

## Ibn al-Jawzī, the Later Ḥanbalīs and Tashbīh

Just as there occurred deviation amongst those ascribing to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 150),<sup>1574</sup> Imām Mālik (d. 179H), Imām al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204H),<sup>1575</sup> some of the latecomers who ascribed to Imām Aḥmad also fell into error, and there is nothing strange or extraordinary about this. In fact, the deviation that occurred in some of those ascribing to Aḥmad is much less than the deviations which occurred amongst the Ḥanafīs, Mālikīs and Shāfi'īs.<sup>1576</sup> As for the Ḥanbalīs then adopting the 'uṣūl of the Kullābiyyah, or the 'uṣūl of the Mu'tazilah, or exaggeration in affirmation of the attributes, or a combination of some or all of these,

<sup>1574</sup> The Mu'tazilah used to be found in his gatherings, and from his grandchildren were those who were Jahmites. And the Karrāmiyyah Mujassimah were all Ḥanafīs and Murji'ites too, claiming īmān (faith) is mere profession by the tongue alone.

<sup>1575</sup> One of his associates Husayn al-Karābīsī entered into the doctrines of Ibn Kullāb, and he was condemned severely by Imām Aḥmad. And amongst the Kurdish Shāfi'īs there were Mujassimah and Mushabbihah.

<sup>1576</sup> Ibn Taymiyyah commented on the saying of the one who said that there were people who ascribed to Imām Aḥmad who innovated things:

I say: As for this, it is true, but this is not unique to Aḥmad, rather, there is not any Imām except that a people ascribed to him from whom he is free and innocent. A people ascribed to Mālik whom Mālik was free of. And a people ascribed to al-Shāfi'ī whom he was free of. And a people ascribed to Abū Ḥanīfah whom he was free of. And a people ascribed to Moses (ﷺ) whom he was free of. And a people ascribed to 'Īsā whom he was free of. And a people ascribed to 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib whom he was free of. And our Prophet (ﷺ), factions of the heretics and hypocrites such as the Qarāmiṭah and Bāṭiniyyah ascribed to him whom he was free of. And then it was mentioned in his speech that a people from the Ḥashawiyyah and Mushabbihah ascribed to Aḥmad, or what is similar to this speech. So I say: The Mushabbihah and Mujassimah in other than the associates of Imām Aḥmad are greater than them. Those Kurds, they are all Shāfi'īs and they have such tashbīh and tajsīm that is not found in any other faction. And amongst the people of Jīlān are a mixture of Shāfi'īs and Ḥanbalīs. As for the pure Ḥanbalīs, there is not found amongst them what is found in other than them. And from the completion of the answer is that the Karrāmiyyah Mujassimah are all Ḥanafīs.

Refer to *Majmū' al-Fatāwā* (3/184-185).

occurred from the likes of Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥasan bin Hāmid (d. 403H), al-Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā (d. 458H), Abū al-Ḥasan Ibn al-Zāghūnī (d. 527H), and Abū al-Wafā' Ibn 'Aqīl (d. 513H)<sup>1577</sup> and Ibn al-Jawzī<sup>1578</sup> (597H). While the latter two had a heavy Mu'tazilī influence, the others were influenced by the 'ūsūl of Ibn Kullāb and they also had exaggeration in affirmation of the attributes in that they relied upon weak and fabricated narrations in the *ṣifāt*, as a result of which they brought disrepute to the way of Imām Aḥmad.<sup>1579</sup> Ibn Taymiyyah said:

There is no doubt that the Ash'arites of Khurasān had deviated towards ta'tīl,<sup>1580</sup> and many of the Ḥanbalīs increased in affirmation.<sup>1581</sup>

There were many from the later scholars attached to ḥadīth who were influenced by some of the 'uṣūl of the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah and Kullābiyyah. They lacked the in-depth knowledge found with the leading Imāms of the Ḥadīth and Sunnah who preceded them by centuries. They did not have the same expertise in validating the authenticity of texts and nor in grasping their meanings. When they saw the the conflict between those uṣūl they adopted and between the

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<sup>1577</sup> Imām al-Dhahabī quotes Ibn 'Aqīl as saying, "And our associates, the Ḥanbalīs desired from me to boycott a group amongst the scholars, and that would have prevented me from beneficial knowledge," and al-Dhahabī commented on this saying, "They used to prohibit him from sitting with the Mu'tazilah, but he refused, until he fell into their snares and ventured into making ta'wīl of the texts, we ask Allāh for safety." Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī said about him, "A type of deviation away from the Sunnah manifested from him in some instances, he made ta'wīl of some of the attributes, and this did not cease to remain with him until he died, may Allāh have mercy upon him." Refer to *Dhayl 'alā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah* of Ibn Rajab (1/142-165) and *al-Siyar* 19/443-451) for his biographical details.

<sup>1578</sup> Ibn al-Jawzī himself was confused on the issue of the *ṣifāt*, holding variant and contradictory opinions without any firm grounding. He was influenced by Abū al-Wafā' Ibn 'Aqīl, his teacher, who had traversed the way of the Mu'tazilah.

<sup>1579</sup> The likes of Abu Ya'lā misrepresented the way of Imām Aḥmad in the subject of the Qur'ān and the *ṣifāt fi'liyyah*, upon the principles of Ibn Kullāb, just as they exaggerated in affirmation in relation to the *ṣifāt khabariyyah*.

<sup>1580</sup> That is, they deviated from the way of Ibn Kullāb, al-Muḥāsibī, al-Qalānīsī, al-Ash'arī, Ibn Mahdī al-Ṭabarī and al-Bāqillānī, and gave preference to the approach of the Mu'tazilah in ta'tīl.

<sup>1581</sup> *Majmū' al-Fatāwā* (6/54).

ḥadīth and āthār, some of them, like Ibn Fawrak (d. 406H)<sup>1582</sup>, took the approach of *ta'wīl* and others, like al-Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā and Ibn 'Aqīl took the approach of *tafwīḍ*,<sup>1583</sup> and at times they would prefer one approach over the other.<sup>1584</sup> At other times they fell into affirmation of what was

<sup>1582</sup> Abū Bakr bin Fawrak is an Ash'arī scholar.

<sup>1583</sup> The contemporary Ash'arites do not reveal the fact that the Ḥanbalīs they accuse of *tashbīh* also fell into something of the innovation of *tafwīḍ*, and they spoke with the *uṣūl* of Ibn Kullāb and the Ash'ariyyah regarding the *ṣifāt fī'liyyah* in addition to their excess in *ithbāt* (affirmation) regarding the attributes. Thus, what they are to be criticised for is not just excesses in affirmation, rather they are also fell into something of *tafwīḍ* and also the *uṣūl* of Ibn Kullāb, especially in the matter of Allāh's chosen actions (*af'āl ikhtiyāriyyah*).

<sup>1584</sup> Refer to *Dar' al-Ta'āruḍ al-'Aql wal-Naql* (taḥqīq, Dr. Muḥammad Rāshid Sālim, 2nd edition, 1991) 7/34, where Ibn Taymiyyah explains regarding the issue of the deniers of the attributes having knowledge of the sunnah and āthār:

They are of types: A **[first] type** who do not have expertise in the rationalities (of *ilm al-kalām*), rather they simply take what the deniers stated through the mere ruling and evidence, and they believe them to be definitive evidences, but they do not have any strength in that regard independently. In reality, they are blind-followers, and their sayings have been believed. All of what they hear from the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth and the sayings of the Salaf, they do not carry it upon whatever opposes that (the evidences they believed). Either they consider it to be in agreement with them, or they turn away from it and consign its meaning (to Allāh) [with *tafwīḍ*]. And this is the condition of the likes of Abū Ḥātim al-Bustī, Abū Sa'īd al-Sam'ān al-Mu'tazilī, Abū Dharr al-Harawī, Abū Bakr al-Bayḥaqī, al-Qāḍī 'Iyād, Abū Faraj bin al-Jawzī, Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī bin al-Mufaḍḍal al-Maqdisī and their likes. The **second [type]** who traverse a path of *ijtihād* in the rationalities (of *ilm al-kalām*), and who err in it as other erred in it. Thus, they share with the Jahmiyyah in some of their corrupt foundational principles alongside them not having such expertise in the statements of the Salaf and the leading Imāms in this subject that was found with the leading Imāms of the Sunnah, even if they used to be acquainted with the texts of the two Ṣaḥīḥs and others. And this is the condition of Abū Muḥammad bin Ḥazm, Abū Walīd al-Bājī, al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr bin al-'Arabī and their likes. Also from this type are Bisr al-Marīsī, Muḥammad bin Shujā' al-Thaljī and their likes. And a **third type** who heard the āḥādīth and āthār and who venerated the madhhab of the Salaf, and who shared with the Jahmite Mutakallimīn in some of their remnant principles, and they did not

have the same expertise in the Qur'ān, Ḥadīth and āthār that was with the leading Imāms of the Sunnah and Ḥadīth, neither from the angle of acquaintance, nor distinguishing between the authentic and weak, and nor from the angle of understanding their meanings. And they [wrongly] presumed the correctness of some of the rational foundations of the Jahmite deniers, and then they saw what was between them [the revealed texts and the rational principles founded upon the kalām of the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah]. This is the condition of Abū Bakr bin Fawrak, al-Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā, Ibn 'Aqīl and their likes. For this reason they sometimes chose the way of the people of ta'wīl as was done by Ibn Fawrak and his likes in speech regarding the problematic narrations. And at other times they would make tafwīd of their meanings and would say, they are to be left upon their apparentness, as was done by al-Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā and his likes in this regard. And sometimes their ijtihād would vary, they would either prefer this approach (of ta'wīl) at times and the other approach (of tafwīd) at other times, and this is the way of Ibn 'Aqīl and his likes. And [all of] them would enter into [what they considered] the problematic āhādīth such [narrations] that were a lie and a fabrication, and they would not know it is a fabrication, or that it has a wording that removes its problematic nature, such as that the vision (ru'yah) [of Allāh] [in a particular narration] was the vision in a dream, however [not knowing this] they thought it to be a vision during the state of wakefulness on the night of the ascension (al-mi'rāj). And amongst the people are those who have expertise [detailed knowledge] of the rationalities taken from the [ilm al-kalām] of the Jahmiyyah and others, and they shared with them in some of their foundational principles, but they also saw what was found in their statement of opposition to the well-known affairs with Ahl al-Sunnah, such as the issue of the Qur'ān and the Ru'yah, for that became widespread and known to both the laymen and the learned alike that the Qur'ān is the uncreated speech of Allāh, and that Allāh will be seen in the Hereafter. So they desired to combine between aiding what became well-known [and established] with Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Ḥadīth and between agreeing with the Jahmiyyah in those rational foundations which they [wrongly] thought to be correct. However, they did not have the detailed, minute knowledge of the Qur'ān and its meanings, and the ḥadīth, and the sayings of the companions that was with the leading Imāms of the Sunnah and Ḥadīth. Therefore, they took a composite madhhab made up of both this and that, and both factions [Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Ḥadīth and the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah] ascribed

weak or fabricated. Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah wrote regarding Abū Ya'lā:

And whilst he connected (the chains) of the āḥādīth he mentioned, and also mentioned their narrators, there are many fabricated āḥādīth therein, such as the ḥadīth of the [Prophet's] seeing [Allāh] with the eyes on the night of the ascent [of the Prophet] and its likes. And also within them are things from some of the Salaf, which some of the people reported in marfū' form<sup>1585</sup>, such as the Prophet (ﷺ) sitting on the Throne, some of the people have narrated this through many routes of transmission in marfū' form, but all of them are fabricated ... for this reason and others, Rizqullāh al-Tamīmī [d. 448H] and others from the [later] associates of Aḥmad spoke against al-Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā's authorship of this book with very harsh words, and his enemies poured scorn upon him on account of things he was innocent of, as he mentioned at the end of the book. As for what Abu Bakr bin al-'Arabī mentioned about him in al-'Awāṣim, it is a lie against him, from an unknown person that Abu Bakr did not mention, and it is a lie against him. Yet alongside this, even if they quoted what was a lie against him, then in his speech (Abu Ya'lā's) is what is rejected both in terms of revealed text and in terms of directive (tawjīh).<sup>1586</sup>

And Imām al-Dhahabī explained;

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contradiction to them. This was the way of al-Ash'arī, and the earlier scholars from his followers, like al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr [al-Bāqillānī]] and Abū Ishāq al-Isfarāyīnī and their likes. For this reason you will find the best of those, like al-Ash'arī, mention the madhhab of Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Ḥadīth in a general way and quote it in accordance with what he thinks to be binding (from it), and would then say that he speaks with everything that they [Ahl al-Sunnah] spoke with, and when he mentioned the sayings of Ahl al-Kalām, from the Mu'tazilah and others, he would quote them with the quotation of one who is well-informed about them in all their detail. So the likes of these, their speech is beneficial in knowing the contradiction of the Mu'tazilah, and knowing the corruption of their sayings. But as for knowing what came from the Messenger, and what the Companions and Successors were upon, then their acquaintance [in that regard] is deficient.

<sup>1585</sup> Meaning, ascribing this saying to the Prophet (ﷺ).

<sup>1586</sup> *Dar' al-Ta'arūḍ al-'Aql wal-Naql* (taḥqīq, Dr. Muḥammad Rāshid Sālim, 2nd edition, 1991) 5/237-238.

He (Abu Ya'lā) did not have great experience in the knowledge of ḥadīth, and perhaps he used weak narrations as proof.<sup>1587</sup>

Al-Dhahabī also said:

... however, he cited many baseless ahādīth whose likes are impermissible to use in order to affirm any attribute for Allāh.<sup>1588</sup>

Ibn al-Jawzī authored a book called *Daf Shubah al-Tashbīh* in criticism of the scholars who ascribed to Imām Aḥmad. Whilst much of Ibn al-Jawzī's diatribe is from the Mu'tazilī perspective of considering the affirmation of the attributes to be tashbīh,<sup>1589</sup> some of the later Ḥanbalīs did exaggerate in affirmation.<sup>1590</sup> However, they also fell into tafwīḍ, and held positions upon the 'uṣūl of the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah and Ibn Kullāb of negating *ḥawādith*, as is the case with al-Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā. They wrongly thought that these positions were those of Imām Aḥmad and his associates, and this was manifested in their views pertaining to the speech (kalām) of Allāh and the Qur'ān.

Ibn al-Jawzī, following the errors of the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah, and the later Ash'arīs - in opposition to the Righteous Salaf and the early Kullābī Ash'arīs - claimed that the texts of the attributes give the presumption of tashbīh, and that they, the Ḥanbalīs he was criticising, prohibited interpretation of them upon the language, such that *al-yad* (hand) becomes *nīmah* (favour, bounty) and *qudrah* (power), and what

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<sup>1587</sup> *Siyar A'lām al-Nubulā*, (18/91).

<sup>1588</sup> *Mukhtaṣar al-'Uluww* (p. 271).

<sup>1589</sup> That which Ibn al-Jawzī criticised them for, along with his advocacy for making *ta'wīl* of the attributes, applies also to the early Kullābī Ash'arīs who affirmed Allāh's 'Uluww, and the attributes of Face, Hands, and Eyes, without *ta'wīl* and tafwīḍ. Mere affirmation of these attributes, to Ibn al-Jawzī, is considered tashbīh, since he was upon the position of the necessity of making *ta'wīl* of whatever gives the presumption of tashbīh and tajsīm, and in this he took the path of the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah. This is aside from the point that the likes of these later Ḥanbalīs - due to their lack of knowledge of ḥadīth - affirmed attributes for Allāh which Allāh is exonerated from. When the Ash'arīs saw this transpire, they took it as an opportunity to distort the madhhab of Imām Aḥmad and perceive it through the tajahhum and i'tizāl of Ibn al-Jawzī.

<sup>1590</sup> Abu Ya'lā wrote a book called *Ibtāl al-Ta'wīlāt*, in which he rebutted the *ta'wīl*s of the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah but also ended up affirming many repugnant things on account of weak, fabrication narrations.

is similar to this.<sup>1591</sup> Ibn al-Jawzī, never grasped the reality of the 'aqīdah of the Salaf,<sup>1592</sup> and presumed everything that Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥasan bin Hāmid, Abū Ya'lā and Ibn al-Zāghūnī affirmed was *tashbīh*, when this was not the case, for they had a type of deviation with them, but not everything they held onto was deviation. Ibn Jawzī ventured into the way of the Mu'tazilah and Jahmiyyah and thereby rejected part of the truth that was with those whom he criticized.

The later Ash'arites took this as an opportunity to attack the 'aqīdah of Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah, Ahl al-Ḥadīth wal-Athar, the Righteous Salaf, which is based upon submission to the revealed texts, affirmation of what they contain of Allāh's attributes and actions, alongside negation of *tamthīl*, *takyīf*, and *tashbīh*. This is in opposition to their 'aqīdah which is based upon the blameworthy and condemned *'ilm al-kalām*, the language of al-jawhar wal-'arad, the proof of ḥudūth al-ajsām, which they made to be the foundation of Islām itself and the foundation of all their speech regarding Allāh<sup>1593</sup> and on account of which they held that the revealed texts pertaining to the attributes conflict with reason, are presumptions of *tashbīh* and *tajsim* and must be given metaphorical interpretation. It is from this angle that they denied Allāh's 'uluww, claimed the Arabic Qur'ān is created, agreeing with the Mu'tazilah, and claimed Allāh will not be seen in the Hereafter with the faculty of vision.<sup>1594</sup>

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<sup>1591</sup> The refutation of this *tajahhum* and *i'tizāl* of Ibn al-Jawzī has already preceded from the speech of Ibn Kullāb, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, al-Muḥāsibī, al-Qalānisī, al-Bāqillānī, and al-Bayḥaqī, without there even being any need for statements from any of the Ḥanbalī scholars who truly followed the way of Imām Aḥmad, in making affirmation with negation of likeness.

<sup>1592</sup> Which is specific affirmation for Allāh of what He and His Messenger affirmed for Himself, and the negation from Allāh of whatever He and His Messenger negated from Himself. And the affirmation is specific, whilst the negation is general, thus, it is *ithhbāt* (affirmation) with the negation of *tamthīl*, and *tashbīh* in a general sense. This is what the Salaf were upon, and likewise the early Kullābiyyah Ash'ariyyah.

<sup>1593</sup> And about which they explicitly stated that if they called the common people through this type of language and theology, they would turn to atheism. Refer to the sayings of al-Ghazālī and al-Rāzī which have been quoted earlier in the work.

<sup>1594</sup> In all of these issues the Ash'arites agree with the Mu'tazilah in the reality of their saying, but pretend to agree with Ahl al-Sunnah in words.

Ibn al-Jawzī was advised and refuted by other Ḥanbalī scholars for traversing the path that he took. Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī makes mention of a letter of advice written by Abū al-Faḍl Ishāq bin Aḥmad al-ʿAlthiyy to Ibn al-Jawzī regarding his errors and deviation in this subject.<sup>1595</sup>

From ʿUbaydullāh Ishāq bin Aḥmad bin Muḥammad bin Ghānim al-ʿAlthiyy to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān bin al-Jawzī: May Allāh protect us and you from arrogance in accepting advice, and may He grant us and you success in following the Righteous Salaf, and grant us insight into the Sunnah, and not prevent us from the guidance of the Prophetic words, and may He procted us from innovating into the Muḥammadan Sharīʿah, there is no need for that, sine we have been left upon purity and clarity, and Allāh has perfected the religion for us, and has relieved us of being in need of the views of the extremists. For in the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger there is sufficiency for everyone with aspiration or apprehension.... and after the praise of Allāh and prayers upon His Messenger: It is not hidden that the religion comprises the giving of sincerity in purpose, especially to the Master, the Generous, the Lord, the Merciful, for how many a pen has erred, and a foot slipped and a speaker stumbled, and they do not comprehend Him in knowledge. Mighty is the one who said, "**And amongst mankind is one who disputes about Allāh without knowledge, guidance or an illuminating Book**" (22:8). And you O ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, there does not cease to be conveyed from you, and heard from you, and witnessed in your books that are heard from you, [that] you mention many of those who were before you from the Scholars with error, out of your belief that you are defending the truth without any bias. It is necessary to continue in the arena of giving advice, so that either you benefit if Allāh guides you, or to compile Allāh's proof against you, and that the people beware from your corrupt saying. Do not let your abundance in the acquisition of knowledge deceive you, for perhaps the one to whom it is conveyed is of better comprehension than the one who hears (it directly), and perhaps the carrier of knowledge (fiqh) has no understanding of it, and perhaps the ocean is polluted, yet the river is pure... Know that the rejection of the Scholars, the esteemed ones, and the best of those in the horizons against you has increased, on account of your corrupt sayings regarding the Attributes, and they have clarified the weakness in your saying, and they quote about you that you rejected the advice...

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<sup>1595</sup> Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, *Dhayl Tabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah* (taḥqīq, Dr. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-ʿUthaymīn, Maktabah al-ʿUbaykān, 1st edition, 2005) 3/446 onwards.

Then he proceeds to mentions his errors in speaking about the attributes and delving into kalām, and later he says:

So how is permissible for you to follow the mutakallimin in their views, and dispute with those who dispute in that which they disputed, and then you show rejection against them. This is from the amazing, strange affairs. And if a created being described another with attributes without direct vision or a truthful report, he would have been a liar in his information. So how can you (people) describe Allāh, the Sublime, with something, whose authenticity you have not come across. Rather, (how can you speak) based upon mere presumptions, and happenings, and you negate the Attributes that He is pleased with for Himself, and [which] His Prophet related about Him, through the narration of firm, trustworthy narrators?

... And you say al-Khaṭṭābī was alarmed with these words, so what alarmed him instead of others? And we see you affirm something and then negate it, and you say, "So and so said", and you ascribe that to our Imām Aḥmad - may Allāh be pleased with him - and his way is well-known in that it is silence about the likes of this (matter), and that it is not explained, rather, he authenticated the ḥadīth, and prohibited from its figurative interpretation ... And I am delegated to you on behalf of the people, the Scholars, the Ḥuffādh,<sup>1596</sup> so either you desist from these sayings, and make a sincere repentance, as others have repented besides you, or otherwise, they will expose your affair to the people, they will spread that in the land, and will explain the angle of [these] meagre sayings... and the criticism (al-jarḥ), no doubt takes precedence over the appraisal (ta'dīl), and Allāh is a guardian over what we say, and he who warns has been excused. And if you make figurative interpretation of the Attributes with [meanings] from the language, making it permissible for yourself, and you reject the advice, then this is not the way of the great Imām, Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, may Allāh sanctify his soul. Thus, it is not possible for you to ascribe to him with this (approach), so choose a way for your own self, if you are able.... and you have blackened our faces with your corrupt sayings, isolating yourself, as if you are tyrant amongst the tyrants ... we will not let you proclaim your opposition to the Sunnah ... between

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<sup>1596</sup> Ibn al-Jawzī was isolated and in opposition to the rest of the Ḥanbālīs in his time, and it is strange to see the Jahmites of today fraudulently trying to present the way of Imām Aḥmad in 'aqīdah through the tongue of Ibn al-Jawzī, and relying upon his books in order to vilify the way of the Salaf, when Ibn al-Jawzī himself came from the Jahmī, Mu'tazilī perspective and was himself confused, with not coherent stance on the subject.

you and us is the Book of Allāh, and the Sunnah of His Messenger. Allāh, the Exalted, said, "**And if you differ in anything, then return it back to Allāh and the Messenger**" (4:59), and He did not say "to Ibn al-Jawzī".

So beware O pauper, before death (comes to you), and rectify your speech and action, for the appointed time has come, to Allāh belongs the affair, from before and after, there is no power nor might except by Allāh, the Most-High, the Mighty.

This provides a clearer picture of the entire situation in that Ibn al-Jawzī, in speaking about the excesses of some of the later Ḥanbalīs, traversed the way of the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah, and not the moderate way of Ahl al-Sunnah. He was upon the view of making the presumption of *tashbīh* in relation to the revealed texts, making *ta'wīl* to be something necessary. This was not the way of Imām Aḥmad and the scholars of his time rebuked him, refuted his saying, gave him advice, and exonerated Imām Aḥmad from Ibn al-Jawzī's attempts to portray what he inherited from the Mu'tazilah through Ibn 'Aqīl, his teacher, as being the way of Imām Aḥmad - a claim that is baseless and is not supported by anything that is authentically related from Imām Aḥmad himself.

Ibn Jawzī's arguments - and of all of the Mutakallimīn for that matter - for the denial of the Attributes through *ta'wīl* are based around certain forms of analogy<sup>1597</sup> upon which they based their presumption of *tajsīm* and *tashbīh* against the revealed texts. And on this basis his criticisms of those Ḥanbalīs, even if they erred in certain areas, is from a Jahmī, Mu'tazilī perspective, not from the perspective of the Book and the Sunnah and the way of the Salaf.

From everything that has preceded, it is from the conniving of the hearts of the contemporary Ash'arīs that they use this particular work of Ibn al-Jawzī to scaremonger against the 'aqīdah of the Righteous Salaf and the early Kullābī Ash'arīs. This stratagem is a means of softening others to their own creed, which would otherwise not be easily taken up by the common people whose *fiṭrah* would reject a Lord described in the language and terminology of the people of *falsafah* and *kalām*, that Allāh is not a *jism* (body), or a *jawhar* (substance), or an '*arad*

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<sup>1597</sup> They are *qiyās al-shāhid 'ala al-ghā'ib* (analogy for the unseen by the seen), *qiyās al-tamthīl* (analogy through likeness) and *qiyās al-shumūl* (analogy through inclusion), and they are treated in a separate chapter.

(incidental attribute), nor outside the creation, nor within it, nor above it and so on. In his book *al-Risālah al-Adḥawīyyah Fī Amr il-Ma'ād*<sup>1598</sup> Ibn Sīnā (d. 429H) said:

As for the affair of the legislation (ash-shar'), then it is desirable that one principle be known regarding it, which is: That what is desired by the religion which came upon the tongue of a Prophet amongst the Prophets, is to address all people, as a whole. Further, from what is known and clear is that the verified truth that is desirable to be referred back to regarding the soundness of Tawḥīd of [which is the] affirmation of a Maker [who is] unique (muwahḥad) and sanctified (muqaddas) from: *al-kam* (quantity), *al-kayf* (quality), *al-'ayn* (location, place), *matā* (time, when), *al-wad'* (position), and *al-taghyīr* (change)<sup>1599</sup>. So that belief in Him becomes [one in which] He is a single essence, it not being possible for it [the essence] to have a partner in type (naw') and nor that it has an existent part (juz') whether in terms of quantity or conceptually (in meaning). And it is not possible that it [the essence] be outside of the universe (the creation) and nor inside of it, and nor that it would be correct to point to Him that He is "here" or "there".<sup>1600</sup> Yet, it is not possible to present this [belief] to the majority [of people]. And if it was presented in this form to the Arabs [of pure original Arabic tongue], or Hebrews [present in the Arab lands] they would have rushed to stubborn rejection (al-'inād), and they would have been in agreement that [this] belief (īmān) that is being called to is belief in a [mere] non-existent [thing] which has no existence fundamentally [at all].

And al-Ghazālī (d. 505H) said, mentioning an observation that is made:

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<sup>1598</sup> This book has been published numerous times with two verifications, that of Dr. Sulaymān Danyāt, published by Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabi, in Cairo, and that of Ḥasan Āmī, published in Beirut.

<sup>1599</sup> Denoted by acting (fi'l) or being acted upon (infi'aal), and all of these are from Aristotle's Categories known as *al-Maqūlāt al-'Ashar* and *al-Jawhar wal-'Arad*. And the Philosophers and the Mutakallimīn, the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah, the Ash'ariyyah and Maturidiyyah are all united upon negating the Aristotle's categories from Allāh, the Most High, and this is Tawḥīd to them, alongside their differences in the sum whole of what they affirm or deny for Allāh, upon its varying levels.

<sup>1600</sup> This is what the later Ash'arites adopted as their belief, deviating from the creed of the Kullābiyyah Ash'ariyyah and it is strange and amazing indeed, that they should concur with Ibn Sīnā and adopt his doctrine and that of the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah and then set up the greatest of enmity towards Ahl al-Sunnah based around this issue.

So if it is said: Why did he (the Prophet) not remove the veil from what was intended [in the matter of belief] through the application of the word *al-ilāh*, and (why did he) not say, He exists, (but) is not a body (*jism*), and nor a substance (*jawhar*), and nor an incidental attribute (*'arad*), and nor is He inside the universe, nor outside of it, nor attached to it, nor separate from it, and He is not in a location (*makān*), and nor is He in direction (*jihah*), rather all the directions are devoid of Him? For this is the truth with a people<sup>1601</sup> and it is possible to express that (belief) in this manner [using these words] just like the Mutakallimūn have expressed it...

And he makes his admission a little later:

As for affirming His existence, in [one's] belief, and upon what we have mentioned of exaggeration in *tanzīh*<sup>1602</sup>, it is extremely hard. *In fact, not even one in a thousand would accept it, especially (amongst) the Arab nation.*<sup>1603</sup>

And al-Rāzī (d. 606H) said:

The natural dispositions of the common people are averse, for the most part, to comprehending the realities. Thus, when one from the common folk hears at the beginning the affirmation of an existent (*mawjūd*) that, is not a *jism* (body), and is not occupying space (*mutahayyiz*) and cannot be pointed to (*mushār ilayhi*), he will think this is non-existence and negation and he will fall into negation of (the one described as such). Thus, it is more suitable that they are addressed with words that indicate some of what is

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<sup>1601</sup> This is the truth with the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah and their tail-ends from the later Ash'arites, who are in reality Jahmiyyah, they are not upon the original and authentic Kullābi Ash'arī creed. The Salaf declared anyone opposing the Sunnah on just one issue to be a Jahmite, and the later Ash'arites agree with the Jahmiyyah in denying Allāh's 'uluww, just as they claim that the Arabic Qur'ān is created and just as they deny and make *ta'wīl* of some of the *sifāt dhātiyyah* such as face (*wajh*) and hands (*yadān*).

<sup>1602</sup> He means here, upon our language, that of the Mutakallimīn which is centered around the proof of *hudūth al-ajsām*, and which is that Allāh is not a body, nor a substance, nor an incidental attribute, nor inside the universe, nor outside of it, nor above it, nor attached to it, nor separate from it, and He is not in a location, and not in direction and so on.

<sup>1603</sup> *Iljām al-'Awwām 'an 'ilm al-kalām*, the full quote has already appeared earlier in the book, where al-Ghazālī expresses the very same meaning as Ibn Sīnā.

appropriate to what they presume and imagine, and that such (language) should be mixed with what indicates the clear truth.<sup>1604</sup>

The Ash'arites know that the innate dispositions of the common people would reject their belief and their particular language, because it amounts to atheism to the sound *fiṭrah* (innate disposition), and for this reason they are not able to approach the people directly and expound upon this particular belief of theirs, in the language they consider to represent the truth regarding Allāh. For this reason, it is integral to their methodology to pursue the allegations of *tajsīm* and *tashbīh* as a starting point, present them to the people as a form of intellectual terrorism and to soften them towards their own creed which most people would flee from and consider as pure atheism. These allegations they make are based upon the *usūl* of the *Jahmiyyah* and *Mu'tazilah* whom the early *Kullābī Ash'arīs* refuted.<sup>1605</sup> Once, the people have been given this particular treatment and scared away from the path of *Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*, they are more likely to accept their version of *Tawḥīd*, that of *al-Jawhar wal-'Araḍ* which is based upon the language, terminology and method of the *Sabean star* and *idol-worshipping pagan disbelievers*.

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<sup>1604</sup> Al-Rāzī in *Mafātīh al-Ghayb* (India, 1917) 2/599.

<sup>1605</sup> This approach is from the greatest of their academic and intellectual frauds.