

## Examining and Analyzing Allameh Tabatabai's Account on Faith within the Framework of Howard Snyder's Non-Doxastic Approach

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine Allameh Tabatabai's account on faith and analyze it within the framework of Daniel Howard-Snyder's non-doxastic approach. Faith is one of the key concepts in the epistemology of religion, and recent analytic approaches have increasingly distinguished it from belief. Allameh Tabatabai describes faith as being based on two main components: "al- 'itiqad" and "tamakkun fi al-qalb". This paper employs a comparative method to evaluate Allameh's account, interpreted as a form of doxastic faith, with the core components of Howard-Snyder's non-doxastic model, in order to address the ambiguities in the concept of faith and the challenges associated with doxastic faith. Based on Howard-Snyder's non-doxastic analysis of faith, the upshots show that the concept of "al- 'itiqad" in Allameh's account, as a cognitive attitude, is ambiguous and lacks the essential characteristic which is constituent for belief. Additionally, the failure to explicitly define the conative and evaluative components of faith in Allameh's account is another challenge. Drawing on Howard-Snyder's model, which emphasizes faith amid doubt, this article argues that the non-doxastic framework provides conceptual resources for clarifying these ambiguities and for constructing a meaningful bridge between classical Islamic thought and contemporary discussions in the epistemology of religion.

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## **Intruduction**

Faith, as one of the central concepts in epistemology of religion, has always been a subject of interest for both Islamic and Western philosophers and theologians. In contemporary epistemology of religion, two distinct approaches to faith have gradually emerged: the doxasticism and the non-doxasticism. These two approaches offer different accounts on faith based on their understanding of the relationship between belief and faith. The doxastic approach, which holds that faith entails belief in religious propositions, and the non-doxastic approach, which argues that faith does not entail belief and instead replaces it with weaker cognitive attitudes such as acceptance or assuming.

In this article, the account of Allama Tabatabai on faith is examined through the lens of the non-doxastic approach. Allama, as one of the most prominent Islamic thinkers, describes faith as consisting of two main components: *i'tiqad* and "settledness in the heart" (*tamakkun fi al-qalb*). However, analyzing this account within the framework of non-doxasticism reveals certain ambiguities and challenges in explaining the components of faith from Allama's account. These challenges include the ambiguity in the concept of *i'tiqad* as a cognitive attitude, the lack of explicit explanation of the conative and evaluative components of faith, and the challenges related to the rationality of religious belief.

This article, through a comparative analysis of Allama's account and the non-doxastic approach, particularly as developed by Daniel Howard-Snyder<sup>1</sup>, seeks to address these ambiguities and pave the way for a more precise understanding of the nature of faith in Islamic thought. Ultimately, this article demonstrates that the non-doxastic reading of faith, especially in Howard-Snyder's framework, can serve as an analytical tool to clarify the accounts of Islamic thinkers on faith and address the epistemological challenges associated with it.

Attention to the non-doxastic approach to faith in Persian literature has been rare, with very few research works addressing this subject. An example is the article "*Faith as a Doxastic Venture: A Comparison of John Bishop and John Schellenberg's Views on Faith*," (Karami & Akrami) which touches on this topic. However, in the broader English-language literature, discussions on the non-doxastic approach have flourished in recent years. No research has been conducted in Persian on the comparative analysis of Islamic philosophers' views in light of the non-doxastic approach to faith. Therefore, this article represents a novel contribution, both in terms of exploring the non-doxastic approach to faith and conducting a comparative analysis with the views of Islamic thinkers.

This study is of particular importance due to the following reasons: In the contemporary religious context, shaped by secularism and skepticism, the formation of belief has become more difficult. Given the gap in the prevailing approach, due to the incompatibility between

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<sup>1</sup> Although the faith accounts based on the non-doxastic approach are not limited to Howard-Snyder. The following philosophers also defend non-doxastic faith: Louis Pojman (1986, 2007), Audi (2008, 2011), Schellenberg (2005), McKaughan (2013, 2018, 2016), Palmquist (2022, 2021, 2019), Lara Buchak (2012, 2018)

belief and doubt, exploring the capacities of the novel non-doxastic approach in describing the cognitive component of faith is crucial. This analysis seeks to illuminate how faith can exist in the absence of belief for those who face doubt but still wish to maintain their religious commitments.

By pursuing these objectives, this article aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse in epistemology of religion and bridge the gap between traditional Islamic theology and contemporary philosophical discussions on the nature of faith.

In what follows, the first section outlines the non-doxastic approach as a novel framework for understanding faith. The second section is devoted to the specific non-doxastic account developed by Daniel Howard-Snyder. The third section critically examines 'Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī's account of faith and analyzes its key components in light of Howard-Snyder's non-doxastic framework. The paper concludes with a summary of findings and final reflection.

### **The Emergence of the Non-Doxastic Approach to Faith**

In recent years, analytical philosophers of religion have increasingly turned their attention to the distinction between faith and belief. Given the particular nature of Christian faith and the apparent irrationality of some of its doctrines, several Christian theologians and philosophers have attempted to redefine the concept of faith. These efforts have raised new philosophical questions—such as the compatibility between faith and doubt—and have ultimately led to the development of a novel perspective known as the non-doxastic approach.

Philosophers such as Louis Pojman, William Alston, Robert Audi, John Schellenberg, and Daniel Howard-Snyder have all challenged the traditional view that faith necessarily involves belief. According to their arguments, it is possible for a person to have faith even in the absence of belief, particularly in situations of epistemic doubt.

Within this framework, various models have been proposed to account for the cognitive dimension of faith without grounding it in belief. Instead, faith is explained in terms of belief-like attitudes, which, though weaker than belief, can still sustain a religious commitment. This has resulted in a new movement within the epistemology of religion, one that seeks to understand faith without assuming belief as a necessary cognitive component.

According to the traditional doxastic model, belief is a necessary condition for faith. Belief implies a degree of epistemic certainty, which is thought to be incompatible with doubt. However, many believers, especially in today's secular and skeptical intellectual climate, report experiencing serious doubts and epistemic uncertainty concerning their religious commitments.

If belief is truly essential to faith, then many religious individuals would fall outside the domain of faith altogether. The doxastic model, therefore, fails to explain how faith and doubt can coexist, or how believers can remain faithful even while wrestling with deep and prolonged doubt. A striking example of this tension is seen in the case of Mother Teresa, whose profound religious devotion was accompanied by long periods of spiritual emptiness

and doubt. This issue has come to be known as the "Mother Teresa Problem" and is often cited by proponents of the non-doxastic approach (McKaughan, 2013, 106).

Mother Teresa once wrote:

Jesus has a very special love for you. As for me – the silence and the emptiness are so great that I look and do not see, listen and do not hear.

Further reflections on her experience of divine hiddenness can be found in Kolodiejchuk (cited in McKaughan, 2018, 200–201). McKaughan summarizes:

For many, faith coexists with doubt—even profound doubts—and sometimes over long periods of life. Faith is clearly not incompatible with a persistent sense of uncertainty, dark nights of the soul, or a pervasive sense of the hiddenness of God. It is indisputable that many who profess to be devoutly religious simply do not find themselves with spontaneously formed confident belief (McKaughan, 2018, 200–201).

Moreover, some individuals find themselves in a state of agnostic openness—not yet believers, but not committed disbelievers either.

In the non-doxasticism, belief is replaced by weaker cognitive attitudes such as hope or acceptance. The non-doxastic approach assumes that religious life does not necessarily need to be based on belief. Instead, weaker cognitive attitudes like acceptance or assuming can form the foundation of an individual's religion. This model presupposes a binary understanding of belief, where one either believes or does not believe a proposition, rather than degrees of belief (credence)<sup>1</sup>. This approach aligns with agnosticism, which is deemed necessary because agnosticism, in situations where there is insufficient epistemic evidence, is the best response to religious claims.

Non-doxastic theorists seek to account for faith among individuals whose epistemic stance lies between belief and disbelief—that is, those who suspend judgment but still adopt a positive orientation toward religious claims. In such cases, belief is absent, but affirmative cognitive attitudes remain. Crucially, however, the non-doxastic model excludes cases of active disbelief; it requires at least a minimal level of cognitive openness or endorsement (Howard-Snyder, 2013a, 6–10)

Among contemporary proponents of the non-doxastic approach, Daniel Howard-Snyder stands out for his robust defense of faith without belief. Through a series of arguments, he challenges the idea that belief is necessary for faith and develops a coherent account of how faith can persist under conditions of doubt and epistemic insufficiency.

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<sup>1</sup> Some epistemologists prefer to describe belief in terms of degrees or credences (from 0 to 1), but non-doxastic theorists typically work with a binary conception of belief.

Ontologically, there is a disagreement regarding which of belief and credence actually exist. There is also a difference of opinion about which concept is more fundamental. In this context, some argue for their independence from each other and reject the reduction of one to the other (Jackson, 2020, pp. 2-3) (Jackson, 2022, 360).

Howard-Snyder has offered several arguments in defense of nondoxasticism, some of which will be briefly outlined here.

The first argument for Nondoxasticism is from Linguistic Evidence. Howard-Snyder presents everyday examples where people claim to have *faith that p* while also expressing *doubt about p*. For instance, someone may say, "I doubt she'll stay, but I have faith that she will," or "I'm unsure whether God exists, but I still have faith that He does." These statements sound natural and coherent in ordinary language.

From this observation, he builds the following argument:

1. Such linguistic usage is accurate and reflects common intuitions.
2. In standard English, it is conceptually possible to have *faith that p* while being in doubt about *p*.
3. However, belief that *p* is incompatible with being in doubt about *p*.
4. Therefore, it is conceptually possible to have *faith that p* without *belief that p* (Howard-Snyder, 2019).

Howard-Snyder for the second argument for non-doxasticism argues that if doxasticism were correct, then only belief could fulfill faith's requirement to "take a stand" in favor of a proposition's truth. However, he claims that other positive cognitive attitudes, such as hopeful acceptance or trusting commitment can also fulfill this requirement. Therefore, belief is not necessary for faith, and doxasticism is false (Howard-Snyder, 2019).

In his third argument for nondoxasticism, Howard-Snyder contends that doxasticism is overly restrictive in requiring both a specific attitude type (belief) and a specific content (that *p*) for faith. He argues that other positive cognitive attitudes, such as intellectual seemings can also fulfill faith's function of taking a stand for *p*. Moreover, just as hope or fear can operate with weaker propositional contents (like "p is likely"), so too can faith. These rigid constraints, he claims, are implausible and fail to reflect how faith actually works in real life, especially in contexts where belief is absent but commitment and resilience remain. Thus, faith need not involve belief that *p* (Howard-Snyder, 2019).

Following Howard-Snyder's defense of nondoxasticism, the next section explicates his descriptive model of faith, outlining its key components.

### Daniel Howard-Snyder's Account of Non-Doxastic Faith

Daniel Howard-Snyder offers one of the most systematic and influential accounts of non-doxastic faith. He argues that propositional faith<sup>1</sup> does require a positive cognitive stance; however, when the evidence for a religious proposition is inadequate, this stance need not amount to full belief. Instead, it can take the form of a weaker doxastic attitude, such as beliefless assuming.

Howard-Snyder systematizes the idea of non-doxastic faith through his central notion of *beliefless assuming*, which demonstrates how faith can survive, and even flourish, under

<sup>1</sup> There are two kinds of faith: attitude-oriented (propositional faith or faith-that *p*) and action-oriented (relational or faith-in *p*) (Jackson, 2023).

epistemic insufficiency. His account is primarily motivated by a conceptual challenge often referred to as the Problem of the Skeptical Christian<sup>1</sup>, a puzzle concerning whether one can possess genuine Christian faith without believing its core doctrines. This problem is framed as an inconsistent triad:

1. Christian faith essentially includes a cognitive component.
2. That component is belief in the core Christian narrative.
3. Some sincere Christians, despite lacking such belief, still seem to have genuine faith (Howard-Snyder, 2017, 1–2).

Each of these claims appears plausible, but they cannot all be true at once. Howard-Snyder takes this puzzle as a point of departure for constructing a model of faith that allows for a positive cognitive stance weaker than belief, thereby making room for what he calls *beliefless assuming*.

To address this puzzle, Alston offers an important distinction between belief and other cognitive attitudes. He describes belief as a dispositional state that manifests in certain characteristic tendencies when relevant conditions arise. If a subject S believes that p, the following dispositions are typically present (Alston, 1996, 4):

1. S is disposed to affirm that p when asked whether p.
2. When considering whether p is true, S tends to feel confident that p is indeed the case.
3. S is disposed to believe what she takes to follow from p.
4. S is inclined to use p as a premise in both theoretical and practical reasoning.
5. Learning that not-p would tend to surprise S.
6. S is disposed to act in ways that would be appropriate if p were true, given S's goals, aversions, and other beliefs.

This set of dispositions constitutes what Alston calls the “belief profile.” From Alston’s perspective, genuine belief involves both assent and a sense of certainty. When such certainty is absent, he recommends using terms like *supposing* or *assuming* rather than speaking of degrees of belief (Alston, 1996, 6).

Drawing on this distinction, Daniel Howard-Snyder proposes that the quasi-skeptical Christian, whose cognitive stance falls short of full belief, can nevertheless satisfy the cognitive dimension of faith by *belieflessly assuming* the core tenets of Christianity. This form of assuming mirrors aspects of the belief profile but in a weaker, non-doxastic mode. Howard-Snyder distinguishes *beliefless assuming* from belief by noting that it lacks the dispositional traits typically associated with belief, such as a sense of certainty, a tendency to affirm, or surprise upon learning the contrary. However, assuming still functions like belief in reasoning and action: it is a dispositional, representational, and evidence-sensitive state that guides thought and behavior. The key distinction lies in the absence of felt

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<sup>1</sup> The term *Problem of the Skeptical Christian* was originally introduced by William Alston, who observed that some committed Christians, despite sincere devotion and affective commitment, remain unsure about central doctrines such as the resurrection. He called such individuals “quasi-skeptical Christians” and regarded their situation as a conceptual puzzle for traditional doxastic accounts of faith. See [Alston \(1996, 15\)](#).

certainty. As Alston notes, this sense of certainty is central to belief. One strength of the non-doxastic approach is its ability to clarify these subtle differences between cognitive attitudes.

Through illustrative cases, Howard-Snyder shows how agents can act on assumptions without believing the propositions they rely on. For example, a football captain, facing limited evidence, assumes the opposing quarterback will call a plunge and adjusts the defense accordingly—despite harboring doubts and lacking belief. Similarly, an army general, unsure of the enemy's location, assumes the enemy is scattered in a boulder field and organizes her troops based on that assumption (Howard-Snyder, 2016).

These examples reveal several key features of *belieflless assuming*:

1. The agents are in a state of doubt and hold neither belief nor disbelief regarding the proposition.
2. They lack the dispositional characteristics typical of belief or disbelief (e.g., mental affirmation or denial).
3. Nonetheless, they act on a cognitive attitude—namely, assuming the proposition is true in a practical, non-doxastic manner.
4. Their actions are goal-oriented and guided by the assumed proposition (Howard-Snyder, 2019, 8–10).

Building on this foundation, Howard-Snyder proposes a structural analysis of propositional faith. In his view, faith is a complex attitude composed of three interrelated components:

1. Positive evaluation of p: the agent sees the proposition "p" as good or desirable.
2. Positive conative orientation toward p: the agent is motivated to act in ways that align with "p".
3. Positive cognitive stance toward p: the agent adopts a cognitive attitude toward "p", such as belief, acceptance, or assuming (Howard-Snyder, 2013b, 367).

Importantly, each component admits of multiple realizations. For instance, the cognitive stance may take the form of full belief, acceptance, or belieflless assuming. Howard-Snyder, in addition to these three components, also refers to the component of resilience. The resilience he refers to is not limited to cognitive resilience but also includes behavioral resilience, which is considered one of the ways to maintain long-term commitments to faith by focusing on counter-evidence (Howard-Snyder, 2022).

With this conceptual framework developed by Howard-Snyder, we are now in a position to examine Allameh Tabataba'i's account of faith.

### **Examining Allameh Tabataba'i's account on faith**

Allameh Tabataba'i is one of the most influential contemporary Islamic philosophers and theologians, whose interpretations of key religious concepts, including faith, have shaped much of modern Shi'a thought. Examining his view allows us to explore how faith has been understood within Islamic philosophical theology and to evaluate whether it aligns with or diverges from contemporary philosophical approaches, such as the non-doxastic account of faith.

There are various interpretations of faith in the works of Allameh Tabatabai, which initially seem to create ambiguity and contradiction. Some of the interpretations are as follows:

1. Faith as “the Settledness of al-i'tiqad in the heart” (Tabatabai, 1363-1367, vol. 1, 72)
2. Faith as “al-i'tiqad accompanied by practical commitment” (Tabatabai, 1363-1367, vol. 18, 388)
3. Faith as “an inner al-i'tiqad that leads to bodily actions” (Tabatabai, 1363-1367, vol. 15, 4-5)

These different interpretations have led to diverse and sometimes contradictory readings of Allameh Tabatabai's account. Some believe that Allameh sees faith merely as a heart-based belief or inner knowledge, while others, especially based on the second and fifth interpretations, infer that he does not accept faith without action-oriented commitment (Nasiri, 2017, 56).

However, it seems that Allameh Tabatabai refers to two different perspectives on the nature of faith. At times, he addresses the essence and nature of faith, and at other times, he speaks of its consequences and signs. Allameh generally considers faith to be a matter of the heart and regards practical commitment as a consequence, rather than a constituent, of faith (Nasiri, 2017, 55). Therefore, despite his emphasis on practical commitment, we cannot infer that his account is action-oriented for the following reasons:

1. In some interpretations, Allameh defines faith as a heart-based affirmation, stating that faith, from an ontological perspective, is a truth in the heart.
2. In some of Allameh's accounts, the consequences of faith can be forgotten without the loss of faith itself.
3. Based on Quranic verses and his interpretations, Allameh does not consider action as a constituent of faith but regards it as a sign of the realization of faith. Allameh explicitly states that the faith related to religion is the faith that involves action: “Faith is the object of the religious call.”
4. Based on psychological analysis and the linguistic roots of the term faith, action cannot be constituent of faith.

Thus, Allameh Tabatabai considers faith as a heart-based affirmation and regards verbal confession or action as mere consequences of faith, not constituent of faith (Nasiri, 2017, 56-57).

### **Analysis of the Concept of Faith in Allameh Tabatabai's Account**

In Allameh Tabatabai's account, faith is defined as "tamakkun al-i'tiqad fi al-qalb" (the settledness of belief in the heart), which consists of two main components:

1. al-i'tiqad: As a positive cognitive attitude toward p.
2. Settling in the heart: Referring to a complete feeling of confidence and firm Settledness in the heart.

Based on this, faith, from Allameh's perspective, is attitude-oriented (propositional faith). Now, by comparing this definition with the belief profile from William Alston's account, the following points can be made:

### **1. Ambiguity in "al-i'tiqad " in Allameh's account**

Allameh grounds faith on " al-i'tiqad ", but does not clarify exactly what al-i'tiqad is. Is al-i'tiqad the same as "belief" in epistemology, defined as a positive cognitive attitude with degree of confidence, or does it refer to another cognitive attitude distinct from belief (like acceptance and assuming)?

In comparison, Howard-Snyder define belief as an attitude that possesses six characteristics, and on this basis, they analyze the concept of beliefless assuming, distinguishing them from belief. As previously mentioned, the concept of beliefless assuming, due to the absence of this tendency in the the belief profile, is considered a weaker cognitive attitude compared to belief.

From this perspective, part of Allameh's definition, which refers to "i'tiqad ", can be related to belief in Alston's account. However, there is ambiguity in the concept of al-i'tiqad: Is al-i'tiqad mentined by Allameh a weaker form of belief, or does Allameh consider another cognitive attitude distinct from belief?

Al-i'tiqad is a mental judgment regarding the truth of a proposition. This mental judgment can range from varying degrees of confidence, from doubt to certainty. In other words, belief means having a positive mental attitude toward a proposition, which can range from weaker states (e.g., acceptance or assuming) to stronger ones (certainty and full confidence).

If Allameh accepts the account of degrees of belief(credence), and does not regard it as independence from belief, then al-i'tiqad involved in faith might be a belief with a lesser degree of confidence, which implies some probability regarding the truth of the proposition. The degree of confidence in this belief would be completed with its Settledness in the heart, resulting in firm belief and certainty. However, according to a non-doxastic reading, al-i'tiqad could be analogous to acceptance or assuming, which, since they are compatible with belief, would gain the confidence that was lacking when settled in the heart, thus transforming into belief.

However, regardless of which perspective Allameh is attributed to, an issue arises: the realization of belief metaphysically depends on evidence. Beliefs have a special relationship with evidence. Rational beliefs are often formed based on evidence. In general, when we say that someone believes in a proposition rationally, it means that: (1) the person has evidence supporting the truth of that proposition at a specific time; (2) the evidence supporting the truth of the proposition outweighs the evidence against it; and (3) the person believes in the proposition based on this evidence.

Therefore, the process of forming a belief requires mental assent, which can only be achieved when sufficient evidence is available. Based on this, the enhancement of cognitive attitudes, whether in the form of credence (degree of belief) or other cognitive attitudes like acceptance and assuming, to belief must also involve mental assent. In conclusion, more evidence must be accessible to the individual.

However, it seems that Allameh considers the stage when belief settles in the heart and the individual gains confidence as sufficient without evidence. It seems that Allameh considers the stage of settling belief in the heart, which leads to certainty, without the need

for evidence. In other words, the stage where firm belief forms with feeling of confidence in the heart can occur without relying on evidence and can settle in the heart. This issue complicates the epistemological definition of faith in Allameh's account.

## **2. Feeling of confidence and Its role in faith and belief**

In the second part of his definition, Allameh links faith with "tamakkun fi al-qalb," meaning the settling of the heart, which refers to complete confidence in the heart. This has similarities to Alston's account, who considers the feeling of confidence as a necessary condition for belief to be realized. However, there is an important difference: in Allameh's account, the feeling of confidence in the heart is offered as a necessary condition for the realization of faith. Faith occurs when belief is settled in the heart of the individual and complete confidence is built.

Jawadi Amoli, under the verse "And they denied it, though their souls were convinced," (Qur'an, 27:14) states:

Sometimes a person is knowledgeable about something but does not have faith in it. Scientific belief must be intertwined with the soul and heart of the believer and manifest in their psychological traits and bodily actions for faith to be correctly attributed to that person ([Sadeghzadeh Qamsari, 2015, 355](#)).

In contrast, Alston considers the feeling of confidence as a condition for belief to take place, so that without it, belief does not form at all. Alston defines belief as an attitude in which, upon considering it, the person experiences a feeling of confidence regarding the proposition in question. However, according to Alston, this feeling of confidence is not a mental state that varies in degrees of certainty, because belief entails confidence. In other word, feeling of confidence P to be the case is constituent of belief. As mentioned, the concept of acceptance, due to its lack of this tendency in the belief profile, is considered a weaker cognitive attitude than belief, and the concept of assuming, in Howard-Snyder's account, similarly differs from belief in the same way that acceptance does.

Alston uses the term "feeling" to indicate that this state is a direct and immediate experience, pointing to a kind of intuitive grasp that is only possible with the heart. Alston states: "I have used the term "feel" for the manifestation in 2 in order to convey the idea that it possesses a kind of immediacy, that it is something one experiences rather than something that one thinks out, that it is a matter of one's being struck by (a sense of) how things are rather than deciding how things are". (Alston, 1996, 2). Alston, emphasizing the importance of the feeling of confidence in the realization of belief, quotes Cohen as follows: "Cohen gives number 2 [the feeling of confidence] a special place, and considers it as the only embodiment of the meaning of 'belief.' There are reasons for this. It seems that the feeling of confidence toward 'p' has a closer connection to belief than behavioral manifestations. It is clear that a person can behave as if they believe 'p' while, in fact, they do not" (Alston, 1996, 7). This means that when you believe that something is true, you intuitively perceive it, not based on inference and decision-making.

Thus, the feeling of confidence in Alston's account is heart-based confidence and a constituent for belief, whereas in Allameh's account, this feeling of confidence is the necessary condition for faith. Therefore, it seems that faith in Allameh's account is the same as certainty (firm belief) in Alston's and Howard-Snyder's accounts.

### 3. Lack of distinction between faith and belief

Based on this comparison, in Allameh's account, not only is the concept of belief ambiguous, but there is also no distinction between faith and belief. In contrast, in the non-doxastic approach, faith is not only distinct from belief but does not entail belief. In Allameh's account, it seems that faith is simply belief accompanied by a feeling of complete confidence. If this interpretation is correct, faith in Allameh's account, based on the belief profile, is merely a firm belief with a feeling of confidence established in the heart. Therefore, it can be said that Allameh's definition of faith fits within the framework of belief, and his concept of faith cannot be distinguished from belief.

However, according to the definition of faith as an attitude-oriented (propositional faith), faith requires not only a cognitive attitude but also a positive conative orientation toward *p*. Furthermore, Howard-Snyder argues that, unlike belief, faith includes a desire-like attitude toward the truth of the proposition. The two components of positive evaluation and positive conative in his model of faith emphasize this point. As a result, a person may believe something without caring about the truth of it. However, faith requires a positive orientation toward the truth of the proposition.

For example, you might believe that terrorism will increase in the 21st century but not have faith in this proposition because faith involves to be for its truth, whereas belief does not necessarily have this requirement. Howard-Snyder believes you cannot consider *p*'s truth to be good or desirable unless you want it to be the case that *p*. He says:

This is an ancient dispute, one that I will sidestep. For, even if you *can* consider *p*'s truth to be good or desirable without wanting it to be the case that *p*, ...faith that *p* requires at least something in the neighborhood of desire for the truth of *p* ([Howard-Snyder, 2013b, 360](#))<sup>1</sup>.

Thus, if we consider Allameh's account as the firm belief, can we consider it as faith? Because one of the main differences between faith and belief is the positive attitude toward the truth of the proposition, which belief does not necessarily require. Now, we need to examine whether Allameh's account includes such a component.

By analyzing Allameh's account of faith, faith has two components: "al-i'tiqad" and "tamakkun fi al-qalb" Al-i'tiqad refers to the cognitive attitude, so we should focus on "tamakkun fi al-qalb." Allameh refers to "tamakkun fi al-qalb" as a complete feeling of confidence. This feeling of confidence clearly represents a state beyond just a mental belief and involves a kind of emotional and existential commitment to the proposition. However,

<sup>1</sup> Howard-Snyder holds that there is a variety of cases for the conative component of faith, such as first-order desire and second-order desire ([Howard-Snyder, 2013a](#)).

Allameh does not directly mention a positive conative orientation for the truth of the proposition.

Nevertheless, if we consider “tamakkun fi al-qalb” as a kind of existential settledness, we can infer that, in Allameh’s account, faith, while including a positive evaluation of the truth of the proposition, might also be accompanied by an inner and practical acceptance. This inner acceptance can be seen as the basis for the conative component.

To show the action-oriented significance of faith in everyday life based on Allameh’s account, we must refer to other aspects of Allameh’s thoughts on faith. In other sections of his accounts on faith, Allameh refers to practical commitment alongside heartfelt affirmation. For example, he says:

For faith, which is a heart matter, it is an internal al-i’tiqad and acknowledgment, such that bodily actions are tied to it ([Tabatabai, Vol. 16, 314](#)).

Therefore, it can be concluded that, while Allameh does not directly reference the concept of positive conative-affective component in his definition, However:

1. “Tamakkun fi al-qalb” can implicitly indicate existential and practical acceptance, as heart Settledness is usually accompanied by readiness for action.
2. In Allameh’s intellectual system, which is influenced by Islamic tradition, faith is generally associated with action. Therefore, it can be indirectly inferred that faith, in addition to heartfelt affirmation, leads to the regulation of behavior.

#### **4. Allameh's account of faith is doxastic**

Based on the belief profile, faith in Allameh's account is the same as firm belief. In light of this, considering the approaches to faith, Allameh's account aligns with the doxastic approach, according to which faith as belief in the proposition "p". Among the various accounts on faith within the doxastic approach, it seems that Allameh’s account represents faith as belief in religious propositions. In some parts of Allameh's accounts on faith, he states:

Faith in God is the belief (aqd) in His oneness and in what has been legislated in religion. Faith in the Prophet means believing that he is a messenger sent by his Lord; his command is God’s command, his prohibition is God’s prohibition, and his judgment is God’s judgment, without him attributing any share of this matter (the laws and commandments) to himself ([Tabatabai, Vol. 15, 145](#)).

#### **5. Challenges to Allameh’s account on faith**

Allameh’s account on faith faces the same challenges as the doxastic approach. The main challenge and critique that doxastic models face is the challenge of doubt. As mentioned, according to these models, belief is a necessary condition for propositional faith, while belief is incompatible with doubt. If the doxastic approach to faith is correct, many religious individuals would be excluded from the realm of faith. Therefore, Allameh's linguistic definition of faith clearly illustrates the conflict between his account and doubt. He states: “

Faith is derived from the root ‘amn’ and contains a component of security, and its apparent relevance is that the person who believes actually provides a

form of confidence and security against doubt, which is the enemy of belief ([Sadeghzadeh Qamsari, 1394, 354](#)).

Thus, Allameh's account of faith may not sufficiently address the crises of faith in the lives of contemporary believers. Some believers in the secular and scientific age today face doubts because they are either seeking more evidence for their religious propositions or suspect the falsity of some of these propositions. Based on Allameh's account of faith, these individuals cannot find a basis for religious action and will lose to commit to religious obligations.

## Conclusion

In epistemology of religion, the relationship between faith and belief is divided into two main approaches: the doxastic approach and the non-doxastic approach. The doxasticism, which is a traditional and common approach, holds that propositional faith entails belief that *p*. In contrast, the non-doxasticism does not require belief that *p* for faith that "*p*" and instead proposes weaker cognitive attitudes like acceptance or assuming for faith. Proponents of the non-doxasticism argue that the doxasticism faces challenges such as the issue of the rationality of religious belief and its inability to explain faith in conditions of epistemic uncertainty. They contend that faith can coexist with doubt and does not entail belief.

Through examining Allameh Tabatabai's account on faith, it becomes clear that he defines faith based on two main components: "al-i'tiqad" and "tamakkun fi al-qalb" (Settledness in the heart). Analyzing this account within the framework of Howard-Snyder's non-doxastic model reveals some ambiguities and challenges in explaining the components of faith according to Allameh. The findings of this analysis are as follows:

1. Ambiguity in the concept of al- i'tiqad: The concept of "al- i'tiqad" in Allameh's account, as a cognitive attitude, is ambiguous. Considering the belief profile and alternative cognitive attitudes such as acceptance and assuming, " al- i'tiqad " cannot be considered the same as firm belief, as belief requires a "feeling of confidence", which in Allameh's account is articulated in the independent component of "tamakkun fi al-qalb". Therefore, belief on its own is a positive cognitive attitude that lacks the feeling of confidence.
2. Faith as belief: According to Allameh's definition, faith means belief that has reached the stage of certainty. However, in the process of forming belief, achieving firm belief depends on evidence and reasoning, whereas Allameh seems to focus more on the "sense of certainty in the heart".
3. Lack of explicit positive conative orientation: Although Allameh refers to "tamakkun fi al-qalb" and "the corresponding actions of the limbs", the conative components of faith are not explicitly clarified in his account and can only be inferred implicitly. In contrast, the non-doxastic approach emphasizes the importance of positive conative orientation toward *p* in faith and considers faith which includes emotional and motivational tendencies and attitudes.
4. Challenges of the doxastic approach: Allameh's account on faith still falls within the doxastic framework, and therefore faces challenges such as the rationality of religious belief, the inability to explain the experience of believers' doubt, epistemic uncertainty, and epistemic limitations.

Ultimately, a non-doxastic reading of faith could help resolve the existing ambiguities in the cognitive aspect of faith. This approach, by accurately identifying the components of faith, paves the way for a clearer understanding of Islamic thinkers' accounts on the nature of faith and highlights the ambiguities and challenges they face. This article demonstrates that integrating traditional Islamic accounts with contemporary epistemology of religion discussions can significantly enrich the discourse in philosophy of religion and epistemology of religion.

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