic and multi-dimensional understanding of complex philosophical and religious issues.

#### 3.3.2 Characteristics of the Combined Method

Building upon the previously discussed methods, it is essential to examine the unique characteristics of the combined method, which include:

**a) Comprehensiveness:** By integrating diverse epistemic tools—including rational arguments, empirical evidence, and textual propositions—the combined method allows for a

multi-dimensional analysis of issues. This comprehensiveness ensures that the resulting conclusions are more mature and coherent. For instance, in proving the existence of God, the method can synthesize rational proofs, textual evidence, and mystical experiences to present a more complete perspective.

**b) Flexibility:** The method can adapt to different issues and contexts. This flexibility allows its application across various fields, such as ethics, philosophy, and theology. For example, in analyzing prophethood, the method can integrate rational, textual, and historical evidence in a coordinated manner.

**c) Strengthening of Arguments:** Combining different epistemic sources enhances the validity and strength of arguments. The simultaneous use of rational and textual evidence helps to cover cognitive gaps present in each source. For instance, in the case of the afterlife, textual proofs are complemented and reinforced by philosophical reasoning regarding the necessity of the soul's continuation.

**d) Applicability to Complex Topics:** The method is ideally suited for analyzing intricate and multi-layered topics, such as the proof of the afterlife or the examination of divine attributes. Complex philosophical and religious issues require a multi-faceted approach, and the combined method can address various dimensions simultaneously, providing a more complete representation.

With these unique characteristics, the combined method offers an efficient and impactful approach to analyzing philosophical and religious issues, particularly profound and extensive subjects. These capabilities have secured its prominent position in various epistemic domains, especially within Islamic philosophy.

### 3.3.3 Applications of the Combined Method in Philosophy and Doctrinal Principles

In philosophy, the combined method serves as an efficient and comprehensive tool for integrating diverse lines of reasoning to demonstrate the existence of God. By incorporating philosophical, theological, and mystical elements, this approach provides a multidimensional and more complete understanding of the subject. Notable examples of its application in arguments for the existence of God include:

1. **Innate and Rational Arguments:** This approach combines the innate human inclination toward God with rational reasoning. For instance, the natural tendency toward an Absolute Being is integrated with logical arguments regarding the necessity of God's existence. This combination provides simultaneous evidence from human experience and rational deduction (Tabataba'i, 1390: 5/42), allowing for a rational argument for God's existence.

2. **Causal and Moral Arguments:** In this category, philosophical causation is integrated with ethical values to establish God as the ultimate source of morality and causality. Such a combination can also be observed in Kantian moral arguments, where God's existence is posited as the guarantor of ultimate moral justice (Mohammad Rezaei, 1390: sh. 77).

3. **Ontological and Intuitive Arguments:** In certain mystical proofs, intuitive knowledge or immediate perception (e.g., direct experiential awareness of God) is intertwined with philosophical ontological reasoning. This approach, elaborated in works such as "Divine Intuition and Proof of God," blends mystical and intuitive dimensions with philosophical analysis (Askari, 1385: sh. 2).

The combined method is applied not only in proving but also in explaining and describing doctrinal principles. Its application ensures that religious beliefs remain both rationally coherent and consistent with the language of revelation, enhancing public acceptance and fostering greater harmony within religious communities. Essentially, this method provides a

means of balancing philosophical rationality with religious faith, making it particularly valuable in both explaining doctrinal principles and addressing theological objections.

### 3.3.4 Limitations of the Combined Method

Despite its advantages—such as comprehensiveness, flexibility, and the ability to analyze multilayered topics—the combined method also faces several limitations:

**a. Complexity of Results:** Because it simultaneously employs multiple methods (rational, textual, and intuitive), the resulting analysis can be highly complex. This complexity may render the outcomes difficult to comprehend for non-specialists, as the interplay among different methods and concepts requires advanced expertise and analytical discernment. Consequently, mastery over all these methods simultaneously may not be feasible for everyone.

**b. High Cognitive Demand for Logical Integration:** Successful use of the method requires harmonizing rational, textual, and intuitive evidence. This necessitates extensive knowledge and a high level of logical integration skills, which may not be accessible to all researchers.

**c. Potential Contradictions Among Methods:** Employing diverse methods can occasionally yield conflicting results. For example, discrepancies may arise between textual evidence and rational analysis, necessitating clear and acceptable criteria for resolving such conflicts.

**d. Limitations in Presenting Comprehensive Principles:** In some cases, the combined method may fail to present general philosophical or doctrinal principles in a simple yet comprehensive manner, as the components of each method may conflict or overlap.

Overall, in evaluating philosophical proofs for doctrinal principles, deductive, inductive, and combined methods each play a significant role. The **deductive method** relies on logic and rules of reasoning, enabling movement from general principles to specific conclusions and providing a coherent structure for beliefs. The **inductive method** examines empirical evidence and observed phenomena, allowing for the derivation of general laws.

The **combined method**, integrating deductive, inductive, and occasionally intuitive reasoning, offers a more comprehensive and flexible approach for establishing complex, multifaceted doctrinal principles. By merging rational, textual, and intuitive evidence, it facilitates deeper and more convincing understanding of religious truths, though it carries inherent challenges.

In conclusion, the combined use of these methods—taking into account the strengths and limitations of each—yields more comprehensive and precise results. The combined method acts as an integrative framework, bringing together diverse lines of evidence to present a clearer and fuller depiction of truth, while the deductive method provides the structural backbone that ensures stability and coherence.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The present study, by examining the methodological approaches of philosophical proofs in the domain of doctrinal principles, has yielded significant insights. The findings indicate that each of the three methods—deductive, inductive, and combined—possesses distinct capacities and limitations in demonstrating and explicating doctrinal tenets.

The **deductive method**, relying on the logical structure of syllogism and the movement from general principles to specific conclusions, offers high precision and certainty in reasoning. This approach proves particularly effective in establishing the existence of God and elucidating philosophical concepts such as the Necessary Being. However, its primary limitation lies in its inability to fully explicate complex issues, such as bodily resurrection and certain ontological concepts.

The **inductive method**, based on observation and experience, enables the connection of natural phenomena to metaphysical concepts. This approach is valuable for reinforcing religious beliefs and providing empirical support for doctrinal concepts, yet due to its probabilistic nature, it cannot independently offer conclusive proof of doctrinal principles.

Among these methods, the **combined method** emerges as the most comprehensive approach. By intelligently integrating reason, textual sources, and intuition, it allows for a multidimensional analysis of doctrinal issues. Its embodiment in Mulla Sadra's *Transcendent Theosophy* demonstrates how the integration of philosophical argumentation, Qur'anic references, and mystical insight can yield a profound and holistic explanation of theological truths.

In conclusion, it can be emphasized that the integrative and wisdom-oriented approach of the combined method not only enriches theoretical discourse in the philosophy of religion but also provides a practical framework for balancing philosophical rationality with religious faith. This study thus contributes to the revival of the tradition of philosophical wisdom in Islamic thought and to the development of methodological approaches in the study of doctrinal principles.

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