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Critical Thinking as a Mechanism for Situation Handling and Problem Solving: Examples from Ḥadīth Literature

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Abstract

In an era marked by complex social challenges, the need for effective critical thinking methodologies has become increasingly vital. While contemporary approaches to critical thinking and problem-solving are well documented, the rich repository of Islamic intellectual tradition, particularly the prophetic teachings, remains largely unexplored in this context. This study addresses this gap by examining the critical thinking patterns embedded in ḥadīth literature, specifically investigating how Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his companions approached complex social situations and problems. Through systematic analysis of selected narratives from the two authoritative ḥadīth collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, the study employs both inductive and analytical approaches to identify and categorise critical thinking skills. From examining twenty carefully selected ḥadīths, eight distinct critical thinking skills were identified and subsequently organised into a novel threestage model for situation handling and problem-solving. The findings reveal a framework that bridges classical Islamic wisdom with contemporary cognitive theories, demonstrating how traditional approaches to critical thinking can inform modern problem-solving methodologies. The study concludes that while 'wisdom' and 'critical thinking' share fundamental tools and strategies, the Islamic conception of wisdom offers a more comprehensive approach that integrates ethical considerations with analytical thinking. This research contributes to both theoretical understanding of critical thinking and practical application of classical Islamic problem-solving methods in

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