

## Sheikh Ibrahim Bayoud and the Renewal of Doctrinal Thought in Algeria

Fatima Ouled Yahia

Faculty of Fundamentals of Religion, Department of Doctrine and Comparative Religions, Emir Abd El Kader University for Islamic Sciences, Constantine, Algeria.

Email: ima507584@gmail.com

Received : 12/07/2024 ; Accepted : 29/11/2024 , Published : 05/01/2025

### ABSTRACT

This study is considered an attempt to understand the role of one of the thinkers in renewing doctrinal thought, Sheikh Ibrahim Bayoud in Algeria. It addresses the importance of Sheikh Bayoud as one of the most prominent intellectual and religious figures in Algeria in the 20th century. The study highlights his approach to dealing with doctrinal constants and variables, where he primarily relied on both rational and textual evidence, balancing them in his jurisprudential interpretations. Through these interpretations, Sheikh Bayoud guided new generations towards a deeper and broader understanding of Islam, free from doctrinal rigidity. This approach had a significant impact on Islamic thought both in Algeria and beyond. His influence was particularly evident in combating intellectual stagnation and promoting a revitalized Islamic thought that keeps pace with contemporary developments, making him a pivotal figure in the renewal of doctrinal thought in Algeria.

**Keywords:** Doctrinal thought; Renewal; Monotheism; Doctrine; Reform; Ibrahim Bayoud.

### INTRODUCTION

Algeria stands as a rich source of knowledge and science in North Africa, contributing significantly to Islamic thought throughout history despite enduring challenges and conflicts. Despite the trials and destruction the country has faced, the pursuit of knowledge has persisted, evidenced by the numerous scholars it has produced across various fields. Even the Ibadi interpretations, distinguished by their unique nature and rarity, predominantly originated in Algeria, whether ancient or modern, printed or lost.

Ibadism is one of the Islamic sects characterized by its obscurity and historical insularity. It was established in the first Hijri century by Abdullah bin Ibad al-Tamimi and remained confined to a narrow scope, away from the broader intellectual arena. Over the centuries, it has been limited to specific regions within the Islamic world, most notably southern Algeria, especially the M'zab Valley and the city of Ghardaia.

Amid the intellectual developments witnessed by the Islamic world in recent centuries, Ibadi theological thought has maintained its foundational principles while also adapting to contemporary challenges through multiple reform efforts. Among these reformers was Sheikh Ibrahim Bayoud, one of the most prominent Ibadi scholars in Algeria and the Islamic world during the 20th century. Renowned for his profound intellect and comprehensive vision, he consistently worked to develop Ibadi doctrine without compromising its core principles. His writings and commentaries served as primary references for numerous scholars and learners seeking a balance between immutable religious texts and the demands of modern life. Bayoud exemplified the reformist scholar who sought to merge tradition with modernity within the framework of doctrine, making him an intellectual and religious icon in Algeria's Ibadi heritage.

The significance of this study lies in shedding light on the personality of Sheikh Ibrahim Bayoud and his pivotal role in renewing theological thought in Algeria. Sheikh Bayoud made remarkable contributions to the development of religious thought among Ibadis, striving to modernize theological concepts to align with contemporary challenges while preserving religious and historical constants. Through this study, we aim to explore Sheikh Bayoud's reformist perspectives in theological thought and his innovative interpretations of various religious issues, enhancing our understanding of how he contributed to renewing religious thought in Algeria. This renewal represents a significant step towards expanding the Ibadi intellectual and religious influence in Algeria and the broader Islamic world.

This study will delve into Sheikh Ibrahim Bayoud's biography and his efforts to reformulate Ibadi theological thought. It begins with an introduction providing an overview of the Sheikh's character, followed by three main sections. First, we will examine his biography, focusing on his upbringing, major achievements, stages of intellectual and religious formation, and the influential figures in shaping his thought. Second, we will explore the concepts of theological renewal in Sheikh Bayoud's thought, discussing topics of faith and analyzing his approach to dealing with theological constants and variables. Third, we will

concentrate on the trajectory of renewing religious values through the Life Institute and its role in promoting theological thought. The study concludes with key findings derived from the analysis.

The choice of this subject stems from the desire to highlight an influential intellectual figure who has rarely received the attention she deserves in study and analysis. Sheikh Bayoud, with his reformist vision and profound writings, is among the figures who have had a significant impact on Ibadi theological thought, particularly in Algeria. Moreover, studying his efforts in doctrinal renewal opens new horizons for understanding how Ibadi scholars engage with contemporary issues and maintain doctrinal identity in the face of intellectual challenges.

### **1. Biography of Sheikh Bayoud:**

Sheikh Ibrahim Bayoud is considered one of the most prominent intellectual and religious figures in the history of Ibadism in Algeria. He played a pivotal role in renewing and developing theological thought to address contemporary challenges. This section explores his upbringing, education, and the social and religious conditions in which he grew up.

#### **1.1. His Upbringing and Major Achievements:<sup>1</sup>**

The scholar Ibrahim Omar Bayoud was born on April 21, 1899, in the city of Al-Qarara, Algeria. He memorized the Quran at the age of twelve at the institute of Sheikh Ibrahim bin Al-Hajj Al-Bariki, then joined the school of Sheikh Al-Hajj Omar bin Yahya.

He began teaching after the death of his teacher, at the age of only 22. He was selected as a member of the Council of Azzaba (the highest authority supervising religious and social affairs in the town) in 1922. Two years later, in 1924, he was appointed as a sheikh responsible for teaching and preaching in the mosque. He established the Youth Institute (later known as the Life Institute) in 1925 and assumed its administration and teaching responsibilities.

In 1937, he founded the Al-Hayat Charitable Society, which oversaw several institutions, including a primary school, the Hayat Club, and the Hayat Library. In 1939, he was appointed as the head of the Council of Azzaba due to his pioneering role in societal reform.

After Algeria gained independence in 1962, he became the president of the Ami Sa'id Council, the highest authority of the Azzaba councils in the towns of the M'zab Valley and Warjlan. He held this position until his death on January 14, 1981.

#### **1.2 Stages of His Academic and Religious Formation:**

Sheikh Bayoud began his education at a Quranic school at a young age. He memorized the entire Quran before the age of twelve under the guidance of his teacher, Al-Hajj Muhammad bin Yusuf Bahoun bin Ali. He then joined the Irwan study circle, gradually advancing in his pursuit of Arabic language and Islamic Sharia sciences<sup>2</sup>.

Self-reliance and a love for reading were among Sheikh Bayoud's most prominent characteristics. He was a regular attendee of a club led by his teacher, Al-Hajj Bakir Al-Anq, where the town's elite gathered to read books and magazines, particularly those arriving from the East, and to follow events in the Islamic world. Reflecting on this experience, he stated:

"These gatherings discussed all the town's problems and explained all its policies. Through them, I learned what I had not known about the secrets of society and reform. My mind was enriched by what I heard and observed, teaching me methods of struggle, sharpening my awareness, and providing me with an exceptional social education<sup>3</sup>".

#### **1.3. Influential Figures in His Intellectual Formation:**

Sheikh Bayoud closely followed the movement of reformist scholars in the East, such as Sheikh Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Sheikh Muhammad Abduh, Sheikh Rashid Rida, Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi, and Prince Shakib Arslan. He admired their methodologies and absorbed their ideas through their works and writings. By chance, he met some of them, including Shakib Arslan, whom he encountered during the Hajj pilgrimage in 1929. Sheikh Bayoud frequently praised Arslan's thought and stances.

In Algeria, Sheikh Bayoud maintained strong connections with its scholars and reform leaders, such as Sheikh Abdelhamid Ben Badis and Sheikh Bashir al-Ibrahimi. He collaborated with them in founding the Association of Algerian Muslim Ulama in 1931, where he was a prominent member.<sup>4</sup>

### **2. Concepts of Doctrinal Renewal in Sheikh Ibrahim Bayoud's Thought:**

Sheikh Ibrahim Bayoud emerged as a reformer of theological thought, striving to reconcile religious constants with contemporary challenges in a manner consistent with the developments of the era.

#### **2.1. Doctrinal Renewal in Bayoud's Thought:**

Thought is the process of reflection and intellectual reasoning, involving the application of the mind to understand things. In its general sense, it refers to any phenomenon of intellectual activity.<sup>5</sup> From this definition, we can infer that theological thought encompasses the set of beliefs and ideas related to the foundations of religious doctrine. It concerns the study of the principles upon which religious doctrine is based, alongside their interpretation and the clarification of related concepts using reason.

### 2.1.1 Faith in Allah:

Before addressing the concept of faith in Allah, it is essential to first consider the notion of Tawhid (monotheism), as it forms the foundation of faith. Linguistically, Tawhid stems from the root word for "oneness," meaning singularity. To say "wahhada, tawhidan" means "to make something one."<sup>6</sup> In Islamic terminology, Tawhid refers to affirming the oneness of Allah in His Lordship, Divinity, Names, and Attributes.<sup>7</sup>

#### A. The Question of Allah's Existence:

The question of Allah's existence has always been one of the central issues occupying human thought throughout history. Scholars have employed various approaches and proofs to affirm the existence of the Creator, the most prominent of which is known as the "Proof of Fitrah" (innate disposition). Sheikh Bayoud emphasized that the closest way for a person to know Allah is through their pure innate disposition, which Allah instilled in them:

"The innate disposition placed by Allah in the heart is sufficient on its own for a person to recognize Him, even without being reminded by a scholar, parent, or mentor. It is enough for one to look at the earth, what it contains and what it bears, and to observe the heavens, the sun, and the moon. Then, they ponder and ask: Who created this vast, boundless universe? Who governs and regulates it? What creature can claim, 'I or someone else did this'?"<sup>8</sup>

The signs of Allah in the horizons and within ourselves serve as powerful evidence of His existence and infinite wisdom. The Quran invites us to contemplate the vast universe and its wondrous signs, pointing to the existence of a Creator and Sustainer: ﴿سَتَرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَّبِعِنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ ۗ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ﴾ [فصلت: 53]

Allah's proof to His creation is simple yet profound, sufficient to instill faith. It leaves no room for excuse, as it is evident to all, regardless of their intellectual level. Such evidence, despite its simplicity, firmly roots faith in the heart of the reflective and contemplative. As one walks upon the earth, it directs them to Allah; lifting their gaze to the heavens does the same. Allah establishes proof through these simple yet universal signs, accessible to both the learned and the unlearned alike.<sup>9</sup>

The signs of Allah are scattered throughout this magnificent universe. Sheikh Bayoud remarked on the manifestation of faith's proofs in the diversity of human colors, fruits, animals, and livestock:

"Glory be to Allah! Where were these colors formed, and what is the reason for their variation? We do not say this to pass time or waste it; not at all. Every word we utter increases a person's reverence for Allah, love for Him, and acknowledgment of His authority and power. In this way, faith becomes deeply rooted in the heart."<sup>10</sup>

#### B. The Question of Names and Attributes:

Sheikh Bayoud held that the greatest name of Allah, which serves as a proper noun for the Divine Being, is the term "Allah." This name is not derived and is the subject of attributes, such as saying: Allah the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the Wise. He believed that the Most Beautiful Names of Allah are His attributes<sup>11</sup> and that they are *tawqifi* (determined solely by divine revelation), forbidding the attribution of names to Allah that He has not attributed to Himself.<sup>12</sup>

Humans are incapable of comprehending the true nature of Allah's Most Beautiful Names, and in this inability lies a form of glorification and exaltation. Sheikh Bayoud stated:

*"All that we must believe is that Allah possesses the Most Beautiful Names, which are His attributes. However, we cannot grasp their reality, except that He is described by them, and this suffices us."*<sup>13</sup>

A servant's limitation in understanding the Divine Attributes is not a shortcoming or negligence but an acknowledgment of their inability to comprehend. They are not to delve into the essence of these attributes, as their true nature is beyond human understanding. One can only perceive their effects. Those who attempt to comprehend the true essence of the Creator's attributes lack evidence and are likely to fall into confusion and misguidance. This is because no creature can grasp such realities, even if they were to unite in their efforts.

Sheikh Bayoud explained:

"The Names of Allah are only forms that Allah has provided to help us understand that He is All-Knowing, All-Seeing, Omnipotent, and Willful. No expressions can fulfill this purpose other than these words. Then, we must pause and acknowledge our inability and deficiency, which is what Allah is pleased for us to do."<sup>14</sup>

### 2.1.2 Faith in Angels:

Faith in angels is an essential pillar of belief, as indicated in the verse:

[285] ﴿أَمَّنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ...﴾ [البقرة: 285] Denying their existence constitutes an act of disbelief, specifically shirk (associating partners with Allah), rather than nifaq (hypocrisy). This is because belief in angels is among the essentials of faith known inherently by necessity and explicitly confirmed in the clear texts of the Quran.<sup>15</sup>

### 2.1.3 Faith in the Scriptures:

Human beings naturally require a system to regulate their lives and guide their interactions with others. Throughout history, humanity has established constitutions and laws to organize social and economic relationships. However, these human-made laws remain inherently limited, as they are the product of finite human knowledge and understanding. In contrast, the divine scriptures originate from the all-wise Creator, who possesses complete knowledge of what benefits humanity in every time and place. This makes them the most perfect framework for organizing human life:

[14] ﴿أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ﴾ [الملك: 14]

Faith in the Quran entails adherence to its rulings, application of its teachings, and rejection of any legislation or laws that contradict its principles. Sheikh Bayoud did not limit the Quran's role to merely surpassing previous divine scriptures; he regarded it as a comprehensive reference that surpasses all human laws and ideologies, based on the Quran's inherent quality of being Qayyim (upright and guiding).

He asserted:

"Whoever brings forth a law, scripture, or document claiming it to be authored by so-and-so, or attributed to a specific academy be it French, American, or British we say to them: The Quran stands as the measure against it. Whatever aligns with it, we accept; whatever contradicts it, we reject and cast aside, with no regard."<sup>16</sup>

### 2.1.4 Faith in the Messengers:

Sheikh Bayoud believed that prophethood is a gift from Allah, granted to whomever He chooses among His servants. It is not the result of effort or striving.<sup>17</sup> Allah says:

[75] ﴿اللَّهُ يَصْطَفِي مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا وَمِمَّنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ﴾ [الحج: 75]

Allah alone selects whom He wills to receive His revelation and convey His messages.

Belief in all the prophets and messengers is obligatory without distinction between them:

[285] ﴿لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّن رُّسُلِهِ﴾ [البقرة: 285]

This is because their religion is one, even if their laws differed. All of them came with the message of Tawhid (monotheism) from Allah to His servants. Each of them said to their people:

[73] ﴿قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ﴾ [الأعراف: 73]

Thus, Tawhid is the cornerstone of all the messengers' calls.<sup>18</sup>

### 2.1.5 Faith in the Day of Judgment:

Faith in the Day of Judgment is often mentioned in conjunction with faith in Allah in contexts commanding action or refraining from it. This is evident in many Quranic verses and prophetic traditions, such as: ﴿إِنْ كُنْتُمْ

[59] ﴿النساء: 59﴾ And the saying: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day..."

This highlights the significance of this belief and its profound impact on human behavior.

When a person is certain that the Hereafter is their ultimate destiny and fears standing before their Lord, they make it the foremost objective in all aspects of life. Such a person's lifestyle is markedly different from one who disregards the Hereafter in their considerations and actions, prioritizing worldly pleasures and possessions at the expense of religion.

Sheikh Bayoud emphasized the necessity of having firm conviction in the Day of Judgment within the believer's heart to ensure steadfastness on the path of righteousness. He noted that when person harbors doubt about this matter, they lose control over their behavior, making it easy for them to transgress boundaries. While all Muslims are aware of resurrection and accountability, deviations in worship and dealings indicate a lack of certainty about this day and skepticism regarding it.<sup>19</sup>

### 2.1.6 Faith in Divine Decree and Predestination:

Sheikh Bayoud adopted the concept of kasb (acquisition) in this matter, affirming that human actions are attributed to individuals, while ultimately returning all matters to Allah. He explained that a person's will and execution of actions occur by Allah's permission. He stated:

"An action is singular in nature but is attributed to Allah as creation and to the individual as execution. However, since this execution occurs by Allah's permission, creation, and knowledge, all matters ultimately belong to Allah." <sup>20</sup>

Sheikh Bayoud addressed the differing views on this issue in various ways. His response to the Mu'tazilites was concise, acknowledging their misstep while recognizing their good intention of absolving Allah from creating the evil deeds committed by His servants: "*Their intention was correct, but they erred in attributing creation to the servant.*" <sup>21</sup>

## **2.2. His Approach to Theological Constants and Variables:**

### **2.2.1. Faith and Islam:**

Sheikh Bayoud examined the interconnection between the linguistic and terminological meanings of Islam, emphasizing that neglecting its linguistic roots weakens the comprehension of its profound dynamic dimensions. He remarked: "*A Muslim has become merely a static title, devoid of the fluid and meaningful essence of the term.*" <sup>22</sup>

Faith (*iman*) and Islam are concepts that can appear together or independently, with their meanings determined by context. When mentioned together, each carries a distinct meaning and is linked through a complementary relationship. Faith serves as the foundation that leads to the submission of the limbs and their obedience to Allah's commands, reflecting its practical impact on the believer's life. Sheikh Bayoud explained: "*When this belief resides in the heart, expressed through faith, it results in visible Islam. Thus, a person is a believer at heart and a Muslim outwardly. When we distinguish between faith and Islam, their meanings align in this way.*" <sup>23</sup>

Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah and Sheikh Ibrahim Bayoud both cited the *Hadith of Gabriel* <sup>24</sup> to differentiate between the concepts of Islam and faith. When the Prophet ﷺ was asked about Islam, he responded with the five outward pillars of religion. When asked about faith, he described its six fundamental principles. Sheikh Bayoud also referenced Allah's statement:

{فَأَخْرَجْنَا مَنْ كَانَ فِيهَا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَمَا وَجَدْنَا فِيهَا غَيْرَ بَيْتٍ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ} [الذاريات: 35-36]

to demonstrate that the terms Islam and faith can be used interchangeably <sup>25</sup>, signifying the comprehensive meaning of religion, encompassing both its doctrinal and practical aspects, when used separately. <sup>26</sup>

### **2.2.2. Doctrinal Foundations:**

The methodologies for studying doctrine vary. Sheikh Bayoud remarked: "*All schools derive their rulings from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ, but they differ in their methods of deduction.*" <sup>27</sup>

In presenting Islamic doctrine, two main methodologies are recognized: the Quranic approach and the scholastic theologians' approach (*mutakallimun*).

The Quranic doctrinal methodology possesses comprehensive features that distinguish it from others. It is universal, suitable for all people, transcending specific classes or eras. The Quran appeals to human nature with clear evidence that resonates across different classes and ethnicities. It prepares the human self to instill faith by encouraging the pursuit of knowledge and self-honesty while questioning inherited corrupt beliefs and myths.

The Quran surrounds individuals with emotional and logical stimuli, presenting content that engages both the innate disposition (*fitrah*) and the intellect. It connects the foundations of faith with their practical effects on human life. Additionally, the Quran invites reflection on the signs in the horizons and within ourselves, affirming the truths of faith. It emphasizes the authenticity of doctrine by harmonizing with natural human disposition and deeply rooting itself in human history, presenting pure monotheism as the central message of the prophets from Adam onward.

This methodology is characterized by clarity and alignment with the evident truths of reason, avoiding contradictions. It fosters pure, dynamic faith that influences every aspect of a believer's life, as expressed in:

{قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ} [الأنعام: 162]

With these features, the Quranic approach surpasses the methodologies of the scholastic theologians, which are often marked by abstraction and complexity. The Quran offers believers purification and faith, drawing them closer to their Lord. <sup>28</sup>

Al-Zarkashi noted: "*There is no indication, categorization, or definition of any general intellectual or auditory knowledge except that the Book of Allah has articulated it. However, it does so in the manner of the Arabs, rather than in the intricate style of the theologians.*" <sup>29</sup>

### **2.2.3 Interpretation of the Quran:**

A Muslim's clear understanding of their creed and unwavering confidence in it are fundamental pillars for shaping their character and enabling them to fulfill their role in building the earth and establishing a

civilization based on Islamic values and principles. Sheikh Bayoud stated: *"This will not be possible for a Muslim unless they re-examine the Quran afresh, stripping its verses of their historical layers, the discussions of scholastic theology influenced by Eastern and Western theology, the so-called Islamic philosophy, and what is referred to as modern Islamic thought tainted by Western cultures and its idolatrous and disbelieving civilization."*<sup>30</sup>

The Quran addresses humanity by appealing to their innate nature, intellect, and emotions in a comprehensive manner. It bases its call to the pillars of faith on awakening this innate disposition and stimulating inherent principles of belief. For this reason, the Quran is described as *dhikr* (reminder) and *dhikra* (recollection), and the Prophet ﷺ was commanded to remind those who fear the consequences of disobedience, as in: [ق: 45] (فَذَكِّرْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَنْ يَخَافُ وَعَيْدِ)

As Sheikh Muhammad Al-Ghazali remarked: *"The Quran alone is the source of creeds and the foundation of certainty. Its method of establishing beliefs is characterized by absolute clarity, alignment with the evident truths of reason, and its resistance to contradictions and doubts."*<sup>31</sup>

Sheikh Bayoud regarded his interpretation of the Quran as a means of achieving guidance. He focused on purifying souls, developing minds, and reforming society. He went beyond mere linguistic and doctrinal differences, striving instead to connect Quranic texts to contemporary realities. He addressed the crises of his time and drew solutions from the Quran tailored to them. He expanded his interpretations to include various issues related to the events and challenges faced by his community.

*"In such elaborations, the listener might feel they are not hearing a lesson in Quranic exegesis but a session in preaching and guidance. This, of course, aligns with the ultimate purpose and wisdom behind the revelation of this sacred book: guidance and direction, which is what reformist interpreters sought to achieve."*<sup>32</sup>

Sheikh Bayoud was dedicated to uncovering the deep meanings of the Quran and simplifying them to make them accessible to all segments of the ummah. His goal was to inspire them to act according to its teachings: *"If only people understood the Word of Allah, the one revealed in His Book, and if only they understood the Book of the universe, they would return to Allah and truly believe in His promises."*<sup>33</sup>

### **3. Sheikh Ibrahim Bayoud and the Path of Renewing Religious Values:**

This section addresses Sheikh Ibrahim Bayoud's role in renewing religious values through his unique approach to interpreting and teaching the Quran. Sheikh Bayoud sought to revive authentic religious values in a manner aligned with the demands of the modern era. He relied on the Institute of Life as an effective educational tool for renewing theological thought. Through this institute, he presented an educational model that harmonized authenticity with modernity in addressing religious and doctrinal issues.

#### **3.1 The Institute of Life and Its Establishment as a Tool for Renewing Theological Thought:**

Sheikh Ibrahim Bayoud adopted a comprehensive approach to reform, combining spiritual nourishment with intellectual development. This vision inspired him to establish an educational movement that integrated the authenticity of principles with innovative methods. On 18 Shawwal 1343 AH / May 21, 1925, Sheikh Bayoud founded the *Institute of Life* for youth, in collaboration with a group of dedicated scholars who devoted their lives to revival efforts. Among these were Sheikh Abu al-Yaqzan Ibrahim (1306–1393 AH / 1888–1973 CE), a pioneer of national journalism, and Sheikh Sharifi Said bin Belhaj, known as "Sheikh Adoun" (1319 AH / 1902 CE), who was Sheikh Bayoud's right-hand man.

Sheikh Bayoud echoed the sentiment of Imam Muhammad al-Ghazali, who said: *"There is no salvation for us except by giving as much attention to institutes as we do to mosques, building an institute beside every mosque, and erecting a place of worship beside every institute."*

Sheikh Bayoud remarked: *"By the grace of Allah, we have long advocated for this idea, and after tremendous efforts, we implemented it practically. This resulted in the establishment of the great institution of the Institute of Life beside the mosque, a towering structure for Muhammadan education and a beacon for Islam. This has been our conviction since we took our first steps in religious and social reform."*<sup>34</sup>

This blessed institution has stood the test of time, steadfastly carrying its mission. As the Islamic ummah approached the 21st century, there was great anticipation for the institute to continue its contributions, intensify its efforts, and play a pivotal role in restoring the ummah's glory and honor, reaching the position Allah has destined for it among nations.

The institute was further supported by a student residence providing an internal system for those arriving from different regions. Its purpose was to unify the youth and consolidate ideas within an interconnected educational and social framework. Sheikh Bayoud observed: *"If the Institute of Life is a source of*

*inspiration, the residence is the practical field where students translate the ethical values inspired by the Prophetic biography into their daily lives.*"<sup>35</sup>

The institute produced a distinguished group of graduates: *"Successive generations of outstanding students emerged, including teachers and educators, authors, preachers calling to Allah, writers, poets, and social reformers who became pivotal figures in their communities."*<sup>36</sup>

These graduates went on to assume diverse roles in various fields of practical life, such as trade, industry, administration, and more.

### **3.2 Sheikh Bayoud's Adherence to the Creed of the Salaf: Between Delegation and Interpretation**

Sheikh Bayoud emphasized in multiple parts of his Quranic exegesis the importance of adhering to the creed of the *Salaf* (righteous predecessors) in understanding Allah's names and attributes. He stated: *"It is obligatory for us to adhere to the creed of the Salaf in all matters related to Allah's affairs, His attributes, and His Most Beautiful Names. We must delegate all of this to Allah without delving into philosophical debates to understand the essence of the attribute—whether it is identical to His essence or distinct from it."*<sup>37</sup>

In another instance, he said: *"All we are required to believe is that Allah possesses the Most Beautiful Names, which are His attributes. However, we do not know their reality except that He is described by them, and this suffices for us. We believe in whatever He ascribes to Himself in terms of actions, without anthropomorphism or negation. The guiding principle we uphold is His statement: [أَلَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ] الشورى: [11. His existence is unlike the existence of created beings, as are His life, hearing, seeing, will, love, hatred, guardianship, enmity, and all other matters unique to Him. Nothing resembles Him. The Creator of words and expressions has told us: 'I am the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.' These words are similar to those we use, but their realities differ as vastly as the heavens and the earth—or even more so. Therefore, leave this debate and adhere to the methodology of the Salaf, which ensures safety."*<sup>38</sup>

While Sheikh Bayoud occasionally interpreted certain attributes in a manner that avoided apparent anthropomorphism, such as interpreting *istiwa* (rising) as *istila* (dominion) in some cases, and considering Allah's elevation (*'ulu*) as a metaphor for status rather than physical place, his overarching approach remained rooted in the methodology of the Salaf. For instance, regarding *istiwa*, he stated: *"As for istiwa, its reality is known only to Allah, and it is among His affairs that we do not discuss. While some interpret it as istila (dominion), the Throne itself is also unknown in its reality except to Allah. Istiwa and the Throne belong to the category of mutashabihat (ambiguous matters). Delving into interpreting verses related to Allah's unique affairs is challenging, but since He has informed us of them in His Book, we may seek understanding to the extent possible, provided it brings peace to the soul. Otherwise, we delegate the matter to Allah."*<sup>39</sup>

Sheikh Bayoud's exegesis reflects the influence of the reform movement and the Association of Algerian Muslim Ulama. He was a reformist within Ibadi exegesis, liberated from the constraints of his predecessors, steering clear of theological polemics, and bridging divergent perspectives on contentious issues. His focus was on the reformative and instructional aspects of exegesis, rejecting blind imitation and sectarian fanaticism.

Although his interpretations were generally consistent with the principles of his sect, they were free from bigotry or condemnation of opposing views<sup>40</sup>. As one of his students described: *"Sheikh Bayoud does not blindly follow others in exegesis nor is he fanatical about his sect. He prepares for his lessons by consulting the best references from all Islamic schools, examining their views, accepting what aligns with the truth, and sometimes rejecting them all, explaining their weaknesses, and presenting something new of his own."*<sup>41</sup>

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this study highlights Sheikh Bayoud's significant intellectual contributions to theology and religious renewal, which extended far beyond the M'zab Valley to various regions of Algeria and the broader Islamic world. Sheikh Bayoud successfully balanced authenticity and modernity in his theological thought, drawing upon the foundational principles of Ibadism while engaging with contemporary needs and challenges. His profound interpretations and efforts to renew religious values through the Institute of Life played a pivotal role in preserving the Ibadi identity, safeguarding it from the influence of extreme and erroneous ideologies. Based on the findings of this study, we can summarize the following key points:

- ✓ Sheikh Bayoud is one of the most prominent Ibadi scholars in Algeria, playing a central role in renewing theological thought to meet the challenges of the modern age while maintaining religious constants.

- ✓ He strived to achieve a balance between fixed theological principles and contemporary life's demands, making him a symbol of reformist thought within the Ibadi community.
- ✓ Sheikh Bayoud adopted a reformist approach in his interpretations of faith concepts, particularly in issues of Tawhid (monotheism) and Allah's names and attributes, which expanded theological understanding within the Ibadi society.
- ✓ He emphasized innate disposition (fitrah) and cosmic signs as tools for strengthening faith in Allah, asserting that these signs are sufficient to affirm the existence and governance of Allah.
- ✓ The Institute of Life, founded by Sheikh Bayoud, played a key role in promoting Ibadi theological thought in Algeria through its educational program, which integrated theological and religious aspects.
- ✓ Sheikh Bayoud was influenced by reformist scholars in the East, such as Sheikh Muhammad Abduh and Sheikh Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, which shaped his intellectual methodologies.
- ✓ Through his writings and educational activities, Sheikh Bayoud elevated the religious awareness of Ibadis, providing them with a deeper understanding of their creed through a contemporary lens.
- ✓ He succeeded in making Ibadi theological thought relevant to modern developments without compromising its fundamental values and religious principles.

Sheikh Bayoud's legacy continues to serve as a guiding light for reformist theological and educational efforts, embodying a harmonious blend of tradition and modernity.

#### REFERENCES

1. Ibrahim Bayoud, Fatwas of Imam Sheikh Bayoud, edited by Sheikh Bakir bin Muhammad Sheikh Belhaj, 1st Edition, Al-Arabiyyah Printing Press, Ghardaia, Algeria, 1408 AH / 1988 CE.
2. Ibrahim Bayoud, In the Shade of the Quran: Surah Al-Shura, edited by Issa bin Muhammad Sheikh Belhaj, Vol. 17, Heritage Association - Al-Qarara, Al-Arabiyyah Printing Press, Ghardaia, 2008.
3. Ibn al-Qayyim, Healing of the Ailing: On Issues of Predestination and Wisdom, Dar Al-Ma'rifa, Beirut, Lebanon, 1978.
4. Ibn Taymiyyah, The Book of Faith, edited by Muhammad Nasir Al-Din Al-Albani, Islamic Office, Amman, Jordan, 1996.
5. Ibn Uthaymeen, The Beneficial Statement on the Book of Tawhid, 2nd Edition, Ibn Al-Jawzi Publishing House, Saudi Arabia, 1424 AH.
6. Ibn Faris, Dictionary of Language Standards, edited by Abdul Salam Muhammad Harun, Dar Al-Fikr, 1979.
7. Abu Abdullah Al-Zarkashi, The Proof in Quranic Sciences, edited by Yusuf Abdul Rahman Al-Maraashli and others, Vol. 2, 2nd Edition, Dar Al-Ma'rifa, Beirut, Lebanon, 1415 AH / 1994 CE.
8. Al-Raghib Al-Asfahani, Vocabulary of the Quran's Rare Terms, edited by Safwan Adnan Al-Daoudi, Dar Al-Qalam, Al-Dar Al-Shamiyyah - Damascus Beirut, 1412 AH.
9. Jamil Saliba, Philosophical Dictionary, Vol. 2, Lebanese Book House, Beirut, 1982.
10. Al-Rabi' bin Habib, The Authentic Collection, edited by Muhammad Idris and Ashour bin Yusuf, 1st Edition, Dar Al-Hikma Beirut, Al-Istiqama Library, Oman, 1415 AH.
11. Suleiman bin Ali bin Amer Al-Shaeili, The Theological Approach of Sheikh Ibrahim Bayoud in His Exegesis, Journal of the Faculty of Fundamentals of Religion, Vol. 7, Amman, 2012.
12. Soukhal Nour Al-Din, Sheikh Bayoud and His Reformist Approach: Religious Education Schools.
13. Abdul Rahman Al-Zanidi, Methodologies of Research in Islamic Doctrine in the Modern Era, 1st Edition, Ishbilia Publishing House, Riyadh, 1418 AH / 1998 CE.
14. Al-Fayruzabadi, Al-Qamous Al-Muheet, Al-Resalah Foundation for Printing, Publishing, and Distribution, Beirut, Lebanon, 2005.
15. Muhammad Al-Salih Seti, The Evolution of Ibadi Exegesis in Algeria: An Evaluative Study of Methodology and Interpretation of Theological Verses, February 27, 2023.
16. Muhammad Al-Ghazali, Defense of Doctrine and Sharia Against the Criticism of Orientalists, Dar Nahdat Misr Publishing and Distribution, Egypt, 1999.
17. Muhammad bin Musa Babaami, Imam Sheikh Ibrahim bin Omar Bayoud, Al-Arabiyyah Printing Press, Ghardaia, Algeria, 1996.
18. Muhammad Salih Nasir, Sheikh Ibrahim Omar Bayoud as a Reformer and Leader, Al-Riyam Library, Algeria, 2005.
19. Muhammad Abdul Hakim Khayal, Introduction to the Book "Islamic Civilization" by Abu Al-A'la Al-Maududi, Dar Al-Khilafah for Printing, Baghdad, undated.



20. Muhammad Ali Dabous, *Figures of Reform in Algeria*, Vol. 2, 1st Edition, Al-Baath Printing Press, Constantine, Algeria, 1976.
21. Muhammad Ali Dabous, *Algeria's Renaissance*, Vol. 3, Al-Arabiyyah Printing Press, Algeria, 1969.
22. Muhammad Nasir, *Sheikh Al-Qaradi: His Life and Contributions*, Al-Atf, 1998.
23. Mustafa bin Al-Nasir Wentin, *Theological Views of Sheikh Mohammed bin Yusuf Atfayish*, Master's Thesis, University of Prince Abdul Qadir, Constantine, Algeria, 1996.
24. An interview conducted with Sheikh Bayoud, documented in "Al-Ajwiba Al-Shafia," edited by Sheikh Hamu bin Omar Fakhar, May 23, 1973.
25. Speech by Sheikh Abdul Rahman Bakli at the Quran Exegesis Completion Ceremony. See *In the Shade of the Quran* (commemoration event).
26. Nadia Waznaji, *The Method of Exegesis by Sheikh Abdul Hamid Ben Badis and Ibrahim bin Omar Bayoud*, Master's Thesis, National Institute of Islamic Sciences, Batna, Academic Year 1998–1999.

## ENDNOTES

- 
- <sup>1</sup>Dr. Suleiman bin Ali bin Amer Al-Shaeili, *The Theological Approach of Sheikh Ibrahim Bayoud in His Exegesis "In the Shade of the Quran"* - Review and Study, *Journal of the Faculty of Fundamentals of Religion*, Vol. 7, Amman, 2012, pp. 525–526.
  - <sup>2</sup>Muhammad bin Musa Babaami, *Imam Sheikh Ibrahim bin Omar Bayoud*, Al-Arabiyyah Printing Press, Ghardaia, Algeria, 1996, p. 6.
  - <sup>3</sup>Muhammad Ali Dabous, *Figures of Reform in Algeria*, Vol. 2, 1st Edition, Al-Baath Printing Press, Constantine, Algeria, 1976, p. 154.
  - <sup>4</sup>See: Dr. Muhammad Saleh Nasir, *Sheikh Ibrahim Omar Bayoud as a Reformer and Leader*, Al-Riyam Library, Algeria, 2005, p. 17.
  - <sup>5</sup>Jamil Saliba, *Philosophical Dictionary*, Vol. 2, Lebanese Book House, Beirut, 1982, p. 154.
  - <sup>6</sup>Refer to: Ibn Faris, *Dictionary of Language Standards (6/90)*, Al-Asfahani, *Vocabulary of the Quran's Rare Terms*, p. 857; Al-Fayruzabadi, *Al-Qamous Al-Muheet*, p. 324.
  - <sup>7</sup>Refer to: Ibn al-Qayyim, *Healing of the Ailing*, p. 366; Ibn Uthaymeen, *The Beneficial Statement (1/11)*.
  - <sup>8</sup>Ibrahim Bayoud, *In the Shade of the Quran: Surah Al-Shura*, edited by Issa bin Muhammad Sheikh Belhaj, Vol. 17, Heritage Association - Al-Qarara, Al-Arabiyyah Printing Press, Ghardaia, 2008, p. 103.
  - <sup>9</sup>Ibrahim Bayoud, *In the Shade of the Quran: Surah Ya-Sin*, Vol. 14, p. 156.
  - <sup>10</sup>Ibrahim Bayoud, *In the Shade of the Quran: Surah Fatir*, Vol. 13, p. 495.
  - <sup>11</sup>Ibrahim Bayoud, *In the Shade of the Quran: Surah Fussilat*, Vol. 16, p. 517.
  - <sup>12</sup>Mustafa bin Al-Nasir Wentin, *Theological Views of Sheikh Mohammed bin Yusuf Atfayish*, Master's Thesis, University of Prince Abdul Qadir, Constantine, Algeria, 1996, p. 114.
  - <sup>13</sup> Ibrahim Bayoud, *In the Shade of the Quran: Surah Al-Qasas*, Vol. 8, p. 361.
  - <sup>14</sup> Same reference, *Surah An-Nur*, Vol. 6, p. 290.
  - <sup>15</sup>Ibrahim Bayoud, *In the Shade of the Quran: Surah Luqman*, Vol. 11, pp. 474–475.
  - <sup>16</sup>Ibrahim Bayoud, *In the Shade of the Quran: Surah Al-Kahf*, Vol. 2, p. 23.
  - <sup>17</sup>Ibrahim Bayoud, *In the Shade of the Quran: Surah Al-Qasas*, Vol. 8, p. 286.
  - <sup>18</sup>Ibrahim Bayoud, *In the Shade of the Quran: Surah Al-Shura*, Vol. 17, p. 93.
  - <sup>19</sup>Ibrahim Bayoud, *In the Shade of the Quran: Surah Ad-Dukhan*, Vol. 18, p. 94.
  - <sup>20</sup>Ibrahim Bayoud, *In the Shade of the Quran: Surah Muhammad*, Vol. 18, p. 461.

- <sup>21</sup>An interview conducted with Sheikh Bayoud, documented in *Al-Ajwiba Al-Shafia*, edited by Sheikh Hamu bin Omar Fakhar, May 23, 1973, p. 24.
- <sup>22</sup>Ibrahim Bayoud, *In the Shade of the Quran: Surah Luqman*, Vol. 11, p. 424.
- <sup>23</sup>Ibrahim Bayoud, *In the Shade of the Quran: Surah Al-Ahzab*, Vol. 12, pp. 315–316.
- <sup>24</sup>Al-Rabi' bin Habib, *The Authentic Collection*, edited by Muhammad Idris and Ashour bin Yusuf, 1st Edition, Dar Al-Hikma Beirut, Al-Istiqama Library, Oman, 1415 AH, Hadith: 769, p. 295; Muslim, *The Book of Faith*, Chapter on Explanation of Faith, Islam, and Ihsan, Hadith: 08, Vol. 37/1.
- <sup>25</sup>Ibn Taymiyyah, *The Book of Faith*, edited by Muhammad Nasir Al-Din Al-Albani, Islamic Office, Amman, Jordan, 1996, pp. 35–36.
- <sup>26</sup>Ibrahim Bayoud, *In the Shade of the Quran: Surah Al-Hajj*, Vol. 4, p. 165.
- <sup>27</sup>Ibrahim Bayoud, *Fatwas of Imam Sheikh Bayoud*, edited by Sheikh Bakir bin Muhammad Sheikh Belhaj, 1st Edition, Al-Arabiyyah Printing Press, Ghardaia, Algeria, 1408 AH / 1988 CE, Vol. 1, p. 49.
- <sup>28</sup>See: Abdul Rahman Al-Zanidi, *Methodologies of Research in Islamic Doctrine in the Modern Era*, 1st Edition, Ishbilia Publishing House, Riyadh, 1418 AH / 1998 CE, p. 335.
- <sup>29</sup>Abu Abdullah Al-Zarkashi, *The Proof in Quranic Sciences*, edited by Yusuf Abdul Rahman Al-Maraashli and others, Vol. 2, 2nd Edition, Dar Al-Ma'rifa, Beirut, Lebanon, 1415 AH / 1994 CE, p. 147.
- <sup>30</sup>Muhammad Abdul Hakim Khayal, *Introduction to the Book "Islamic Civilization" by Abu Al-A'la Al-Maududi*, Dar Al-Khilafah for Printing, Baghdad, undated, p. 3.
- <sup>31</sup>Muhammad Al-Ghazali, *Defense of Doctrine and Sharia Against the Criticism of Orientalists*, Dar Nahdat Misr Publishing and Distribution, Egypt, 1999, p. 82.
- <sup>32</sup>Nadia Waznaji, *The Method of Exegesis by Sheikh Abdul Hamid Ben Badis and Ibrahim bin Omar Bayoud*, Master's Thesis, National Institute of Islamic Sciences, Batna, Academic Year 1998–1999, p. 440.
- <sup>33</sup>Ibrahim Bayoud, *In the Shade of the Quran: Surah Al-Ahqaf*, Vol. 18, p. 263.
- <sup>34</sup>Soukhal Nour Al-Din, *Sheikh Bayoud and His Reformist Approach: Religious Education Schools*, pp. 97–115.
- <sup>35</sup>See: Muhammad Nasir, *Sheikh Al-Qaradi: His Life and Contributions*, Al-Atf, 1998, p. 97.
- <sup>36</sup>From the speech of Sheikh Abdul Rahman Bakli at the Quran Exegesis Completion Ceremony. See: *In the Shade of the Quran (commemoration event)*, p. 111.
- <sup>37</sup>Ibrahim Bayoud, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 12, p. 383.
- <sup>38</sup>Same reference, Vol. 8, pp. 359–361.
- <sup>39</sup>Ibrahim Bayoud, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 12, p. 30.
- <sup>40</sup>Muhammad Al-Salih Seti, *The Evolution of Ibadi Exegesis in Algeria: An Evaluative Study of Methodology and Interpretation of Theological Verses*, February 27, 2023, p. 18.
- <sup>41</sup>Muhammad Ali Dabous, *Algeria's Renaissance*, Vol. 3, Al-Arabiyyah Printing Press, Algeria, 1969, p. 76.