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The modern study of Ḥanbalī theology was initially plagued by the problem of viewing Ḥanbalism through the eyes of its Ashʿarī opponents. I. Goldziher (d. 1921) and D. B. Macdonald (d. 1943) labelled the Ḥanbalīs 'reactionary' and bemoaned the harm that they had done to the cause of a conciliatory Ashʿarī orthodoxy. The work of H. Laoust (d. 1983) and G. Makdisi (d. 2002) turned the tide of scholarship toward closer examination of Ḥanbalī texts on their own terms and deeper understanding of Ḥanbalism in its historical context. Makdisi in particular argued that Ḥanbalism had a disproportionate impact on the development of Islamic theology because it was the only Sunnī law school to maintain a consistently traditionalist theological voice. For Makdisi, the Ḥanbalīs were the 'spearhead' of a wider traditionalist movement in medieval Islam against the rationalism of Muʿtazilī and Ashʿarī *Kalām* (Makdisi 1962–3; 1981). Aspects of Makdisi's narrative require modification, especially as some leading Ḥanbalīs of the fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth centuries were more rationalist than earlier thought, but the main thrust of his argument still stands. It may be added that Ḥanbalī theology has also had a disproportionate impact on modern Islamic theology. The Wahhābī movement in Arabia and contemporary Salafism have appropriated and spread the theology of the eighth/fourteenth-century scholar Ibn Taymiyya far beyond the confines of the modern Ḥanbalī school of law. This chapter begins with the formation and early development of Ḥanbalism in order to clarify Makdisi's claim, and it continues by surveying key Ḥanbalī figures from Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in the third/ninth century to Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb in the twelfth/eighteenth and giving extended attention to the unique theology of Ibn Taymiyya.

I. The Formation of Ḥanbalism

The Ḥanbalī law school originated in the ʿAbbāsid capital Baghdad in the late ninth and early tenth centuries CE as the most rigorous heir of the traditionalist movement that had emerged nearly two centuries earlier. The traditionalists nurtured the collection and study of *Ḥadīth*, and they sought to ground Islamic belief and practice solely in the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth* reports from the Prophet Muḥammad, his Companions, and their Successors. Opposite the traditionalists were the more dominant proponents of *raʾy* ('common sense' or 'rational discretion'). Advocates of *raʾy* relied to some degree on Qurʾān and *Ḥadīth*, but they also located religious authority in existing Muslim practice, general notions of upright conduct from the past, and the

considered opinion of prominent scholars of the day. Traditionalists and proponents of *raʾy* came into conflict by the late second/eighth century, and, in response to traditionalist pressure, the advocates of *raʾy* began adjusting their jurisprudence toward traditionalist positions and grounding it in the precedents of an eponymous founder and *ḥadīth* reports from the Prophet to a far greater extent. The Ḥanafī law school emerged through the course of the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries by vesting authority in a body of jurisprudence ascribed to its eponym Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767) and in turn linking these rulings to Prophetic *ḥadīth*. The notion that law should be based on *ḥadīth* from the Prophet, but not *ḥadīth* from the Prophet's Companions and Successors, was argued by al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204/820), the eponym of the Shāfiʿī law school, and he worked to interpret the Qurʾān and the *Ḥadīth* so that it correlated with received legal practice. Al-Shāfiʿī's position may be called 'semi-rationalist' because he made more room for reasoning by analogy (*qiyās*) than did the pure traditionalists. He also favoured a ruling derived by analogy from a Prophetic *ḥadīth* over a report from a Companion or Successor, and, in this, al-Shāfiʿī was at odds with Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) (Melchert 1997; Hallaq 2009: 36–71).

Aḥmad was the most prominent traditionalist of the third/ninth century and the eponym of the Ḥanbalī school. He gave priority to *ḥadīth* from the Companions and Successors over analogy, and he also sought to prevent people from recording his opinions because, in his view, Islamic doctrine and law should be based in the revealed sources, not a later scholar like himself. Such a rigorist methodology proved untenable in the long run, and, in a shift away from pure traditionalism, Abū Bakr al-Khallāl (d. 311/923) gathered Aḥmad's views into a vast collection to form the textual foundation for the Ḥanbalī school. A little later, Abū Qāsim al-Khiraqī (d. 334/945–6) produced the first handbook of Ḥanbalī jurisprudence, and Ibn Ḥāmid (d. 403/1013) worked to reconcile conflicting views within these preceding Ḥanbalī sources (Melchert 1997; al-Sarhan 2011: 96–107). In the realm of legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), Abū Yaʿlā (d. 458/1065) carried forward al-Shāfiʿī's project of correlating the law to the Qurʾān and the *Ḥadīth* with unprecedented thoroughness and consistency. By pressing the claim that the law corresponded to the literal (*ẓāhir*) sense of revelation, he elided the historical and hermeneutical process by which the law came into existence. The point was to rationalize the equation of revelation with prescribed belief and practice as inherently obvious (Vishanoff 2011). For most Ḥanbalīs, affiliating with the school meant following the rulings attributed to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal loyally, much as Shāfiʿīs followed the rulings of al-Shāfiʿī and Ḥanafīs the rulings of Abū Ḥanifa. However, being Ḥanbalī could also mean engaging in creative jurisprudence (*ijtihād*) according to Aḥmad's traditionalist method without necessarily following his rulings. This is

the sense in which Ibn Taymiyya considered himself Ḥanbalī. As a creative jurist (*mujtahid*), Ibn Taymiyya did not hesitate to criticize Aḥmad's rulings, but he nonetheless claimed loyalty to the Ḥanbalī school and Aḥmad's juristic method (al-Matroudi 2006).

The classical Sunnī law schools were committed first and foremost to the study of their respective jurisprudential systems, and by the fifth/eleventh century Sunnī orthodoxy consisted most fundamentally in belonging to a school of law. Other religious groupings such as Sufis and Muʿtazilī *Kalām* theologians had to take their places within this structure in order to protect themselves from traditionalist persecution. The Muʿtazilī theologians found refuge in both the Ḥanafī and Shāfiʿī schools, but, with time, Muʿtazilism died out among Sunnīs and continued on only among Shīʿīs. Shāfiʿism appears to have been semi-rationalist in both jurisprudence and theological doctrine in the late third/ninth century before confining itself to jurisprudence in the course of the fourth/tenth. Shāfiʿīs of semi-rationalist persuasion in theology eventually took up Ashʿarī *Kalām*. Other Shāfiʿīs were traditionalist in theology and took their theological lights from the Ḥanbalīs. This is apparent in biographical dictionary entries describing such scholars as 'Shāfiʿī in law, Ḥanbalī in principles of religion' (*shāfiʿiyyat al-fiqh, ḥanbaliyyat al-uṣūl*). As Makdisi observed, the Ḥanbalīs were the most consistently traditionalist in both law and theology. Traditionalists within the Shāfiʿī and Ḥanafī law schools also opposed *Kalām*. However, they did not voice their criticism as openly in order to safeguard the unity of their respective schools. As we will see, some Ḥanbalī scholars drew on *Kalām* and later the philosophy of Ibn Sīnā in their theologies, but, on the whole, the Ḥanbalīs were the most vociferous in propagating traditionalist theological doctrines (Melchert 1997; Makdisi 1962–3; 1981).

II. Early Ḥanbalī Theological Doctrine

A number of texts used to depict the doctrinal views of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in past research are evidently not his. It has been shown recently that the six creeds attributed to him in the biographical dictionary *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila* of Ibn Abī Yaʿlā (d. 526/1133) (see Laoust 1957 for locations; three are translated into English in Watt 1994: 29–40) go back to diverse traditionalist sources in the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries rather than Aḥmad himself. The creeds were apparently linked to him at a later date, probably to consolidate his position as the seminal authority for Ḥanbalī doctrine. Another work, *al-Radd ʿalā l-Jahmiyya wa-l-Zanādiqa* ('Refutation of the Jahmīs and the Irreligious'), may go back to Aḥmad in earlier forms. However, the final edition (trans. in Seale 1964: 96–125) includes substantial rational argument against non-traditionalist doctrines, and it was probably written in the fifth/eleventh

century to rally Aḥmad to the side of Ḥanbalīs seeking to justify rational argument in theology (al-Sarhan 2011: 29–54).

These sources aside, a few things may still be known about Aḥmad's doctrine. Prior to Aḥmad, some traditionalists had been apprehensive to include ʿAlī as the fourth of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (*al-khulafāʾ al-rāshidūn*) after Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān. Aḥmad, however, tipped the balance in favour of this four-caliph thesis, which then became the bedrock of emerging Sunnī orthodoxy. The four-caliph doctrine conciliated a number of conflicts in the early Islamic era that continued to divide Muslims in later centuries, but it firmly excluded the Shīʿīs, who claimed that ʿAlī was first caliph rather than the fourth (al-Sarhan 2011: 111–21).

It is also likely that Aḥmad, like other traditionalists of his day, had no qualms about speaking of God in creaturely or corporeal terms, so long as there were Qurʾān or *Ḥadīth* texts in support. He affirmed for example that the *ḥadīth* 'God created Adam in his form (*ṣūra*)' meant that God created Adam in God's form, which implied that God himself had a form or shape like that of Adam. To *Kalām* theologians this constituted the grave error of assimilating God to creatures (*tashbīh*, also called 'anthropomorphism' in much scholarship). Taking their cue from 'There is nothing like [God], and He is all-Hearing and all-Seeing' (Q 42: 11), later Ḥanbalīs such as al-Barbahārī (d. 329/941) sought to avoid the charge of assimiliationism by denying any likeness between God's attributes and those of creatures while yet affirming that God indeed had the attributes mentioned in revelation. This 'noninterventionist' (Swartz 2002) or 'noncognitive' (Shihadeh 2006) approach refused to inquire into the modality (*kayf*) of God's attributes—a position known as *balkafa* or *bi-lā kayf* ('without how')—or to interpret the meaning of the attributes in any way. The texts should be passed over without comment (*imrār*). Some scholars have identified this kind of non-interventionism in Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal as well (e.g. Abrahamov 1995: 366–7). However, there is no evidence that Aḥmad affirmed the *balkafa* doctrine explicitly (Williams 2002; see also Melchert 2011).

Questions of *tashbīh* and the status of *Kalām* theology were at the centre of the Inquisition (*miḥna*) initiated by the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Maʾmūn in 218/833 and famously resisted by Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. It has been often said that al-Maʾmūn imposed the created Qurʾān on judges and leading religious scholars to support Muʿtazilī *Kalām*. However, the Muʿtazilīs were not the only or even the main beneficiaries of the Inquisition. The doctrine of the created Qurʾān was also known among followers of Abū Ḥanīfa going back to the master himself, and the Inquisition sought primarily to support the Ḥanafīs, as well as other rationalist and semi-rationalist currents, against an increasingly assertive traditionalism. In the face of al-Maʾmūn's Inquisition, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal would affirm only that the Qurʾān was the word of God. No

Qurʾānic verse or *ḥadīth* report stated explicitly that the Qurʾān was created (*makhlūq*), and Aḥmad discounted on principle the *Kalām* reasoning supplied for the doctrine. Aḥmad was subjected to imprisonment and flogging under al-Maʾmūn's successor al-Muʿtaṣim, but the later caliph al-Mutawakkil brought the Inquisition to a gradual halt from 233/847 to 237/852. In a letter to al-Mutawakkil, Aḥmad did go a bit beyond the witness of the texts to affirm that the Qurʾān was also 'uncreated' (*ghayr makhlūq*), and he added that anyone who refused to affirm this was an unbeliever. The failure of the Inquisition marked a major setback for *Kalām* theology and the caliphate's gambit for religious authority. Aḥmad emerged from the Inquisition the hero of the traditionalist cause (Melchert 2006: 8–18; Hinds 1960–2004: vii. 2–6; Madelung 1974; Patton 1897).

Aḥmad was known for his complete disinterest in political affairs. He lived a quiet life, and he interacted with the ruling authorities as little as possible during and after the Inquisition. However, later Ḥanbalīs were much more active, and Ḥanbalī preachers and crowds constituted a powerful social force in Baghdad from the fourth/tenth century onward. The most famous figure in the first half of the fourth/tenth century was the fiery preacher al-Barbahārī, author of a comprehensive creedal statement *Sharḥ al-sunna* (in Ibn Abī Yaʿlā 1952: ii. 18–45). He was implicated in Ḥanbalī attacks on Shāfiʿī jurists and purveyors of vice and innovation (*bidʿa*), and he often went into hiding to escape the authorities. Al-Barbaharī may have been involved in riots that began in 317/929 over interpretation of the divine address to the Prophet Muḥammad 'Perhaps your Lord will raise you up to a praiseworthy station' (Q 17: 79). Al-Barbahārī understood this to mean that God would seat Muḥammad on the Throne beside Himself whereas semi-rationalists of the time—including followers of the renowned Qurʾān commentator al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923)—preferred to interpret this metaphorically as Muḥammad's right to intercede for grave sinners (Melchert 2012). With the Būyid takeover of Baghdad in 334/945, Ḥanbalī animosities turned against the Shīʿīs as well, and Ḥanbalīs engaged in numerous attacks on Shīʿīs, *Kalām* theologians and others well into the seventh/thirteenth century. M. Cook attributes this Ḥanbalī social power to their great numbers and a weakened state. Additionally, with the rise of the Būyids and then later the Saljuq conquest of Baghdad in 447/1055, the Ḥanbalīs and the ʿAbbāsid caliphs found common cause in undermining those foreign rulers (Sabarī 1981: 101–20; Cook 2000: 115–28).

A key fourth/tenth century author on Ḥanbalī theological doctrine beyond al-Barbahārī was Ibn Baṭṭa (d. 387/997). Ibn Baṭṭa composed *al-Ibāna al-kubrā*, a large collection of traditions on belief, the Qurʾān, God's predetermination, and other doctrinal matters. He also wrote *al-Ibāna al-ṣughrā*, a shorter creedal text that is also amply supplied with supporting

traditions (ed. and trans. in Laoust 1958). A brief survey of this treatise will serve to summarize the key points of early Ḥanbalī doctrine.

Ibn Baṭṭa begins *al-Ibāna al-ṣughrā* with a long exhortation to adhere to the community (*jamāʿa*) and the Sunna of the Prophet and to avoid division and innovation. Then, he mentions belief (*īmān*), which is affirming what God says, commands, and prohibits and putting this into practice. Unlike the Murjiʾīs for whom belief depends on confession alone, belief can increase or decrease according to one's deeds. 'If God wills' should be added when affirming that one is a believer, not out of doubt over one's religious status as a believer, but because the future is unknown. Ibn Baṭṭa affirms that the Qurʾān is the Word of God, and he deems it uncreated no matter where it is found, even written on the chalkboards of children. Not one letter is created, and whoever deems otherwise is an unbeliever worthy of death. God's attributes mentioned in revealed texts must be affirmed. Among other things, God is living, speaking, powerful, wise, and knowing. He gives life and death, and He speaks and laughs. Believers will also see God on the Day of Resurrection. Ibn Baṭṭa does not mention *balkafa* with this list of attributes, but he does invoke it later when affirming God's descent each night to the lowest heaven. This, he says, should be affirmed without asking how (*kayf*) or why (*lima*). In opposition to the Qadarī and Muʿtazilī doctrine that humans create their own acts, Ibn Baṭṭa affirms God's determination (*qadar*) of all things, both good and evil, according to the timing of God's will and foreknowledge. He goes on to affirm numerous elements of eschatology: the punishment in the tomb, the weighing of deeds in the scales at the Resurrection, intercession for believers, and so on. The latter part of the treatise extols the virtues of the prophets and the Prophet Muḥammad's Companions—especially Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, and ʿAlī, in that order to oppose the Shīʿīs—and treats several matters of practice. Overall, *al-Ibāna al-ṣughrā* provides very little explanation or rational argument. It is largely a series of affirmations supported with Qurʾānic verses and *ḥadīth* reports.

III. Ḥanbalī Theology from the Eleventh Century to the Thirteenth

Research on Ḥanbalī theology in the fifth/eleventh to seventh/thirteenth centuries remains spotty, but it is readily apparent that this period marks a new departure as some of the leading Ḥanbalī scholars of the time adopted *Kalām* views and argumentation. The earlier Ḥanbalī Abū l-Ḥusayn b. al-Munādī (d. 335/947) had advocated metaphorical interpretation (*taʾwīl*) of God's attributes, and the lost *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-dīn* of Ibn Ḥāmid may have been a *Kalām*-style work (Swartz 2002: 61, 94). But it is from Ibn Ḥāmid's student Abū Yaʿlā Ibn al-Farrāʾ (d. 458/1066), the most prominent Ḥanbalī of his time, that we have our first extant Ḥanbalī *Kalām*

manual, *al-Muʿtamad fī uṣūl al-dīn*, a summary of a larger lost work by the same title. Typical of *Kalām* manuals, *al-Muʿtamad* first outlines the foundations of knowledge and explains that the initial human obligation is reasoning (*naẓar*) to knowledge of God. The book then outlines the basics of *Kalām* atomism, proves the existence of God from the origination of the world, and treats, among other things, God's attributes, God's creation of the world and human acts, prophecy, eschatology, belief, and the Imāmate. Abū Yaʿlā adopts Ashʿarī positions on a number of issues in *al-Muʿtamad*. For example, he bases the obligation to *naẓar* on revelation as do the Ashʿarīs, not reason as held by the Muʿtazilīs, and he employs the Ashʿarī notion of acquisition (*kasb*) to give humans responsibility for the acts that God creates in them (Gimaret 1977: 161–5). Abū Yaʿlā also wrote two other theological works that are extant: *Ibṭāl al-taʾwīlāt li-akhbār al-ṣifāt* and *Kitāb al-Īmān*. The *Kitāb al-Īmān*, also known as *Masāʾil al-īmān*, is a detailed treatment of belief and the status of believers and bad sinners. *Ibṭāl al-taʾwīlāt* is a lengthy work on the interpretation God's corporeal qualities.

Abū Yaʿlā's approach to God's corporeal qualifications seeks to mediate between *Kalām* rationalism and Ḥanbalī traditionalism. In *al-Muʿtamad*, he joins the *Kalām* theologians in arguing that God cannot have a body (*jism*). This means that God's corporeal qualifications such as eyes, hands, face, and laughter cannot mean that God has body parts. Yet, Abū Yaʿlā also rejects metaphorical interpretation (*taʾwīl*) of these qualifications, and he maintains that they are simply attributes of God, some essential (*dhātī*) and others added (*zāʾid*) to God's essence (Abū Yaʿlā 1974: 51–60). He also condemns *taʾwīl* in *Ibṭāl al-taʾwīlāt*. For example, he affirms that God laughs such that His molars and uvula will be seen, as stated in the *Ḥadīth*. This should be taken literally (*ʿalā ẓāhir*), Abū Yaʿlā explains, but without interpreting it further to imply that God opens his mouth or that He has body parts such as molars or an uvula, and without interpreting it metaphorically to mean God's grace and generosity. God's laughing is an attribute (*ṣifa*), but its meaning (*maʿnā*) is not understood (Holtzman 2010: 186–7). Despite Abū Yaʿlā's attempt to avoid corporealism (*tajsīm*) on the one hand and *taʾwīl* on the other, he and his teacher Ibn Ḥāmid later came under sharp attack from fellow Ḥanbalī scholar Ibn al-Jawzī for crass literalism and corporealism.

Abū Yaʿlā's foremost student was Ibn ʿAqīl (d. 513/1119), a precocious reader of Muʿtazilī *Kalām* alongside his Ḥanbalī legal studies. With the death of his patron in 460/1067–8, Ibn ʿAqīl suffered under the intrigues of rival Ḥanbalī jurist Sharīf Abū Jaʿfar (d. 470/1077) and was eventually forced to retract his Muʿtazilī writings in 1072, as well as his sympathies for the Sufi martyr al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922). G. Makdisi ties Ibn ʿAqīl's retraction to the ʿAbbāsid Caliph al-Qādir's (d. 422/1031) earlier promulgation of a traditionalist Ḥanbalī creed as official

doctrine of the caliphate and interprets it as the culmination of traditionalist ascendancy in Baghdad: '[The retraction] represents the triumph of the Traditionalist movement supported by the caliphate, against Rationalist Mu'tazilism, on the decline, and a militant Rationalist Ash'arism, on the ascendant' thanks to support from the Saljuqs (Makdisi 1997: 14; also Makdisi 1963). As Makdisi indicates, the traditionalist battle with *Kalām* was not done, and Ashʿarism continued to rival Ḥanbalism for centuries to come. Ibn ʿAqīl's major work on theology *al-Irshād fī uṣūl al-dīn* is not extant. Otherwise, it appears that Ibn ʿAqīl, post-retraction, was moderately rationalist within a traditional Ḥanbalī doctrinal framework and advocated a limited use of *taʾwīl* (Makdisi 1997).

Mention of Ibn ʿAqīl's interest in al-Ḥallāj raises the question of Ḥanbalī-Sufi relations, especially as Ḥanbalīs have often been seen to be opponents of Sufism. This reputation derives from the later Ḥanbalī polemic of Ibn al-Jawzī and Ibn Taymiyya against innovated practices and doctrines linked to Sufism, although not against its ideal of a spiritual path to God. Ḥanbalīs and Sufis share common origins in traditionalist currents of renunciant piety, and, like other traditionalists, early Sufis studied *Ḥadīth* and rejected *Kalām*. As the legal schools formed from the late third/ninth century onward, Sufis affiliated largely with semi-rationalist schools such as the Shāfiʿī and the Mālikī. However, Sufi relations with the traditionalist Ḥanbalīṣ were generally good. Traditionalist Sufi writers such as Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī (d. 430/1038) included Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal among the pious saints (*awliyāʾ*) of past generations, and some notable Sufis were Ḥanbalīs including Ibn ʿAṭāʾ (d. 309/921–2 or 311/923–4), who was killed for defending al-Ḥallāj, ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī (d. 481/1089), and the eponym of the Qādiriyya Sufi order ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jilānī (d. 561/1166). Al-Anṣārī and ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jilānī are both of significance for Ḥanbalī theology. Al-Anṣārī battled against Ashʿarī *Kalām* theologians in Khorasan, and out of this came his large work *Dhamm al-kalām.* ʿAbd al-Qādir, for his part, provides a full and well-organized statement of traditionalist Ḥanbalī doctrine in his large spiritual work *al-Ghunya* (trans. ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī 1995: i. 171–279) (Karamustafa 2007; Makdisi 1979; 1997).

The most sophisticated Ḥanbalī theological voice after Ibn ʿAqīl was Ibn al-Zāghūnī (d. 527/1132), author of *al-Īḍāḥ fī uṣūl al-dīn*. *Al-Īdāḥ* is a well-organized theological manual similar in length and structure to Abū Yaʿlā's *Muʿtamad*, and it treats God's corporeal qualifications in much the same way. To take God's eyes, for example, Ibn al-Zāghūnī denies that God's eye consists of a fleshly eyeball—God's eye is not an originated body. Yet, he also disallows interpreting God's eye metaphorically along *Kalām* lines as God's 'protection'. Rather, God's eye is an attribute to be taken literally without assimilationism or modality (Ibn

al-Zāghūnī 2003: 291–4). With this, Ibn al-Zāghūnī sought to find his way between corporealism and *taʾwīl*, but it failed to please his foremost student Ibn al-Jawzī.

Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201) was the leading Ḥanbalī scholar and preacher of his day. He initially opposed the Ashʿarīs and Muʿtazilīs, partly because they were aligned with the Saljuq sultans, but, as Saljuq power waned and the ʿAbbāsid caliphate revived, he took a more relaxed attitude toward *Kalām* and eventually drew on *Kalām* argumentation to produce his fullest theological work, *Kitāb Akhbār al-ṣifāt*, in the late 1180s or early 1190s. This book contains a stinging condemnation of assimilationism and corporealism within the Ḥanbalī school, and it probably contributed to his banishment to Wāsiṭ in 590/1194 (Swartz 2002: 33–45). Ibn al-Jawzī also wrote a similar but shorter work called the *Dafʿ shubah al-tashbīh* (trans. ʿAlī 2006), also known as *al-Bāz al-ashhab*.

The targets of Ibn al-Jawzī's *Kitāb Akhbār al-ṣifāt* are three of the most prominent Ḥanbalīs of the preceding two centuries—Ibn Ḥāmid, Abū Yaʿlā, and Ibn al-Zāghūnī—whom he accuses of interpreting God's corporeal qualifications literally and disallowing metaphorical interpretation. In a strongly rationalist tone, Ibn al-Jawzī explains that reason apart from revelation knows God's existence, God's unity, God's necessary attributes, the originated quality of the world and prophecy. Reason also knows that God is not a body; otherwise He would be subject to temporality. Thus God cannot be said to have corporeal attributes in any literal sense.

Then, in *Kitāb Akhbār al-ṣifāt*, Ibn al-Jawzī sets forth two approaches to God's corporeal qualifications: non-interventionism for the masses and metaphorical interpretation (*taʾwīl*) for the scholars. The error of the *Kalām* theologians is to subject the public to their dialectics because it only sows doubt and spreads heresy. Rather, God has spoken to the masses in language that they can understand and readily accept, and, in public, God's corporeal qualifications such as His hands and eyes should be read in the texts and passed over as they are without comment (*imrār*). Taking aim at Abū Yaʿlā, Ibn Jawzī declares that nothing further should be said about what kind of attributes these qualifications might be (e.g. essential (*dhātī*) or additional (*zāʾid*) to the essence) or about their literal meaning. However, among the scholars, Ibn al-Jawzī explains, God's corporeal qualifications should be reinterpreted metaphorically to accord with the demands of reason, that is, to deny that God has a body. The bulk of *Kitāb Akhbār al-ṣifāt* is then discussion and reinterpretation of Qurʾān and *Ḥadīth* texts portraying God in corporeal terms. Ibn Jawzī's elitism—that *taʾwīl* is only for the scholars—may have been driven by a desire for scholarly respectability. Ibn al-Jawzī displays considerable embarrassment at Ḥanbalī assimilationism in his book, and his objective in

writing appears to be salvaging the reputation of the Ḥanbalī school in the eyes of the wider community of Sunnī scholars. Ibn al-Jawzī claims the highly regarded Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal for the non-interventionism that he advocates for the masses, and he rejects later Ḥanbalī attempts at literality as deviant corporealism (Swartz 2002: 46–64, 77–138).

Ibn al-Jawzī's polemic did not escape Ḥanbalī criticism. Abū al-Faḍl al-Althī (d. 634/1236) wrote a diatribe that may have helped get the senior Ḥanbalī scholar exiled to Wāsiṭ. Al-Althī takes Ibn al-Jawzī to task for his elitist advocacy of *taʾwīl* and calls him to repentance. There is, however, no evidence that Ibn al-Jawzī ever recanted (Swartz 2002: 282–97). Later on, sometime after 603/1206, the Syrian Ḥanbalī jurist Ibn Qudāma (d. 620/1223) wrote his *Taḥrīm al-naẓar fī kutub ahl al-kalām* in which he discusses the retraction of Ibn ʿAqīl at length. No mention is made here of Ibn al-Jawzī, but it seems likely that Ibn Qudāma had him and his admirers in mind (Swartz 2002: 42, 62).

Ibn Qudāma's *Taḥrīm al-naẓar* provides a lengthy refutation of *taʿwīl*, and it repeatedly sets out the traditionalist Ḥanbalī position on God's attributes. Citing the authority of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Ibn Qudāma explains that corporeal depictions of God in the Qurʾān and the *Ḥadīth* must be accepted as true without saying anything more or less. God is described as He has described Himself, and the texts are passed over as they are without comment (*imrār*) and without inquiring into modality (*kayf*) or meaning (*maʿnā*). Ibn Qudāma also claims that whatever God's attributes might mean is of no practical import, and believing in them in ignorance is the correct path. If one wants to inquire into something, Ibn Qudāma argues, one should inquire into jurisprudence, not the attributes of God (Makdisi 1962).

Ḥanbalism weakened in Baghdad after Ibn al-Jawzī, and the Mongol destruction of the city in 1258 dealt the Ḥanbalīs a further setback. Damascus took over as the intellectual centre of Ḥanbalism with Ibn Qudāma being one of its great early figures. Damascus was dominated by Shāfiʿīs, and Ḥanbalīs could not exercise the same social and political power that they had enjoyed in Baghdad. Nonetheless, the Damascene Ḥanbalīs thrived and eventually produced the most creative theologian in the Ḥanbalī tradition and one of the greatest minds in medieval Islam: Ibn Taymiyya.

IV. Ibn Taymiyya

Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) is at times portrayed as anti-rationalist due to his polemic against the main claimants to reason in his day: Ashʿarī and Muʿtazilī *Kalām* theology, Aristotelian logic, and the Aristotelian-Neoplatonist *Falsafa* of Ibn Sina. However, it has been made clear that Ibn Taymiyya did not reject reason as such but argued for its congruence with revelation

(Michot 1994; 2003). It has also become apparent that his criticism of *Kalām* and *Falsafa* was not simply a matter of haphazard polemics. It was instead rooted in a fundamentally different construal of God as perpetually creative and temporally dynamic (Hoover 2004; 2010a). Drawing on both *Kalām* and *Falsafa* and giving distinctive authority to the Qurʾān, the Sunna, and the Salaf (the early Muslims), Ibn Taymiyya introduced a new current of theology unprecedented in the Ḥanbalī school and not found elsewhere in medieval Islam (el Omari 2010; Hoover 2007; Özervarli 2010).

The theological world in which Ibn Taymiyya worked was permeated with philosophized Ashʿarī *Kalām*, especially that of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209). Ibn Taymiyya read al-Rāzī with his students, and he wrote extensively against al-Rāzī's ideas. His major works *Bayān talbīs al-jahmiyya* and *Darʾ taʿāruḍ al-ʿaql wa-l-naql* both respond directly to al-Rāzī's thought. The former work refutes al-Rāzī's book *Asās al-taqdīs* on the metaphorical interpretation of God's corporeal attributes. The latter work *Darʾ taʿāruḍ* confutes the 'Rule of Metaphorical Interpretation' (*qānūn al-taʾwīl*) espoused by al-Ghazālī and al-Rāzī, which gives reason precedence over the literal meaning of revelation when the two contradict. Although Muʿtazilī *Kalām* had died out in Sunnī Islam by the eighth/fourteenth century, it lived on in Imāmī Shīʿī theology, and Ibn Taymiyya's large refutation of Shīʿism *Minhāj al-sunna al-nabawiyya* directly rebuts Muʿtazilī notions of divine justice.

In addition to the tomes just mentioned, Ibn Taymiyya wrote several other large works, including major refutations of Christianity and Aristotelian logic, and important treatises on Sufism, political theory, and prophecy. While a few of Ibn Taymiyya's works may be dated with precision, many cannot, and change or development in his thinking is often difficult to establish. However, his thought is remarkably consistent and coherent, and it is thus with some confidence that we may speak of a characteristic Taymiyyan theology that retained its essential contours throughout the course of his scholarly life. Except where indicated otherwise, the following overview of Ibn Taymiyya's theology is based on my own writings (Hoover 2004; 2007; 2010a; see also Laoust 1939; Bell 1979).

As Ibn Taymiyya saw it, the fundamental problem of his time was that God was no longer worshipped and spoken of correctly. A great many Muslims had strayed from true theological doctrine and proper religious practice and fallen into the errors of philosophers and *Kalām* theologians, as well as Shīʿis, Sufis, Christians, and others. The solution was to return Islam to its sources, the Qurʾān, the *Ḥadīth*, and the doctrine and practice of the Salaf, the first two or three generations following the Prophet Muḥammad, before the religion was corrupted by error and sectarian division. In Ibn Taymiyya's view, the accumulated judgements and the

consensus of later scholars were subject to error, and they had to be measured against the doctrine of the Salaf.

At the core of Ibn Taymiyya's polemic against *Kalām* and *Falsafa* is the subordination of metaphysics to ethics and the theoretical to the practical. *Kalām* and *Falsafa* reverse the order. Both disciplines reason from the nature of reality to the existence of God, God's unity, and God's attributes and eventually to prophecy and the practical obligations that follow on from that. For Ibn Taymiyya, this approach fails to place worship of God at the fore. Taking his cue from the order of invocations in 'You alone we worship; You alone we ask for help' (Q 1: 5), Ibn Taymiyya argues that God's exclusive worthiness of worship, praise, and love is prior to God's exclusive creation of the world and provision of help for His servants. God is the sole creator of the world, but for Ibn Taymiyya this metaphysical monotheism follows on from the more foundational reality of God's pre-eminent worthiness of obedience and praise. Humans should love and worship God alone because of who God is in Himself and not simply because He alone creates and sustains. Here is how Ibn Taymiyya distinguishes *Kalām* from his own method, which he takes to be that of the Qurʾān:

> The distinction between the Qurʾānic and the *kalām* theological methods is that God commands worship of Him, a worship which is the perfection of the soul, its prosperity, and its ultimate goal. He did not limit it to mere affirmation of Him, as is the purpose of the *kalām* method. The Qurʾān relates knowledge of Him and service to Him. It thus combines the two human faculties of knowledge and practice; or sensation and motion; or perceptive volition and operation; or verbal and practical. As God says, 'Worship your Lord'. Worship necessarily entails knowledge of Him, having penitence and humility before Him, and need of Him. This is the goal. The *kalām* method secures only the benefit of affirmation and admission of God's existence. (Quoted in Özervarli 2010: 89)

Ibn Taymiyya also speaks of the priority of worship and ethics over metaphysics in theological terms that later became widespread among Wahhābīs and modern Salafīs. He distinguishes two *tawḥīd*s, or two ways of confessing God's unity. Ibn Taymiyya's first *tawḥīd* is that of God's divinity (*ulūhiyya*). *Tawḥīd al-ulūhiyya* signifies God's sole worthiness to be a god, that is, God's sole right to be an object of worship (*ʿibāda*). *Tawḥīd al-ulūhiyya* is exclusive worship of God that refuses to give devotion and love to anything or anyone else. Then flowing out from this is the second *tawḥīd*, the *tawḥīd* of God's lordship (*rubūbiyya*). God's lordship refers to His creative power, and *tawḥīd al-rubūbiyya* means confessing that God is the only source of created beings. For Ibn Taymiyya *tawḥīd al-ulūhiyya* is logically prior to *tawḥīd al-rubūbiyya*: God in Himself in His pre-eminent worthiness of love and worship comes first.

Ibn Taymiyya's practical turn effectively transforms theology into an aspect of Muslim jurisprudence. He rejects the commonplace medieval distinction between the principles (*uṣūl*) of religion and the branches (*furūʿ*), in which the principles treat theological doctrines like God's existence and attributes from a theoretical perspective and the branches discuss religious obligations such as prayer and fasting from a practical, legal vantage point. Rather, for Ibn Taymiyya, the principles treat those matters of greatest importance in both theological doctrine and religious practice, and the branches deal with lesser matters of detail. Moreover, theological beliefs and religious practices are both practical matters concerned with correct worship of God, and theology is primarily about getting the language of praise and worship right, not establishing the existence of God.

Nevertheless, Ibn Taymiyya still holds a place for reason and its capacity to prove the existence of God, and his view of what reason can know is very optimistic. He asserts that the very fact of creaturely existence is sufficient to prove the existence of the Creator just as it is known that every effect necessarily requires a cause. Ibn Taymiyya speaks as well of the human natural constitution (*fiṭra*) which likewise knows that anything originated needs an originator. Additionally, Ibn Taymiyya asserts, reason and the natural constitution know that it is God alone who should be worshipped and that the fullest human benefit is found in exclusive love of God. Speaking in Aristotelian terms, Ibn Taymiyya frames the natural constitution as an innate potency toward the religion of Islam at birth that is actualized as the human being develops; the role of prophecy and revelation is then to perfect the natural constitution and help it overcome corruption.

For Ibn Taymiyya, reason and the natural constitution on the one hand and revelation on the other do not contradict. They both come from the same source, and they provide much the same information and argument. Rational minds and natural constitutions can know the existence of God and the proper human end apart from revelation, but when they encounter revelation they immediately recognize it as true and congruent with what they already know. Ibn Taymiyya observes that *Kalām* theologians and philosophers confine revelation to information that cannot be attained by reason, and he counters that revelation includes not merely information but also rational argument. Revelation contains the correct proofs of reason, and reason recognizes the truth of revelation. In making the claim that revelation and reason agree, Ibn Taymiyya is trying to take the rational high ground away from *Falsafa* and *Kalām*, which he believes are based on faulty foundations and lead to misguided conclusions.

A case in point is the *Kalām* proof for God's existence. The *Kalām* proof in simplified form assumes that the world is made up of indivisible atoms and the accidents that subsist in

them. Accidents are temporally originating (*ḥādith*), and—this is key—anything in which something temporally originating subsists—the atom—must also be temporally originating. Seeing that all atoms are temporally originating, and in view of the *Kalām* conviction that an infinite regress of temporally originating events is impossible, the world as a whole must have been originated in time. Having proved that the world had a beginning, the *Kalām* argument concludes that it required a Maker who was not originated but eternal.

Ibn Taymiyya often dismisses this proof and its talk of atoms and accidents as unnecessarily complex. Yet, apart from a bit of complexity, it can be difficult to see why he would find it so problematic. However, the proof is based on two postulates that are incompatible with Ibn Taymiyya's theological vision: the impossibility of an infinite regress and the notion that something in which temporally originating events subsist is itself temporally originating. As will become apparent, Ibn Taymiyya has no objection to an infinite regress. His own view of God as perpetually creative from eternity entails an infinite regress of created things. Additionally, his temporally dynamic view of God implies that originating events subsist in God's very essence. Ibn Taymiyya cannot accept the *Kalām* postulate that originating events render their host substrate temporally originating because he himself posits temporality in the essence of God. In his view, the *Kalām* postulates are faulty and lead to irrational conclusions while his own formulations accord with both revelation and reason.

Concerning God's attributes and names, which he discusses at times under the rubric *al-tawḥīd fī l-ṣifāt* ('the uniqueness of God's attributes'), Ibn Taymiyya's position is that of traditionalist non-interventionism or non-cognitivism, but with a crucial difference that I will signal later on. Ibn Taymiyya's non-cognitivism is straightforward: God should be qualified with the names and attributes with which He is qualified in revelation without, on the one hand, inquiring into their modality (*takyīf*) and assimilating (*tashbīh*) or likening (*tamthīl*) them to the attributes and names of creatures, or, on the other hand, stripping them away (*taʿṭīl*) from God with metaphorical interpretation. God is affirmed as all-Hearing, all-Seeing, but there is nevertheless nothing like Him (Q 42: 11). This applies equally to all qualifications given in the Qurʾān and the *Ḥadīth*, from God's 'willing' to God's 'laughter' and God's 'sitting' on the Throne. Ibn Taymiyya rejects the *Kalām* practice of reinterpretation (*taʾwīl*) and dismisses the distinction between the literal (*ẓāhir*) and the metaphorical (*majāz*) upon which it is based. To take one of Ibn Taymiyya's examples, Ashʿarī *Kalām* theologians reinterpret God's 'love' metaphorically as God's 'will' on the grounds that speaking of God's love literally would assimilate Him to creaturely qualities; God cannot be ascribed with creaturely passions like love. Ibn Taymiyya retorts that this reinterpretation in fact involves both likening and stripping

away. First, the *Kalām* theologians imagine the love ascribed to God to be like human love in a literal sense and thereby conclude that 'love' may not be ascribed to God. Then, to free God of the untoward passions of human love, they strip God of His love by calling it instead 'will'. The only reasonable course, according to Ibn Taymiyya, is to affirm all of God's names and attributes equally and without modality. The only similarity between the names and attributes of God and the names and attributes of creatures are the very names.

The non-interventionism of a Ḥanbalī like Ibn Qudāma stopped at this point and forbade further inquiry into the meanings of God's attributes because they were of no practical consequence. God's names and attributes must be passed over without inquiring into their meaning (*imrār*). Ibn Taymiyya, on the contrary, believes that the meanings do matter, and this propels him on to a wide-ranging project of theological hermeneutics. He discards the *Kalām* device of *taʾwīl* and places in its stead a project of linguistic inquiry (*tafsīr*) that seeks to interpret God's attributes and names in ways that he deems praiseworthy. While humans may know nothing about God's names and attributes except the names, these names still evoke meaning in the human mind, and this meaning impacts human response to God for good or ill, depending on the character of the portrayal. For Ibn Taymiyya it is thus imperative to give sense to God's names and attributes that will evoke love and praise for God and ward off scepticism and disdain. This is the aim of Ibn Taymiyya's whole theological endeavour, and his foremost difficulty with rival theological visions is that they fail to give God sufficient praise.

An instructive example of how this works is Ibn Taymiyya's contrast of his own notion of God's justice (*ʿadl*) with that of the Ashʿarīs and the Muʿtazilīs. In the voluntarism of the Ashʿarīs, God's justice consists in whatever God wills, without consideration of cause or wise purpose. God is just to punish humans for the bad deeds that He creates in them, and he would even be just to punish prophets without cause. Ibn Taymiyya rejects such a God as capricious and unworthy of praise. The Muʿtazilīs, for their part, argue against the Ashʿarīs that it would in fact be unjust of God to punish bad deeds that He creates. Thus, God gives humans freedom to create their own deeds, and He deals out retribution in complete fairness: reward for good deeds and punishment for bad deeds. Ibn Taymiyya rejects the Muʿtazilī understanding of God's justice because it posits a plurality of creators in the universe—both God and humans—and because it makes God look foolish. God in his foreknowledge knows that humans will commit evil deeds with the creative power that He gives them, and yet He stupidly gives it to them anyway. This, Ibn Taymiyya remarks, is like one person giving another a sword to fight unbelievers when he already knows that the other person will use it to kill a prophet. In sum,

Ibn Taymiyya castigates both the Muʿtazilīs and the Ashʿarīs for depicting God in an unworthy manner. While God cannot be subjected to human moral standards because He is wholly unlike creatures, He must nonetheless be spoken of with the highest praise. For Ibn Taymiyya, this means that God's justice consists in 'putting things in their places' in accord with His wise purpose (*ḥikma*), and, in one of his late texts, he affirms with Ibn Sīnā and al-Ghazālī that God has created the best possible world.

Ibn Taymiyya also sets forth a mechanism for deriving God's names and attributes rationally. While he disallows use of the juristic analogy (*qiyās*) and the categorical syllogism in theology because they bring God and creatures into direct comparison, he does permit their use in an *a fortiori* argument (*qiyās al-awlā*). In accord with the Qurʾānic assertion that God is ascribed with the 'highest similitude' (*al-mathal al-aʿlā*) (Q 16: 60), Ibn Taymiyya claims that God is all the worthier (*awlā*) of perfections found in creatures than are the creatures themselves because He is their cause and source. Thus, using *a fortiori* reasoning, God is all the worthier of being ascribed with perfections found in creatures such as power, life, sight, and speech. Similarly, God is all the worthier of being disassociated from anything considered imperfect in creatures, and the pinnacle of perfection in God is for His attributes to be unlike those of creatures entirely. Ibn Taymiyya sums it up thus: '[God] is qualified by every attribute of perfection such that no one bears any likeness to Him in it' (quoted in Hoover 2007: 65). On this basis Ibn Taymiyya ascribes to God a wide range of attributes that he deems perfections in humans including laughter, joy, and movement. These attributes are of course attested in revealed texts, but Ibn Taymiyya maintains that they are apparent from reason as well. Moreover, God must be ascribed with such attributes of perfection. Otherwise, He will be regarded as imperfect and unworthy of worship.

Ibn Taymiyya's view of what constitutes God's essential perfection—perpetual, temporal, and purposeful activity—sets him apart from practically the entire preceding Islamic tradition. Elements of his formulation are found in Karrāmī theology, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, and the philosopher Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (d. 560/1165), but Ibn Taymiyya surpasses all of these in developing a consistently dynamic understanding of God. According to Ibn Taymiyya, God has been acting, creating, and speaking by His will and power for wise purposes from eternity (*min al-azal*). God's acts subsist in His very essence, and they occur in temporal succession. He writes, 'The Lord must inevitably be qualified by acts subsisting in Him one after another' (quoted in Hoover 2007: 96). Ibn Taymiyya rarely uses the term temporally originating events (*ḥawādith*) to qualify God's acts, preferring to speak instead of God's voluntary acts and with other language closer to the revealed texts. However, he does indicate

that the sense is that of temporality, and he takes it upon himself to refute the *Kalām* arguments against originating events subsisting in God's essence.

In maintaining that God has been creating from eternity, Ibn Taymiyya carves out a middle position between the *Falsafa* of Ibn Sīnā on the one hand and *Kalām* on the other. Ibn Taymiyya agrees with the *Falsafa* tradition that God's perfection entails eternal productivity. To posit a starting point in God's creative action, as does *Kalām*, implies that God was imperfect prior to beginning to create and subject to change when He switched from not creating to creating. Moreover, an efficient cause or preponderator (*murajjiḥ*) was needed to tip the balance in favour of God beginning His creative activity. Resisting this argument, Ashʿarī *Kalām* held that it was in the very nature of God's eternal will to preponderate or cause creation to begin at a certain point; no additional cause need be posited. Ibn Taymiyya rejects this. Nothing can arise without a prior cause. Ibn Sīnā concluded from these considerations that God's eternal productivity entailed the emanation of an eternal world. Ibn Taymiyya affirms similarly that God's perpetual creativity entails that there have always been created things of one sort or another. However, he has no patience for Ibn Sīnā's emanation scheme and its hierarchy of eternal celestial spheres. In agreement now with the *Kalām* tradition, he denies that any created thing can be eternal. Rather, created things by definition come into existence in time after they were not. To make sense of his position, Ibn Taymiyya distinguishes between the genus (*jins*) of created things on the one hand and individual created things on the other. The genus is eternal—there have always been created things of one sort or another—but each individual created thing originates in time. Additionally, God does not create new things not out of nothing but out of prior created things, and this present world that God created in six days (Q 11: 7) was preceded by and created out of prior worlds. Ibn Taymiyya's view of creation is remarkably close to that of the philosopher Ibn Rushd, but it is not clear whether there was direct influence.

Regarding God's speech, Ibn Taymiyya rejects the Ashʿarī doctrine of the eternal Qurʾān, but he does not follow the Muʿtazilīs in calling the Qurʾān created. Instead, he holds that God has been speaking from eternity by His will and power and that God's acts of speaking subsist in God's essence. As with created things, the genus of God's speaking is eternal while His individual speech acts are not. However, it is not said that God's speech acts are created. This is because they subsist in God's essence, not outside of God. Thus, God's individual speech acts are neither created nor eternal, and, likewise, God's speech in the Qurʾān is 'uncreated' (*ghayr makhlūq*) but not eternal. As is apparent, the term 'uncreated' does not mean timeless eternity for Ibn Taymiyya. Rather, it distinguishes God's acts from created things in

the world. On the verbal level, Ibn Taymiyya is faithful to the traditional Ḥanbalī doctrine of the Qurʾān's uncreatedness, and he claims that his position is that of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. But his introduction of temporal sequence into the speech acts of God may be novel in Ḥanbalism. By way of contrast, the earlier Ḥanbalī Ibn Qudāma, in a debate with an Ashʿarī, denied succession in the speech of God because God does not speak with the physical organs with which humans speak (Daiber 1994: 258, 261).

In Ibn Taymiyya's theology of God's perpetual creativity, as in Ibn Sīnā's emanation scheme, creation is in some sense necessary alongside God, and this poses the question of God's independence and self-sufficiency. *Kalām* theology makes clear that God is fully God without the world by positing a beginning to the world's creation, and Ashʿarīs such as al-Rāzī and Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī (d. 631/1233) deny that God creates for purposes or causes in order to render God's creation of the world entirely gratuitous. In this Ashʿarī voluntarism, God has no need of the world, and the world is strictly the product of God's sheer will. Ibn Taymiyya does not interpret God's independence or sufficiency apart from the world in this voluntarist sense. Instead, he explains that God's sufficiency consists in needing no help in creating the world, and he follows Ibn Sīnā in giving priority to God's self-intellection and self-love and making that the ground for the rest of existence. We see this for example in Ibn Taymiyya's statement: 'What God loves of worship of Him and obedience to Him follows from love for Himself, and love of that is the cause of [His] love for His believing servants. His love for believers follows from love for Himself' (quoted in Hoover 2007: 99). Here, God's self-love is the ground for all other love. God does not need human love, and, likewise, God does not need the creation. Nevertheless, human love and the whole of creation follow necessarily from God's love for Himself and from His perfection.

The necessity with which God's acts flow from God's perfection would appear to obviate the reality of God's choice. Ibn Taymiyya responds, however, that it is possible for something predetermined to occur through God's will and power. God's will and power are the means by which the concomitants of God's perfection are brought into existence. Ibn Taymiyya writes, 'It is not impossible that something, which is necessary of occurrence because the decree that it must inevitably be has preceded it, occur by . . . His power and His will, even if it is among the necessary concomitants of His essence like His life and His knowledge' (adapted from Hoover 2010a: 66).

A similar question arises at the level of human acts. If God predetermines and creates all human acts, how are humans to be held accountable for their deeds? Following in the steps of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Ibn Taymiyya affirms that the human act is real and that humans

undertake their acts by means of their own will and power. Nonetheless, it is God who creates the human will and power, and it is by means of these that He necessitates human acts. Nothing occurs independently of God's will and creation. Ibn Taymiyya denies any contradiction in this formulation, and when pressed on the point, he sometimes switches from the perspective of God's creation to the human perspective of responsibility to evade the inference that humans cannot be held accountable for deeds that God creates. Faced with a similar paradox between God's command to do good deeds and God's creation of bad deeds, Ibn Taymiyya appeals to God's wise purpose in the creation of all things and suggests ways of mitigating the difficulty. He submits, for example, that a king might command his subject to do something that will benefit that subject. Yet, the king might also refrain from helping his subject obey his command lest the subject be empowered to rise up against him. Ibn Taymiyya acknowledges that such examples fail to find an exact parallel in God. Rather, he argues, if we can imagine that creatures act for wise purposes in the fashion of this king, then God is all the more worthy of being ascribed with wise purposes in his acts as well. Ibn Taymiyya's primary theological aim is to find ways to speak well of God, and drawing attention to contradictions in God's acts would defeat his purpose.

V. Ḥanbalī Theology from the Fourteenth Century to the Eighteenth

The early eighth/fourteenth century was an especially fertile period for Ḥanbalī theology, and two figures beyond Ibn Taymiyya are worthy of note. The first, Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭūfī (d. 716/1316), was something of an eccentric among Ḥanbalīs. Arriving in Damascus from Baghdad in 704/1304–5, he was briefly a student of Ibn Taymiyya before moving on to Cairo the next year. He wrote a commentary on parts of the Bible and a refutation of Christianity, and he was accused of Shīʿī sympathies in later life. He is well known among modern Muslim legal theorists for his bold appeal to benefit (*maṣlaḥa*) over revealed texts in law formulation, although it seems that this had little impact in his own time. He also wrote a non-extant defence of logic and *Kalām*: *Dafʿ al-malām ʿan ahl al-manṭiq wa-l-kalām*. His last work, *al-Ishārāt al-ilāhiyya*, is a commentary on Qurʾānic verses relating to principles of jurisprudence and theology (Heinrichs 1960–2004).

Al-Ṭūfī's eccentricity is readily evident in his *Darʾ al-qawl al-qabīḥ bi-l-taḥsīn wa-l-taqbīḥ*. He refutes the Muʿtazilī views that reason discerns the ethical value of acts and that humans create their own acts independently of God's control, and he argues that God determines and creates all acts. Yet, he notes that the Qurʾānic evidence supporting God's determination of human acts is not unequivocal. Some verses also indicate human

responsibility and choice, which implies that the Qurʾān is contradictory. What al-Ṭūfī does with this observation may be unique among Muslim theologians. He suggests that contradiction in the Qurʾān is in fact a proof for the prophethood of Muḥammad. Everyone agrees that Muḥammad was eminently intelligent and that intelligent authors will necessarily work to remove all contradictions from their writings. Seeing that the Qurʾān contains contradiction, it is evidently not from Muḥammad and so must be from God. It might be objected that Muḥammad introduced contradiction into the Qurʾān as a ruse, but al-Ṭūfī insists that intelligent authors would never judge introducing contradiction intentionally to be in their interest (Shihadeh 2006).

The second major eighth/fourteenth century figure beyond Ibn Taymiyya is his foremost student Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350). While remaining faithful to the basic contours of his teacher's theology, he wrote more systematically and with greater literary flair, which goes some way toward accounting for the popularity of his books in Salafi circles today. A hallmark of his literary production is a distinctively therapeutic concern for healing the ailments of mind, body, and soul impeding praise and worship of God, and many of Ibn al-Qayyim's books focus on theological issues to remove intellectual obstacles to correct belief as he understands it. One of his earlier works, *al-Kāfiyya al-shāfiyya*, is a long anti-Ashʿarī theological poem that received many commentaries and became popular enough to garner a refutation in 1348 from the Ashʿarī-Shāfiʿī chief judge of Damascus Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī. Another early work *Miftāḥ dār al-ṣaʿāda* explains, among other things, God's wise purposes in the creation of the diverse phenomena of this world (Holtzman 2009: 209–10, 216–17; Bori and Holtzman 2010: 25–6).

Two of Ibn al-Qayyim's later books, written after 1345, are among the fullest treatments of their respective theological topics in the Islamic tradition. *Shifāʾ al-ʿalīl* fleshes out the contours of Ibn Taymiyya's theodicy at great length. The first half elaborates God's determination and creation of all things, and it explains that, while God creates human acts, humans are the agents of their acts and therefore responsible for their deeds. The second half of the book argues that God creates all things for wise purposes in a causal sense. Evils are in fact good in view of God's wise purposes in creating them, and pure evil does not exist. Ibn al-Qayyim then outlines, in detail far exceeding anything found in Ibn Taymiyya, the wise purposes that God has in creating everything from poisons to disobedience, and even Iblīs (Perho 2001; Hoover 2010b).

The second work, Ibn al-Qayyim's *al-Ṣawāʿiq al-mursala*, is a massive refutation of the presuppositions underlying *Kalām* metaphorical reinterpretation. Only the first half of the

work is extant, and resort must be made to the abridgement *Mukhtaṣar al-ṣawāʿiq al-mursala* of Shams al-Dīn b. al-Mawṣilī (d. 774/1372) to gain a sense of the whole. Writing along Taymiyyan lines, Ibn al-Qayyim denies that reason and revelation ever contradict in the interpretation of God's attributes. He attacks the *Kalām* notion of metaphor (*majāz*) at great length and defends the reliability of traditions providing information about God's attributes (Qadhi 2010).

Ḥanbalī theology in the centuries following Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya has not been studied carefully (for surveys, see Laoust 1939: 493–540; Laoust 1960–2004), but it appears that Ibn Taymiyya's thought was not highly influential within the school, at least not until the Taymiyyan-inspired revivalism of the nineteenth century in Iraq, Syria, and Egypt. Even in his own day, Ibn Taymiyya's circle of students was small (Bori 2010), and Ḥanbalīs have never embraced his theology as school doctrine. However, Ibn Taymiyya's ideas did find their best-known pre-modern advocate in Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (d. 1206/1792), a Ḥanbalī scholar in central Arabia.

Taking his cue from Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb drew a distinction between *tawḥīd al-rubūbiyya*, the affirmation that God is the sole creator of the world, and *tawḥīd al-ulūhiyya* or *tawḥīd al-ʿibāda*, the exclusive devotion of worship and service to God according to the divine law. Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb likewise gave priority to the ethical/legal *tawḥīd al-ulūhiyya* over the mere confession of God as Creator in *tawḥīd al-rubūbiyya*, and he narrowed the scope of *tawḥīd al-ulūhiyya* to exclude a wide range of popular practices such as saint veneration, tomb visitation, and magic. Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb was adamant that these practices had to be condemned as idol worship (*shirk*) and eradicated, and he aligned with the central Arabian emir Muḥammad b. Suʿūd in 1744 to put his theological vision into practice. This first Wahhābī-Suʿūdī state lasted through 1819. A second Wahhābī-Suʿūdī state emerged in the nineteenth century. The third Wahhābī-Suʿūdī state, the modern state of Saudi Arabia, began in 1902, and the country has been instrumental in spreading the ideas of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb far beyond its borders, especially in the last half century (Peskes 1960–2004; Peskes 1999).

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