

## Between Theology and Religion: Ibn Taymiyyah's Methodological Approach and its Contemporary Relevance

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### Abstract

*Religious beliefs and theological scrutiny of those beliefs exist side by side with each other from the time immemorial. Religious beliefs seek to continuously characterise and regenerate values, feelings, imaginations and actual daily activities of a person whosoever. Theology stands to scrutinize such religious beliefs, thoughts and values to see whether these beliefs and values are sustainable in human life based on reasoning. Although there is hardly any distinctive single definition for theology, it is said to be the rational inquiry into religious matters such as the nature of God and the truth of the sacred scriptures or, in a broader sense, it is a system of thought which attempts to present what we can know and understand about God in an organised and understandable manner. However, throughout the human history, questions related to the rapport between religion and theology particularly whether that relationship is harmonious or contradictory and what are the proper rational theological means to understand and interpret the nature of God as well as God's Words, have long been the main concerns of theologians, philosophers as well as religious scholars. Ibn Taymiyyah was one of the prominent Muslim theologians who endeavoured to comprehend the nature of this relationship and produced numerous volumes on this subject. Ibn Taymiyyah maintains that the religion and theology are not contradictory to each other; they are both rather complementary to each other. He believes that the religious teachings can be further clarified and validated through the application of theological approaches. He also raises the question as to the nature of the theological methodology. He invites the philosophers to deliberate over the issue whether the matters concerning the religion are purely rational. It seems that Ibn Taymiyyah's concerns and suggestions are of universal nature, thus making them still relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> century world. This paper seeks to explain his methodological approach to the religion and the theology with a view to substantiating its contemporary relevance. Analytical and comparative methods will be applied in this paper.*

### Introduction

Theology which is known within the Islamic scholastic thought as *Ñilm al-kalÉm* i.e., the science of debate, is a discipline of Islamic thought generally concerned with interpreting and clarifying *uÎËl al-dËn*, i.e., the basic foundations of religion, or *'ilm al-tawÎÉd*, i.e., the sciences of unity of God. After spreading throughout the Arabian peninsular and beyond, especially through the Roman-Byzantine Empire of the east and the Persian Empire of the west, Islam experienced diversity of cultures and thoughts. The possessors of these various cultures and societies who have different backgrounds to Islam constituted a real challenge to previous traditional interpretations of the religious scriptures. As a result of this, *kalÉm* appears at both academic and scholastic stages of the Islamic thought.

The function of this discipline, which evolved from the tendency of the scholars to have rational interpretations of the religious sacred scriptures and texts, comprises the interpretations of religious doctrine and the defense of these interpretations by means of discursive deliberations. After the early stages of Islamic thought where *kalÉm* was merely limited to the understanding and justifying of dogmatic principles, it has developed to assimilate into the Aristotelian philosophical themes, though the shift in this direction was not completely successful. Besides having groups whose aim was political in origin adopting theological arguments to support their political interest, there were also groups of which their primary focus was on understanding the text theologically.<sup>1</sup> Predestination, Man's freedom and will, attributes of God,<sup>2</sup> the relationship between the will of the Divine Transcendent and that of Man, and the status of a person who commits grave sin<sup>3</sup> were among the issues discussed in the early stages of *kalÉm* in Islam.<sup>4</sup> Among well known Muslim theologians who deeply participated in the systemisation of theology in the Islamic thought were ImÉm xasan, al-AshÑari (874 – 935),<sup>5</sup> AbËÑAli Muñammad b.

Abd al-Wahab, al-Juba'i, (d.915-6, a.d),<sup>6</sup> and Mu'ammad ibn Ma'mEd AbE ManiEr al-Samarqandi al-xanafi al-MEturEdE (d.915 a.d.).<sup>7</sup> In the meantime, while such scholars had endeavoured to establish a harmonious condition between religion and rational understanding of its values; like theology, there were some who were concerned about the validity of interpreting religious thought through reason-based norms. Such concerns questioned the possibility of having theological discourse of the type advocated by both Mu'ntazilite and Ash'arite theologians, characterising such discourse as, at best, excessive or superfluous and at worst, a heretical deviation. This attitude has been expressed historically by the founders of Islamic Jurisprudence (*u'El al-fiqh*). These scholars mainly discourage their pupils to involve in any form of theological engagement. This approach is clearly expressed in the well-known statement of MElik b. Anas who clearly stated his position about the proper understanding of textual articulation of God's establishment on the throne. In the chapter 20 of the Qur'En, it was stated that 'God is firmly established on the Throne'.

“Ta-Ha we have not sent down the Qur'En to thee to be (an occasion) for thy distress, but only as an admonition to those who fear (Allah). A revelation from Him Who created the earth and the heavens on high. (Allah) Most Gracious is firmly established on the throne (of authority). To Him belongs what is in the heavens and on earth, and all between them, and all beneath the soil.”<sup>8</sup>

The interpretation of such statement had caused huge speculations both among Muslim scholars and laymen. When asked to explain how God could be said to have 'established himself on the Throne' as mentioned in the Qur'En, ImEm MElik responded by saying:

“The establishment is known, the modality is unknown, the belief in it is obligatory and asking questions about it is an unwarranted innovation.”<sup>9</sup>

Similarly, about the question of “divine justice”, advocated by the Mu'ntazilite, the traditionalists rejected and characterized it as an attempt to impose human and rational concepts on the “justice of God”. They have denounced this by firmly pointing out that it would be meaningless to speak of justice in this context, since God is the absolute sovereign and absolute Master of all His creations, which means that anything, which He created, is by definition just. The struggle and unrest between these two rival trends continued and even become more intensified in the latter centuries. The legitimacy of the rational inquisition of religious interpretations had been questioned and had many times been seen as an act of deviation from the true nature of religious teachings. Despite the fact that theology had reclaimed for orthodoxy through the endeavours of al-Ash'ari and others, the traditionalists and those who were anti-*kalEm* had strengthened their position. Thus, the science and art of arguing matters of faith with appeal to human intellect and reason fell into disrepute and went into a decline from the beginning of the twelfth century.

However, despite the strong opposition in the subsequent generations of Muslim scholars particularly those of Ash'arites and Mu'ntazilites, theology emerged to be part of the core essential elements of religious thought within the scholastic fields of religious thought. Systemisation of theology appeared to be vital in order to systematise religious doctrine into a rational schema centered on the affirmation of God's absolute unity and absolute justice.<sup>10</sup>

### **Ibn Taymiyyah's life and milieu**

Ibn Taymiyyah's full name is Taqiyu al-DEn AbE al-'AbbEs AImad b. Óbd al-xalEm b. Óbd al-SalEm b. Óbd AllEh b. al-KhiEr b. Mu'ammad b. al-KhiEr b. Óli b. Óbd Allah b. Taymiyyah al-xarrEnE. He was born on the tenth day of Rabi' al-Awwal, 661 A.H. / 1263 C.E. in xarrEn, a city near Damascus. When he reached the age of seven, the Mongols destroyed the city of xarrEn, and thus, all his family members had to migrate to Damascus.<sup>11</sup>

At the age of thirty, he was offered the post of a judge (*qEli*) but he hesitated since he could not restrict himself from merely following the limitations imposed by the authorities. Throughout his lives, he vehemently defended his well-known motto, “Go back to the Qur'En and the Sunnah”, which was inspired by the earliest generation of Muslims (*salaf*) who freed themselves from all sorts of innovation (*bid'ah*). As a result, Ibn Taymiyyah always expressed his refutations against some practices in Sufism, pantheism and scholastic theology.

In addition, he released himself from blind imitation (*taqlĒd*) and acted as one who exerted himself to give his own opinion in his particular sect (*mujtahid fĒ al-madhhab*) though he was known to have been influenced by the works of ImĒm Ālmad Ibn ×anbal (d. 241 A.H), the author of al-Musnad cum the founder of the Hanbalite school.<sup>12</sup> Ibn Taymiyyah was well-known for his boldness and courage where he stood against tyrannical, unjust and misleading actions. He was also actively involved in refuting the practices of the Sufis, the pantheists and the MuĒtazilites during his time, particularly the tomb veneration and the worship of the prophets and the saints. Therefore, some leaders of these groups opposed him and they used their influence upon the ruling authorities against him. As a result, he was exiled and imprisoned for a number of times. He himself died in prison in Damascus in 728 A.H./ 1328 C.E.<sup>13</sup>

### **Ibn Taymiyyah and the question of methodology in theology**

Ibn Taymiyyah summarised the content of theology to mainly comprise of two ingredients; firstly, an endeavour and attempt to justify religious beliefs through rationality, and secondly, an employment of reason to draw new conclusions and consequences from these beliefs. Theologically:

“Doctrines comprise three major components: the articulation of what a school regarded as fundamental beliefs; the construction of the speculative framework within which these beliefs must be understood; and the attempt to give coherence to these views within the accepted speculative framework.”<sup>14</sup>

He then articulated the relationship between theology and religion whereby theologians normally agree on the authority of a sacred scripture to be the basis of the debate. However, since scriptural and textual expositions are possible only through semantic interpretations and etymological explanations of the text, they disagree about the length of the rational analysis in the scripture. “Traditionalists had always suspected that the ‘reason’ being referred to was in fact the suspect intellect of infidel heretics; why else would a believer want to drag the articles of faith in front of the court of human reason, fallible and limited as it was?”<sup>15</sup> Methodologically, the early groups of theologians advocated the necessity of having a speculative framework to construct a system of religious thought, which is based on both religious text and (because of complete confidence in human reason) rational justifications of man’s rational convictions. While (because of the lack of reverence for the authority of texts) provocatively approaching the text, some theologians advocated the necessity of giving priority to reason over revelation.<sup>16</sup>

Methodologically, the central ingredients of the early stages of theological interpretations of doctrinal issues were limited to textual and linguistic analyses.<sup>17</sup> However, the late employment of Aristotelian logic to theology had marked the exit point of theology from its Islamic identity, where authoritative texts were routinely cited to clinch an argument, while an accusation of heresy was thought to be a conclusive refutation of any argument. Ibn Taymiyyah contended the methods of both philosophers and mysticisms particularly those that promote the unity of truth or pantheists (*waĒdat al-wujĒd*). He argued that the goal of human life is neither to engage philosophic contemplations nor to involve the mystic type of love of God. Because of the pantheists’ unsacred method, he accused them of not perceiving the total dissimilarity between God and His creations. This is because, “the basis of the error of these people is that they do not apprehend the dissimilarity of God to creatures and His transcendence beyond them (*‘uluwwuhu ‘alayhim*). They know that He exists, and they therefore think that His existence is none other than (*la yakhruj ‘an*) their existence, in the manner of someone who sees the rays of the sun and supposes that they are the sun itself.”<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, Ibn Taymiyyah also contended the method of the philosophers and characterised it as a double sided tool, which could, on one side, endanger some aspects of knowledge while on the other side, jeopardise the process of information flow therefore, ending up with unappreciated result and conclusion. He said, “the teaching of the philosophers on divine matters and general intellectual principles is extremely limited and there is much confusion in it. They only speak well on matters of natural sense perception and part of this is good. However, the unseen of which the prophets bring in information, and universal intellectual principles which are general to all existent beings-about those things they know nothing at all.”<sup>19</sup>

Ibn Taymiyyah directed his contentions against philosophers to both their method and attitudes towards the revelation and the scriptural teachings. They had committed, methodologically, incredible error when they intentionally assumed that whatever they do not know or cannot prove cannot be true, and by doing so employ a methodological grave alteration and distortion on the scriptural texts, both in terminology and in concept.

After these contentions, Ibn Taymiyyah concluded that both philosophers and pantheists, because of their erroneous approach and technique towards knowledge and belief, present deviant and corrupted thought to humanity.

With regards to the theologians' speculative approach to the religious scriptures and beliefs, though essentially questioning the revelational legitimacy of speculative theology about the prophetic teachings, Ibn Taymiyyah accepted the basic position of the theologians' method of speculation in principles. He stated:

“That its original intent was both valid and praiseworthy. Speculative theology developed as an apologetic science whose purpose was to argue the case for Islam convincingly in the terminology and conceptions of its opponents.”<sup>20</sup>

The error that had been committed by most speculative theologians, in Ibn Taymiyyah's view, was their comprising attitude in allowing the judgment of reason to determine the content and the message of the sacred texts.<sup>21</sup> When translating religious scriptures, Ibn Taymiyyah warned theologians against the grave consequence of imposing any outside elements and terminologies and applying the fundamental teachings of revelation.<sup>22</sup> Though Ibn Taymiyyah approved speculative theology as a discipline as something permissible and beneficial to Islam, he remained provocative and critical of the approaches of theologians to interpret the religious text. He aggressively criticized the act of imposing rational alien values in the procedure of religious textual elucidation.

### **Ibn Taymiyyah's methodological approach and its contemporary relevance**

Ibn Taymiyyah started with proposing a paramount and preferable package of principles through which we will be able to understand, safely, the sacred scripture. His approach to the relationship between theology and religion comprises three interrelated elements, which still have both methodological and theological relevance; not only with the classical-medieval times but also to our contemporary epochs. These approaches include a method of textual interpretations of the sacred scriptures, inquisitively enquire what human 'rationality' is all about, and finally, in the event of reconciling between 'mind and revelation' he advocated the latter over the former. Thus, he proposed (what he called), a reliable and trustworthy interpretive approach, which consists of various interrelated principles. These three elements could be highlighted as follows:

#### **1. The method of textual exegeses of the scripture**

The first principle of understanding of the sacred scripture is to let the text explain itself. For instance, the method of possible textual exegeses of the *Qur'Ēn*, to him, was to explain the *Qur'Ēn* through the *Qur'Ēn*. This is because what the *Qur'Ēn* generalised in one place, is explained in the other, and what has been abridged in certain occasions is elaborated widely in other occasions.<sup>23</sup> However, because some of this are not enough, sometimes, for one to extract the meaning directly from the text, where human minds need more actual models and examples, Ibn Taymiyyah advised that the prophetic teachings and actions be the second source of textual interpretation of the sacred books. But if this does not help you, you should turn to the *Sunnah*, because the *Sunnah* explains and elucidates the *Qur'Ēn*. Besides, the role of the *Sunnah* is to expose the *Qur'Ēn*:

“We have sent down to you the book in truth that you may judge between me, as Allah guides you; so don't be an advocate for those who betray their trust.”<sup>24</sup>

In case you do not get a clear picture from the *Qur'Ēn* or the *Sunnah*, turn to the words of the companions and those who have experienced the time of scriptural revelation. For they know the revelation better, because:

“They have witnessed its revelation, and passed through the situations in which it was revealed: and know it and understand it fully. This is particularly true of the scholars and leaders such as the four righteous caliphs. ÑAbdullah ibn MasÑĒd said: there is no Being deserves to be worshipped except Him, there is no verse in the *Qur'Ēn* about which I do not know in whose case and at what place was it revealed. If I were aware that anyone knew the *Qur'Ēn* more than me, and I could reach him, I would certainly have gone to see him.”<sup>25</sup>

#### **2. The method of reconciliation between religion and theology**

Another interesting point related to theology and religion is the role of reason. Ibn Taymiyyah charged the theologians with distorting the true Islamic religion by engaging Greek logical values, and of having abandoned the positive aspects of Islam, namely that of law, jurisprudence and *fiqh*.

Though affirming that faith and deeds are connected, and that reason is part of revelation, he seemed to have allowed a passage for reasoning into law and ethics in Islamic thought. His contention to “rationality” was really against the theologians’ as well as the philosophers’ employment of the Greek logic without limitations to understand the sacred text of the *Qur’Ēn*.<sup>26</sup> Nonetheless, to anyone who has a few tracts or works of theology, they are neither spiritually refreshing nor do they satisfy the intellect. About the relationship between religion and rationality, Ibn Taymiyyah argued that our position about both rationality and theology should be unambiguously determined before we employ the terms. If the nature of theology is said to be a unified science in which all things are treated under the aspect of God either because they are about God Himself or because they refer to God. This science is about the facts of the divine revelation so far as those facts govern the nature of God and our relation to Him. Therefore, it is a dialogue between religion and the human mind.<sup>27</sup>

He raised certain doubtful and sceptical concerns about the possibility of whether the human mind will be able to comprehend sufficiently the religious beliefs, which might sometimes seem to be contradictory to the mind. In this position, Ibn Taymiyyah firmly called that the human mind should not be placed in a higher status than the revealed laws. It is wrong, he said, to work from the premise that what is revealed in the books must be in agreement with reason, where there would no longer be a revelation, but rather a reason, which then become the ultimate criterion of truth.<sup>28</sup>

Ibn Taymiyyah believed that religious thought should be rooted on the strict adherence to the scriptural revelation simply because it contains all the religious and spiritual guidance necessary for our salvation in the hereafter. Thus he rejected the arguments and ideas of both philosophers and theologians regarding religious knowledge, rational experiences and metaphysical issues.<sup>29</sup> He concluded that logic is not a reliable mean of attaining religious truth and that the intellect must be subservient to reveal truth. Since theologians were affected and were being improperly influenced by aspects of Greek logic and thought and its impossible to eliminate such influence from the thought of theologians, theology remains rejected and relevant to the religion.<sup>30</sup>

Ibn Taymiyyah placed primary importance on revelation, when its authenticity is verified as the only reliable source of knowledge about God and about a person’s religious duties towards Him. Therefore, the human intellect (*‘aql*) and its powers of reason, said Ibn Taymiyyah, must be subservient to revelation. To Ibn Taymiyyah, the only proper use of *‘aql* i.e., intellect, is to understand the scripture, in the way the Prophet and his Companions did, and then to defend it against deviant sects. When discussing the nature of God, he argued, one must accept the descriptions found in the *Qur’Ēn* and the *Sunnah* and apply the orthodox view of not asking how particular attributes existed in God. This means that one believes in all of the attributes of God mentioned in the *Qur’Ēn* and the *Sunnah* without investigating the nature of these because the human mind is incapable of understanding the eternal God.<sup>31</sup>

For example, one accepts that God is mounted upon a throne above the heavens without questioning how this is possible. The same attitude is held for all of God’s attributes such as His sight, His hearing or His hands. This view is very much opposed to the philosophical view of God as first cause and as being devoid of attributes. Thus the philosophical argument that the oneness of God precludes a multiplicity of attributes was not acceptable to Ibn Taymiyyah because God says that He is Only one and that He has various attributes. This denial of the attributes of God based on rationalism was adopted by some Muslim theologians of the Mu’tazilite, of whom Ibn Taymiyyah was especially critical.<sup>32</sup>

### **3. The problem in defining ‘rationality’**

Ibn Taymiyyah raised the question of how to define the reason and rationality, leading to the question of whether it contradicts with the revelation. To him rationalism does not contradict revelation. To prove this he delineated the term ‘logic or reason’ in order to identify what is the logic that opposes the religious scripture. Ibn Taymiyyah analysed the content of *Ĥaqīqah*; normal mental state, a declaration made to explain or justify action, decision, or conviction, an underlying fact or cause that provides logical sense for a premise or occurrence, and the capacity for logical, rational, and analytic thought; intelligence. These three aspects of reason pride various interrelated types of knowledge. Knowledge by acquaintance, which the object related knowledge or knowing something through experience. Second is the competence knowledge, or skill knowledge where a person knows how to do something. Thirdly, propositional knowledge, or sometimes called descriptive knowledge, which contains two parts of knowledge, a posterior knowledge or empirical knowledge which is based on sensory or perceptual experience.

And priori or non-empirical knowledge; not based on any such experience even though sensory or perceptual experience is involved in acquiring it.<sup>33</sup> Ibn Taymīyah challenged those who claim the contradiction between mind and revelation to prove their claim. According to him it is impossible that the study of the principles of reasoning, especially of the structure of propositions as distinguished from their content and of method and validity in deductive reasoning, will contradict with revelation. Second, it is also unreasonable how the knowledge of acquiring the relationship between elements and between an element and the whole in a set of objects, individuals, principles would contradict with revelation.<sup>34</sup> The doctrine of rational innate ideas and the method of logically deducing truths about the world from self-evident premises without any revelational aid are denounced by Ibn Taymīyah. He maintained that pure reason, which is claimed to oppose revelation, could be detected against its untruthfulness prior to its contradiction to the revelation.<sup>35</sup>

### Conclusion

Ibn Taymīyah presented a package of principles through which we will be able to understand, safely, the sacred scripture. Besides, Ibn Taymīyah's approach to the relationship between theology and religion started with his call for the necessity of clarifying and validating the religious teachings. He also provocatively, raised questions about the nature of the logical issues related to theology particularly whether they are purely rational or otherwise. This attempt contains various interrelated elements such as, a method of textual interpretations of the sacred scriptures, inquisitively enquire of what human 'rationality' is all about, and finally, in the event of reconciling between 'mind and revelation' he advocated the latter over the former. His interpretive approach to the relationship between religion and theology which consists various interrelated principles is both reliable and trustworthy. Thus, though many contended theology within the Muslim scholastic debates, however, the pro-traditionalist Ibn Taymīyah's approach and comments are still both enduring and relevant to our contemporary epoch.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> ØubÍÊ, AÍmad MaÍmËd, *FË 'Ilm al-KalËm DirËsah Falsafiyah Li ÓrË' al-Firaq al-IslËmīyah*, IskandËriyah: Mu'assasËt al-ThaqËfah al-JËmiÑiyah, 1982, pp.30-31.

<sup>2</sup> Contrarily there was another group who advocated a deterministic view about such issues, namely the Jabriyah (determinists). This group thought that no attributes could be predicated of God except for creation, power and action, since any attribute that could be predicated of creatures was not fit to be predicated of the Creator. As God is the sole Creator and Actor, our actions are also authored by Him alone; therefore, we as persons have no control over our actions and no free will. (Ibid., pp. 34-35)

<sup>3</sup> Some Muslim sects like al-KhËwarij contended the opinion of the traditional Muslim scholars' mainstream, by saying that any person who committed a grave sin automatically became a non-believer, thus forfeiting all rights and protections afforded by Islamic law. The MurjiÑah argued for the withholding of judgment while tending to widen the interpretation of who could qualify as a believer, however, the MuÑtazilite held that such a person should be placed in an intermediate position, being neither a Muslim nor an unbeliever. (See: AmËr, NajËr, *al-KhawËrij: ÑAqËdatan, wa Fikran wa Falsafatan*, Cairo: DËr al-MaÑËrif, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1988, pp.145-146.)

<sup>4</sup> The group of Qadariyyah (i.e., proponents of *qadar*-predestination or the freedom of Man's will.) This school argued for the absolute freedom of will. God is justice and He is never unjust, therefore, for them it is injustice that God would put on human beings under obligation to act righteously if we do not possess the power to choose our course of action. Hence, rationally Man is given free choice for his course of action, and because of this freedom he will be punished and rewarded in the hereafter. The view of mainstream orthodox and traditionalist groups who affirmed that the will of God is supreme and that He is the Creator of all human acts, whether evil or good; about this matter was that nothing could happen on earth that contradicted His will. This position was later given some nuances by al-AshÑari, who argued that God created human acts, but we acquired (*kasaba*) these acts by willing them prior to their creation. (See: Maghribi, ÑAli ÑAbdul FatËÍ, *al-Firaq al-KalËmīyah al-IslËmīyah, Madkhal WadirËsah*, Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.1986, p.56. See: also, al-ShahrastËni, ÑAbdul Karam b. Abi Bakar, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, Beirut: DËr al-MaÑrifah, 1982, pp.92-93.

5 A famous Muslim theologian in Baghdad who was the real founder of Islamic scholastic theology specially that of al-Ash'arites. He attempted to surmount the gap between rational and logical values and orthodox faith and scriptural teachings. In an early work 'Maqalât al-Islamiyyân' he compiled the various opinions of scholars on Muslim theological questions. He endeavoured to establish a rational ground for textual religious interpretations of the faith, to defend the belief and justify the validation of such belief elements. (See: Al-Imâm al-Ash'ari, *al-Ib'nah Nân UËl al-Diy'nah*, Egypt: Id'rat al-Tib'nah al-Muniriyah, 1928, pp.10-25.)

6 One of the most celebrated of Mu'tazilite theologians, who attempted to give fresh and new mandate to Mu'tazilite theological thought. It can be said that he was able to add some additional brilliance to the traditions of the previous Mu'tazilite thought, while at same time refreshed it and opened the way to new solutions. (See: 'Abdul Ra'îm b. A'îmad al-Ij'ê, *al-Maw'eqif FÊ 'Ilm al-Kal'Em*, Beirut: Ólam al-Kutub, pp.20-30.)

7 One of the two foremost Imams of the theologians of Ahl al-Sunnah, i.e., the group of the sunnah, known in his time as the Imam of Guidance (Imâm al-Hud'ê). It is said there is not much doctrinal difference between Ash'arite and M'etur'êd'ê, hence both groups are now called *ahl-al-sunnah*. (See: al-Imâm M'etur'êd'ê, *Kit'eb al-Taw'îd*, Beirut: D'ér al-Mashriq, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1970, pp.12-30.)

8 The Qur'ân, 20:1-6.

9 See: Sub'î, A'îmad, op. cit., p.20.

10 See: Fat'î, Irf'ân Abdul 'am'êd, *Dir'és'êt FÊ al-Firaq al-Isl'emiyyah*, Beirut: D'ér al-J'êl, 1991, pp. 20-25. And also, Al-Sayyid al-Shar'êf 'Alî Mu'îamad al-Jurj'êni, *Shar' al-Maw'eqif FÊ 'Ilm al-Kal'Em*, Cairo: Maktabat al-Azhar, 1976, p.25.

11 In Damascus, Ibn Taymiyyah sought various disciplines in jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and its principles (*uËl al-fiqh*), Arabic language, tradition (*îad'êth*), theology (*'ilm al-kal'Em*), etc. He was also reported to have memorised the whole al-Qur'ân during his adolescence age. After the death of his father in 1282, he succeeded his father's position as a scholar where he delivered lectures on the exegesis (*tafs'êr*) of the Qur'ân. (See: Serajul Haque, *Ibn Taymiyyah and His Projects of Reform*, Dhaka: Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, 1982, pp. 5 – 6.)

12 Ibid., p. 8.

13 Victor E. Makari, *Ibn Taymiyyah's Ethics: The Social Factor*, California: American Academy of Religion, 1983, pp. 28 – 29.

14 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Muw'êfaqat Óal'êl al-Manq'êl Li Sar'êh al-Ma'q'êl*, al-Q'êhirah : Matba'at al-Sunnah al-Mu'îammadiyah, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1951, pp.12-29.

15 Ibid, p.31.

16 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar'u Ta'N'êru' al-N'Aql wa al-Naql*, Riyadh: Jami'nah al-Imâm Mu'îammad b. Sa'N'êd al-Isl'emiyyah, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1981, v.5, p.295.

17 Ibid, v.5, p. 296.

18 Ibid., p. 297.

19 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Tafs'êr Surah al-Ikhl'és*, Cairo: Maktabat al-Q'êhirah, 1900, pp.82-83.

20 Thomas F. Michel, S.J, *Muslim Theologian's Response To Christianity*, New York: Caravan Books, Delmar, 1984. p.41.

21 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar'u Ta'N'êru' al-N'Aql wa Naql*, v.5, pp.299-301.

22 Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned as an example certain terms like: "Jawhar (substance), Jism (body), and hayyiz (place) that imply categories which are incompatible with the teachings of the Qur'ân and Sunnah. To him imposing this extraterrestrial terms to the religious text will lead misconception to the majority of the religious layman. (Ibn Taymiyyah, *Muw'êfaqat Óal'êl al-Manq'êl li Óar'êl al-Ma'N'q'êl*, Beirut: D'ér al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1985, p.151.)

<sup>23</sup> Ibn Taymiyyah, *UËl al-Tafs'êr*, Bierut: D'ér al-Fikr, 1992, pp.12-13.

24 The Qur'ân, 4:105.

25 Ibn Taymiyyah, *UËl al-Tafs'êr*, op. cit., p.20.

26 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Muw'êfaqat Óal'êl al-Manq'êl li Óar'êl al-Ma'N'q'êl*, op. cit., p.151.

27 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar'u Ta'N'êru' al-N'Aql wa Naql*, op. cit., pp. 301-305.

- 28 Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Rad ĤĀĪĒ al-MantiqiyĒn*, Beirut: DĒr al-Fikr, 1993, pp.101-110.  
 29 Ibid, p.111.  
 30 Ibid, p.112.  
 31 Ibid, p. 120.  
 32 Ibid, p. 125.  
 33 Ibn Taymiyyah, *MuwĒfaqat ŒĀĪĒĪ al-ManqĒl Li ŒarĒh al-MaĤqĒl*, op. cit., pp.120-125.  
 34 Ibid, pp.126-128.  
 35 Ibid, pp130-131.

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