CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION: IDEOLOGICAL ROOTS OF THE WAHHABIYYA

During the Abbasid period we come across a great theologian and jurist of Islam, Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (d. 855), who became the founder of the Hanbali School of jurisprudence and the champion of Hadith. From the very early period of Islam we notice two main groups: Ashab al-Hadith and Ashab al-Ra‘y, the former known for their emphasis on Tradition and the latter on individual opinion (ra‘y). Owing to the scarcity of legislative material in the Qur‘an and the dearth of ancient precedents, the authorities entrusted with the administration of justice and the conduct of the religious life had in most cases to fall back on the excersie of their own ra‘y.

The Iraqi School, led by Abu Hanifa (d. 767), was known as the ‘people of opinion’ whereas the Hijazi School, led by Malik b. Anas (d. 796), was termed as the ‘people of hadith’. Ahmad b. Hanbal was a staunch defender of the latter school and believer of literal interpretation of Qur‘an and the Sunna. To him can be traced back the Sunni origins of Islamic ‘fundamentalism’. It was on the

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ideas of Ibn Hanbal, as interpreted by Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) and his disciple Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350), both sworn enemies of bida', that Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1792) based the framework of his reform movement. In order to understand the pre-modern and modern revivalist movements in Sunni Islam, it is necessary to study in brief the main ideas of Ibn Hanbal, who influenced so greatly the subsequent development of revivalist trends in Islamic thought. Commonly known as Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal, he was born in Baghdad in 780 A.D. He was an Arab by descent belonging to the Banu Shayban tribe. His grand father's name was Hanbal b. Hilal and his father was Muhammad b. Hanbal but rarely he is called Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Hanbal. His father Muhammad died three years after his birth. From 795 A.D. onwards he started the study of Traditions and other Muslim sciences. In the pursuit of knowledge of Tradition, he visited Mecca, Medina, Yemen, Syria, Kufa, and Basra. Some assert that he visited Iran too, but H. Laoust denies that he ever visited either Iran or Khurasan or the distant Maghrib and dismisses the view as legendary. He learned fiqh and hadith under many

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3. For the details of his life see Inb al-Jawzi, Managib al-Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal (Cairo, 1931); A.M. Shakir (ed.), Tarjuamat al-Imam Ahmad (Cairo, 1946).

teachers, prominent among whom were Qadi Abu Yusuf (d. 798) of Baghdad, 'Abd al-Rahman b. Mahdi (d. 813-4) of Basra, Waki' b. al-Jarrah (d. 812-3) of Kufa and Sufyan b. 'Uyayna (d. 813-4) of Hijaz, who was his principal teacher and the greatest authority of the place. He also studied under al-Shafi'i (d. 820) whom he met once in Baghdad in 810 A.D. About his knowledge regarding Tradition Ibn Khalliqan (d. 1282) states that Ahmad Ibn Hanbal knew by heart 1000,000 Traditions. It is said that, when al-Shafi'i went at last to Egypt, he said: "I do not leave behind anyone greater as a faqih or more pious and learned than Ahmad Ibn Hanbal."

Ibn Hanbal resided in Baghdad after he ended his journey in the quest of learning. Very soon he acquired the reputation of being one of the greatest teachers of Tradition and fiqh, and at the same time he was a champion of orthodoxy and 'a representative of uncompromising adherence to the letter of the hadith'. He was very strict in his devotion to ritual observances. The Caliph al-Ma'mun


(d. 833), during his period granted official patronage to the Mu'tazilite belief in the 'createdness of the Qur'an' \(^9\) (Khalq al-Qur'an) and with this commenced a period of tormentation for Ibn Hanbal. In 827 the Caliph issued a proclamation declaring the Mu'tazilite doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'an. In 833, through a mandate, he made it obligatory upon his subjects the acceptance of this Mu'tazilite doctrine. This mandate also made it obligatory that all the qadis will hold their office or new ones to be appointed only when they subscribed to this dogma. At the same time towards the end of his reign he started the minhā, an inquisitional tribunal, to try and punish those who denied it. He sent letters to the governors of the provinces ordering them to force the qadis under their jurisdiction to declare their acceptance of the caliph's views of the Qur'an or face trial. Ibn Hanbal strongly refused to accept this dogma which was contrary to orthodoxy. Most of the qadis and 'ulama' adhered to the doctrine and many were frightened and tortured to accept it. But Ibn Hanbal was firm in his belief that the Qur'an is the 'uncreated word of Allah'. On the orders of al-Ma'mun he

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was chained and was being brought to him when the news of the Caliph’s death came and consequently he was sent back to Baghdad where he was imprisoned. He was brought before the new Caliph al-Mu’tasim (d. 842) but still he refused to acknowledge the doctrine of the createdness of the Qur’an and was severely beaten and was allowed to go home only after about two years’ imprisonment. He did not emerge on the front during the reign of al-Mu’tasim and his son al-Wathiq (d. 847).

The religious policy of the ‘Abbasids underwent a reversal during the early part of al-Mutawakkil’s reign (d. 861) which put an end to the minha, thus Mu’tazilism began to lose its hold. But this does not necessarily resolve that it was consequent upon Ibn Hanbal’s stand. The person supposed to be the driving force behind the overthrow of the Mu’tazilites and the re-establishment of the orthodox belief was Abu’l-Hasan ‘Ali al-Ash’ari (d. 935-6), who himself was a Mu’tazilite before he changed his ideas. He was followed by Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 1111) who wrote the famous Ihya’ ‘Ulum al-Din (Revival of the Religious Sciences) and Tahafut al-Falasifah (The


Incoherence of the Philosophers). He employed Greek dialect to found a pragmatic system and made Greek philosophy palatable to the orthodox school of theologians.

It was during al-Mutawakkil's reign that Ibn Hanbal resumed his teachings after orthodoxy had reinstated itself. The Caliph summoned Ibn Hanbal and asked him to undertake the teaching of his son but he excused himself out of it on grounds of his age and failing health. He then went from Samarra to Baghdad where he died in 855 A.D. and was buried in the Magabir al-Shuhada' (Martyrs' Cemetery) near the Harb Gate. On hearing the news of his death the people were grief stricken. It is said that his influence was so great that nearly 800,000 men and 60,000 women attended his funeral. In a short time his tomb was considered a holy place and was one of the most frequented places of pilgrimage in Baghdad, till at last it was washed away by a flood on the Tigris in the eighty/fourteenth century.

It has been very rightly remarked that 'as a faqih and traditionist, Ibn Hanbal bore a great reputation among his own and the following generations. He was a man

16. Ibid., p. 399.
of great influence among the people, and the leading representative of the strictest orthodox party in those days. As D.B. Macdonald remarks:

"... Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, saint and ascetic, was the idol of the masses; and he, in their eyes had maintained single-handed the honour of the Word of God. For his persecutors there was nothing but hatred. After he had passed away, the conflict was taken up with a still fiercer bitterness, by the school of law founded by his pupils".

Ibn Hanbal had two wives and with each of them he had two sons named Salih and 'Abd Allah. It is also asserted that he had six children by a concubine. The elder of the two, Salih, was born in 818-9 in Baghdad and died in 879-80 when he was Qadi of Isfahan. He had special interest in fiqh and it is often asserted that he had transmitted Ibn Hanbal’s fiqh. 'Abd Allah, who was born in 828, had special interest in hadith and it is through him that the major part of Ibn Hanbal’s literary work has come down to us. He died in Baghdad in 903. He had two sons, both of whom are credited with the frame-work which constitutes the Hanbali madhhab.

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18. See Abu Zahra, op. cit., passim.

Regarding Ibn Hanbal’s works we have scant information. The most popular of his works is the Musnad which is a collection of traditions. It contains about 30,000 or 40,000 traditions. Ibn Hanbal regarded it as the one and only reliable basis for testifying in fiqh and other Muslim sciences. He gave much importance to this work of his, but, actually it was his son ‘Abd Allah who collected and classified it and made his own additions in places (zawa’id). It was further transmitted with some more additions by Abu Bakr al-Qati’i (d. 978-9) of Baghdad. The Musnad is not arranged according to the subject of the traditions but under the names of the first guarantor, therefore, it is difficult to consult for those persons who do not know it by heart. ‘Abd Allah also supplemented his another work Kitab al-zuhd (‘The Book of Asceticism’).

20. A collection of Traditions not arranged according to their contents but according to their transmitters. Among such Collections, the best one is that of Ahmad b. Hanbal. For details see Abu Zahra, op. cit., pp. 183-93; I. Goldziher, ‘Neue Materialien zur Literatur des Überlieferungswesens bei den Muhammedanern’ in Z.D.M.G., I, 465-506.

The other works of Ibn Hanbal which have also been transmitted through his disciples are: Kitab al-Salat wa ma Yalzam fiha, on the discipline of prayer; al-Radd ‘ala al-Zanadiqa wa’l-Jahmiyya fi ma Shakkat fi hi mutashabih al-Qur’an, a polemical treatise in which he refutes ta’wil; Kitab Ta’at al-Rasul, which contains discussions on the method to be adopted in cases where the hadith seems to contradict certain Qur’anic passages; Kitab al-Sunna, a formulation of his dogmatic confession; Kitab al-Wara’i; Masa’il, containing opinions of Ibn Hanbal to the various questions put to him. There is an important work Kitab al-Jami’ li’ulum al-Imam Ahmad by Abu Bakr al-Khallal (d. 923-4) in which dispersed materials were collected. According to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, this book consisted of twenty volumes. It is nearly completely lost except for a few parts, but by going through the works of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim one may be able to get an idea of Ibn Hanbal’s thought. Nearly all of those works have reached us through his sons Salih and ‘Abd Allah and his other disciples. His more prominent disciples include Ishaq b. Mansur al-Khawsaj (d. 845-6), Abu Bakr al-Athram (d. 873-4 or 886-7), Hanbal...


b. Ishaq (d. 886-7), 'Abd al-Maymuni (d. 887-8), Abu Da'ud al-Sijistani (d. 888-9) etc.

Prominent Hanbali teachers at different times include Abu'l Qasim 'Umar al-Kharaqi (d. 945-6) whose summary of Hanbalite fiqh still exists, 'Abd al-'Aziz b. Ja'far (895-974) who is the author of the work Mughni; Abu'l-Wafa' 'Ali b. 'Aqil (1121-2) was the head of the productive school, 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilli (1078-1166) was a faithful Hanbalite as well as a sufi, Abu'l-Faraj b. al-Jawzi (1114-1200); 'Abd al-Ghani al-Jama'ili (1203-4); Muwaffaq al-Din b. Qudama (d. 1223) whose Mughni was widely studied and which consisted of a commentary of Kharaqi's summary in twelve volumes, and above all the famous Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyya and his pupil Muhammad Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya.

In Ibn Hanbal's period there were many conflicting problems faced by the 'ulama' about which different interpretations were given by them. Ibn Hanbal had given his own interpretations to many of them. He was much more orthodox in his principles, and this is the reason

24. For the life and works of eminent Hanbalite scholars see especially, Ibn Ali Ya'la, Tabaqat al-Hanabila (Damascus, 1931).

25. A study of the main thoughts of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim follows in this chapter.

26. For a comprehensive study of Ibn Hanbal's interpretations see Muhammad Abu Zahra, Ibn Hanbal (Cairo, n.d.), p. 141 ff.
why throughout history, Hanbalism had to fight its way out against many powerful opponents belonging to different schools whose principles it opposed. Some times its antagonists united to oppose it. Ibn Hanbal's school is based on five main sources: (a) the texts of the Qur'an and the *sunna*, (b) the fatwas of the Companions, if there was nothing to contradict them, (c) the sayings of certain of the Companions when these were consistent with the Qur'an and the *sunna*, (d) *daʿif* and *mursal* traditions (the former type having a weak chain of transmission while the latter lacks the name of some of the transmitters), and finally, (e) reasoning by analogy (*qiyas*) whenever it was necessary.

It has rightly been pointed out that:

"The Hanbalites maintained in theology their devotion to tradition; they fought for centuries all independent thinking which sought to rise above what the fathers had told; they fought even scholastic theology of strictest type and would be content with nothing but the rehearsal of the old dogmas in the old forms; they fought, too, the mystical life in all its phases."

The Hanbali view is that 'logic has no right to meddle in law, as little as philosophy has any nexus with

28. Cf. S. Mahmassani, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-1
religion or Greek wisdom with the formulation of Statutes (ahkam). The views of Ibn Hanbal on this ideology is well expressed by Watt thus:

"... The Hanbalite position was based on an awareness of the limitations of reason in this sphere, coupled with an understanding of the need to retain the concrete and 'poetical language of the Qur'an and the Traditions. Reason likes to have an ordered system, but religious truth, Ibn Hanbal felt, cannot be thus systematized."

Ibn Hanbal inculcated that to believe in God is to believe in the description God has given of Himself in the Qur'an. It is to be believed as a reality, the attributes of God such as hearing, sight, speech, omnipotence, will, wisdom, etc., and also all the terms called mutashabih speaking of God's hand, throne, omnipresence, and vision of God by the believers on the Day of Resurrection. Ibn Hanbal rejects the negative theology (ta'til) of the Jahmiyya as well as their allegorical exegesis (ta'wil) of the Qur'an and of the Tradition. With same vigour he rejects the anthropomorphism (tashbih) of the Mutashabbiha and includes the Jahmiyya as unconscious anthropomorphists. According to Ibn Hanbal the


32. The Mutashabbihas (anthropomorphists) likened the Divine attributes to the attributes of created things and turned God into a similitude of their own selves.
authropomorphic expressions of the Qur'an are to be understood "without stating the precise manner of their existence (bi-la kayf, literally, 'without how') and leave to God the understanding of his own mystery, and in this way he repudiated the ineffective and dangerous cleverness of dogmatic theology (kalam). H. Laoust summarises Ibn Taymiyya's views on the attributes of God as follows:

"For Ibn Hanbal, God is the God of the Kur'an: to believe in God is to believe in the description which God has given of Himself in His Book. Not only, therefore, must the attributes of God, such as hearing, sight, speech, omnipotence, will, wisdom, etc. be affirmed as realities (hakk), but also all the terms called "ambiguous" (mutashabih) which speak of God's hands, throne, omnipresence, and vision by the Believers on the day of resurrection. In conformity with tradition, also, it must be affirmed that God descends to the lowest heaven in the last third of every night to hearken to the prayers of his worshippers, and at the same time, with the literal text of the Kur'an (cf. sura cxii), that God, the Unique, the

33. W.M. Watt, op. cit., p. 80

34. In the words of D.B. Macdonald: "Scholastic theology (kalam) was his abomination. Those who disputed over doctrines he cast out. That their dogmatic position was the same as his made no difference. For him, theological truth could not be reached by reasoning ('aql); tradition (naql) from fathers (as-salaf) was the only ground on which the dubious words of the Qur'an could be explained." Cf., Development of Muslim Theology, etc., p. 157.

Absolute, is not comparable to anything in the world of His creatures (K. al-Sunna, 37; Manakib, 155). Ibn Hanbal therefore vigorously rejects the negative theology (ta’til) of the Djahmiyya and their allegorizing exegesis (ta’wil) of the Kur’an and of tradition, and no less emphatically rejects the anthropomorphism (tashbih) of the Mushabbiha, amongst whom he includes, in the scope of his polemics, the Djahmiyya as unconscious anthropomorphists. In the fideism of Ibn Hanbal, one must believe in God without seeking to know the "mode" of the theologoumena (bila kayf), and to leave to God the understanding of his own mystery renouncing the vain and dangerous subteleties of dogmatic theology (Kalām). So simple, and at the same time so strong, was this position from the Kur’anic angle, that al-Ash’ari, on abandoning Mu’tazilism, seeks, either for tactical reasons or in sincere acceptance, to place himself under the patronage of Ibn Hanbal before making certain concessions to his former credo, concessions successively enlarged by his disciples, on the problem of the attributes, the Kur’an and the legitimacy of dogmatic theology."

Regarding Qur’an he firmly believed that kalam Allah ghayr makhluq (the Qur’an is the uncreated Word of God). Simply to believe that the Qur’an is the Word of God is not enough, one has to clearly specify. Otherwise, according to Ibn Hanbal, the doubt which it brings forth is a sin graver than the heresy of Jahmiyya. On the problem of the pronunciation of the Qur’an Ibn Hanbal’s position is not clear. It is said that according to him its pronunciation is uncreated and he declared that "whoso
asserts that our words, when we recite the Qur'an, and that our reading of the Qur'an are created, seeing that the Qur'an is the Word of God, is a Jahmi." In short his belief was that "the Qur'an is the speech of Allah, written in the copies, preserved in the memories, recited by the tongues, revealed to the Prophet. Our pronouncing, writing and reciting the Qur'an is created. Whereas the Qur'an itself is uncreated". The Hanbali view is somewhat the same as that of the Ash'arites. Ibn 'Asakir says that "Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and al-Ash'ari were in perfect harmony in their religious opinions and did not differ in any particular, in the fundamental doctrines and in the acceptance of the authority of the Traditions. This is the reason why the Hanbalites relied always and at all times on the Ash'arites against the heterodox, as they were the only dialecticians among the orthodox." Although al-Ash'ari has reverence for the teachings of Ibn Hanbal in his creed but the Ash'ari school had to defend against Hanbalism the legitimacy of a certain use of reason in matters concerning faith.

36. Loc. cit.


Ibn Hanbal himself did not write a juristic methodology (usul al-fiqh) and the famous works ascribed to his school cannot be said to be strictly in accordance with his thought. His doctrine, as can be found out from the Masa’il, is more elementary compared to the later elaborations, but it has a distinction of setting out the first principles of the methodology of the school.

The school of Ibn Hanbal spread rapidly up to the fourteenth century. In Iran the followers of this school were found all over, in Syria and Palestine this school was started in the eleventh century by ‘Abd al-Wahid al-Shirazi. Later on, the great Hanbalite Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyya, who also belonged to Syria, strengthened it there. But after the death of Ibn Taymiyya, Hanbalism was constantly on the decline. When the Turks took over the reigns of Islam, all the schools were officially represented by their qadis in all Islamic centres. The advent of the Turks had dealt a severe blow to Hanbalism and it was gradually on the decline till the eighteenth century when all of a sudden a new and vigorous wave appeared in it in the form of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab’s movement which showed strong traces of the effects of Ibn Taymiyya’s Islamic militancy.

41. See Abu Zahra, op. cit., pp. 460 ff.
Taqi al-Din Abu'l-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Abd al-Salam, more famous simply as Ibn Taymiyya, and known as the mujaddid of Islam, emerged on the reformist scene of Islam in the seventh/thirteenth century. He grasped all the teachings of Ibn Hanbal and made his contribution of Hanbalite thought. He emanated as a mujtahid and preached a puritanical reconciliation of Islam in accordance with the Qur'an and the Sunna. His time, therefore, is often termed

42. Every member of his family was known by the title 'Ibn Taymiyya'. Ibn Khalilqan quoting Abu'l Barkat Ibn al-Mastufi explains that Taqi al-Din's great grandfather Abu'l-Qasim al-Khidr's eldest son Fakhr al-Din was questioned about the title by Ibn al-Mastufi during the pilgrimage in 604/1207, he replied that when his maternal grandfather was performing the pilgrimage his grandmother was pregnant while he was passing through a town named Tima, he saw a small girl in a camp. When he returned home he was informed of the birth of a daughter. When he saw his daughter she resembled the girl he had seen in Tima and called out "O! Taymiyya". And hence all the sons of his daughter onwards were known as Ibn Taymiyya. But at the same time Ibn Khalliqan has contradicted it by saying that if Taymiyya refers to Tima then it should have been Timawiyya to be more precise. Cf., Yusuf Kokan, Imam Ibn Taymiyya (Madras, 1959). p. 17.

43. Shibli Nu'mani (d. 1914), for instance, considers him a 'real mujaddid' as compared to Abu Hanifa, al-Ghazali, al-Razi and Shah Wali Allah, cf., Magalat (Azamgarh, 1936), Vol. V, p. 66; Abu'l-Kalam Azad (d. 1958) uses such epithets for him:

آية من آيات الله، وحجة تامة من حجج الله، شيخ العلماء، وابن المجددين، سيد الأكاديميين، وامام العارفين، وقهرة الأولياء، حافظ شيخ الإسلام، الذين ابن شهيدة

as "the pre-rennaissance period in the history of Islam". Ibn Taymiyya was a Hanbalite of the most extreme type. It is said that he never forgot a Tradition after he had once heard it. He devoted his life to religious reform and showed extraordinary zeal in this regard. He tried to restore the primitive monotheism taught by Prophet Muhammad and to purge Islam of all the corruptions and innovations that had crept into it in the course of time. Ibn Taymiyya’s life corresponds exactly with the period of the first Mamluk dynasty (648-784/1250-1382).

He was born in Harran on 10th Rabi’ I, 661/20th or 22nd January, 1263. His family had a Hanbalite outlook. His uncle Fakhr al-Din (d. 1225) and his paternal grand father Mājd al-Din (d. 1255) were adherents of the same thought. Later on, he also excelled on the same line and became a prominent Hanbali theologian and jurisconsult.

In 1269, when Ibn Taymiyya was about seven, his father, ʿAbd al-Halim, shifted from Harran and settled in Damascus as a result of the Mongol ravage of the city. In Damascus Ibn Taymiyya received education in religious


45. A city in northern Syria, near Damascus, famous for its Hanbalite School.
sciences, especially hadith, under his father, also a great Hanbalite scholar. But afterwards he attended the circles of other teachers. It is said that between 662 A.H. and 684 A.H., he gained knowledge of hadith with more than two hundred Shaykhs among whom are included four ladies whom Ibn Taymiyya himself mentions in his Arba’un. He succeeded his father, who was the director of the Sukkariyya madrasa in 1284 and also taught Qur’anic exegesis at the Umayyad Mosque. He became so prominent that he was offered the post of Qadi in 1291 but he refused it. Intellectually he was a genius and it is said that at the age of seventeen he was in a position to give formal legal opinions. He performed the pilgrimage to Mecca towards the end of 691/1292 and on his return compiled his treatise, the Manasik al-Hajj, in which he denounced many bida’ (innovations) which had crept in the performance of Hajj. He first sprang into the political scene and was imprisoned for the first time in 693/1293 at Adhrawiyya, when he adopted an uncompromising attitude against Assaf al-Nasrani, a Christian of Suwayda, who was accused of having insulted the Prophet. It was at this time

46. Ibn Taymiyya, Arba’un, pp. 34-6. Also Yusuf Kokan, op. cit., p. 59, but he has not mentioned the exact number.
47. Yusuf Kokan, op. cit., p. 72
49. For details, see Yusuf Kokan, op. cit., pp. 78-82.
that his first important work, Kitab al-Sarim al-Maslu' ala Shatim al-Rasul was compiled.

In 695/1296 on the death of Zayn al-Din Ibn Munajja, one of his teachers, Ibn Taymiyya took his place at the Hanbaliyya, the oldest Hanbali madrasa in Damascus. In 698/1299 at the request of the people of Hamat he wrote his al-Hamawiyya al-Kubra which was very critical both of Ash'arism as well as Kalam. Actually speaking, the treatise is the beginning of great hostilities against him. He was asked publicly to express his opinion about the attributes of God in response of which he wrote the treatise.

Ibn Taymiyya declared in his treatise that:

"Allah has an Essence predicated by positive attributes ascribed to His Essence. Though these Attributes are similar in apellation to the attributes of man, they are different from them in degree and in purpose. These attributes are additions to the Essence, and some of them are eternal with that Essence, but nothing prevents Allah, who knows all things from eternity, from knowing things when they occur individually (in our world).

This view is different from the view held by the rational philosophers that no Attributes may be ascribed to the Deity. It is also different from the view of the Mu'tazilites who hold that only a few

50. Hyderabad, 1322/1905.
necessary Attributes are ascribed to Him, as One, Eternal, Omnipotent, etc. Similarly, it is different from the view of the Ash'arites who maintain that Allah's attributes are of two kinds: those which are ascribed to Allah as such, as Living, Mighty, Creator, etc.; and those which should be ascribed to Him only after an interpretation in the spirit of Arabic Rhetoric. One example of these is the concept mentioned of Allah in the Qur'anic Verse *istawa ala-'Arsh* (VII, 53; X, 3; XIII, 2; XXV, 59; XXXII, 4; LVII, 4) meaning "He has taken position on the Throne", rendered by Rodwell as "mounted the throne", by Maulana Muhammad Ali as "established on the Throne", by Mermaduke Pickthall as "then mounted He the Throne" and by Bashir ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad as "He settled Himself on the Throne". The Ash'arites hold in this respect that "setting on the throne in general is quite known, but how it is to be conceived in the case of Allah is not known". Ibn Taimiyah rejects this attitude and asserts that "sitting on the throne" implies — even in the case of Allah — that which is above (Allah), that which is below (our world) and that which is between (Allah's Throne)."

Shaykh Bahjat al-Bitar defending Ibn Taymiyya against a possible accusation of anthropomorphism says that 'to be above the Throne' does not necessarily imply 'sitting on it' or 'being in contact with it'.

He stayed in Syria for about thirteen years beginning from 1292 to 1305 when he was sent to Cairo. During his entire stay in Syria he wrote many books and treatises all of which were basically against the sufis, the *mutakallimun* and the Aristotelian philosophers. Also during

this period, he took part in the war against the Tartars and Nusayris and in the battle of Shaqhab. He also inflicted a crushing defeat on the people of Jabal Khusruwan in Syria. Thus he has also been described as a mujahid.

Ibn Taymiyya was relentless in attacking his critics. In the years that followed he faced the criticism of his antagonists but all the time he was able to defeat them till finally he was sent from Syria to Egypt. In Cairo he faced munazarah (religious argumentation) and on the insistence of Shaykh Safi al-Din al-Hindi, he along with his two brothers, was imprisoned for about a year and a half. He was released on the intervention of amir Sattar for whom he wrote al-‘Aqida al-Tadmuriyya. He was granted his liberty but was not allowed to return to Syria. He continued to denounce all the innovations (bida') and regarded them as heretical. He then encountered the opposition of two of the most influential sufis of Egypt: Ibn ‘Ata’ Allah (d. 1309-10) and Karim al-Din al-Amuli (d. 1310-11). A popular demonstration followed and consequently he was summoned before the Shafi‘i qadi Badr al-Din Ibn

53. M.M. Sharif (ed.) op. cit., p. 797


55. Cairo, 1325/1908.
Jama’a. He was questioned on his interpretation of the doctrine of intercession of the saints (tawassul; istighatha). Thereafter he was allowed to return to Syria but was imprisoned for several months in the prison of the qadis.

Ibn Taymiyya returned to Damascus in 712/1313 following a new threat from the Mongol. Tanqiz was the governor of Damascus at that time. Ibn Taymiyya, at this time promoted to the rank of professor, was considered an independent mujtahid by his supporters. His chief pupil at this time was Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350) who was for some time in prison with him and who spread his ideas to a great extent.

The Sultan, in 718/1318, forbade Ibn Taymiyya to issue fatwas regarding repudiation (talâq) contrary to the prevailing Hanbalite doctrine. He was much criticized in this regard and finally landed up in prison in the Citadel at Damascus. He was released after a period of five years. But in 726/1226 he was again arrested and deprived of the right to issue fatwas. He invited criticism because


57. Ibid.
of his treatise *ziyarat al-qubur* which condemned the cult of the saints. His brother Zayn al-Din was allowed to stay with him and at the same time his pupil Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya was held up in the same prison. Ibn Taymiyya was imprisoned for more than two years but he continued to issue fatwas and wrote several books and pamphlets defending and justifying his own views and doctrines. Among the books he wrote in prison at this time were *Kitab Ma’arif al-Usul*, on the methodology of *fiqh*, the *Kitab al-Radd ‘ala’l-Akhna’i*, in this he attacked his opponents and expressed his ideas on the cult of saints. The most important of his works of this period is said to be *al-Bahr al-Muhit* which was a commentary of the Qur’an in forty volumes. His enemies got hold of some of these works and it is said that al-Akhna’i complained to the Sultan who ordered to deprive him of his paper, ink, and pen. But even then Ibn Taymiyya did not stop and he wrote with charcoal and devoted his time to


60. Cairo, 1346/1928. Taqi al-Din al-Akhna’i (d. 750/1349) was the Maliki *Qadi’il-gudat*.


63. Some of his writings in Charcoal are still found, at least two of them have been clearly mentioned. See Ghulam Jilani Barq, *Imam Ibn Taymiyya* (Lahore, 1938), pp.115-7.
worship. Five months later he died in prison on 20th Zu‘l Qa‘da 728/September 26, 1328. He was buried in the cemetery of the sufis in Damascus, where his tomb is still honoured. W.F. Smalley writing about Ibn Taymiyya remarks that he stood alone against the Muslim world; against the mystics, the theologians and the common people who worshipped saints and made pilgrimages to shrines, on the other side. All felt equally the sting of his scornful denunciations. He was a sworn enemy of mystics, philosophers and Ash‘arite theologians. His contemporaries often described him as a man most able and learned in many sciences but with an insane mind.

The influence which Ibn Taymiyya had on the Muslim masses is evident from the fact that lacs of men and women attended his funeral. It is said that three persons, Shaykh Jamal al-Din, Shaykh Sadr al-Din and Qafchari did not attend his funeral lest they be murdered by the furious mob as they were the men who had troubled him most in his lifetime.

Ibn Taymiyya left behind many works. Nobody could enumerate them definitely. Some of his books have been printed while others are still lying in manuscript.

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forms. We come across the names of some other books but they are nowhere to be found. Some of his principal works which have already been published are: Fatawa Ibn Taymiyya, in five volumes; Igamah al-dalil 'ala batlan al-tahlil; Kitab al-Ikhtiyarat al-'Ilmiyya; al-Shatim al-raslul; 'al-Jawab al-Sahih li man baddal din al-masih; Minhaj al-sunna al-nabawiyya fi naqd kalam al-shi'iyya wa'al-qadariyya; Dar' ta'ariz al-'aql wa'l-naql; Majmu'a al-rasa'il al-kubra; Majmu'a al-rasa'il; Majmu'a al-rasa'il wa'l-masa'il; Kitab al-radd 'ala'l-mantiqiyyin; Kitab al-Iman; Jawab ahl al-'ilm wa'l-iman fi inna surah al-Ikhlas; Ta'addil thulth Qur'an; Kitab Iqtida' al-sirat al-mustaqim fi mukhalifah ashab al-jahim; Kitab al-nubuwat; al-Siyah al-shar'iyya fi islah al-ra'i wa'l-ra'iyya; Tafsir surah al-Ikhlas; Tafsir surah al-Nur; Majmu'a tafsir shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyya; al-Kalam al-Tayyib min azkar al-nabi sal'am; Qa'idah jalilah fi al-tawassul wa'l-wasila; al-Risalah al-Qabasiyya; al-Furqan bayna awliya' al-rahman wa awliya' al-shaytan; Risalah al-iijima' wa'l-iftiraq fi'l-half bi'l-talaqi Araba'un haditha; Majmu'a al-rasa'il al-muniriyya; al-Tuhfah al-'Iraqiyya fi a'mal al-qalbiyya; al-Sufiyya wa'l-fugra'; al-risalah al-madiniyya fi tahqiq al-majaz wa'l-haqiqiyya; Sharh hadith innama'l a'mal bi al-niyya.

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66. A comprehensive list is given in Yusuf Kokan, op. cit., pp. 642-55; a list of his main works is also given in Ibn Qayyim, Asma'Mu'allafat Ibn Taymiyya (Damascus, Ibn Qayyim, 1352/1953); and also H. Laoust, "Ibn Taymiyya" in Encyclopaedia of Islam (2nd Edition).
Ibn Taymiyya was a profound Hanbali theologian and jurisconsult. He acquired the knowledge of all the great works linked with his school, may it be the works of Imam Ahmad, or al-Khallal (d. 923-4) or Muwaffaq al-Din b. Qudamja (d. 1223). He had also read thoroughly the works of his grandfather Majd al-Din Abu’l-Barakat (d. 1254) whose works were regularly studied by the Hanbalis of the Mamluk period. He acquired the knowledge of not only the Hanbali school but also of the other schools of jurisprudence and along with it that of heresiographical literature and of philosophy and sufism. Among the works of the various sufis were included Sahl al-Tustari, Junaid al-Baghdadi (d. 910), Abu Talib al-Makki, Abu’l-Qasim al-Qushairi (d. 1072), Abu Hafs al-Suhrawardi, and even Muhy al-Din Ibn al-‘Arabi (1165-1240). He was even lured into sufistic practices before he discovered how they were indistinctly unorthodox. Ibn Taymiyya criticized sufism and its representatives. He was no less vehement against the pure thought of the philosophers, the esotericism of the Shi’a in general and the Isma’ilis in particular. Even the orthodox Ash’arite formulation receives its share of Ibn Taymiyya’s critique. He condemned saint worship and sufism.

67. For his juridical ideas see, Muhammad Yusuf Musa, Ibn Taymiyya (Cairo, 1962), pp. 168 ff; Abu Zahra, op. cit., pp. 350 ff.

practices and theology root and branch. He issued many fatwas and wrote pamphlets condemning eminent sufis, their practices in seeking ecstasy through music and dancing as well as the people’s faith. It was with the sufis that he had his worst conflicts, and at their hands he suffered the most. In many points his career is parallel to that of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, the sufi movement taking the place that was played by Mu’tazilism in the life of the earlier saint.

W. M. Watt, in this regard, writes that:

"He rejects everything resembling ‘union with God’ as the highest aim for human life. Absorption into the one or even contemplation of the highest Good he felt to be at variance with the Shari’a. For him the highest aim was the worship or service of God (ibada) whose basis was the observance of the prescriptions of the Shari’a. Yet in his own make up there was something of the mystic; and from the standpoint of his conception of ‘service’ he proceeded to give a meaning to many of the terms employed by the sufis—fear of God, confidence in Him, humility, love for Him."

Although Ibn Taymiyya generally gives the impression of being a rigid conservative, uncompromising with both rationalism as well as sufism, this image is not fully true. In his writings there can be traced a positive movement of the mind and spirit which seeks to go behind all

70. *Islamic Philosophy and Theology*, p. 162.
historic compositions of Islam by all groups of Muslims, to the Qur'an itself and to the teachings of the Prophet. There are enough testimonies which indicate that he did not reject all forms of sufism, and that he in fact regarded the sufi 'intuition' as being on par with the *ijtihad* of orthodox 'ulama', both of which, he emphasized, must be judged in the light of the Qur'an and the *Sunna*. He did not go so far as to condemn sufism outright but to denouncing what they regarded as illegalitys. Laoust asserts that:

"He never condemned sufism in itself, but only that which he considered to be, in the case of too many sufis, inadmissible deviations in doctrine, ritual or morals, such as monism (*wahdat al-wujud*), anti-nomianism (*ibaha*) or esotericism (*ghuluww").

According to Ibn Taymiyya the goal of human life is neither the philosophic contemplation of God nor the mystic type of love of Him --- for each of these leads to the doctrine of the Unity of Being, of the identity of the world and God and so to the absolute inanity of both God and man --- but the active concept of *ibada*, a knowledge of God's will and its fearless implementation in life. God is

not something to be merely perceived or admired and cherished but must be recognised as the one to whom alone our allegiance is due. This alone can inspire the real attitude of *ibada*. Ibn Taymiyya believes in the impossibility of attaining knowledge of God by rational methods, whether those of philosophy or of philosophical theology, and also to the impossibility of the mystical aim of union with God.

In nature Ibn Taymiyya’s doctrines were basically motivated by Hanbalism. They were such a combination that in accordance with the spirit of the Qur’an and the Sunna they accorded to each school its justifiable place. According to I. Goldziher Ibn Taymiyya did not belong to a definite school of thought but was a "Muslim on his own". In formulating his principles Ibn Taymiyya aimed at integrating and combining tradition, reason and freewill which Laoust defines as "a conservative reformism". However, according to Abu Zahra he regarded the Hanbali school as the best of all the other schools, and *ta’wil* and

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75. H. Laoust, op. cit., p. 953.

76. *Fatawa Ibn Taymiyya*, I, 199; cited by Abu Zahra op. cit., p. 449. He writes:
concentrated more on tafwid and taslim, i.e. leaving to God the ultimate mystery of things, and voluntary and intentional submission to the Word of God and of His Prophet, both in knowledge and in action. Regarding taqlid, Ibn Taymiyya was against the taqlid of an individual. In his Fatawa he wrote that it is not necessary for a Muslim to leave the Prophet and make it necessary for himself to follow an individual’s actions and sayings. The sayings of every individual can be set aside excepting the Prophet. At another place he asserts that if a person, who is a follower of Abu Hanifa, Malik, Shafi’i or Ahmad, feels that regarding certain problems one is more convincing than the other and follows it then it will of course be better. This clearly points out that Ibn Taymiyya was against the taqlid of an individual. On individual basis he did not distinguish between the ‘Imams’ but he was strict in following first the Qur’an and the Sunna and then the companions. He preferred the ideas upheld by the companions or their early successors regarding the doctrines preached by different schools. On the doctrine of Ijma’h (consensus) his ideas are quite clear.


He regards it as a *hujja* and gives arguments in his support. However, he makes it quite clear that in no case *ijma'* violates the explicit orders of the Qur'an and the *Sunna*. He was a great champion of *ijtihad*. To trace the facts about the Book, the *Sunna*, the Companions, the successors of the Companions, and the great Imams, he made a thorough study of various books. In his works we find references of those books of his predecessors which have not been mentioned in the works of his contemporaries. On every matter he referred to the Qur'an and the *Sunna* and agreed with that Imam whose ideas he found to be closest with the Qur'an and the *Sunna*. This indicates that Ibn Taymiyya was in favour of *ijtihad*. It is often stressed that in forming his ideas on *ijtihad* he was particularly influenced by the works of the Shi‘ite Imam al-Hilli (d. 1325). He considered himself a *mujtabid* at such a time when most of the ulama' held that the doors of *ijtihad* were closed. According to


الاعام شنق بينه بينه المسلمين من السنة والصوفية; وأهل الحديث، والأئمة وغيرهم في الحملة، وأدرك أهل البدع من المعتزلة والشيعة.


his ardent supporters he was a mujtahid mutlaq but according to others he was a mujtahid muntasib. On ijtihad his position was that he did not, as is sometimes said, announce the reopening of ijtihad, and still less did he claim this privilege for himself; he did not consider that ijtihad required to be ‘closed’, since its continuance is necessary for the interpretation of the Law. But anxious to impose some discipline on this ijtihad he attempted to define the rules which every mujtahid ought to follow. With this intent he announced the absolute supremacy of the text (nass) (Qur’an or hadith) and reduced correspondingly the importance of ijma’, to which he opposed the agreement (ittifaq) of the doctors of Law, the validity of which derives from the text on which it is based.

On Qiyas (analogy) Ibn Taymiyya lays enough stress and wrote an independent treatise on the subject. As opposed to the Hanafite views he regards the following as in accordance with Qiyas: (a) bai salam, (b) bai ma dam, (c) al-ijara, (d) al-mudariba, (e) al-muzari’a, (f) al-musagat, and (g) al-musarrat. Qiyas, according to him, should be practiced by looking into the cause of all the judgements.

84. H. Laoust, op. cit., p. 954.
emanating from the Qur'an and the Sunna, and then applying these to all such problems which are out-comings of similar causes. He was not favourable of maslaha (public interest) in the beginning, but, later on, he approved of it on the pre-condition that it should be applied only after a vast study of the Qur'an, hadith and the jurisprudence of the great imams. He defines maslaha in these words:

An interesting account of Ibn Taymiyya's bold expression of ijtihad is his opinion in talaq which went against the accepted views of the imams, and on account of which he was severely maligned by his opponents. He divides talaq into two kinds: (a) al-muharram (forbidden) and (b) Sunna. He approves the later saying that the talaq uttered thrice or more in one sitting is not the final repudiation.

86. H. Laoust, op. cit., p. 954.
88. Abu Zahra, op. cit., p. 415. He writes:
Though a theologian himself Ibn Taymiyya was very critical of theology (al-Kalam). He left behind numerous books and treatises on theology. Discussions on theology and philosophy are found throughout his works but he has straight away declared that theology and philosophy have no place in Islam. In his books Minhaj al-Sunna and Majmu‘at al-Tafsir Ibn Taymiyya states the opinions of Imam Ahmad and Abu Yusuf that he who would seek knowledge with the help of kalam would become an atheist. He also gives the opinion of Imam Shafi‘i that theologians should be beaten with shoes and palm branches and paraded through the city so that the people may know the consequences of studying theology.

On the practice of saint and tomb worship Ibn Taymiyya was emphatically severe. He traced the origin of these practices to show that it were the Batinites and Rafidites who started the practice and coined spurious Traditions favouring their interested views since they wanted to awaken popular enthusiasm in their own Imams and their shrines. They, first of all, forged Traditions, which affirm the advantages and benefits of undertaking undertakings.

pilgrimages to the shrines of the saints. Rafidites and other heretical sects wanted to see the mosques foresaken in order to raise these shrines in popular esteem where a new religion could be fabricated. The effect of the growing popularity of saint worship was that every shrine or tomb of a person believed to have died in the halo of sanctity became an object of general admiration and reverence decreasing the importance of the mosques. Ibn Taymiyya writes:

"there are some persons who perform pilgrimages to these tombs. The pilgrimages to the shrines are often given preference while there are people who labour under the misconception that two or three pilgrimages to the shrines of certain venerable saints are equal in merit to Hajj pilgrimage. Once the disciple of a saint offered to exchange the seven Hajjs performed by him for a single visit to his saint’s shrine paid by another man. The latter enquired about it from his shaykh who told him that had he agreed to the transaction he would have suffered a great loss. One can often hear these people making the assertion that perambulations seven times round the graves of a saint are equal in merit to one Hajj."

He further says that without bestowing any care on the mosques which give a dull and deserted look, shrines are adorned with beautiful carvings and decorated by splash of

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colour and artistic designs. The mosques meant for offering obligatory prayers five times a day are left to the mercy of the poor who are often unable to provide even a carpet and a lamp for them. But compared to these mosques, looking like neglected inns, the shrines are decorated with beautiful curtains, adorned with gold and silver ornamentations and provided with marble floors. Gifts and oblations continue to be offered at these shrines all round the year. Does all this not mean an open disrespect of God, His signs and His Apostle, and associating partners to Him? But why does this happen? This demonstrates the common faith of these people that the supplications made in a shrine or calling out one's needs in the name of the saints are more efficacious than the prayers offered to God in the mosques. The natural outcome of such a belief is that the shrines are given preference over the mosques which were to be the houses meant for sending up all supplications and invocations and entreaties and beseechments."

Rejecting all these practices he writes: 'The teachings of the Prophet of Islam leave no doubt that he never permitted his followers to supplicate to any departed soul, whether a prophet or a saint either by way of appeal or intercession. Similarly it is not lawful to prostrate

93. Ibid., p. 250
before any being, living or dead, or to pay homage to anybody in a way prescribed for divine service. We all know that the Prophet had prohibited all these acts which are, in fact, different forms of shirk or ascribing plurality to God, and hence strictly prohibited by God and His Apostle. If the theologians of bygone days did not declare such ignorances as outright apostates it was because people were unlettered and ignorant of the teachings of the Prophet. They considered it prudent to wait till the precepts of the Prophet and ordinances of the true faith were made known to all.

Ibn Taymiyya laid great emphasis on authority and regarded it as a part of the shari'a. On the question of 'the necessity for authority', he writes: 'It should be known that the exercise of authority (for the benefit) of the people is (one) of the greatest religious duties. Neither Religion nor world order may be established without it. The children of Adam cannot insure the realization of their (common) interest except by meeting together, because every one of them is in need of every other one. And when they meet together, it is inevitable for them to have a head (a chief), so that the Prophet, peace be upon him, has said: "If three of them were on a journey, they should choose one

94. Ibid., p. 377.
of them as prince" .... It is necessary that being in authority should be considered as (a part of) Religion and as a good action that brings one nearer to Allah. Seeking to be nearer to Allah through obedience to him and to His Messenger is the best of (such) actions.

On the methodology of the administration of the state Ibn Taymiyya wrote a treatise entitled *al-Siyasa al-shar'iyya fi islah al-ra'i wa'l-ra'iyya*. He believed in the rule of the divinely revealed law --- administration according to and by means of the Shari'ā. He insisted upon the religious duties of all Muslims, rulers and subjects alike. To reform the individual and the communal life he forcefully advocated a reform of the administration in the spirit of the ideal shari'ā. He considered religion and state to be indissolubly linked. Without the coercive power (shawka) of the state, religion is in danger. Without the discipline of the revealed law, the state becomes a tyrannical organisation. The essential function of the state is to see that justice ('adl) prevails, to ordain good (amr) and to forbid evil, to bring about, in reality, the reign of Unity (tahqiq al-tawhid), and to prepare for the coming of a society devoted to the service of God. As

Rosenthal writes:

"What stands out in Ibn Taymiyya's approach and treatment is his emphasis on the ideal Muslim community under the ideal prophet/lawgiver/ruler; his appeal to Qur'an and Sunnah and not to historical precedent; his insistence on the realization of Shari'a through the umma wasat who co-operate with those in authority by obedience to lawful command and by example in piety; and finally -- underlying them all -- the central place he assigns to Shari'a. The Khilafa or imama as the battle ground between imam and emir or sultan is outside his concern. Authority interests him only in so far as it is indispensable for the good order and welfare of the umma in this world, and for the fulfilment of the basic Islamic duties in order to ensure the good working of the political and religious unity of Islam, salah al-dunya wa'l-din (welfare of the world and of religion)."

Briefly, Ibn Taymiyya aimed at a reform of political and social life in accordance with the principles of the Shari'a and its proper application. For this, he went to the extent of believing in that 'anyone who could force and seize the government was the legitimate ruler, but he must act according to the Shari'a. To him religion without a sultan,

97. E.I.J. Rosenthal, Political Thought in Medieval Islam, pp. 58-9
army, and money is as futile as a sultan with army and money but without religion. On the question of Ibn Taymiyya’s views on the relationship between religion and the state H. Laoust gives a concise account which deserves to be quoted at length:

"L’imam est également tenu de veiller à une stricte application des peines légales (hudud) et des peines discretionnaires. Les peines légales sont les peines déterminées qui frappent des infractions à la loi d’une gravité particulière: brigandage et atteinte à l’ordre public, vol qualifié, fornication et sodomie, délits d’ivresse et consommation de produits fermentés. Les peines discretionnaires (ta’zir), laissées à l’initiative de l’imam, frappent toutes les infractions pour lesquelles la loi n’a prévu ni peine déterminée ni compensation expiatoire (kaffara). Elles sont des plus diverses et touchent à tous les domaines de la vie individuelle et sociale. Prendre le deuil, comme on le faisait à l’époque du paganisme (jahiliyya), frauder sur la marchandise, manquer aux interdictions alimentaires, accepter un pot-de-vin, enfreindre les règles de la bienséance sociale, sont autant de fautes qu’il appartient à l’imam de réprimer, en pleine liberté d’estimation, s’il croit qu’il y a intérêt à le faire. Cette liberté d’estimation reste grande encore, remarquons-le, même dans le domaine des peines légales, car les stipulations de


la Loi sont suffisamment larges pour laisser à l'initiative de l'imam de souples possibilités.

L'imam enfin est tenu de faire respecter les droits des gens. On doit entendre, par "droit des gens" (huquq al-nas) les droits qui appartiennent à un individu pris en particulier, par opposition aux droits de Dieu (huquq Allah) qui comprennent non seulement les devoirs envers Dieu, mais toutes les obligations envers la communauté musulmane considérée comme un tout. Il appartient d'abord à l'imam de faire respecter la personne des membres de la communauté musulmane et des protèges minoritaires en veillant à la bonne application des règles concernant le talion (qisas) et le prix du sang. Il est aussi responsable de la législation familiale, telle que la shari'a la conçoit, en assurant la protection des droits reciproques des épous comme celle des orphelins et des incapables. Il incombe enfin au chef de l'État de veiller à la protection de la propriété individuelle et à la rectitude des transactions. La encore une assez grande liberté d'interprétation peut être laissée à l'imam: la seule interdiction que l'on trouve dans le Qur'an et la Sunna, est l'interdiction de l'usure (riba) et de la spéculation (maysir), qui eux-mêmes relevent d'une interdiction plus générale: l'enrichissement sans cause. Ainsi l'imam, investi de si lourdes responsabilités et de pouvoirs si étendus, apparaît, dans la doctrine d'Ibn Taymiya, comme le fondateur de pouvoir (wakil), le tuteur (waliy) et le berger de la communauté.

Thus, after describing the various functions of the imam, Ibn Taymiyya tries to prove that his powers are not unlimited:

“Mais, dans le même temps où il définit
si largement les pouvoirs de l’imam, le
reformisme d’Ibn Taymiya entend limiter
et discipliner ces pouvoirs en y
associant tous les membres qualifiés de
la communauté. Le chef de l’État et,
d’une manière générale, tout détenteur
de l’autorité, doit recourir à la
consultation (mushawara), comme le
Qur’an et la Sunna la prescrivent. Il
peut, à ce titre, recourir à l’avis
d’experts techniques, à ceux d’un
collège de docteurs, ou même à l’avis
d’un docteur de la Loi auquel il a
accordé sa confiance. En cas de
desaccord entre les ‘ulama’ consultés,
il lui appartient de trancher.
Inversement, tout membre de la
communauté et, à plus forte raison, les
docteurs de la Loi sont tenus, dans les
limites de leur compétence, de donner
leurs bons conseils (nasiha) à leur
imam tout en lui devant obéissance. Le
refus d’obéissance, dans cette
doctrine profondément loyaliste, n’est
prevu que dans le cas d’une
desobéissance à Dieu, c’est-à-dire au
texte du Qur’an et de la Sunna. La
révolte armée, admise par le
Kharijisme, est exclue, comme étant la
source de désordres imprévisibles, sauf
daus les cas d’une gravite
exceptionnelle, si, par exemple, l’imam
entendait contraindre ses sujets à
l’infidélité.

Le reformisme d’Ibn Taymiya
reclame ainsi la constitution d’un État
fort, en raison de l’ampleur des
attributions et des responsabilités
conférées à l’imam et en raison du
loyalisme accusé de la doctrine ou
chacun est tenu d’obéir à l’imam, “que
ce soit un homme de bien ou un homme
pervers”. L’État, tel qu’il le
conçoit, est aussi, en un sens, un
État coopératif qui doit parachever la
force de contrainte dont il dispose et
la légitimité à laquelle il aspire en
exigeant de tous ceux qui le composent, non pas une simple obéissance passive, mais une participation effective à la vie commune, par le devoir de bon conseil et de commandement du bien."

It was along these lines that the foundations of Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab’s state were laid, as is to be discussed below, no doubt he was initially guided by the teachings of this great Hanbalite.

Ibn Taymiyya’s economic views emphasize the importance of the community. He is not against owing property but stresses that the rich should be friendly with the poor and should treat them as partners. He further emphasized that instead of competing, the practice adopted should be one of co-operation and mutual help. To further emphasize this idea Ibn Taymiyya quotes the Qur’an which condemns those who make riches their goal and wish to resemble Qarun just as it condemns those whose aim is political power and who wish to be like Pharaoh. He writes:

"The greatest wish of a man who craves for authority is to be like Pharaoh, and a man who is greedy for the accumulated money is to be like Korah (Qurun). Allah, be He exalted, has said of Pharaoh and Korah: ‘Have they not travelled in the land and seen

what was the end of those who were before them? Mightier than these were they in strength and fortifications in the land, but Allah destroyed them for their sins. And they had none to protect them from Allah'. Allah, be He exalted, has also said: 'that abode of the Hereafter, we assign it to those who have no desire to exalt themselves in the earth, nor to make mischief. And the good end is for those who keep their duty'.

Ibn Taymiyya left behind a strong group of his disciples. After the death of his father 'Abd al-Halim in 1283, Ibn Taymiyya had started delivering lectures which he continued till his death. Even while he was in prison in Damascus, Cairo, and Alexandria, he taught many persons. Among those he taught were his disciples and many other important personalities of that period which included Shaykh Barzali, Shaykh Abu al-Hajjaj Mizzi, Shaykh Shams al-Din Zahbi and Shaykh Abu’l-Abbas Wasiti. Among his famous disciples who belonged to schools other than his own are included Ahmad b. Ibrahim al-Wasiti (d. 1311-2) who was the son of the head of the Rifa’iyya brotherhood of Wasit, al-Mizzi, mentioned above, belonged to the Shafi’i school. Another Shafi’i was Ibn Kathir (d. 1372-3) who had inserted in his Bidaya, a bibliography of Ibn Taymiyya. Al-Tahabi

103. Y. Kokan, op. cit., p. 656.
(d. 1347–8) was a famous theologian and historian and he wrote a summary of Ibn Taymiyya’s *Minhaj al-Sunna*. Another prominent person was Ibn Rajab (d. 1393) who had written a well-documented history of Hanbalism and there are also to be found traces of Ibn Taymiyya’s doctrines in his *Qawa'id Fiqhiyya*. But the most prominent of his disciples who propagated the ideas of his master most, was Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya.

Hanbalism received a severe setback when in 1517 Syria and Egypt were conquered by the Ottomans who were adherents of the Hanafi school. Even then the admirers of Ibn Taymiyya remained. Among them two are worth mentioning: al-‘Ulaymi (d. ca. 1522) who wrote a history of Hanbalism which provides important information regarding the school after the death of Ibn Qayyim and al-Mar’i (d. 1623 A.D.) who wrote a bibliography of Ibn Taymiyya named *al-Kawakib al-Durriyya*.

In the first half of the fourteenth century, the most prominent theologian and jurist belonging to the school of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (d. 855) was Shams al-Din Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Abi Bakr al-Zara’i Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya. He is more popularly known as Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya or simply as Ibn Qayyim. One of the most famous

105. Ibid.
disciples of Ibn Taymiyya, he took to propagating and popularising Ibn Taymiyya's thoughts after the latter's death in 1328.

Ibn Qayyim was born at Damascus on Safar 7, 691/ January 29, 1292 in a family which was the nucleus of wisdom and learning at that time. His father, Abu Bakr b. Ayyub, an expert on 'Ilm al-Fara'id which he himself had learnt from his father, was the Qayyim (superintendent) of the Jawziyya madrasa, that is why the title Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya has been given to him. This madrasa also served as a court of law for the Hanbali Qadi al-Qudat of Damascus and it was here that Ibn Qayyim received a wide and sound education. Prominent among his teachers, apart of course from Ibn Taymiyya, were Qadi Sulayman b. Hamza (d. 1311) and Shaykh Abu Bakr (d. 1318), son of the traditionist Ibn 'Abd al-Da'im. It is also asserted that before Ibn Qayyim became a disciple of Ibn Taymiyya he was a pupil of Safi al-Din al-Hindi, an opponent of Ibn Taymiyya who had faced a munazarah with him (Ibn Taymiyya), and it was from him that Ibn Qayyim had gained the knowledge of 'usul. The assertion follows that after the death of al-Hindi in 1315. Ibn Qayyim became a disciple of Ibn Taymiyya. Another view is that he became

107. Yusuf Kokan, op. cit., p. 657
a disciple of Ibn Taymiyya immediately after the latter’s return from Egypt in 1312 and since then remained with him till the latter’s death. Very soon he became the most dedicated pupil of Ibn Taymiyya and proved to be his most capable successor in the truest sense of the term.

Ibn Qayyim absorbed all the ideas of his master and took extraordinary pains to revive the popularity of his works but at the same time he carved out a separate identity for himself. Ibn Kathir (d. 1337) remarks that "Ibn Qayyim heard the traditions and spent a major period of his life occupied in literary activities. He had acquired perfection in various sciences, especially in the field of exegesis and traditions he had extraordinary ability". At the same time when Ibn Taymiyya was imprisoned in 1326 he too was imprisoned in the same citadel at Damascus but separately. Since he was the most devoted disciple of his mentor, he was especially marked for humiliation. He was made to sit on a camel’s back and paraded around the town and later on was imprisoned. He was released only after the death of Ibn Taymiyya in 1328. He then performed the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1331. It is said

that the caravan which took him for the pilgrimage under the leadership of 'Izz al-Din Aybak contained a number of jurisconsults and traditionists. In February 1336 he delivered the first khutba in the mosque founded by Najm al-Din b. Khalliqan. In July 1342 he delivered his inaugural lecture at the Sadriyya madrasa where he taught till his death.

Ibn Qayyim had a decent career, but since he represented and propagated Ibn Taymiyya’s thoughts, he was at times hampered by the same circle which opposed his master. On two occasions his views differed, on matters concerning fiqh, with the chief qadi of Damascus, Taqi al-Din al-Subki (d. 1378), who himself was allegiant to the Shafi'i school. On both these occasions he issued fatwas strictly in conformity with the ideas of Ibn Taymiyya which infuriated al-Subki. The first of these disagreements took place in 1345. The problem was concerning a race or a contest of shooting (musabaga) where each of the competitors puts down a stake. The question was whether it is permitted without the participation of a third competitor (muhallil) who himself takes part without contributing a stake and thus makes lawful an operation which otherwise might be regarded as constituting a game of chance; in accordance with the

110. Ibid., p. 154
ideas of Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Qayyim ruled that the presence of this muhallil was not necessary. The second time he disagreed with al-Subki was in 1349 when he gave a fatwa concerning the problem of talaq (repudiation), which also conformed with the doctrines of Ibn Taymiyya. Before their differences could take a serious turn the opponents were conciliated by Sayf al-Din Fadl, the bedouin amir.

Ibn Qayyim died at Damascus on Thursday, Rajab 23, 751/September 26, 1350 in the night at the time of the 'Isha' prayers. His divine services were performed the next day in the Jami' Jarrah after the afternoon prayers after which he was buried in the cemetery of Bab Saghir beside his mother. At the Sadiyya madrasa, where he taught, he was succeeded by his son Jamal al-Din 'Abd Allah (d. 1355).

Ibn Qayyim had a great following. A large number Muslim scholars of the Mamluk period were either his pupils or were under his influence in one way or the other.

111. For a detailed study of Ibn Taymiyya's views on talaq see his al-Fatawa al-Kubra (Cairo, 1965), a introduction by Husayn Muhammad Makhluf, Vol. III; also M. Abu Zahra, op. cit., pp. 414 ff.


Among his famed pupils were Ibn Kathir (d. 1373), the Shafi’i traditionist and historian, to whom is credited the work *al-Bidaya wa’l-Nihaya* in fourteen volumes and Zayn al-Din Ibn Rajab (d. 1397), a great historian of Hanbalism in the medieval period and the author of the great legal work *Qawa'id*.

A considerable number of works are ascribed to Ibn Qayyim. Some of his works are especially devoted to the refutation of the fictitious beliefs of the Jews and the Christians. A majority of his works have become extinct since in the early periods no care was taken to preserve them. Ibn al-‘Imad in his *Shadhrat al-Dhahab* gives a long list of his works. The number of books mentioned by him are forty-five after which is written ‘and other (works) than these’. This points to the possibility that Ibn Qayyim has also other works to his credit. Carl Brockelmann has listed fifty two books and Malik Zulfiqar Ali has given the names of sixty six books attributed to him. Some of his distinguished works are: (1) *Ijtima’ al-Juyush al-Islamiyah*,

114. Cairo, 1932.

115. Cairo, 1933.


published from Amritsar in 1314 A.H. and from Cairo in 1350 A.H.; (2) I’lam al-Muwaggi’in ‘an Rab al-‘Alamin (Cairo, 1325 A.H.) in 3 volumes, and (Delhi, 1313-14 A.H.) in 2 volumes. It is a treatise on juridical methodology (usul al-fiqh) based on Ibn Taymiyya’s ideas. Its Urdu translation entitled Din-i-Muhammad has also been brought out from Delhi, (3) Ighatha al-Lahfan min masa‘id al-Shaitan (Cairo, 1322 A.H. and 1357 A.H.); (4) al-Tibyan fi Aqṣam al-Qur’ān (Mecca, 1321 A.H.) and Cairo (1352 A.H.); (5) Tuhfah al-Mawdud fi Ahkam al-Mawlud (Lahore, 1329 A.H.); (6) Hadi al-Arwah ila Bilad al-Afrah. It has been printed on the margin of I’lam al-Muwaggi’in as well as separately. It is said that a disciple of Ibn Qayyim had abridged it with the title al-Dai ila Ashraf al-Masa’il; (7) Kitab al-Ruh (Hyderabad, 1318 and 1324 A.H.) Burhan al-Din had abridged it with the title Sirr ar-Ruh (Cairo, 1326 A.H.) (8) Zad al-Ma‘ad fi Hadi Khair al-Ibad, in 4 volumes (Kanpur, 1298 A.H.) and (Cairo, 1324 and 1347 A.H.). Ra’is Ahmad Ja’fri has rendered it into Urdu (Karachi, 1962). ‘Abd al-Razzaq has translated its abridgement entitled Hadi al-Rasul into Urdu with the title Uswah‘i-Hasanah (Lahore, 1931): (9) Shifa‘al-‘Alil fi al-Qada’ wa‘l-Qadar wa‘l-Hikmah wa‘l-Ta‘lil (Cairo, 1323 A.H.). Its Urdu translation published from Lahore is entitled Kitab al-Tagdir: (10) al-Turuq al-Hakmiyah fi al-Siyasah al-Shar‘iyya (Cairo, 1317 A.H.): (11)
al-Kafiyyah al-Shafiyyah fi al-Firqa al-Najiyah, published from Egypt: (12) Madarrij al-Salikin fi Sharh Manazil al-Sa’irin, in 3 volumes (Cairo, 1331, Vol. I and 1333 A.H., Vols. II and III, Cairo, 1375 A.H.). It is a commentary on the Manazil al-sa’irin of al-Ansari and is considered as a masterpiece of Hanbali mystic literature; (13) Miftah dar al-Sa’adah (Cairo, 1323-25/1905-7) also published in India in 1329/911; (14) Hidayah al-Hayara min al-Yahud wa’l-Nasara (Cairo, 1323 A.H.); (15) al-Risala al-Tabukiyya (Mecca, 1347 A.H.); (16) ‘Uddah al-Sabar in wa Dhakhirah al-Shakirin (Cairo, 1341 and 1347 A.H.); (17) Rada’i al-Fawa’id, published from Cairo; (18) al-Wabil al-Saiyib, Urdu translation entitled Dhikr-i-Ilaahi published from Tandalyanwala (Pakistan); (19) Tafsir al-Mu’awwidhatayn (Cairo, n.d.) rendered into Urdu by ‘Abd al-Rahim (Lahore, 1927); (20) Hukm Tarik al-Salat also mentioned as Kitab al-Salat; (21) Rawdah al-Muhibbin wa Nuzhah al-Mushtaqin; (22) al-Sawa’iq al-Munazzalah ‘ala al-Jahmiyyah wa’l-Mu’attalah; (23) Kitab al-Sirat al-Mustaqim; (24) Akhbar al-Nisa’; (25) al-Kalim al-Tayyib; (26) al-Tibb al-Nabawi; (27) Zad al-Musafirin; (28) Uwais Nadwi has compiled a commentary of the Qur’an based on the works of Ibn Qayyim. Its title is at-Tafsir al-Qayyim (Mecca, 1368/1949), etc.
Concerning the style of Ibn Qayyim, Abu Zahra observes that "the writings of Ibn Qayyim, unlike most of the works of Ibn Taymiyya, are not in altercating manner but they reflect a gentle disposition and peace of mind and heart. Although the depth of his thought, power of inference and effervescing description are fully evident, likewise, his works are a reflection of his elegance of arrangement, excellence of division, orderly notions and fluency of style, since, whatever he has written it is with confidence. For a most conspicuous example three of his books can be mentioned, i.e. Madarij al-Salikin, 'Udda al-Sabirin, and Miftah dar al-Sa'ada. They contain a profound philosophy as well as a marvellous flair."

Like his master, Ibn Qayyim also was a Hanbali theologian and jurisconsult. He was well versed in all the branches of knowledge of the time — Tafsir Hadith, Usul al-fiqh and Furu'. He was strictly against the taqlid of an individual. In problems concerning masā'il, he was inclined towards Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal. Similarly, in usul and 'aqā'id he strictly adhered to Hanbalism, but in furu' he had his own independent view. He was strictly against

118. M. Abu Zahra, op. cit., p. 528

philosophers, Mu’tazila and Jahmiyya, and, like Ibn Taymiyya he was also an opponent of the Ittihadiyya (the monist school) which came into being as a consequence of Ibn al-Arabi’s (d. 1240) teachings. His views on Kalam and philosophy were in accordance with those of the Salaf al-Salih (the pious ancestors). He disliked innovators and innovations and wanted to rid Islam of its later accretions.

120. The Mu’tazila movement began at the end of the first century A.H. as an ethical reaction against the doctrinal and practical excesses of the fanatical Kharijites on the one hand and the ethical laxity of the political conformists (Murji’ites) on the other. It began as a rigid puritanical movement rather than a rationalist movement. They called themselves Ahl al-‘Adl wa’l-Tawhid. After getting official sanction during the ‘Abbasid period they became fanatics. They differed from the orthodox on three main points — the nature of God, the nature of the Qur’an and man’s relation to God. Rejecting the traditional interpretation of the Qur’an and the dogmas of the orthodox school, they claimed the right to judge revelation in the light of reason and the tenets of philosophy.

121. Founded by Jahm b. Safwan who was killed towards the end of the Umayyad period. It is said that the Jahmiyya originated from the Jabariyya. Jahm. b. Safwan held that after the Judgement both heaven and hell would pass away and God would remain alone as He was in the beginning.

122. Ibn al-‘Arabi, with his doctrine of the unity of Being (Wahdat al-Wujud) taught that all things pre-exist as ideas in the knowledge of God, whence they emanate and whither they ultimately return — things have no consistency of their own, they are only one with God. He developed more fully the doctrine of the pre-existence of Prophet Muhammad before creation. This is the doctrine of al-Nur al-Muhummadi, the Muhammadan Light, the image of God in its primary entity, the divine consciousness, the pre-creation light from which everything was created.
and to guide the Muslims back to the simplicity of early Islam of the salaf.

However, it cannot be denied that both, Ibn Qayyim and Ibn Taymiyya, were to some extent influenced by sufism. But compared to Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Qayyim was more influenced by sufism and it is asserted that he had altered some of the later works of Ibn Taymiyya. As Watt remarks, ".... he was a kind of literary executor -- not only in 123 language but also in sentiment". He was much less of a polemicist than his master and much more a preacher (wa'iz). Ibn Qayyim finally left behind him the justified reputation of a writer of great talent, whose eloquence contrasts with the incisive dryness of the succinct prose of his famous master.

Compared to Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Qayyim had a more compromising attitude. He thought and worked along the lines set forth by his master but he retained his own personality. His works are highly regarded even in this period, not only among the followers of Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1792) who adopted from them the guidelines for his movement and his teachings but among modern reformers like Muhammad 'Abduh (d. 1905), Rashid Rida' (d. 1935), and their followers in the Muslim world.

123. Islamic Philosophy and Theology, p. 164.