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QUESTIONING THE POSITION AND STATUS OF IBN TAIMIYYAH IN THE HANBALI SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

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Abstrak

Kata Kunci:

Ibn Taimiyyah,
Salafi-Taimi,
Hanbali School
of Thought,
Salafism,
Wahhabism

Polemik tentang Ibnu Taimiyyah (661-728H) telah berlangsung berabad-abad hingga melahirkan barisan pendukung dan penentang. Barisan pendukung meyakini Ibnu Taimiyyah ma'shum, melampai Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal dan secara sepihak mentabbiskannya sebagai khatim al-mujtahidin. Klaim yang mengabaikan kritik epistemis para ulama Sunni lintas mazhab dan lintas generasi, termasuk penilaian kritis dari internal ulama mazhab Hanbali sendiri. Seperti Ibnu Rajab (736-795H), Ibnu al-Mardawi (817-885H), Ibnu Najjar (898-972H), al-Buhuti (1000-1051H), dan al-Safaraini (1114-1188H). Berbasis pendekatan interdisipliner dalam menganalisis sumber-sumber primer mazhab, hasil studi menemukan bahwa salah satu konsensus internal mazhab Hanbali telah jelas. Ketika terjadi perselisihan hasil rumusan tarjih dalam ushul maupun furu', maka hierarki otoritas referensial secara berurutan adalah; pertama, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal; kedua, Imam Ibnu Qudamah al-Maqdisi; ketiga, Imam Majd al-Din Abi al-Barakat al-Taimi; keempat, Imam Ibnu Muflih al-Hanbali (dengan sarat jika Ibnu Qudamah al-Maqdisi berbeda pendapat dengan Majd al-Din Abi al-Barakat); kelima, Imam Ibnu Rajab al-Hanbali; keenam, Ibnu Hamdan al-Hanbali; ketujuh, Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu Taimiyyah (dengan sarat selaras dengan Ibnu Qudamah al-Maqdisi atau Imam Majd al-Din Abi al-Barakah); dan kedelapan, Ibnu 'Abdus. Berdasarkan berbagai kontroversinya, para pemuka ulama mazhab Hanbali sendiri memposisikan Ibnu Taimiyyah dalam peringkat ketujuh dalam hirarki otoritas mazhab, dan menegaskan Ibnu Taimiyyah bukanlah satu-satunya penyandang gelar syaikh al-Islam diinternal mazhab Hanbali.

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Abstract
Keywords:

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For centuries, polemic over Ibn Taimiyyah (661-728H) has generated cross-generational tension among supporters and opponents. Those supporters believed Ibn Taimiyyah to be ma'shum, surpassed Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, and unilaterally ordained him as khatim al-mujtahidin. A claim which ignores Sunnis scholars' epistemic criticism across the school of thought and generations, including a critical assessment of the internal Hanbali school of thought itself. Such as Ibn Rajab (736-795H); Ibn al-Mardawi (817-885H); Ibn Najjar (898-972H); al-Buhuti (1000-1051H); and al-Safaraini (1114-1188H). By employing the interdisciplinary approach to analyzing the primary sources, the result of the study revealed that one of the internal consensuses of the Hanbali school of thought is clear enough. When there is a dispute over the results of tarjih formulation in ushul and furu', the hierarchy of the referential authority is as the following; first, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal; second, Ibnu Qudamah al-Maqdisi al-Hanbali; third, Al-Majd al-Din Abi al-Barakat al-Taimi; fourth, Ibn Muflih al-Hanbali; fifth, Ibnu Rajab al-Hanbali; sixth, Ibnu Hamdan al-Hanbali; seventh, Taqiyy al-Din Ibn Taimiyyah; and eighth, Ibn 'Abdus al-Hanbali. Considering its various controversies, the leading scholars of the Hanbali school of thought positioned Ibn Taimiyyah in the seventh rank in the hierarchy of the school of thought's authority. They emphasized that Ibn Taimiyyah was not the only one bearing the title of sheikh al-Islam within the Hanbali school of thought.

Introduction

Salafism (*al-salafiyah*) as a discourse of schools of thought in the fields of theology, fiqh, and Sufism has become popular since it was introduced by Ibn Taimiyyah, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, and Ibn 'Abd al-Hadi. At the same time, the school of thought of Ibn Taimiyyah and his colleagues marks a new epistemic division between the mainstream groups of the Sunni-mazhabi (*Hanafiyah, Malikiyyah, Shafi'iyyah, and Hanbaliyyah*) and the Salafi-taimi (*Salafi-Taymiyyah*) themselves.

In the discourse of Islamic studies, the Muslim intellectuals and scholars concerning the ideas and fatwas of Ibn Taimiyyah are divided into two groups; his supporters (minority) and critics (majority). Representing his supporters are those who admire Ibn Taimiyyah's thought and consider his thoughts and fatwas in the fields of theology, *fiqh*, and Sufism to be superior, surpassing the opinion of the imams of other schools of thought or Hanbali school leaders, even exceeding the authority of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal himself, including ordaining him as

khatim *al-mujtabidin* (the last *mujtabids*).¹

Consequently, his fanatical supporters and disciples of Ibn Taymiyyah became exaggerated in attitude (*al-ghulum*) by believing that Ibn Taymiyyah had reached the level of *ma'shum* (free from sin). They think that the *manhaj* (method) of Ibn Taymiyyah is the true one and completely ignores the epistemic criticism of the "problematic-controversial" aspects in his theological *fatwas*, *fiqh*, and *tasawuf*.² Whereas in the *manhaj* of the *Salaf-al-Salih* or *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* scholars across schools and generations, the only figure believed to have attained the level of *ma'shum* is the Prophet Muhammad himself, no one else.

On the other hand, representing the critics of Ibn Taymiyyah's thought, based on a rigorous academic examination, the critics and Muslim scholars from different schools and generations rejected Ibn Taymiyyah and doubted his scientific *manhaj*. This includes opposing his claim to being on par with the *mujtabid* imams of the four schools of *fiqh*. Instead, his critics positioned him as a *mujtabid* in his school (*mujtabid fi mazhabih*). Based on specific parameters, this critic argues that Ibn Taymiyyah's theological thinking is opposed to the authenticity of the *manhaj* of the *Salaf al-Salih* generation, especially in the theological field.

Considering the polemic between his supporters and opponents above, this study begins by elaborating on the internal response of the Hanbali scholars (during or near) to the thoughts and fatwas of Ibn Taymiyyah (661-728H). Including testing its alignment with Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal's *manhaj* so that the position and status of Ibn Taymiyyah are apparent in the Hanbali school itself. This is followed by an epistemic-critical examination of the fanatical and exaggerated claims of Ibn Taymiyyah's supporters.

¹ Mushthafa Hamdun 'Ilyan al-Hanbali, *al-Sadah al-Hanabilah aa al-Ikhtilafubum ma'a al-Salafiyah al-Mu'ashirah fi al-'Aqa'Id wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashawwuf* (Amman: Dar al-Nur al-Mubin, 2014), 111.

² Mushthafa Hamdun 'Ilyan al-Hanbali, *al-Sadah al-Hanabilah aa al-Ikhtilafubum ma'a al-Salafiyah al-Mu'ashirah fi al-'Aqa'Id wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashawwuf*, 111.

This study reviews two schemes within the framework of a critical epistemological examination and anticipating judgmental bias. *Firstly*, as a critical analysis, examining the internal critique of the thoughts, capacities, and status of Ibn Taimiyyah's fatwa raised by the leaders of the Hanbali school of thought across generations. Including the criticism of Imam al-Mardawi al-Hanbali (817-885H), Imam Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali (736-795H), Imam Ibn Najjar al-Futuhi al-Hanbali (898-972H), Imam al-Buhuti al-Hanbali (1000-1051H), Imam al-Safaraini al-Hanbali (1114-1188H) and several other Hanbali school leaders.

Secondly, to complete the basis of analysis by utilizing the intellectual tests of authoritative Muslim scholars, ulama, and historians across different schools of thought across generations who lived in the same era as Ibn Taymiyyah, such as al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani al-Syafi'i al-Asy'ari (773-852H) in his book *al-Durar al-Kaminah fi A'yani al-Mi'at al-Thaminah*; Shaykh al-Islam Taqiyy al-Din al-Subki al-Syafi'i al-Asy'ari (683-756H) in the book *al-Durrah al-Mudhi'ah fi al-Radd 'ala Ibni Taimiyyah*;³ Imam Badru al-Din al-'Aini al-Hanafi al-Ash'ari al-Maturidi (762-855H) in the book *Iqd al-Juman fi Tarikh Abl al-Zaman*;⁴ Imam Jamal al-Din Yusuf al-Muzi al-Syafi'i (654-742H) in *Tahdhib al-Kamal fi Asma' al-Rijal*;⁵ or al-Hafiz Abu al-Fida 'Ibn Kathir al-Syafi'i al-Athari (774H) in *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*.⁶

Ibnu Taimiyyah's Theological Doctrine Controversy

Ibn Taimiyyah, in his various works, formulated dozens of concepts and controversial opinions, including ten important ideas that have been

³ Taqiyy al-Din al-Subki Al-Syafi'i, *Al-Durrah al-Mudhi'ah fi al-Radd 'ala Ibni Taimiyyah, tahqiq*. Muhammad Zahid Al-Kawthari (Dimashqi: Mathba'ah al-Taraqi, 1347 H), 6-26.

⁴ Badr al-Din al-'Aini Al-Hanafi, *Iqd al-Juman fi Tarikh Abl al-Zaman*, tahqiq Mahmud Riziq Mahmud, Juz 4. (al-Qahiroh: Dar al-Kutub aa al-Watha'iq al-Qawmiyyah, 1431H/2010), 125-126.

⁵ Al-Hafiz Jamal al-Din Abi al-Hajjaj Yusuf al-Muzi Al-Syafi'i, *Tahdhib al-Kamal fi Asma' al-Rijal*, tahqiq Bashari 'Awwad Ma'ruf, Cetakan ke-1. (Beirut: Thab'ah Muassasah al-Risalah, 1408H/1988M), 18-23.

⁶ Mushthafa Hamdun 'Ilyan al-Hanbali al-Hanbali, *al-Sadah al-Hanabilah wa al-Ikhtilafubum ma'a al-Salafiyah al-Mu'ashirah fi al-'Aqa'Id wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashawwuf*, 112.

the target of criticism and rejection from the internal Hanbali school and across generations. *First*, Ibn Taimiyyah classifies the concept of tawhid as *ulubhiyyah*,⁷ *rububiyyah*,⁸ *asma' wa sifat*.⁹ Some contemporary studies say the three formulas of tawhid above are adopted into the theology of Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab (*Salafi-Wahhabi*), although with a variety of more extreme bias deviations.¹⁰

According to the majority of the ulama of the four schools of *fiqh* (*Sunni*), the controversy and rejection of ulama across schools and generations against the teachings of Ibn Taimiyyah are centered on his ideas of *tajsim* (anthropomorphism), *tasybih* (materialization of Allah) and *jibab* (direction) which are spread throughout his various works. As in the book '*Ary al-Rahman*, Ibn Taimiyyah argues that Allah SWT resides (*istima'*) essentially above the 'Throne, as written in Q.S. Thaha: 5. Allah SWT also has a face form, as stated in Q.S. al-Rahman: 27.¹¹

Ibn Taimiyyah, in the book '*Ary al-Rahman*, also wrote that Allah SWT has both hands essentially without a mechanism (*kayf*) when interpreting textually Q.S. Shad: 75 and Q.S. al-Maidah: 64. Likewise, when he argued that Allah SWT has eyes essentially without a mechanism (*kayf*), when interpreting Q.S. al-Qamar: 14.¹²

⁷ Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu Taimiyyah, *Majmu' Fatawa*, tartib 'Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad bin Qasim, Juz 1. (Madinah: Majma' Malik Fahd li al-Thiba'ah wa al-Nashr, 1425H/2004M), 20-36. Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu Taimiyyah, *Majmu' Fatawa*, tartib 'Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad bin Qasim, Juz 2. (Madinah: Majma' Malik Fahd li al-Thiba'ah wa al-Nashr, 1425H/2004M), 36-37.

⁸ Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu Taimiyyah, *Majmu' Fatawa*, tartib 'Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad bin Qasim, Juz 1, 37-48. Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu Taimiyyah, *Majmu' Fatawa*, tartib 'Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad bin Qasim, Juz 2, 38-39.

⁹ Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu Taimiyyah, *Majmu' Fatawa*, tartib 'Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad bin Qasim, Juz 3, 1-128.

¹⁰ Hasan 'Ali al-Saqqaf al-Husaini al-Syafi'i, *al-Tandid bi Man 'Addada al-Tawhid Ibtali Mubawalab al-Tathlith fi al-Tawhid wa al-'Aqidah al-Islamiyyah*, 2nd ed. (Ardon: Dar al-Imam al-Nawawi, 1413H/1992M), 42-54. 'Abd Allah bin 'Abd al-Rahman al-Makki, *Taqsim al-Tawhid fi al-Mizān min Khilāl ma Katabahu al-Mufasssirin wa al-Mubaddithun wa al-Mutakallimun wa al-Fuqaha'*, 1st ed. (Ardu: Dar al-Nur al-Mubin Li al-Nashr Wa al-Tawzi', 2017), 5-52.

¹¹ Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu Taimiyyah, '*Arsh al-Rahman, tabqiq* 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Sayruwan', 1st ed. (Beirut: Dar al-'Ulum al-'Arabiyyah, 1415H/1995M), 16-17.

¹² Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu Taimiyyah, '*Arsh al-Rahman, tabqiq* 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Sayruwan', 16-17.

Ibn Taimiyyah, in the book *'Arsh al-Rahman*, also writes that the meaning of residing (*istiwa'*) in verse above is the essential meaning for Allah SWT; real resides (*mumasab al-istiwa'*). In a sense, Allah, the Highest, surpasses the height of the Throne without needing an equivalent because Allah SWT is the One who created the Throne and placed it high above all His creatures. After making the Throne, Allah SWT resides (essentially) on it".¹³

Regarding the determination of the position of Allah SWT (*ithbat al-'ulum*), Ibn Taimiyyah argues that many *Salaf* scholars have the same opinion, including Imam al-Dhahabi in his book *al-'Uluww* and the details of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah in the book *Ijtima' al-Juyusy al-Islamiyyah 'ala Ghazw al-Mu'aththilah wa al-Jahmiyyah*.¹⁴ On the other hand, Ibn Taymiyyah considered the *Salaf* scholars who interpret the word '*ala* (above) with the word *fawq* (above) in the sense that Allah SWT is the One who is Most Noble than all His creatures, including His Throne itself, so the sound reason can not accept this kind of takwil model," including for example by making an analogy about the position of a king is higher (noble) than a prime minister; or the assumption that the value of the dinar is higher than the value of the dirham."¹⁵

Regarding the concept of direction (*jibab*), Ibn Taymiyyah concluded that this state of the presence of Allah SWT is (essentially) clear and definite. The ulama also discussed a lot about the Hadith that during Isra', Allah SWT placed Prophet Muhammad SAW above the Throne, side by side with Allah SWT;¹⁶ or the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, that certainly (when) Allah SWT resides above the Throne, the angels supporting the Throne feel heavy, because of the weight of the Greatest Essence.¹⁷ If Allah SWT wills, it is easy for Allah SWT to sit on the back

¹³ Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu Taimiyyah, *'Arsh al-Rahman, tabqiq* 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Sayruwan', 19-23.

¹⁴ Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu Taimiyyah, *'Arsh al-Rahman, tabqiq* 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Sayruwan', 35-38.

¹⁵ Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu Taimiyyah, *'Arsh al-Rahman*, 41-42.

¹⁶ Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu Taimiyyah, *Majmu' Fatawa*, Juz 4, 374.

¹⁷ Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu Taimiyyah, *Bayan Talbis al-Jahmiyyah fi Ta'sis Bida'ihim al-*

of a small mosquito, which remains free to move because of the power and gentleness of Allah SWT over it. So wouldn't it be easier for Allah SWT if he resided on the massive Throne?"¹⁸

In determining the direction (*jibah and badd*), Ibn Taymiyyah also confirmed his argument. If Allah SWT (freely) moves and is free to occupy anything, what argument can invalidate our opinion?¹⁹ Allah SWT has limits (hadd) that are unknown except Him, and no one should doubt the limits that only He understands. According to Ibn Taymiyyah, we only must believe and submit knowledge of this matter to Allah SWT. The place where Allah SWT resides above the Throne also has its limits. Allah SWT resides above the Throne, which is located above the layers of the sky. These two areas (boundaries and places) are the limits. This understanding has become a mutual agreement between Muslims and non-Muslims that Allah SWT is in the sky, and they set it as the limit and place of Allah SWT.²⁰ Furthermore, none of the *Salaf* scholars denounced this kind of understanding or condemned it as the understanding of the *Mujassimah*.²¹

Ibn Taimiyyah added, is there nothing in the Qur'an or Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and the leading *ulama* of the *Salaf* that does not say that Allah SWT is not a *jism*, or is not in the form of a *jism*, or a particular entity? Ibn Taimiyyah asserted that denying the meaning of "textual" based on the explanation of religious arguments and logical arguments, including using *majaz* and *ta'wil*, is foolishness and

Kalamiyah, n.d Juz 1, 573. Thariq Muhammad Najib al-Laham, *Allah Laisa Jisman*, 1st ed. (Beirut: Shirkah Dar al-Mashari', 1435H/2014M), 340.

¹⁸ Thariq Muhammad Najib al-Laham, *Allah Laisa Jisman*, 340.

¹⁹ Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu Taimiyyah, *Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah fi Naqd Kalam al-Shi'ah wa al-Qadariyyah wa Bihamiyyi al-Kitab al-Musamma Bayan Muwafaqah Sharib al-Ma'qul li Shabih al-Manqul*, ed. 1, Juz 1 (Bulaq Mishra al-Mahmiyyah: Mathba'ah al-Kubra al-Amiriyyah, 1321H), 210.

²⁰ Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu Taimiyyah, *Bayan Muwafaqah Sharib al-Ma'qul li Shabih al-Manqul*, 1st ed., Juz 1 (Bulaq Mishra al-Mahmiyyah: Mathba'ah al-Kubra al-Amiriyyah, 1321H), 29-30.

²¹ Thariq Muhammad al-Laham, *Allah Laisa Jisman*, 341.

misguidance.²² Understanding this model is easily found in various other works of Ibn Taymiyyah, including in the book *Su'al fi Hadith al-Nuzul wa Answeruhu aw Syarh Hadith al-Nuzul*,²³ including when Ibn Taymiyyah in the book *Bayan Talbis al-Jahmiyyah fi Ta' sis Bida'ihim al-Kalamiyyah* illustrates Allah SWT with *syabun amrad* (handsome young man).²⁴

Second, Ibn Taymiyyah attributes unfamiliar concepts related to the form of Allah SWT, which are entirely different from the understanding of the majority of the Salaf al-Salih generation of the Sunni school across generations. For example, the construct of Ibn Taymiyyah's thought about the form of Allah SWT in certain "boundaries" and "spaces"; Ibn Taymiyyah's concept of *tajsim* (personification) and *tasybih* (anthropomorphism); and the theological idea of Ibn Taymiyyah which emphasizes that Allah SWT occupies the creature of *hawadith*.²⁵ *Third*, Ibn Taymiyyah believes hell is relative (*al-qawl bi fana'i al-nar*). *Fourth*, Ibn Taymiyyah also views the universe (entity) as eternal (*al-qawl bi al-qidami al-naw'i*).²⁶

Fifth, Ibn Taymiyyah does not recognize and even rejects *majaaz* (metaphor) or *ta'wil* as an important method in interpreting the Qur'an and Sunnah texts. In fact, Ibn al-Hadi Ibn al-Mibrad al-Hanbali (840-909H) asserted that Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal himself and almost all Hanbali scholars and ulama accepted and used metaphors and *ta'wil* as important tools in interpreting Qur'an and Hadith, except for Ibn Taymiyyah. *Sixth*,

²² Thariq Muhammad al-Laham, *Allah Laisa Jisman*, 341.

²³ Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu Taimiyyah, *Su'al fi Hadith al-Nuzul wa Jawabuhu aw Syarh Hadith al-Nuzul*, tahqiq Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Rahman al-Khamis, 1st ed. (Riyadh: Dar al-'Ashimah, 1414H/1993M), 70-78; 128-181; 202-236; 364-423.

²⁴ Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu Taimiyyah, *Bayan Talbis al-Jahmiyyah fi Ta' sis Bida'ihim al-Kalamiyyah*, tahqiq Muhammad al-Buraydi, Juz 7 (Saudi Arabia: al-Mamlakah al-Jahmiyyah fi Ta' sis Bida'ihim al-Kalamiyyah 1426), 290.

²⁵ Mushthafa Hamdun 'Ilyan al-Hanbali, *al-Sadab al-Hanabilah wa al-Ikbtifalafubum ma'a al-Salafiyah al-Mu'ashirah fi al-'Aqa'id wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashawwuf* ('Amman: Dar al-Nur al-Mubin, 2014), 121. Sa'id 'Abd al-Lathif Fawdah, *al-Kashif al-Shaghir 'an 'Aqa'id Ibni Taimiyyah*, 1st ed. ('Amman: Dar al-Razi, 2000), 115-288.

²⁶ Baha' al-Din 'Abd al-Wahhab bin 'Abd al-Rahman al-Ikhmimi, *Risalah fi al-Radd 'ala Ibni Taimiyyah fi Masalah Hawaditha la Anwala Labu*, tahqiq Sa'id 'Abd al-Lathif Fawdah, 1st ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Dakhair, 2014), 69-77.

Ibn Taimiyyah forbade Muslims to visit (*ziyarah*) the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad. In worship rituals, he tends to be against the practice of *tawassul* (intercession), *tabarruk* (seeks blessings), and *istighastab* (pray together). These practices and rituals are commonly carried out by adherents of the previous four schools (Sunni-mazhab), even the leaders and scholars of the Hanbali school themselves.

Seventh, Ibn Taymiyyah does not acknowledge and even rejects the categorization of bid'ah into *hasanah* (good) and *sayyi'ah* (bad). Instead, He considered all innovations regarded as heresy.²⁷ Although in his track record of thought, Ibn Taymiyyah also introduced many innovations of new thinking as described above. *Eighth*, Ibn Taimiyyah argues that the human spirit undergoes a process of reincarnation from one body to another (*tanasukh al-arnab*).²⁸

Ninth, Ibn Taimiyyah "provoked" hatred towards Sayyidina Ali bin Abi Talib R.A and Sayyidah Fatimah R.A, who were Ahlu al-Bait. Although not to the point of judging both as infidels (like the *Khawarij* sect).²⁹ Tenth, Ibn Taymiyyah rejects or does not recognize the validity of the *ijma'* (consensus) of the imam of the *maẓhab* and their successors.

Position of Ibn Taymiyyah in the Hanbali School

One of the Hanbali school leaders, Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, in the book *al-Dhail 'ala Thabaqat al-Hanabilah* said, "Ibn Taimiyyah is one of the many famous mujtahids among the Hanbali school, an expert in *ilm ushul, fiqh, tafsir*, knowledgeable in Hadith science and very productive in his work. Ibn Taymiyyah is quite famous among Muslim scholars for the title "*Shaykh al-Islam*."⁶⁰ However, within the Hanbali school of thought,

²⁷ Mushthafa Hamdun 'Ilyan al-Hanbali, *al-Sadab al-Hanabilah wa al-Ikhtilafubum ma'a al-Salafiyah al-Mu'ashirah fi al-'Aqa'id wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashammuf*, 121.

²⁸ Taqiyy al-Din Abu Bakar al-Hishni al-Syafi'i al-Dimashqi, *Daf'u Shubahi Man Shabbaha wa Tamarrada wa Nasaba Dhalika ila al-Sayyid al-Jalil al-Imam Ahmad, tabqiq* Muhammad Zahid al-Kawthari (Mishra: al-Maktabah al-Azhariyyah li al-Turath, 2010), 97.

²⁹ Taqiyy al-Din Abu Bakar al-Hishni al-Syafi'i al-Dimashqi, *Daf'u Shubahi Man Shabbaha wa Tamarrada wa Nasaba Dhalika ila al-Sayyid al-Jalil al-Imam Ahmad*, 188...

³⁰ Mushthafa Hamdun 'Ilyan al-Hanbali, *al-Sadab al-Hanabilah wa al-Ikhtilafubum Ma'a*

the title of *Shaykh al-Islam* was not only attributed to Ibn Taymiyyah. Many other Hanbali scholars also received the title of *Shaykh al-Islam*, including Shaykh al-Islam Taqiyy al-Din Ibn Daqiq al-'Id al-Hanbali (625-702H).³¹

Imam Ibn Syathi al-Hanbali, in his *Mukhtashar Thabaqat al-Hanabilah*, identifies other Hanbali scholars and scholars who also have the title of *Shaykh al-Islam*. Starting from Abu al-Wafa bin 'Uqail bin Ahmad al-Zafari al-Hanbali (431-513H), Jamal al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn al-Jawzi al-Hanbali (510-597H), Majd al-Din Abi al-Barakat al-Hanbali (590-652H), Muwaffaq al-Din Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi al-Hanbali (541-620H), Shams al-Din Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi al-Hanbali (597-682H), and several another scholar. Imam Ibn Syathi al-Hanbali himself added that above the title of *Shaykh al-Islam* itself, there are still some higher dignities, including *Sulthan al-Masyayikh* (The Supreme Guru), which is assigned to Sulthan al-Masyayikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani al-Hanbali, an expert in *tafsir*, *hadith* as well as the great *Sufi* founder of the *Qadiriyyah* Order.³² Through this testimony, Imam Ibn Syathi al-Hanbali seemed to emphasize that the Hanbali ulama who received the title of *Shaykh al-Islam* was not the monopoly of one person but many. Including ulama or scholars from other schools.

Critical judgments and testimonies on Ibn Taimiyyah's thoughts also emerged from the famous commentators who lived during his time, namely Imam Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi al-Syafi'i al-Ash'ari (654-745H), as written in the book *al-Babr al-Mubith*,³³ and *Tafsir al-Nabr al-Madd min al-Babr al-Mubith*,³⁴ "About the Verse (His chair covers the heavens and the earth, al-Baqarah:255)." I (Abu Hayyan) have read the book '*Ary al-*

al-Salafiyah al-Mu'ashirah fi al-'Aqa'id wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashawwuf, 111. Al-Hafiz Ibnu Rajab Al-Hanbali, *al-Dhail 'ala Thabaqat al-Hanabilah*, *Juz* 2, *tabqiq* Abu Hazim Usamah bin Hasan wa Abu al-Zahra' al-Hazim 'Ali Bahjat (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1997), 307.

³¹ Al-Hafiz Ibnu Rajab Al-Hanbali, *al-Dhail 'ala Thabaqat al-Hanabilah*, *Juz* 2, 308.

³² Muhammad Jamil bin 'Umar al-Baghdadi al-Ma'ruf bi Ibni al-Shathi, *Mukhtashar Thabaqat al-Hanabilah*, *tabqiq* Fawwaz Ahmad Zamarli, 1st ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi, 1986), 36-58.

³³ Imam Abu Hayyan Al-Andalusi, *al-Babr al-Mubith*, *Juz* 15, *tabqiq* Mahir Habbusy, 1st ed. (Dimashqi: Dar al-Risalah al-'Alamiyyah, 2015), 15-16.

³⁴ Imam Abu Hayyan Al-Andalusi, *al-Babr al-Mubith*, *Juz* 15, 17-18.

Rahman, the handwriting of Ibn 'Taimiyyah, who lived during our time. In this book, Ibn 'Taimiyyah argues that Allah SWT sits on a chair and vacates a "space/place" beside Him as the seat of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Because of this opinion, Ibn 'Taimiyyah was criticized and rejected until he died.³⁵

Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi provided a critical note and, at the same time, verified the misunderstandings and disinformation presented by the fanatical followers of Ibn 'Taimiyyah. They "claim" that three ulama who lived during Ibn 'Taimiyyah, namely al-Hafiz Salah al-Din al-'Ala'i, al-Hafiz Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi, and al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani supported the teachings of *tajsim* and *tasybih* Ibn 'Taimiyyah, that is not true at all. Instead, they unilaterally lied with this claim.³⁶ Because the three famous ulama rejected the concept of *tajsim* and *tasybih* of Ibn 'Taimiyyah.

In summary, the rejection and criticism of Muslim scholars on Ibn 'Taimiyyah's thoughts were written by Imam Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani in the book *al-Durar al-Kaminah fi A'yani al-Mi'at al-Thaminah*,³⁷ as follows:

The rejection of ulama and scholars on the thoughts of Ibn 'Taimiyyah is divided into four groups. First, the group that categorizes Ibn 'Taimiyyah theologically *mujassimah* and *musyabbihah* follower as stated in the book *al-'Aqidah al-Hamawiyah al-Kubra*,³⁸ or book *al-'Aqidah al-Wasithiyah*,³⁹ and several other books. Including the fatwa of Ibn 'Taimiyyah, which mentions the face, hands, feet, and calves are the *haqiqiyah* attributes of Allah SWT; and Allah (SWT) sits on the throne

³⁵ Imam Abu Hayyan Al-Andalusi, *Tafsir al-Nabr al-Madd Min al-Babr al-Mubith, tabqiq* 'Umar al-As'ad (Beirut: Dar al-Jail, 1995), 372.

³⁶ Thariq Muhammad Najib al-Liham, *Allah Laisa Jisman*, 5-6; 191.

³⁷ Al-Hafiz Ibnu Hajar al-'Asqalani Al-Syafi'i, *al-Durar al-Kaminah*, n.d, 188.

³⁸ Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu 'Taimiyyah, *al-Fatava al-Hamawiyah al-Kubra, tabqiq* Qushayy Muhibb al-Din al-Khathib, 4th ed. (Riyadh: Mathba'ah al-Salafiyyah wa Maktabatuha, 1410H), 1-72. Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu 'Taimiyyah, *al-Fatava al-Hamawiyah al-Kubra, tabqiq* Syarif Muhammad Fu'ad Hazza', 1st ed. (Mishra: Sibbin al-Kawm, Dar Fajrin li al-Turath, 1991), 1-192. Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu 'Taimiyyah, *al-Fatava al-Hamawiyah al-Kubra, tabqiq* Hamad bin 'Abd al-Muhsin al-Tuwajjiri, 2nd ed. (Riyad: Dar al-Shami'i, 2004), 1-637.

³⁹ Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu 'Taimiyyah, *al-'Aqidah al-Wasithiyah, tabqiq* Qushayy Muhibb al-Din al-Khathib, 9th ed. (al-Qahiroh: Mathba'ah al-Salafiyyah wa Maktabatuha, 1399H), 1-48. Taqiyy al-Din Ibnu 'Taimiyyah, *al-'Aqidah al-Wasithiyah, tabqiq* Abu Muhammad Ashraf bin 'Abd Al-Maqshud, 2nd ed. (Riyadh: Adwa' al-Salaf, 1999), 113.

essentially. The second group categorizes Ibn Taymiyyah as the *zindiq* because he forbids and considers sin, every form of practice such as *ziyarah*, *istighathah*, and *tabarruk* has been commonly done since the generation of Companions, *Tabi'in*, and Muslims at that time. The third is the group that categorizes Ibn Taymiyyah as a hypocrite for inflaming excessive hatred for Sayyidina 'Ali bin Abi Talib R.A who, according to him, is very ambitious to become Caliph and loves power more; judged that the Companion of 'Uthman bin 'Affan R.A loved the world too much; doubted the Islam of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq R.A because he converted to Islam at old age, and doubt the Hadith narrated by Sayyidina 'Ali bin Abi Talib R.A when he was a child because the history of children cannot be accepted at all. Fourth, the group that considered Ibn Taymiyyah too ambitious to be the supreme imam (*al-imamah al-kubra*), thus making him dare to leave the *manhaj* of the imam of the four schools and *salaf al-shalih*.⁴⁰

Based on the explanation above, the leaders of the Hanbali school and ulama of other schools emphasized that even though Ibn Taymiyyah had the title of *Shaykh al-Islam*, his *manhaj* and *fatwas* could not surpass the *manhaj* and position of the *fatwa* of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal and the prominent leaders of the Hanbali school, Imam Shafi'i, Imam Malik bin Anas and Imam Abu Hanifa. Even among the Hanbali school of thought, Ibn Taymiyyah (661-728H) was seen as not having reached the dignity of a *mujtahid*, as Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal's degree in the science of *Hadith*, both in *narration* and *dirayah*; or at the same level as Imam Shafi'i in the science of *fiqh* and Arabic linguistics; or at the level of Imam Abu Hanifah in the field of *fiqh* of the Iraqi population (*fiqh ahl al-Iraq*); or equivalent to Imam Malik in the field of *fiqh* of the people of Medina (*fiqh ahl al-Madinah*); or at the same level as Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq RA or Imam Zaid bin 'Ali bin al-Husayn bin Abi Talib RA in the context of *fiqh ahl al-bait*.⁴¹

Although most of Ibn Taymiyyah's understanding of theology and *fiqh* received a firm rejection from the ulama of his time and the next Hanbali generation, especially regarding his theory of

⁴⁰ Mushthafa Hamdun 'Ilyan al-Hanbali, *al-Sadah al-Hanabilah wa al-Ikhtilafubum Ma'a al-Salafiyah al-Mu'ashirah fi al-'Aqa'id wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashawwuf*, 113.

⁴¹ Mushthafa Hamdun 'Ilyan al-Hanbali, *al-Sadah al-Hanabilah wa al-Ikhtilafubum Ma'a al-Salafiyah al-Mu'ashirah fi al-'Aqa'id wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashawwuf*, 112.

"anthropomorphism" or in Islamic literature known as *aqidah tajsim*, *tasybih*, *jihab*, and the prohibition of pilgrimages to the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and *istighathah*, none of them are prompted into extreme judgments against him. None of the *Sunni-mazhab* ulama have sentenced him to disbelieve or apostasy. This situation contrasts Wahhabism theology, which "easily" condemns infidels or apostates (*tasarra'a fi al-takfir*) to individuals or groups with different theological sects from the Wahhabism doctrine.

Status of Ibn Taymiyyah in the Hanbali School

Studying the Hanbali school by looking at the works of Ibn Taymiyyah and his loyalist supporters without examining the works of other Hanbali scholars can lead to "methodological bias." First, scholars and leaders of the Hanbali school themselves considered that Ibn Taymiyyah was inconsistent in using the *manhaj* or methodology formulated by Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal. On the other hand, in the principal theme, the leaders of the Hanbali school often find Ibn Taymiyyah's *ijtihad* based on his *manhaj*. It is strengthened by the notes of Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali in the book *al-Dhail 'ala Thabaqat al-Hanabilah*,⁴² when quoting the statement of Imam al-Dhahabi al-Syafi'i al-Hanbali;

Imam al-Dhahabi said: Ibn Taymiyyah was an expert and a memorizer of *hadith*. Not many *hadith* experts can memorize *hadith* like him. He has an honorable lineage and has earned the respect of the current scholars because of his expertise in arguing and presenting arguments. Ibn Taymiyyah also mastered Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) above the average scholar of his time; he understood the *khilafiyah* aspects in various schools of thought, including the fatwas of the generation of companions and their successors, the *tabi'in*. However, in presenting religious *fatwas*, Ibn Taymiyyah often did not use certain schools' *manhaj* procedure (methodology), including the Hanbali *manhaj* itself. Ibn Taymiyyah more often issued religious fatwas based on the arguments and

⁴² Al-Hafiz Ibnu Rajab Al-Hanbali, *al-Dhail 'ala Thabaqat al-Hanabilah*, Juz 2, *tabqiq* Abu Hazim Usamah bin Hasan dan Abu al-Zahra'a Hazim 'Ali Bahjat (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1997), 309.

manhaj of his creations.”⁴³

The testimony of Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali and Imam al-Dhahabi al-Shafi'i al-Hanbali reinforces the statement that although Ibn Taymiyyah is known as an expert in giving *fatwas*, in the process of *istidlal* and *istinbath*, he never uses the mechanism and rules of *istinbath* that Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal has formulated. For example, in the case of giving limitations in the case of *sadd al-dhara'i'* to be more rigid, the chance for *ijtihad* becomes increasingly narrow and limited. Ibn Taymiyyah minimized and narrowed the scope of the *ushul fiqh* that, in Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal's view, is quite fluid and flexible. For example, Ibn Taymiyyah forbade the use of *hadith dha'if* (weak) for *fadh'il al-a'mal* activities (virtues of charity). Whereas the founder of the school, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal himself, allowed and accepted the *hadith dha'if* under certain conditions.⁴⁴

One of Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali's disciples once asked him: "what do you think when there are Hanbali ulama or scholars who are successful and able to summarize, enrich and expand the details of the discussion in one "main" or "branch" theme (*al-masa'il ushuliyah aw al-furu'iyah*), does this mean that the ulama or scholar has a higher achievement and dignity than the previous generation?" Imam Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali replied:

This phenomenon often happened and beset the authors of Islamic scholarly books, including among ulama and fiqh experts for several generations. They are too fond of expanding each issue's description and often overdoing it. Although the previous imams did not discuss that in detail, they provided sufficient basic principles to be developed in a balanced manner. If so, can one rank and believe that these fiqh experts have reached a status more than the ulama of their predecessor schools? For example, surpassing Imam Sa'id bin Musayyab (d. 93H), Imam al-Hasan al-Basri (d. 110H), Imam 'Atha' bin Abi Rabah (d. 115H), Imam Ibrahim al-Nakha'i (d. 95H), Imam Sufyan al-Thawri (d. 161H), Imam al-Laith bin Sa'ad (d. 175H), Imam al-Awza'i (d. 214H), Imam Malik bin Anas (d. 179H) , Imam

⁴³ Mushthafa Hamdun 'Ilyan al-Hanbali, *al-Sadab al-Hanabilah wa al-Ikhtilafuhum Ma'a al-Salafiyah al-Mu'ashirah fi al-'Aqa'id wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashawwuf*, 114.

⁴⁴ Mushthafa Hamdun 'Ilyan al-Hanbali, *al-Sadab al-Hanabilah wa al-Ikhtilafuhum Ma'a al-Salafiyah al-Mu'ashirah fi al-'Aqa'id wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashawwuf*, 114.

Muhammad bin Idris al-Syafi'i (d. 204H), Imam Abu Hanifah al-Nu'man (d. 150H), Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (d. 241H), Imam Ishaq bin Rahawih (d. 238H), Imam Abi 'Ubaidillah al-Khudhri (d. 264H), and so on. This situation also afflicted the generation of *tabi'in*, who often detail *fiqh* discussion more than the companions' generation. If so, is it appropriate for the Muslims to believe that the generation of *tabi'in* is better than the companions of the Prophet Muhammad? It can be implied that Imam Ibn Rajab rejected this opinion because the dignity of virtue or nobility is not only based on certain scientific parameters or the details of discussing religious themes alone.⁴⁵

Second, the descriptions and discussions in popular books (*mu'tamad*) from Hanbali ulama and scholars have reached out to the details of religious issues (*al-masa'il al-diniyyah*), both in faith and *fiqh*, which incidentally was not mentioned in the *fatwas* of Ibn Taimiyyah. Imam 'Abd al-Wahhab bin Fairuz al-Hanbali, one of the crucial figures in the Hanbali school, confirmed this: "You need to know, actually Hanbali ulama and scholars have elaborated the *fatwas* of *ushul* and *furu'* according to the *manhaj* of the school of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal in detail. Very few areas of religious affairs have not been discussed, whether through *takbrij*, *qiyas*, *majbuh*, *manthuq*, and *tashrih* methods. Whoever Hanbali ulama and scholars use and apply these methods means that he is walking in harmony with the instructions."⁴⁶

Third, in *fiqh*, when compared with the opinion of Ibn Taimiyyah, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal's *fatwas* are more detailed, extensive, and sourced from the narrations of *naqli* and *'aqli*, accompanied by abundant evidence. Imam Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, when reviewing the *fiqh* formulation of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal through the book *al-Radd 'ala Man Ittaba'a Ghair al-Mazhabibi al-Arba'ah* stated, "Anyone who likes to investigate and study formulas, aspects, and breadth of the scope of Imam Ahmad bin

⁴⁵ Al-Hafiz Ibnu Rajab Al-Hanbali, *Al-Radd 'ala Man Ittaba'a Ghair al-Mazhabib al-Arba'ah*, *tabqiq* Markaz al-'Arabi, 1st ed. (Mathba'ah al-Murabbi, 2016), 54-60. al-Hafiz Ibnu Rajab al-Hanbali, *al-Radd 'ala Man Ittaba'a Ghair al-Mazhabib al-Arba'ah*, *tabqiq* al-Walid bin 'Abd al-Rahman Alu Faryan, 1st ed. (Makkah al-Mukarramah: Dar 'Alim al-Fawa'id, n.d.), 54-60.

⁴⁶ Mushthafa Hamdun 'Ilyan al-Hanbali, *al-Sadab al-Hanabilah wa al-Ikhtilafuhum Ma'a al-Salafiyah al-Mu'ashirah fi al-'Aqa'id wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashawwuf*, 115;

Hanbal's *fiqh*, they will get a detailed understanding of a solid religion from the results of his *istinbath* because the review and spectrum of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal's *fatwa* are quite detailed. It is common for scholars and leaders of the Hanbali school to face difficulties when elaborating them. So they have to look for comparative studies in various sources of other schools of thought. This situation sometimes causes inaccuracies and misunderstandings in capturing the message of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal.⁴⁷

Fourth is the achievement of the level (*maqam*) of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal as a *mustaqil mujtabid*; based on specific criteria and conditions, it is not only legitimized by ulama and leaders of this school itself but also by Imam Shafi'i and other famous *ulama* and scholars across the schools of his time. In contrast to Ibn Taymiyyah, without reducing the capacity of his knowledge, the well-known leaders of the Hanbali school of thought and the leaders of other schools of thought judge that Ibn Taymiyyah never reached this level. From testimonials and legitimacy from experts in *tafsir*, *fiqh*, *hadith*, linguistics, and *Sufis* of his time, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal is believed to have memorized at least one million *hadiths* of the Prophet Muhammad. Even Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal received the title of *Amir al-Mu'minin fi al-Hadith* from the leading ulama of his era, both from internal and across schools.⁴⁸

Fifth, the official consensus (*ijma'*) among the leading ulama and scholars of the early Hanbali school noted that the position of Ibn Taymiyyah's *fatwa* was not included in the top five categories of legal *istinbath*. The leaders of this school considered that Ibn Taymiyyah's *fatwas* were like the *fatwas* of other Hanbali scholars such as Imam Abu Ya'la, Imam Ibn Hamid, and Imam Ibn 'Aqil;

⁴⁷ Mushthafa Hamdun 'Ilyan al-Hanbali, *al-Sadab al-Hanabilah wa al-Ikhtilafubum Ma'a al-Salafiyah al-Mu'ashirah fi al-'Aqa'id wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashammuf*, 115..al-Hafidz Ibnu Rajab al-Hanbali, *al-Radd 'ala Man Ittaba'a Ghair al-Mazhabib al-Arba'ah*, 42.

⁴⁸ Mushthafa Hamdun 'Ilyan al-Hanbali, *al-Sadab al-Hanabilah wa al-Ikhtilafubum Ma'a al-Salafiyah al-Mu'ashirah fi al-'Aqa'id wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashammuf*, 116.

In the consensus of the Hanbali school itself, the opinion or fatwa of Ibn Taymiyyah has never been in the top three levels. In the hierarchy, the levels of fatwas in the Hanbali school are as follows: The first level is the founder Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal; the second level is held by Imam Muwaffaq ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi, the author of *al-Kafi fi Fiqh al-Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal* and *al-Mughni*; the third level is al-Majd al-Din Abu al-Barakat the author of the book *al-Muharrar fi al-Fiqh*; the fourth level is Imam Ibn Muflih, author of *al-Furu'* (if Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi disagrees with al-Majd al-Din Abi al-Barakat); the fifth level is Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali the author of *al-Qawa'id al-Fiqhiyyah*; Ibn Taymiyyah occupies the sixth level with "condition" if it is in accordance with the fatwa of Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi or al-Majd al-Din Abi al-Barakat.⁴⁹

After the death of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, the hierarchical order above was strengthened by Imam al-Mardawi al-Hanbali in his book *al-Inshaf fi Ma'rifah al-Rajih min al-Khilaf 'ala Mazhab al-Imam al-Mubajjal* Ahmad bin Hanbal by stating that, "if the results of the *tarjih* formulation differ among the leaders of the Hanbali school, especially in the main and urgent matters, then the hierarchy of fatwa sequences that become the basis of reference is: *First*, the *fatwa* of Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi. The *second* is the *fatwa* of al-Majd al-Din Abi al-Barakat, followed by Ibn Muflih's *fatwa*. Then, the *fatwa* of Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali; the *fatwa* of Ibn Hamdan al-Hanbali; the *fatwa* of the author of the book *al-Nadhm* and the book *al-Khulashah*; the *fatwa* of Ibn Taymiyyah al-Harani and the last is the *fatwa* of Ibn 'Abdus in the book *Tadbkirah*. Imam Mardawi al-Hanbali also emphasized that if the above *ulama* and scholars have different opinions regarding the *ushul* (principal) case, it is better to refer to the *fatwa* of Ibn Muflih al-Hanbali, the author of the book *al-Furu'*."⁵⁰

The Response of the Prominent Figures of the Hanbali School

Imam Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, in his book *al-Dhail 'ala Tabaqat al-Hanabilah* noted, "The experts on *hadith*, *fiqh*, and memorizer of *hadith* (at

⁴⁹ Mushthafa Hamdun 'Ilyan al-Hanbali, *al-Sadab al-Hanabilah wa al-Ikhtilafubum Ma'a al-Salafiyah al-Mu'ashirah fi al-'Aqa'id wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashawwuf*, 116.

⁵⁰ Mushthafa Hamdun 'Ilyan al-Hanbali, *al-Sadab al-Hanabilah wa al-Ikhtilafubum Ma'a al-Salafiyah al-Mu'ashirah fi al-'Aqa'id wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashawwuf*, 117.

least one hundred thousand) from the Hanbali school respect Ibn Taymiyyah, but they do not love Ibn Taymiyyah. Especially in certain topics which, according to them, are too "drowned" in excessive philosophical discussion. The prominent ulama of *hadith* from the *Salaf al-Salih* generation of his predecessors, such as Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Imam Shafi'i, Imam Malik, Imam Abu Hanifah, and Imam Ishaq bin Rahawaih did not take the "position" as was done by Ibn Taymiyyah. Imam Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali emphasized that the *ulama* of *fiqh*, *hadith*, and *salaf al-shalih* did not like the "foreign concepts" (*al-shudhubhat*) formulated by Ibn Taymiyyah. The majority of *muftis* and *Qadhi al-Islam* (religious judges) from the leaders of the Hanbali school themselves rejected Ibn Taymiyyah's *fatwa* as a reference in giving a *fatwa*.⁵¹

One ulama who had studied with Ibn Taymiyyah, Imam al-Dhahabi al-Shafi'i al-Hanbali, also had a similar response. His statement is also intended to respond to the fanaticism of some followers of Ibn Taymiyyah, who believe that he has reached the position of *ma'shum* (free from sins and mistakes) by saying, "I refuse to believe that Ibn Taymiyyah is a *ma'sum*. I also reject his opinion on the *ushul* and *furu* in some religious issues. Even though Ibn Taymiyyah had extensive knowledge, determination, and courage in defending his understanding, Ibn Taymiyyah was still an ordinary human (*basbarun min al-bashari*) " with limitations.⁵²

Imam Dhahabi al-Shafi'i al-Hanbali, in his book *Zagl al-'Ilmi*, wrote an important testimony, "among his teachers, both Shafi'i and Hanbali, *ulama* or scholars who were experts in the field of *hadith* at that time, al-Hafiz Ibn Daqiq al-'Id and al-Hafiz al-Dimyathi judged Ibn Taymiyyah with the phrase, "*min man labu ma'rifatun bi al-hadith* (like other figures during his time who had knowledge in the science of *hadith*)." Even Imam Dhahabi al-Shafi'i al-Hanbali, through this book, ordained Imam Ibn

⁵¹ Mushthafa Hamdun 'Ilyan al-Hanbali, *al-Sadab al-Hanabilah wa al-Ikhtilafubum Ma'a al-Salafiyah al-Mu'ashirah fi al-'Aqa'id wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashawwuf*, 117; 134.

⁵² Mushthafa Hamdun 'Ilyan al-Hanbali, *al-Sadab al-Hanabilah wa al-Ikhtilafubum Ma'a al-Salafiyah al-Mu'ashirah fi al-'Aqa'id wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashawwuf*, 118. al-Hafidz Ibnu Hajar al-'Asqalani al-Syafi'i, *al-Durar al-Kaminah*, 176.

Daqiq al-'Id as a reformer figure (*al-mujaddid*) in his time. Things that he did not address to Ibn Taymiyyah.⁵³

The fanaticism of some of Ibn Taymiyyah's disciples who considered him *ma'shum* also received refutation and rejection from one of Ibn Taymiyyah's most famous students, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (691-751H), who is commonly considered the spokesman for the Ibn Taymiyyah school. In the book *Madarij al-Salikin*, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah wrote a testimony, "despite all his glory, it does not mean that *Shaykh al-Islam* Ibn Taymiyyah has the rank of *ma'shum*. Moreover, surpassing the companions and the Prophet Muhammad SAW. However, Ibn Taymiyyah was not one of those who violated the way of the Prophet Muhammad.⁵⁴

On the topic of "*talak*," for example, Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali al-Syafi'i once followed Ibn Taymiyyah's *fatwa*. However, Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali later annulled, even criticized, and abandoned Ibn Taymiyyah's *fatwa*. Consequently, the followers and other fanatical disciples of Ibn Taymiyyah became hostile to Imam Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali. This change in Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali's attitude towards Ibn Taimiyyah is also stated in the book *Inba'u al-Ghamar*, by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani al-Syafi'i. Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani in *Inba'u al-Ghamar* writes, "Initially, in many themes, the reference to the *fatwas* of Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali was the *fatwas* of his teacher, Ibn Taymiyyah. But later, Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali criticized and rejected it, so Ibn Rajab was antagonistic to the students and loyal followers (loyalists) of Ibn Taymiyyah."⁵⁵

⁵³ Mushthafa Hamdun 'Ilyan al-Hanbali, *al-Sadah al-Hanabilah wa al-Ikhtilafubum Ma'a al-Salafiyah al-Mu'ashirah fi al-'Aqa'id wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashawwuf*, 118. Al-Hafiz Shams al-Din al-Dhahabi al-Syafi'i al-Hanbali, *Zaql Al-Ilmi, tabqiq* Muhammad bin Nashir Al-'Ajami (Kuwait: Maktabah al-Shahwah al-Islamiyyah, n.d.), 32-33.

⁵⁴ Mushthafa Hamdun 'Ilyan al-Hanbali, *al-Sadah al-Hanabilah wa al-Ikhtilafubum Ma'a al-Salafiyah al-Mu'ashirah fi al-'Aqa'id wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashawwuf*, 119. Imam Abi 'Abd Allah Muhammad bin Abi Bakar bin Ayyub Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, *Madarij al-Salikin bayn Manazila Iyyaka Na'budu wa Iyyaka Nasta'in*, Juz 2, *tabqiq* Muhammad al-Mu'tashim Billahi al-Baghdadi, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi, 2003), 52.

⁵⁵ Mushthafa Hamdun 'Ilyan al-Hanbali, *al-Sadah al-Hanabilah wa al-Ikhtilafubum Ma'a al-Salafiyah al-Mu'ashirah fi al-'Aqa'id wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashawwuf*, 120.

Another Hanbali school leader, 'Abd Allah al-Qudumi al-Hanbali, in the book *Dar'u al-Mathalib* also gave similar testimony. In particular, concerning the difference between Ibn Taymiyyah's *manhaj* and the "mainstream" theory of the Hanbali school of thought; "Attributing the opinion of Ibn Taymiyyah about "three times divorce is counted as one" (*al-thalaq bi al-thalath*), in line with Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal's *fatwa*, is a wrong attribution. To equate Ibn Taymiyyah's *manhaj* on this matter with the official *manhaj* of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal's direct disciples is also incorrect. Because after I studied it in-depth, none of the Hanbali *ulama* or scholars have ever issued this *fatwa*,⁵⁶ including other controversial *fatwas* of Ibn Taymiyyah.

The *fatwa* on the subject of *aqidah* (*ushul al-'aqidah*) composed by Ibn Taymiyyah triggered criticism and rejection from various *ulama* across schools. Including Hanbali *ulama* and scholars themselves. Internal criticism of Ibn Taymiyyah, from the beginning, came from *ulama* of the Hanbali school of his time, namely *Qadhi al-Qudab* (Supreme Judge) Najm al-Din Ahmad bin 'Umar al-Maqdisi al-Hanbali (651-689H); *Qadhi al-Qudab* (Supreme Judge) Syaraf al-Din 'Abd al-Ghani bin Yahya al-Harani al-Hanbali (645-709H). These two well-known Hanbali school leaders and other school leaders were the authors of treatises on the opposition and rejection of Ibn Taymiyyah's theological doctrine in the official state courts at that time. In the trial, the four *Qadhi al-Qudab* (Supreme Judges) representing the four schools of thought sentenced Ibn Taymiyyah to guilt and forced him to be jailed in 705H until he died in 728H. Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani al-Syafi'i, in his book *al-Durar al-Kaminah fi A'yani al-Mi'ah al-Thaminah*, describes in sufficient detail the trial process.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Mushthafa Hamdun 'Ilyan al-Hanbali, *al-Sadah al-Hanabilah wa al-Ikhtilafubum Ma'a al-Salafiyah al-Mu'ashirah fi al-'Aqa'id wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashawwuf*, 120.

⁵⁷ al Hafidz Ibnu Hajar al-'Asqalani al-Syafi'i, *al-Durar al-Kaminah*, 148.

Conclusion

Based on a critical academic examination, the leaders of the Hanbali school and ulama across schools and generations on the position and status of Ibn Taimiyyah above, there are several important points: *first*, the leaders of the Hanbali school during and after agreed, Ibn Taimiyyah never reached the level of mujtahid-mutlaq, like the four imams of schools of *fiqh* (Imam Hanafi, Imam Shafi'i, Imam Malik and Imam Ahmad).

Second, most ulama and prominent scholars of the Hanbali school who lived during or after the death of Ibn Taymiyyah never positioned his *fatwa* as the primary reference in the main issues of *aqidah* (*ushul al-'aqidah*) and *furū'*, including in the mechanism for deducing the law (*istinbath al-bukmi*). Instead, most of them positioned Ibn Taimiyyah's fatwa like the opinions of scholars of other Hanbali schools.

Third, from classical to contemporary contexts, the Hanbali academic centers in the Islamic world still agree to reject the direct link between the *manhaj* of Ibn Taymiyyah and that of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal.

The Hanbali ulama, scholars, and intellectuals establish internal consensus (*ijma' fi al-madhabibi*) regarding the hierarchy of *ijtihad* and *istinbath* if there is a dispute over the results of the *tarjih* formulation, both in *ushul* and *furū'*, as follows: the *fatwa* and *manhaj* of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal will be the main reference; followed by the *fatwa* of Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi, the fatwa of Imam Majd al-Din Abi al-Barakat al-Taimi, the *fatwa* of Imam Ibn Muflih al-Hanbali (with the condition that Ibn Muwaffaq Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi disagrees with Imam Majd al-Din Abi al-Barakat); then the *fatwa* of Imam Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, the *fatwa* of Ibn Hamdan al-Hanbali, the *fatwa* of Taqiyy al-Din Ibn Taimiyyah with the condition his opinion is in line with the *fatwa* of Imam Muqaffaq Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi or Imam Majd al-Din Abi al-Barakah, and the last is the *fatwa* of Ibn 'Abdus. Imam Mardawi al-Hanbali added that after the death of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, if all of the above *ulama* have different

opinions, especially on *furu'* (*furu'al-din*) matters, it is better to refer to the *fatwa* and *manhaj* of Ibn Muflih al-Hanbal.

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