

Imām al-Dhahabī and His Alleged Advice to Ibn Taymiyyah, the *Naṣīḥah Dhahabiyyah*

The Philadelphian Jahmites promulgated another doubt pertaining an alleged piece of written advice from Imām al-Dhahabī to Ibn Taymiyyah.¹⁷¹¹ Their intent being to malign the person of Ibn

¹⁷¹¹ It is purported to be in the handwriting of Ibn Qāḍī al-Shuhbah (d. 851H), a Shāfi'ī jurist who wrote a *Ṭabaqāt* of the Shāfi'ī jurists, and it has been claimed that al-Sakhāwī (d. 831H) made reference to it in his book *al-I'lān bil-Tawbīkh liman Dhamma al-Tārikh*, but this is a false claim invented by Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī. Al-Sakhāwī, when writing about al-Dhahabī was not alluding to this alleged advice but about what al-Dhahabī wrote in *Zaghal al-'ilm*, another work in which he makes some comments about the enmity shown to Ibn Taymiyyah and the various stances taken towards him from his contemporaries. Al-Sakhāwī made reference to this book when he said in *al-I'lān wal-Tawbīkh* (Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, p. 136) and (Mu'assasah al-Risālah, Beirut, 1st edition, 1996, p. 127) :

And I saw a good [treatise on] 'aqīdah of his, and a booklet he wrote for Ibn Taymiyyah ... and he said within it, taking an oath that, "My eyes have not glanced upon anyone with more expansive knowledge than him, and nor [anyone] of a more powerful intelligence, alongside his abstemiousness in food, clothing and women, alongside standing for the truth at every possible [opportunity]..." and he [al-Dhahabī] became tired in evaluating and inspecting him over [many] long years, and he [al-Dhahabī] did not find that he [Ibn Taymiyyah] was deferred between the people of Egypt and Shām, and [that] their souls detested him on account of it, derided him, rendered him a liar, and declared him a disbeliever, except due to arrogance and amazement, and claims, the excessive passion for leadership, and derision of the senior [scholars], and love of prominence, in that a [group] of people went against him who were not more god-fearing than him, and nor more knowledgeable or abstemious than him. Rather, they would pass over the sins of their own associates, and the sins of their friends, but Allāh did not mobilize them against him due to their piety and nobility, rather because of his [own] sins and what Allāh repelled from him and his followers is much more. And nothing transpired over them except some of what they deserved.

It is clear from this that al-Sakhāwī is referring to *Zaghal al-'ilm*, because this quotation from al-Dhahabī is found within it, and it is published and readily available, and he never cited anything from the alleged *Naṣīḥah Dhahabiyyah*. However, when al-Kawtharī distributed this alleged *Naṣīḥah Dhahabiyyah*, he wrote an introduction before it, and reversed the order of what al-Sakhāwī

Taymiyyah, and through that the 'aqidah of the Righteous Salaf. Others who have taken this same route have tried to cause confusion between this alleged, advice called *al-Naṣīḥah al-Dhahabiyyah* and a small treatise written by al-Dhahabī called *Zaḡhal al-'Ilm* in which he praises Ibn Taymiyyah and explains the various perceptions and positions the people took towards him when he began to refute their deviations. The following points should be noted regarding the truth of this entire matter:

Firstly, the first 'ilm al-kalām groups were the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah who adopted the method of the Sabean philosophers in proving the universe is originated, and this is the proof using ajsām (bodies) and a'rāḍ (incidental attributes). On account of this, they rejected Allāh's names, attributes and actions, denied Allāh is above the Throne, claimed the Arabic Qur'ān is created, and denied Allāh will be seen in the Hereafter with the vision of the eyes. When they introduced this into Islām, the Salaf's rejection of them was severe, because they knew that it was an erosion of the 'aqidah. The Imāms of the Salaf condemned this 'ilm al-kalām, which is the language of al-jawhar wal-'araḍ use to prove the universe is originated and disputations in this regard.¹⁷¹² These people gained strength when they influenced the

said. He claimed that al-Sakhāwī mentioned a letter by al-Dhahabī to Ibn Taymiyyah after quoting from *Zaḡhal al-'Ilm*. And the truth is, as has been quoted above, that al-Sakhāwī mentions the treatise first, "*and a booklet he wrote for Ibn Taymiyyah*" and then proceeds to quote from it, indicating that he is referring to *Zaḡhal al-'Ilm* and not the alleged advice. This was from the deception of al-Kawtharī.

¹⁷¹² The Salaf condemned this particular kalām which the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah were upon and likewise this is the very kalām which the Ash'arites inherited, and which their books are full of. When the later Ash'arites saw the inherent flaw within it and realised that this proof can be used to prove the eternity of the universe just as well as it is used to prove its origination, they began to incorporate other types of proofs in order remove themselves from this vulnerability. They then went on to use the proofs which originated with the Philosophers themselves, like Ibn Sīnā, and these are the proofs of tarkīb (composition) and takhṣiṣ (specification), and this latter proof was used by Ibn Sīnā as a deliberate ploy to corrupt the proof of ḥudūth al-ajsām which the Mutakallimīn were using, and which the later Ash'arites fell victim to. As for the genus of kalām, as in refuting falsehood and innovation with the Book, the Sunnah, the Ijmā', the āthār and sound reasoning that does not conflict with any of that, then the Salaf never spoke against that. However, the Ash'arites,

leaders towards the end of the second century hijrah, and they put the ummah and its scholars to trial. When these people were defeated, subdued and humiliated by Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal around 220H-230H, another faction of kalām arose trying to take an intermediate path between the Mu'tazilah and Ahl al-Sunnah. They were the Kullābiyyah, followers of Ibn Kullāb¹⁷¹³ and al-Ash'arī adopted their way

out of their ignorance or due to following of desires and deliberate intent do not distinguish between the genus of kalām and the specific kalām upon which they built their creed and theology, which is the language of ajsām and a'rāḍ and the proof of ḥudūth al-ajsām. This is what Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik, al-Shāfi'i, Aḥmad, and the entirety of the Salaf condemned. And it was because of this very kalām that the Jahmiyyah denied everything for Allāh, His names, attributes and actions. The Mu'tazilah took this from the Jahmiyyah, but fearing the scorn of the people, they pretended to affirm the names, outwardly, whereas in reality they also denied the names, attributes and action. They saw this rejection to be a binding necessity from the proof of ḥudūth al-ajsām. Then there were the Hanafī Karrāmiyyah Mujassimah and likewise the Rāfiḍī Mujassimah, like Hishām bin al-Ḥakam al-Mutakallim, who were also upon this kalām, and they fell into tajsīm through it. It was on account of this kalām that Allāh'a 'uluww was rejected, that the Arabic Qur'ān was said to be created, that it was denied Allāh will be seen in the Hereafter with the vision of the eyes, through the faculty of seeing. It was on account of this kalām, that Allāh's chosen actions were rejected as being ḥawādith (events, occurrences). So this is the kalām that the Salaf condemned and it is the very kalām upon which the Ash'arite theology is founded. However, the Ash'arites try to confuse and deceive the general people by concealing this kalām (ajsām and a'rāḍ) and instead using the word kalām to refer to something else.

¹⁷¹³ Ibn Kullāb tried to defend the Sunnah by using the same kalām that the Salaf condemned and as a result he was forced to submit to the validity of some of the uṣūl of the Mu'tazilah, in which he was unable to refute them. In particular the issue of Allāh's chosen actions (af'āl ikhtiyaariyyah) which the Mu'tazilah considered as ḥawādith (events) that conflict with the proof of ḥudūth al-ajsām. As a result of this Ibn Kullāb was forced to deny Allāh's actions which are tied to His will and power and this led to him formulating the doctrine of kalām nafsī nad claiming that the attributes of love, pleasure, anger and the likes are eternal attributes just like knowledge, hearing, seeing and life, and that they are not tied to His will and power. So Ibn Kullāb debated the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah with the tools of the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah, the condemned heretical kalām, and so he strayed as a result. For this reason he was condemned by Imām Aḥmad, and he had followers such as Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī, Husayn al-Karābīsī, and Abū al-'Abbās al-Qalānisī, and they are in

for a period after he abandoned the Mu'tazilah. Whilst they had much in agreement with Ahl al-Sunnah and had praiseworthy stances and refutations against the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah, they accepted the validity of some of their uṣūl. Starting with al-Bāqillānī, a series of scholars came, ascribing to al-Ash'arī, aiming to propagate his creed, but departing from his actual views. With the influences of Ibn Fawrak (d. 406H), Abū Maṣūr al-Baghdādī (d. 429H), al-Qushayrī (d. 465H), al-Juwaynī (d. 4478H), al-Ghazālī (d. 505H) and al-Rāzī (d. 606H), the original Kullābi creed was polluted and hybridized with the uṣūl of the Mu'tazilah, *taṣawwuf* and *falsafah*. Hence, it is important to distinguish between the original Kullābī Ash'arīs and the later Ash'arīs. In the fourth and fifth centuries, the Ash'arites were a despised minority group who were often reviled. They never gained prominence until the seventh and eighth centuries, and by that time, like the Mu'tazilah in the early third century, they gained much influence, holding many influential positions, and having proximity to the rulers. It was in this era that Ibn Taymiyyah came and aided the 'aḳīdah of the Salaf and brought back that connection to the first three centuries of Islām, to the Imāms of the Sunnah, Ḥadīth and Āthār, and he refuted the Innovators, in all their factions,¹⁷¹⁴ and also the Christians, the Philosophers and other factions, which no doubt earned him a lot of opposition, enmity and hostility. His knowledge, memorization and intellect was the subject of amazement to his peers¹⁷¹⁵ and the

reality the founders and forerunners of what became the Ash'arite doctrinal school.

¹⁷¹⁴ The Khawārij, Rāfiḳah, Qadariyyah, Murji'ah, Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah, Jabariyyah, Ash'ariyyah, Karrāmiyyah, Jabariyyah, Sūfiyyah, Ittiḥādiyyah, Hulūliyyah and many others.

¹⁷¹⁵ Al-Ḥāfidh al-Dhahabī said in *Tadkhirat al-Huffādḥ* (2/1496):

The Shaykh, the Imām, the 'Allāmah, the Hāfidh, the Nāqīḍ (Skilled Critic), the Faqīh, the Mujtahid, the Mufasssir, the Proficient, the signpost of the ascetics, the outstanding phenomenon of the era, Taqī al-Dīn Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad bin al-Fatī Shihāb al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥalīm [Ibn Taymiyyah]...

Ibn Kathīr said in *al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah* (14/118-119):

And the least he would do when he heard something was to memorise it and then engage himself in learning it. He was intelligent and had committed much to memory. He became an Imām in *tafsīr* and everything related to it. He was also

Ash'arites were unable to counter their falsehood being exposed through his support and defence of the 'aqīdah of the Salaf. He showed that the Ash'arites of the time are far away from the early Kullābī Ash'arīs in the subject of the Allāh's 'uluww and the *ṣifāt khabariyyah* and had much innovation in worship unknown to the forerunners. It was in this period that many of the slanders and lies that are current today were spread about him, and there was much resentment towards him from the Ash'arī Shafi'īs.¹⁷¹⁶

Secondly, it is not really Ibn Taymiyyah who is the primary target of the Ash'arites, even if he is the subject of much of their frustration and hatred. It is actually the Salaf of the first three centuries to whom the Ash'arites are opponents and disputants as is clear in the issues of Allāh's 'uluww, the *ṣifāt khabariyyah*, Allāh's speech and the Qur'ān and the believers seeing Allāh in the Hereafter with the vision of their eyes.¹⁷¹⁷ Ibn Taymiyyah is simply an intermediate scapegoat whose

knowledgeable in *fiqh*. And it was said that he was more knowledgeable of the *fiqh* of the madhhabs than the followers of those very same madhhabs, (both) in his time and other than his time. He was a scholar of the fundamental issues (*uṣūl*), the subsidiary issues (*furū'*), of grammar, language and other textual and intellectual sciences. And no scholar of a science would speak to him except that he thought that the science was the speciality of Ibn Taymiyyah. As for *ḥadīth*, then he was the carrier of its flag, a ḥāfidh (great memoriser), able to distinguish the weak from the strong and fully acquainted with the narrators.

¹⁷¹⁶ Al-Ḥāfidh al-Bazzār said in *al-A'lām al-'Uliyyah* (p. 82):

You would not see a scholar opposing him (Ibn Taymiyyah), preventing (the people) from him, filled with hatred for him, except that he was the greediest of them in gathering the goods of this world, and the most cunning of them in acquiring them, and the most pretentious amongst them, and the most desirous of reputation, and the most prolific of them in having lies upon the tongue.

¹⁷¹⁷ In all these issues the later and contemporary Ash'arīs are hand in hand with the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah in the reality of their saying, they simply use sophistry in speech to conceal that agreement and make a pretence of agreement with Ahl al-Sunnah. They say Allāh is above His creation, making it look as if their saying is the saying of the Salaf, then they say, but in rank and status only, agreeing with the Jahmiyyah in reality. And they say, the Qur'ān is

maligning is a tool used by the Ash'arites to scare people away from the 'aqīdah of the Salaf.¹⁷¹⁸ Since their own kalām creed cannot stand upon its own merits - as admitted by al-Ghazālī (d. 505H) who said that all but one in every thousand would become atheists if they were introduced to belief in Allāh through the language of the Mutakallimīn,¹⁷¹⁹ and likewise al-Rāzī who said something similar¹⁷²⁰ - then the only way to call to their creed is to scaremonger against the 'aqīdah of the Salaf and its carriers.

Thirdly, much of the lies against Ibn Taymiyyah were spread by the two Subkīs, Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 756H) and his son, and Tāj al-Dīn al-

Allāh's speech uncreated, claiming to agree with the Salaf, but then they say, the kalām nafsī is eternal, but the Arabic Qur'ān is created and originated, agreeing with the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah in reality. They say Allāh's face will be seen in the Hereafter, claiming to agree with the Salaf, but they make ta'wīl of the face, and they also say, He will be seen, but not in a direction indicating that they agree with the Jahmiyyah in reality and are only playing word games. And this is found in much of their polemics.

¹⁷¹⁸ Muḥammad bin 'Abd al-Barr al-Subkī said:

By Allāh, no one hates Ibn Taymiyyah except for an ignoramus or the person of desires which have diverted him from the truth after he came to know it.

Refer to Ibn Nāṣir's *al-Radd al-Wāfir* (p. 95). And Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī, the Ḥanafī scholar, said:

Whoever says Ibn Taymiyyah is a disbeliever is himself a disbeliever and whoever says that he was a heretic is himself a heretic. How can this be possible when his works are widely available and not a hint of deviation and departure (from the truth) is contained therein?

See *al-Radd al-Wāfir* (p. 245). There is not to be found in all the clangor of the Ash'arite detractors, any quotations, cited with integrity and honesty and maintaining academic integrity, in which they can point to deviation. The most of what they bring is that they ascribe the false necessities that Ibn Taymiyyah discusses arising from the viewpoints of those whose views he is discussing to Ibn Taymiyyah himself.

¹⁷¹⁹ That Allāh is not a *jism* (body), nor a *jawhar* (substance), nor *mutahayyiz* (occupying space), nor in a *jihah* (direction), nor inside the universe, nor outside of it, nor above it, nor below it and so on.

¹⁷²⁰ Both of their statements are quoted earlier in the book in the section on Hūdūth al-Ajsām.

Subkī (d. 771H), both bigoted partisan Ash'arite Shāfi'ī jurists. As for Taqī al-Dīn, he slandered Ibn Taymiyyah with the claim that Ibn Taymiyyah declared visiting the Prophet's grave to be ḥarām (unlawful). The scholar Muḥammad bin Aḥmad bin 'Abd al-Hādī (d. 744H) wrote a powerful refutation of al-Subkī and his slander¹⁷²¹ entitled, *al-Ṣārim al-Munkī Fī al-Radd 'alā al-Subkī*,¹⁷²² in which he established al-Subkī's ignorance of ḥadīth, his authentication of fabricated and weak reports, and his many deceptions. Al-Dhahabī also wrote to al-Subkī, his student, scolding him for attacking Ibn Taymiyyah. Later al-Subkī, wrote a letter to his teacher:¹⁷²³

As for the saying of my teacher [al-Dhahabī] regarding the Shaykh, then I am convinced of his great rank, his ocean-like exuberance, the vastness of his knowledge of the legislative and intellectual sciences, his excessive intelligence and *ijtihād* and his reaching [a level] in all of that which surpasses description. I have always held this opinion. His status in my eyes is greater and loftier than that, alongside what Allāh gathered for him of asceticism, piety, religiosity, his aiding of the truth and remaining firm upon it for the sake of Allāh alone, his traversing the ways of the Salaf and his great dependence upon all of that, and the strangeness of his likes in this time, rather, since many times [that have passed by].

¹⁷²¹ Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah did not prohibit the legislated visitation of the grave of the Prophet (ﷺ), rather his books are found with mention of it and mention of its details and how it is to be done. However, he spoke on the matter of specifically setting out to travel only for the purpose of visiting the grave of the Prophet (ﷺ) and he mentioned the difference of opinion in that regard with some from the associates of al-Shāfi'ī and Aḥmad permitting it and the saying of Imām Mālik that it is prohibited, and it is also the saying of a group from the associates of al-Shāfi'ī and Aḥmad. It was this issue that Ibn Taymiyyah discussed, and not the mere visitation of the Prophet's (ﷺ), since these are two separate issues. And Ibn Taymiyyah supported the view of prohibition based upon the authentic and agreed upon ḥadīth, "A journey is not to be undertaken except for three mosques, this mosque of mine, al-Masjid al-Ḥaram and al-Masjid al-Aqsā." This is all that Ibn Taymiyyah did and as Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī said, "So what blame is upon him for that? But we seek refuge in Allāh from envy, oppression and following of desire..." (p. 13)

¹⁷²² See the print edition, *Dār Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah*, Beirut, 1985.

¹⁷²³ Refer to the text of this letter as reported by Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī in *Dhayl Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah* (Maktabah al-'Ubaykān, 1425H) 4/505, and also *al-Durar al-Kāminah* of Ibn Ḥajar (Dār al-Jayl, Beirut, 1993) 1/159. In *al-Durar al-Kāminah*, Ibn Ḥajar said, "And al-Dhahabī wrote to al-Subkī, scolding him on account of speech that arose from him regarding Ibn Taymiyyah, and so he replied to him and from his response was..." and then he quotes the letter of al-Subkī.

And as for Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, he was rebutted by al-Ḥāfidh al-Sakhāwī for a comment he made, "Since when were the Ḥanbalīs anything. Did any of the Ḥanbalīs raise their heads?" and he meant by this, did any of the Ḥanbalīs become prominent in knowledge. Al-Sakhāwī said:¹⁷²⁴

This is from the strangest of affairs, and the most sectarian of attitudes and this is why the Qādī of our time, and Shaykh of the *madhhab*, al-'Izz al-Kanānī wrote under this statement, "And likewise, Allāh did not raise the heads of the Mu'attilah", and then he said about Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, "He is a man having few manners, lack of scholarly integrity and ignorant of Ahl al-Sunnah and their ranks."

Fourthly, that which is found of biographical accounts in the works of Imām al-Dhahabī written after Ibn Taymiyyah's death is replete with praise, and it is known that biographical accounts are not the same as individual pieces of advice that are exchanged between Scholars, since biographical accounts are comprehensive judgements regarding a person after his death, and as for pieces of advice they are tied to contexts and situations.¹⁷²⁵ So it is important to document some of what has been writted by al-Dhahabī of biographical accounts for Ibn Taymiyyah.

Al-Ḥāfidh al-Dhahabī said:¹⁷²⁶

The Shaykh, the Imām, the 'Allāmah, the Hāfidh, the Nāqiḍ (Skilled Critic), the Faqīh, the Mujtahid, the Mufasssir, the Proficient, the signpost of the ascetics, the outstanding phenomenon of the era, Taqī al-Dīn Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad bin al-Fatī Shihāb al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥalīm [Ibn Taymiyyah]... And he was amongst the oceans of knowledge, from the limited intellectuals, the ascetics, the unique individuals, the great braves, the most generous nobles. He was praised by both the one who agreed with him and the one who differed with him and he became famous by his works, and perhaps they number three-hundred volumes... He held certain rulings which were unique to him and on account of which his honour was attacked. But these are obscured by the (vast) ocean of his

¹⁷²⁴ Refer to *al-I'lān bil-Tawbikh liman Dhamma al-Tārīkh* (ed. Dr. Ṣāliḥ Aḥmad al-'Ily, Mu'assasah al-Risālah, 1st edition, 1986) pp. 94-95.

¹⁷²⁵ If we accept for argument's sake that al-Dhahabī was the author of the alleged piece of advice.

¹⁷²⁶ Refer to *Tadkhirat al-Huffādh* (2/1496).

knowledge, for Allāh, the Most High, has pardoned him and is pleased with him. I have not seen the likes of him, and the speech of every person from this ummah can be accepted or rejected, so what was he [except one from this ummah]?

Al-Ḥāfidh al-Dhahabī also said:¹⁷²⁷

And Shaykh al-Islām, Taqī al-Dīn, Aḥmad bin 'Abd al-Ḥalīm died in the prison of Damascus on the 22nd night of Dhu al-Qa'dah... and he excelled in *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, *ikhtilāf* (the issues in which there is difference of opinion) and the principle affairs (of the religion). He used to display (remarkable) intelligence and his works number more than two-hundred volumes. He also had some strange opinions on account of which his honour was attacked, and he was a leader in generosity, braveness, and was content with little. His disciples numbered more than 50,000 and he was at the forefront, may Allāh have mercy upon him.

Al-Ḥāfidh al-Dhahabī also said:¹⁷²⁸

He was an āyah (sign) in intelligence and in rapid comprehension, a leader in knowledge of the Book, the Sunnah and differences (of opinion) ... if *tafsīr* was mentioned, he was the carrier of its flag, and if the jurists were mentioned, he was their mujtahid muṭlaq, and if the Ḥuffādh gathered and he spoke, they became mute, and he enumerated (cited from memory), and they were silent, and he was rich, and they were bankrupt. And if the theologians were named, he would be the unique of them and he would be their source, and if Ibn Sīnā emerged in the absence of the Philosophers, he would subdue them, diminish them, uncover their veils and reveal their flaws...

Al-Ḥāfidh al-Dhahabī also said:¹⁷²⁹

Ahmad bin 'Abd al-Ḥalīm - then he cited his lineage - al-Ḥarrānī then al-Dimashqī, al-Ḥanbalī, Abū al-'Abbās, Taqī al-Dīn, our Shaykh and the Shaykh of Islām, the matchless individual of the era with respect to knowledge, cognizance, bravery, intelligence, divine illumination, generosity, giving sincerity of purpose to the

¹⁷²⁷ Refer to *al-'Ibar fī Khībar min 'Ibar* (4/84)

¹⁷²⁸ As quoted from al-Dhahabī by Ibn Shākir in *Fuwāt al-Wafiyāt*, through Muḥammad al-Shaybānī in *al-Tawḍīḥ al-Jaliyy* (p. 59).

¹⁷²⁹ As quoted from him by Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī in *Dhayl Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah* (4/496-497) through his work *Mu'jam al-Shuyūkh*.

ummah, enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. He heard ḥadīth, and spent much effort from himself in seeking it, he wrote, and source-referenced, and looked at the narrators and their ranks, and he acquired [of this knowledge] what others besides him did not acquire. He gained skill in tafsīr of the Qur'ān, and he was immersed in its finer meanings, in a fluent manner... He excelled in ḥadīth and its memorization, few are there who memorized what he memorized in ḥadīth ... He had an extreme ability to recall at the time of establishing the evidence. He excelled the people in knowledge of jurisprudence, the differences of the schools, the fatwās of the Companions and Tābī'īn in that whenever he gave a fatwā he did not adhere to a [specific] madhhab but was upon whatever evidence was established with him. He gained precision in the Arabic language, in its foundations and branches, in its explanation and variation. He look at the rationalities and he knew well the sayings of the Mutakallimīn, he refuted them, and notified of their error, and warned against them, and aided the Sunnah with the most apparent of proofs, and the most brilliant of evidences. And he was harmed in his path to Allāh by the opposers, he aided the pure Sunnah until Allāh raised his lighthouse, and united the hearts of the people of piety upon love of him and supplication for him, and He crushed his enemies, and He guided through him men from the various religions and creeds, and He made the hearts of the kings and leaders to be inclined towards compliance to him and obedience to him. overwhelmingly (most of the time). He (Allāh) revived al-Shām through him, nay, Islām (itself) after it had almost been defiled, by making firm those in authority when the party of Tartars approached, and brought their oppression. False thoughts were entertained about Allāh, and the Believers were shaken, and hypocrisy manifested itself. His virtues are many, and he is greater than that the likes of me should notify of his biography. If I was to swear between the corner [of the Ka'bah] and station [of Ibrāhīm], I would have, I would swear that I have not seen the likes of him with my eyes, and that he has not seen the likes of himself.

Al-Ḥāfidh al-Dhahabī also said:¹⁷³⁰

And he wrote, read and corrected (works) and also excelled in the sciences related to the narrations and the *Sunan*. He studied, gave verdict, made *tafsīr* and authored the most amazing of works. He was alone in holding certain opinions and as a result his honour was attacked, yet he is a man who has sins and mistakes. Despite this, and by Allāh, my eyes have not seen the likes of him and he

¹⁷³⁰ In *Mu'jam al-Muḥaddithīn* (p. 25), through *al-Kawkab al-Durrī*. And it is also cited by Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī in *Dhayl Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥānābilah* (4/499-500).

has not seen the likes of himself. He was a skilled and erudite Imām in the various sciences related to the religion, had a correct and sound mind, extremely quick in his perception, fluent in his understanding, overflowing with good deeds and was characterized by excessive braveness and generosity. He kept away from the desires of food, clothing and sexual relations. He did not find pleasure in anything but the spreading of knowledge, putting it into books and then acting upon its requirements. Abū Faṭḥ al-Ya'marī mentioned him in answering the questions of Abū al-'Abbās bin Dimyāṭī al-Ḥāfidh, saying, "I found him to be amongst those who had acquired a fortune of knowledge and he fully and completely memorise the *Sunan* and the *Āthār*. If he spoke about *tafsīr* then he would be the carrier of its flag or if he gave a legal ruling in *fiqh*, he would know its extreme depths. And if he was to recall a hadīth he would possess all the knowledge related to it and would carry its flag (make the *hadīth* take precedence over all else). And if he was to talk about the various religions and factions, no one who was more vast in knowledge or greater in meticulousness could be seen. He surpassed his contemporaries in every science and my eyes have not seen the likes of him and nor have his eyes seen the likes of himself." I (adh-Dhahabī) say: He was imprisoned on more than one occasion in order that he would slacken with respect to his antagonists and so that the fluency of his tongue and pen may diminish. Yet he would not recant and nor turn around upon the advice of anyone, up until he died while imprisoned at the Damascus Prison on the 20th of Dhu al-Qa'dah, in the year 728H. And his followers consisted of nations, (the like of) their number could not be found at the graves of the Sūfis, may Allāh forgive him and have mercy upon him, āmīn.

And the biography for Ibn Taymiyyah in al-Dhahabī's *Siyar A'lām al-Nubulā* has been preserved through Ibn al-Wazīr who quoted it in his book *al-'Awāšim min al-Qawāšim*.¹⁷³¹ And it is as follows:

¹⁷³¹ See *al-'Awāšim min al-Qawāšim* (5/261-264), through al-Kawkab al-Durrī. The verifier of al-Qawāšim said:

And there occurs here in the manuscript jīm a lengthy biography of Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah which is not present in all of the manuscripts. So I saw it fit to affirm it in these footnotes, along with its text. On some of its lines there is some deficiency (in quality) on account of which some words have been cut off, and I have shown this by establishing the diacritical marks, and I have affirmed them here. This is because the volume of *Siyar A'lām al-Nubulā* in which this biography is found, and that is the last one, has not been printed. This is because we have not found a

The Shaykh, the Imām, the Scholar, the Mufassir (Exegete), the Faqīh (Jurist), the Mujtahid, the Hāfidh, the Muḥaddith, the Shaykh of Islām, the prodigy of the era, author of amazing works, and (a manifestation) of excessive intelligence, Taqī ul-Dīn Abu al-'Abbās Aḥmad the son of the Scholar, the Muftī, Shihāb al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥalīm, the son of the Imām, the Shaykh of Islām, Majd al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt 'Abd al-Salām, the author of al-Aḥkām (meaning the book al-Muntaqā) bin 'Abd Allāh bin Abū al-Qāsim al-Harrānī...

He heard from so and so and so and so and from (attending) many circles (of knowledge). And he increased, reached far limits and read over a group of people by himself. He also wrote with his own hand numerous chapters (of certain works) as well as *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*. He looked at the various narrators of hadīth and the hidden defects (in the chains of narration) and then became one of the Imāms of criticism and Scholars of the narrations, along with his recording of knowledge (in books), his piety, remembrance, and constant devotion. Then he turned to *fiqh*, its minutiae, its foundations, evidences, consensus, and matters of difference until sheer amazement would arise when he would mention one of matters in which there was difference of opinion, then he would bring evidence (from the texts), would evaluate and point out the stronger of the positions and would strive (in seeking out the truth), and all of that was deserving to him for the various conditions of making ijtihād had combined in him. Certainly, I have not seen anyone quicker in extracting the verses which would be relevant to the matter which he was discussing, and nor one who was greater in recalling the texts of the ahādīth...

He would constantly enjoin the good and forbid the evil and the reproach of the criticiser would not prevent him from the path of Allāh, [he was] the possessor of authority (in his knowledge and speech) and boldness. He had no concern with the jealous and whoever mixed with him and knew him well will accuse me of falling short in describing him and whoever opposed and hated

manuscript which is fit for publishing. So this is a biography of the Imām, the 'Allāmah, Ibn Taymiyyah from al-Nubulā of al-Dhahabī. I have quoted it to here (only) because I have quoted from it frequently in this book, especially in this volume. Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Dhahabī said regarding him...

And then he quotes the biography that is cited above.

him will accuse me of over praise and exaggeration... yet I do not believe that he is infallible. Never, for he, despite the vastness of his knowledge, overflowing braveness, fluidity of mind, extreme respect and veneration for the sanctities of the Religion, is a man from amongst me. Zealousness would overcome him in study, and he would become angry. Hatred for him would develop in the souls and they would avoid him. And if he had not (been like this), by Allāh, if he had been kind with his antagonists, was kind to them, was amiable with them and made his speech cordial with them, there would have been a word of agreement and consensus . For certainly, their senior scholars and Imāms humbled themselves in front of the knowledge and sciences and fiqh he possessed, acknowledging (at the same time) that they disliked him. And it was as if they affirmed the rarity of his mistakes. I do not mean those scholars whose characteristic and habit is to belittle him and mock his excellence, who have such intense hatred of him that they declare him to be ignorant and also to be a disbeliever, who attack him without even having looked at his works, who do not understand his words and who do not have any share of vast understanding and cognizance.

However, a scholar from among them would do justice to him... with knowledge, and the route of intelligence (in this matter) is to remain quiet about what occurs between rivals, may Allāh have mercy upon them all. And I am the very least of those whose words speak of his greatness or whose pen makes his (mental and characteristic) composition clear. His associates and also his enemies humble themselves in front of his sciences, acknowledge the swiftness of his understanding, that he is a river which has no shores, a treasure for which there is no equal, that he had determined generosity and that his braveness had no end. However, they would seek vengeance against him and those who were fair and just in that will be rewarded, those who took the middle course (were not excessive) will be excused, those who were oppressive will be subdued and overcome, but most of them are in fact deceived, to Allāh do all affairs return and every man can have his saying accepted or rejected. Perfection lies only in the Messengers and decisive proof is only in consensus. So may Allāh show mercy to a man who spoke about the scholars upon knowledge and who assiduously scrutinized their problematic pronouncements out of consideration and good understanding, who then sought forgiveness for them and spoke of excuses for them. And if this is not (the adopted path of an individual) then he is someone who does not know and who doesn't know that he doesn't know. If you pardon the most senior of scholars for their errors and you do not pardon Ibn Taymiyyah for his limited

mistakes then you have affirmed for your own soul (the following of) desires and the lack of justice. And if you were to say, "*I do not pardon him because he is a disbeliever, the enemy of Allāh and His Messenger*" then a portion from the people of knowledge and Religion say to you, "By Allāh, we do not know of him except that he is a believer who guards his prayers, ablutions, fasting in Ramadān and who venerates the Sharī'ah both inwardly and outwardly." He would not approach (any matter) with a faulty and evil understanding, rather he had excessive intelligence. And nor would he approach any matter with lack of knowledge, for he was an overflowing ocean, having firm knowledge and insight of the Book and the Sunnah, without there being any equal to him in that. And nor was he one who played with the religion. For if he had been like that then he would have deceived his antagonists straight away, (pretending to) agree with them and he would have abandoned contradicting them.

He would not hold unique stances in certain matters due to personal desires and nor would he give a fatwa based upon something that was agreed upon, rather he would bring proof from the Qur'ān, the hadīth or qiyās (analogy) for all of his unique stances and he would prove them and argue in their favour. He would also narrate all the different opinions held in the issue and would lengthen his investigation of it, following in the footsteps of the Imāms before him. If he erred then he has the reward of the one who strives to arrive at the truth amongst the scholars, and if he was correct then he acquires two rewards.

Certainly, reproach and hatred is only justified for one of two types of men; the one who gives a verdict in a matter based upon his desires and does not show any evidence, and the one who speaks in a matter without having the slightest amount of knowledge and nor the capacity to quote the narrations. So we seek refuge in Allāh from the desires and ignorance. There is also no doubt that consideration is not to be given to the praise given to him by the leading personalities (accompanying him) and nor those who exaggerate in his affair, for their love of him led them to cover up his errors and they would often count them as good deeds for him. However, consideration is only given (to the testimony) of the people of piety and fear from among the two groups, those who speak with justice and who raise (only) for the sake of Allāh, even if it was against their own souls or against their fathers. And as for this man, I do not desire the world, nor any wealth or status by what I have said concerning him from any aspect whatsoever and this is despite my perfect and complete knowledge regarding him. And it is not permitted for me in my Religion and nor for my

intellect that I conceal his good deeds, hide his excellencies, expose his sins which are forgiven due to the vastness of Allāh's generosity and highlight an individual page (of his writings) which would become obscure when compared to the ocean of his knowledge and generosity. Allāh will forgive him and be pleased with him. He will also show mercy to us if we were to adopt and follow that which he (Shaykh al-Islām) followed, despite the fact that I differed with him in both fundamental and subsidiary issues. I have just made it plain and clear that his mistakes in these matters are forgiven, in fact Allāh will reward him for them to the extent of his good intention and sacrifice of his time and effort and Allāh is the One whom we shall meet at the appointed time. And I have also been harmed by his companions due to my words concerning him, so Allāh is sufficient for me as a reckoner... And I have taken a course in between the two groups. To the one who loves him, I am considered as one who falls short and to the one who hates him, I am considered immoderate and excessive. Never, by Allāh (is this the case).

Portions of this biography are also quoted by Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī in *al-Durar al-Kāminah* which corroborates what has preceded. He quotes from al-Ḥāfidh al-Yaʿmarī as was done by al-Dhāhabī. Ibn Ḥajar wrote:¹⁷³²

The Shaykh of our shaykhs, al-Ḥāfidh Abū al-Faḥ al-Yaʿmarī (Ibn Sayyid al-Nās) said in the biography of Ibn Taymiyyah:

Al-Mizzī encouraged me express my view about Shaykh al-Islām Taqī al-Dīn. I found him to be amongst those who had acquired a fortune of knowledge and he fully and completely memorised the *Sunan* and the *Āthār*. If he spoke about *tafsīr* then he would be the carrier of its flag or if he gave a legal ruling in *fiqh*, he would know its extreme depths. And if he was to recall a *hadīth* he would possess all the knowledge related to it and would carry its flag (make the *hadīth* take precedence over all else). And if he was to talk about the various religions and factions, no one who was more vast in knowledge or greater in meticulousness could be seen. He surpassed his contemporaries in every science and my eyes have not seen the likes of him and nor have his eyes seen the likes of himself. He used to speak about *tafsīr* and a large number of people would attend with a substantial portion returning while having taken from his sweet, rich ocean (of knowledge). (And it continued

¹⁷³² Refer to *al-Durar al-Kāminah* (ed. Dr. Sālim al-Almānī, Dar al-Jayl, Beirut, 1933) 1/156-158.

thus), until the disease of envy crept into the hearts of the people of his city.

The theoreticians conspired together to pick out anything from his beliefs that could be rejected, and for this end they memorised certain of his statements. Then they undermined him by this ploy, and laid traps for him by (which to catch) him [and declare him an innovator]. They thought that he had strayed from their way and split from their sect. So they argued with him and he with them and some of them cut relations with him and he with them. Then he debated another group who ascribed to asceticism and to the *ṭarīqah*, those who thought they had the minute details of the inner reality and its bare truth (the *Sūfīs*). However, he exposed these orders. Then this reached the first group and they sought help from those who cut relations with him and harboured malice towards him. So they took the matter to the rulers, each of them having decided that he was an disbeliever. They prepared a meeting and inspired the ignorant masses to spread this word amongst the great scholars. They (also) took steps to take the matter to the king of Egypt. And he (Ibn Taymiyyah) was arrested and thrown in prison. (Secret) gatherings were held to conspire in the spilling of his blood, and for this purpose the people and students from the small mosques were called, along with those who would argue only for the sake of the people (to make them happy), those who would argue only to display their wit, and those that would pronounce *takfīr* and call for disassociation. But your Lord knows best what is (concealed) in their hearts and what they (openly) proclaim. The one who announced his disbelief was not better than the one who merely argued to make the people happy. The scorpions crept all around him, but Allāh made futile each of their plots and rescued him at the hands of those that He chose, and Allāh is the one who overcomes and reaches His affair. Then he continuously moved from one trial to another. In all of his life he did move except from trouble to trouble, until his affair was raised to some of the *qādīs*, and there occurred what occurred in the matter of his arrest (and imprisonment). He remained in prison until he died and to Allāh do all affairs return, and He knows the deception of the eyes and what the hearts to conceal. On the day of his funeral, the streets were crowded and the Muslims came from every roadway...

And Ibn Ḥajar also quotes the statements of al-Dhahabī and others in *al-Durar al-Kāminah*:¹⁷³³

¹⁷³³ Refer to *al-Durar al-Kāminah* (ed. Dr. Sālim al-ʿAlmānī, Dar al-Jayl, Beirut, 1933) 1/158-160.

Al-Dhahabī said, in giving a biographical account for him, "He read the Qur'ān, [studied] fiqh, debated and sought evidence and he had not reached [the age of] maturity, and he became skilled in knowledge, tafsīr, and he gave fatwā and gave lessons and he was less than twenty years old. He authored works and became from the senior scholars in the life of his own shaykhs. His works number around four thousand books and more." And he [al-Dhahabī] said in another place, "As for his citation of fiqh and the views of the Companions and Tābī'īn, let alone the four madhhab, then he has none to match him in that." And in another place he [al-Dhahabī] said, "And he has a mighty reach in knowing the sayings of the Salaf, rarely would a matter be mentioned except that he would mention the opinions of the Scholars, and he would oppose the four Imāms in a number of issues in which he wrote about and brought proof for them from the Book and the Sunnah..." And he [al-Dhahabī] said in another place, "He was insightful into the way of the Salaf, and he argued in its favour with evidences and with matters in which no one else preceded him, and he used certain expressions which others shied away from, until a portion of the Scholars in Egypt stood against him, they declared him an innovator and debated him, yet he was firm, did not compromise nor fear, rather he spoke the truth when his ijtihād and the sharpness of his mind, and his great expanse (in understanding) led him to it. As a result war-like encounters took place and incidents in both Shām and Egypt, and they assaulted him all from a single arch (bow). Then Allāh, the Exalted, delivered him, and he was constantly in prayer, making much istighāthah (seeking deliverance from Allāh), strong in reliance, constantly alert, and he had regular remembrances which he would be devoted to." And al-Dhahabī wrote to al-Subkī, rebuking him for his speech against Ibn Taymiyyah, and he [al-Subkī] replied to him and from his response was:

As for the saying of my teacher [al-Dhahabī] regarding the Shaykh, then I am convinced of his great rank, his ocean-like exuberance, the vastness of his knowledge of the legislative and intellectual sciences, his excessive intelligence and *ijtihād* and his reaching [a level] in all of that which surpasses description. I have always held this opinion. His status in my eyes is greater and loftier than that, alongside what Allāh gathered for him of asceticism, piety, religiosity, his aiding of the truth and remaining firm upon it for the sake of Allāh alone, his traversing the ways of the Salaf and his great dependence upon all of that, and the strangeness of his

likes in this time, rather, since many times [that have passed by].

And I read in the writing of al-Ḥāfidh Ṣalāh al-Dīn al-'Alā'ī regarding the trustworthiness of the shaykh of our shaykhs, al-Ḥāfidh Bahā' al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh bin Muḥammad bin Khalīl, whose text is - and the Bahā al-Dīn just mentioned heard over the two shaykhs, our shaykh, our chief and imām in that which is between us and Allāh, the Exalted, the shaykh of verification, the one traversing [the way] of the one whom he followed, the one of great many virtues, and powerful, compelling evidences which all of the nations have affirmed that their concerns in trying to enumerate them all are deficient, and may Allāh delight us by his magnificent sciences and benefit us in this world and the hereafter and he is the shaykh, the rabbānī scholar, the ocean-like sage, the pole of light, imām of the scholars, the blessing of the ummah, the signpost of the scholars, inheritors of the prophets, the last of the mujtahidīn, the unique ones amongst the scholars, the shaykh of Islām, the proof of the notables, the example for the creation, the evidence for the students, the subduer of the innovators, the sword of the debators, the ocean of sciences, the beneficial treasure, the explainer of the Qur'ān, and amazing prodigy of the era, the unique of the age, and verily, Taqī al-Dīn is the imām of the Muslims, the proof of Allāh over the creation, associated with the righteous, resembling those who have passed, the muftī of the various factions, the aider of the truth, the signpost of guidance, the support for the Ḥuffādh, the knight of meanings and words, the pillar of the Sharī'ah, possessor of marvellous sciences, Abū al-'Abbās Ibn Taymiyyah."

Fifthly, coming to the alleged advice of al-Dhahabī (d. 748H), much has been written on this subject¹⁷³⁴ and the following points can be mentioned in summary:

Point 1: Al-Dhahabī was a student of Ibn Taymiyyah and accompanied him right until his death. Further, al-Dhahabī is with Ibn Taymiyyah against the Ash'arites, Ahl al-Kalām and the Ṣūfīs in the affairs of 'aqīdah. He explicitly mentioned praise for Ibn Taymiyyah for refuting

¹⁷³⁴ Refer to the two excellent works, *Aḍwā' 'alā al-Risālah al-Mansūbah ilā al-Ḥāfidh al-Dhahabī, al-Naṣīḥah al-Dhahabiyyah Li ibn Taymiyyah* by Muḥammad bin 'Abd Allāh al-Qūnuwī (Dār al-Ma'mūn Lil-Turāth, Beirut, 1st edition, 2002) and also *al-Tawḍīḥ al-Jaliyy Fī al-Radd 'alā al-Naṣīḥah al-Dhahabiyyah al-Manḥūlah 'alā al-Imām al-Dhahabī* by Muḥammad bin Ibrāhīm al-Shaybānī (Kuwait, 1st edition, 1993).

the Mutakallimīn and aiding the Sunnah. All of the statements of al-Dhahabī in his works are full of overflowing praise and contain a language and style entirely different to that which is in the alleged advice. Al-Dhahabī explicitly mentions the death date of Ibn Taymiyyah in some of his biographies indicating that they were written after 728H, and as for this alleged advice it is claimed to have been written some time between 721H and 728H. And what is stated by al-Dhahabī in those biographies flatly contradicts what is in the alleged advice, as will be demonstrated when the text of the advice is quoted a little later.

Point 2: The evidence provided by Muḥammad al-Qūnuwī¹⁷³⁵ indicates that this alleged advice originated with Muḥammad bin 'Alī bin 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sarrāj al-Dimashqī,¹⁷³⁶ (d. 747H) an Ash'arī, Qalandarī,¹⁷³⁷

¹⁷³⁵ Refer to *Aḍwā' alā al-Risālah al-Mansūbah ilā al-Ḥāfīdh al-Dhahabī, al-Naṣīḥah al-Dhahabīyyah Li ibn Taymiyyah* by Muḥammad bin 'Abd Allāh al-Qūnuwī (Dār al-Ma'mūn Lil-Turāth, Beirut, 1st edition, 2002).

¹⁷³⁶ His biographical details are found in al-Wafiyāt of Ibn Rāfi' (2/39), and his mention of his association and friendship with Ibn Taymiyyah is found in his works, *Tuffāḥ al-Arwāḥ wa Miftāḥ al-Arbāḥ*, and *Tashwīq al-Arwāḥ wal-Qulūb ilā Dhikr 'Allām al-Ghuyūb*. Refer to al-Qūnuwī (p. 38). There was a close association between their families, and they played together as children, living in the same town and location. Also living there was Tāj al-Dīn al-Fazārī, whose son al-Burhān al-Fazārī, an Ash'arī, was a childhood friend of Ibn Taymiyyah. This friendship between Ibn al-Sarrāj and Ibn Taymiyyah continued, Ibn al-Sarrāj wrote, "And when we became preoccupied with the noble knowledge, we were together most of the times, and in the places where it was acquired, with each other." Ibn al-Sarrāj's teachers include Aḥmad bin Shaybān al-Ṣālihī (d. 685H), Tāj al-Dīn al-Fazārī (d. 690H) who was also a teacher to Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Dhahabī and al-Mizzi. Also from his teachers, Muḥammad Badr al-Dīn bin Jamā'ah (d. 733H) and his father studied with al-Nawawī (d. 676H). Also from his teachers were Zayn al-Dīn al-Fāriqī (d. 703H), and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥamawī (d. 697H). Ibn al-Sarrāj was an Ash'arī in creed and a Qalandarī, Rifā'ī in ṭarīqah. There are around fifteen books mentioned from his authorship, mostly in taṣawwuf and some in ḥadīth and fiqh. Refer to al-Qūnuwī (pp. 32-40).

¹⁷³⁷ The Qalandariyyah were a more extreme sect of the Ṣūfīs and Ibn al-Sarrāj has much in his works indicating that his family were upon this path and he had been nurtured upon it from an early age. He used to believe in the feats and claimed miracles of the Awliyā from his Qalandarī order, even if they opposed both reason and revelation and would boast about them, claiming if the disbelievers saw them, they would have faith. He would also criticize those who opposed the Ṣūfīs, and would say that al-Rifā'ī's grave should be sought out for visitation and acquiring blessing, and would mention his own

Rifā'ī, Shāfi'ī Ṣūfi, and former associate of Ibn Taymiyyah from the age of childhood. They studied together in their youth but took different ways. Ibn Taymiyyah traversed the way of the Salaf and Ibn al-Sarrāj traversed the way of the Ash'ariyyah and the Ṣūfi ṭariqahs.

Point 3: Ibn al-Sarrāj had much enmity¹⁷³⁸ towards Ibn Taymiyyah and wrote about him and his students with criticism in his books *al-Tashwīq* and *al-Tuffāḥ* without naming them specifically in most instances.¹⁷³⁹ and he would write of his advices to Ibn Taymiyyah, some of which

visitations to the graves, spending nights there, making dhikr. and Refer to al-Qūnuwī (pp. 42-47, 50, 59).

¹⁷³⁸ Ibn al-Sarrāj would boast about the miracles of Abū Yūsuf al-Qamīnī (d. 725H) who was from the so-called Awliyā' of the Qalandariyyah, and this individual is the one about whom Ibn Kathīr said (*al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah*, 14/123):

Ibrāhīm al-Mūlah (d. 725H), the one who is referred to as al-Qamīnī, because he resided in Qamāmīn ... and alongside that he was not from the people who prayed and Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyyah sought his repentance and beat him for abandoning the prayers, and for mixing with filthy things, and for gathering men and women together in unclean places.

And in turn Ibn al-Sarrāj would speak ill of Ibn Taymiyyah for is reprimanding of these deviants, he said (*al-Tuffāḥ*, p. 128):

And there has appeared in our time he who claims knowledge and excellence and has given himself the position of reviling them, and describing them with every repugnant and contemptible thing and he treats whatever is reported from them of these excellencies or their virtues, which everyone who asks, desires [meaning miracles] as being either mere devilish imagination or fabricated impossible (matter).

Refer to al-Qūnuwī (p, 52).

¹⁷³⁹ Ibn al-Sarrāj did not like the rulers of the time, from the Mamlūks, and spoke ill of them. However some of the Mamlūks loved and held Ibn Taymiyyah in esteem, such as the Sultān Nāṣir (d. 741H), who would honour him. Ibn al-Sarrāj wrote in criticism of Ibn Taymiyyah in this regard, just as he wrote in criticism of the followers of Ibn Taymiyyah in general. Refer to al-Qūnuwī (pp. 48-45).

would be in written form.¹⁷⁴⁰ He would complain much of Ibn Taymiyyah's speech against the Ṣūfīs and their deviations.¹⁷⁴¹ He was also present in the great debate that took place between Ibn Taymiyyah and the Rifā'iyyah Ash'ariyyah in Damascus in 705H. And in his writings in general is that he speaks of Ibn Taymiyyah as one who thinks that all knowledge has ended up with him and that he is the central axis¹⁷⁴²

Point 4: Ibn al-Sarrāj is suspected of writing this advice attributed to al-Dhahabī because its contents present a Ṣūfī diatribe against Ibn Taymiyyah and its tone is clearly indicative of an aggrieved adversary. Ibn al-Sarrāj has explicitly stated that he sent innumerable letters of advice to Ibn Taymiyyah and complained that he never received responses. What indicates that Ibn al-Sarrāj is the likely author is that advice has been distributed with the title (النصيحة الذهبية لابن تيمية), which would simply have been the original title "*The Golden Advice to Ibn Taymiyyah*" without it having any connection to Imām al-Dhahabī. At the very end of this advice is written (آخر الرسالة الذهبية نصيحة منه لابن تيمية), which is obviously a comment made by whoever made a copy of the letter. It is likely that his advice was distributed, and was either falsely ascribed to al-Dhahabī, or assumed to belong to al-Dhahabī due to its title (النصيحة الذهبية) or (الرسالة الذهبية). This error in ascription was carried until it reached Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah (d. 851H). This is the only plausible explanation and it is clearly indicated when one looks at the actual contents of the alleged advice.

¹⁷⁴⁰ Refer to al-Qūnuwī (pp. 67, 73, 74-75). Ibn al-Sarrāj wrote in al-Tuffāḥ (p. 198) about the letters he would send to him whilst he was in Damascus and after he left it:

And we had advised him often from the age of youth whilst in Damascus, and we sent many innumerable letters to him from the northern cities, ordering him to be occupied with what would benefit him, and prohibiting him from the opposite of that, for the sake of Allāh, the Exalted, and on account of the old companionship that existed between us ...

¹⁷⁴¹ Refer to al-Qūnuwī (pp. 71).

¹⁷⁴² Ibn al-Sarrāj often uses the term *quṭb* (pole) and *quṭbiyyah* (centrality) when referring to Ibn Taymiyyah, that Ibn Taymiyyah assumes this for himself.

Point 5: As for the text of the advice then it contains the following:¹⁷⁴³

All praise is due to Allāh for my lowliness...¹⁷⁴⁴ to Him do I grieve for the Sunnah and the disappearance of its people, I crave to Him for believing brothers who would support me in crying, and I am saddened for the loss of a people who used to be lanterns of knowledge, people of piety, treasures of goodness, O for the presence of a ḥalāl dirham and a cordial brother...¹⁷⁴⁵ Glad tidings for him whose own flaw preoccupied him from the flaws of others and destruction for the one who became preoccupied with the flaws others away from his own. How much will you praise yourself,¹⁷⁴⁶ your rambling and your expressions, your rebuke of the Scholars, and following up the errors of the people? Alongside your knowledge of the prohibition of the Messenger (ﷺ), "*Do not mention your dead except with goodness, for they have departed to [reap from] what they have sent forth.*"¹⁷⁴⁷ Rather, I know that you will say to me, in order to defend yourself that speaking ill of those who never smelt the fragrance of Islām, and did not know what Muhammad (ﷺ) came with, is jihād.¹⁷⁴⁸ Rather, by Allāh, they knew

¹⁷⁴³ Refer to al-Qūnuwī (p. 83 onwards) and likewise al-Shaybānī (p. 69 onwards) where they comment on the spuriousness of the ascription to al-Dhahabī from its contents alone.

¹⁷⁴⁴ This is not the speech of al-Dhahabī, it is the speech of the Ṣūfīs, and it opposes what is in the Qur'an that "**Honour (izzah) belongs to Allāh, His Messenger and the Believers**" (63:8) and that it is not befitting for a believer to belittle himself.

¹⁷⁴⁵ This is not the saying of one who lives in Damascus in the presence of the likes of Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Hāfidh al-Mizzī, Ibn al-Qayyim and many other notables from the people of knowledge. It is the saying of one who is far away from Damascus. And this type of defeatism, distress and grief does not emanate from an Imām of the Sunnah. It is the speech of the one who has been far away from Damascus for a long time (Ibn al-Sarrāj) and who is grieving for the loss of his Qalandarī Ṣūfīs in Damascus and elsewhere.

¹⁷⁴⁶ As has preceded, al-Dhahabī praised Ibn Taymiyyah with lavish praises in many of his works and in the biographical accounts for Ibn Taymiyyah after his death.

¹⁷⁴⁷ This is not the view of al-Dhahabī of the jihād of Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah against the variety of innovators and deviants. This is the view of the extremist Ash'arī Ṣūfīs who were grieved by the efforts of Ibn Taymiyyah in reviving, aiding and supporting the way of the Salaf. Al-Dhahabī said, "And he aided the pure Sunnah and the Salafī path, and supported it with evidences and principles..." as quoted by Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī in *Dhayl Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah* of (4/506).

¹⁷⁴⁸ Ibn Taymiyyah never described the Scholars of the Sharī'ah and the Imāms of the religion of his time or before him in this manner. However, he described

a lot of good from which if a servant acted upon, he would be successful, and they were ignorant of a great deal from what did not concern them, and "From the good Islām of a man is his leaving that which does not concern him." O man! Allāh is watchful over you, withhold from us, for you are a disputant, skilled in the tongue which does not stop or sleep.¹⁷⁴⁹ Beware of faultfinding questions in the religion, your Prophet (ﷺ) disliked such matters and censured them, and he prohibited too much questioning, and he said, "*Verily the most fearful of that which I fear for my ummah is every hypocrite, skilled in tongue.*"¹⁷⁵⁰ And much speech without evidence hardens the heart when it is in the [matters of] ḥalāl and ḥarām, how then when it is regarding the expressions of the Yūnusiyyah and the Philosophers, and those affairs of disbelief that blind the hearts?

By Allāh, we have become a laughing stock in existence.¹⁷⁵¹ How much will you excavate the subtleties of philosophical disbelief so that we refute them with our intellects? O man! You have swallowed the poisons of the Philosophers, and their works many times over, and with the abundant use of poison the body becomes addicted to them, and by Allāh, they take root in the body.¹⁷⁵²

the extremist Sūfīs, from the Ittiḥādīs and Ḥulūlīs, and the likes of the Qalandariyyah in this manner, and they are the ones who Ibn Taymiyyah subdued, and it is for the sake of these people that Ibn al-Sarrāj is infuriated.

¹⁷⁴⁹ This is a request from Ibn al-Sarrāj to his old friend Ibn Taymiyyah to stop his speech and his jihād against the Qalandarī Ṣūfīs, to whom Ibn al-Sarrāj belongs. There is no connection at all between al-Dhahabī and this speech, and al-Dhahabī would not use this type of denigrating speech, as we have established the great amount of awe and respect he had for Ibn Taymiyyah.

¹⁷⁵⁰ This is not the speech of al-Dhahabī and is flatly contradicted by whatever has preceded from his writings. It is the writing of an enraged and blazing Qalandarī Ṣūfī.

¹⁷⁵¹ How does refutation of the Philosophers make a people a laughing stock?

¹⁷⁵² It has already preceded in the speech of al-Dhahabī that Ibn Taymiyyah removed the veils and uncovered the flaws of the Philosophers. Likewise Ibn Taymiyyah was not weak in knowledge, rather he was a mountain and fortress in knowledge and he approached the sayings of the Philosophers well-equipped, refuting them, exposing them and demolishing them from their very foundations. In the process he highlighted the folly of the Mutakallimīn, the weakness of their arguments, and their inability to refute the Philosophers through sound Sharī'ah principles and evidences. It was the likes of al-Ghazālī (d. 505H) and al-Rāzī (d. 606H) who, without firm grounding, entered into the books of the Philosophers and got diseased through them.

Be eager for the gathering in which there is recitation, reflection, awe, remembrance, and silent reflection. Come to the gathering in which the righteous are mentioned, for with the remembrance of the righteous does mercy descend, not when the righteous are mentioned with derision and cursing...¹⁷⁵³

By Allāh, leave us alone from the mention of the *bid'ah* of Thursday,¹⁷⁵⁴ and the eating of grains, and strive in mentioning innovations which we used to consider from the foundations of misguidance but which have become the pure Sunnah, and the foundation of Tawhīd, whoever does not know them is either a disbeliever or a donkey, and whoever does not declare him a disbeliever is more disbelieving than Fir'awn.¹⁷⁵⁵

And you count the Christians to be like us.¹⁷⁵⁶ By Allāh, in the hearts there are doubts, but if a person's faith in the two testimonials is

¹⁷⁵³ This is the tone of speech and language of Ibn al-Sarrāj, the Qalandarī Ṣūfī, regarding his shaykhs and adherents to the ṭarīqah whom Ibn Taymiyyah spoke of and derided for the misguidance, and some of them used to abandon the prayer, such as al-Qamīnī as has preceded.

¹⁷⁵⁴ This is the greatest of evidences that this advice is spurious in its ascription to al-Dhahabī, why would al-Dhahabī say this when he himself wrote a book refuting the innovation of Thursday, called *Tashbīh al-Khasīs bi Ahl al-Khamīs!* Two manuscripts of this book are present, one in al-Maktabah al-Dhāhiriyyah, collection no. 4669 which was written in 878H, and the second in Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, in a collection containing 30 or so works. This book of al-Dhahabī has been published with a verification by Mashhūr Salmān, and its subject matter is innovated occasions of celebration, from which is the specification of the day of Thursday. Al-Dhahabī begins this treatise by citing the āḥādīth that mention this ummah will follow the ways of those before them, the Jews and Christians, warning from resembling the non-Muslims in their ways, those who made tabdīl of their religion, and worshipped Allāh upon ignorance and innovation, after clear evidences came to them. Al-Dhahabī cites extensively from āḥādīth and āthār in these matters, specifically regarding imitating and participating with the non-Muslims in their taking innovated days of celebration.

¹⁷⁵⁵ This is the way of the Ṣūfīs in speaking with bravado and boldness about innovation in very general terms. However, if you ask them to name such innovations, to give examples and to specify them, their plot is uncovered.

¹⁷⁵⁶ This is certainly the speech of a Ṣūfī grieved that Ibn Taymiyyah pointed out that the Ṣūfīs followed the ways of the Christians in worshipping Allāh upon ignorance and innovation, and in venerating their shaykhs and their awliyā', and it is clear that when he says, "to be like us", he is referring to the Rifā'iyyah Qalandariyyah Ṣūfī orders. This is also from the greatest of

sound, then he will be [amongst] the pleased, but failure is for the one who followed you, for he is subject to heresy and decay, especially when he is of little knowledge and religiosity, idle and given to lusts, but [such a one] will nevertheless be of benefit to you, and defend you with his hand and tongue [outwardly], whilst being an enemy to you inwardly with his disposition and his heart. And are the majority of your followers except [composed of] one who sits, of little intellect, or a liar amongst the general-folk, primitive in his mind...¹⁷⁵⁷

O Muslim who has put forth the donkey of his lust to praise his self.¹⁷⁵⁸ How much will you befriend it and show enmity to the good people? How much will you befriend it and deride the pious righteous ones. How much will you glorify it and belittle the slaves [of Allāh]? Until when will you befriend it and detest the abstemious?¹⁷⁵⁹ Until when will you praise your own speech in a manner that you do not praise, by Allāh, the āḥādīth of the two Ṣaḥīḥs. O if only the āḥādīth of the two Ṣaḥīḥs had remained safe from you,¹⁷⁶⁰ rather, at every opportunity in time, you weaken them, invalidate them, make ta'wīl of them and reject them...¹⁷⁶¹

evidences from within this text which indicate that it was not written by al-Dhahabī.

¹⁷⁵⁷ This is similar to what Ibn al-Sarrāj said in his book *al-Tashwīq* where he refers to the followers and associates of Ibn Taymiyyah as fools and common riff-raff.

¹⁷⁵⁸ This is not the speech of a righteous, god-fearing, honourable Imām like al-Dhahabī, it is the speech of a frustrated, defeated, blazing Ṣūfī.

¹⁷⁵⁹ These righteous, pious, abstemious ones he is referring to are the ones he mentions in his books *al-Tuffāḥ* and *al-Tashwīq*, and they are the figureheads of the Qalandarī Ṣūfī innovators and deviants, so it is natural that Ibn Taymiyyah should deride them and hate them, and this is but hate for the sake of Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic.

¹⁷⁶⁰ Compare with what Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī quotes from al-Dhahabī's *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr*:

He had perfect knowledge of the men (narrators of ḥadīth), their jarḥ and ta'dīl, their levels, and knowledge of the various disciplines of ḥadīth, with the higher (chains) and lower (chains), the sound and the weak, alongside his memorization of the texts which he was unique in. No one in the era has reached his level, nor come close to it, and he is amazing in his ability to recall, and bring out evidences from (his memory). To him is the point of return in referencing from the Book and the Sunnah and the connected

... Has not the time come for you to repent and return. Are you not in the decade of your seventies¹⁷⁶² and the [moment of] departure has drawn near? Indeed, and by Allāh, I do not recall that you remember death,¹⁷⁶³ rather you deride the one who remembers

chains [of ḥadīth], in that the saying is true of him, "Every ḥadīth that Ibn Taymiyyah does not know, it is not a ḥadīth."

Refer to *Dhayl Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah* of Ibn Rajab (4/493 onwards).

¹⁷⁶¹ Compare this with what is firmly established from al-Dhahabī in his many biographical accounts of Ibn Taymiyyah, from them, in what has already preceded from the quotes from al-Dhahabī:

...and he excelled in *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, *ikhṭilāf* (the issues in which there is difference of opinion) and the principle affairs (of the religion). He used to display (remarkable) intelligence...

...and if the Ḥuffādh gathered and he spoke, they became mute, and he enumerated (cited from memory), and they were silent, and he was rich, and they were bankrupt...

...He excelled in ḥadīth and its memorization, few are there who memorized what he memorized in ḥadīth ... He had an extreme ability to recall at the time of establishing the evidence. He excelled the people in knowledge of jurisprudence, the differences of the schools, the fatwās of the Companions and Ṭābī'īn in that whenever he gave a fatwā he did not adhere to a [specific] madhhab but was upon whatever evidence was established with him...

...And he wrote, read and corrected (works) and also excelled in the sciences related to the narrations and the *Sunan*...

...[quoting al-Ḥāfidh al-Dimyāṭī]: I found him to be amongst those who had acquired a fortune of knowledge and he fully and completely memorise the *Sunan* and the *Āthār*...

¹⁷⁶² This is what indicates that the alleged advice was written after 720H, and it is known that al-Dhahabī wrote biographical accounts of Ibn Taymiyyah after his death in 728H which contradict what is in this alleged advice.

¹⁷⁶³ This is contradicted by what is overwhelmingly reported by all authorities about Ibn Taymiyyah's remembrance of Allāh, his piety, asceticism, striving in much worship and abandonment of the worldly pleasures, and even his critics acknowledged that. Except that Ibn al-Sarrāj was not in Damascus for decades and thus did not witness the piety and asceticism Ibn Taymiyyah. This also indicates that this advice is spuriously attributed to al-Dhahabī because in his biographical accounts of Ibn Taymiyyah after his death, he praised Ibn

death, and I do not think that you will accept my saying or pay attention to my admonition. Rather, your greatest concern is to invalidate this letter with volumes, clipping the ends of [my] speech, and you will not cease aiding (yourself) until I [you win] and I say, "Definitely, I remain silent." If this is your condition in my view, and I am concerned for you, loving and affectionate,¹⁷⁶⁴ how would your condition be to your enemies, and your enemies, by Allāh, amongst them are the righteous and good, the intelligent and esteemed (ones), just as there are sinners, liars, ignoramuses, loafers, the lowly, and cattle!! I am happy for you to revile me openly whilst benefiting secretly from [this] statement of mine, "*May Allāh show mercy to a man who directed me to my faults*", for verily I have many faults and plenty of sins, and woe be to me if I do not repent, and how would be my humiliation from the Knower of all that is hidden. My remedy [lies] in Allāh's pardon, clemency, granting of success and His guidance. And all praise is due to the Lord of the worlds, and may Allāh send prayers upon our leader, Muḥammad, the seal of the prophets, and upon his family and all his companions.

From what has preceded, the alleged advice is not from the speech of al-Dhahabī at all, it is likely that it was wrongly ascribed to him, by deliberate intent or otherwise, and it is also possible that al-Dhahabī himself, for the purpose of record-keeping, made a copy of this letter that may have been in circulation, and it was mistakenly assumed to be authored by al-Dhahabī by whoever subsequently copied it.¹⁷⁶⁵ Whatever, the case, its contents falsify its ascription to al-Dhahabī.

Finally, it should be understood well that engagement in these types of issues are what the Jahmiyyah intend as a means of diverting the people's attention away from their own false creed which cannot stand on its own merits, and which is antithetical to what the Salaf were upon. Hence, they preoccupy the people in such matters as a means of softening them to their own creed to which most people's fiṭrah is

Taymiyyah for his piety. Ibn Nāṣir al-Dimashqī wrote a book, *al-Radd al-Wāfir*, which contains the statements of scores of authorities on the piety, worship, asceticism, and striving of Ibn Taymiyyah in the path of Allāh.

¹⁷⁶⁴ This speech is due to his past association and childhood upbringing alongside Ibn Taymiyyah.

¹⁷⁶⁵ From the contemporaries who ascribe this letter to al-Dhahabī are Bashshār "Awwād Ma'rūf and Ṣalāh al-Dīn al-Munajjid.

averse to in the first place,¹⁷⁶⁶ as has been explicitly stated by al-Ghazālī and al-Rāzī and kafirs like Ibn Sīnā.

Imām al-Dhahabī, Ibn Taymiyyah and Zaghal al-‘Ilm

The contemporary Jahmiyyah - the inheritors of the ūṣūl of al-Jahm bin Ṣafwān, and the deniers of that which Ibn Kullāb, al-Muḥāsibī, al-Qalānisī, al-Ash‘arī, Ibn Mahdī al-Ṭabarī, and al-Bāqillānī were upon of affirmation of Allāh's ‘uluww, with His essence, over His creation, and His ṣifāt khabariyyah, such as face, hands and eyes - also use another statement of Imām al-Dhahabī, in addition to what they claimed regarding the alleged advice called *al-Naṣīḥah al-Dhahabiyyah*.

Before entering into this matter it is important to highlight the deception used by the Jahmites in trying to fool the people about the ascription of *al-Naṣīḥah al-Dhahabiyyah* to al-Dhahabī. They try to mislead the readers by speaking of these two separate writings, *Zaghal al-‘Ilm* and *al-Naṣīḥah al-Dhahabiyyah* in one and the same breath, and then they cite the authorities who ascribe *Bayān Zaghal al-‘Ilm* to al-Dhahabī with a view to making the reader presume that these authorities are speaking of *al-Naṣīḥah al-Dhahabiyyah*.

As for the book *Zaghal al-‘Ilm*, it is authentically ascribed to al-Dhahabī and it has also been published, a short treatise.¹⁷⁶⁷ It briefly covers all the various sciences of Islām. The book starts with the knowledge of the Qur‘ān and tajwīd. Then he discusses the knowledge of ḥadīth. Al-Dhahabī mentions the history of the science of ḥadīth, mentioning its important books, its early notable authorities and specialists from the Ṭābī‘īn, through the second and third centuries, reaching to Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī and Ibn Khuzaymah in the early fourth century.¹⁷⁶⁸ Then he said that this specialist field of knowledge began to decline in the fourth century and never ceased until his time, in the eighth century. He says that many of the jurists in the old time were better in ḥadīth than the latecomers, and likewise many of the Mutakallimīn of the

¹⁷⁶⁶ Their saying that Allāh is not a *jism* (body), nor a *jawhar* (substance), nor *mutahayyiz* (occupying space), nor in a *jihah* (direction), nor inside the universe, nor outside of it, nor above it, nor below it and so on.

¹⁷⁶⁷ With the taḥqīq of Muḥammad bin Nāṣir al-‘Ajmī (Maktabah al-Ṣaḥwah al-Islāmiyyah, 1404H).

¹⁷⁶⁸ See pp. 28-32 of al-‘Ajmī's taḥqīq.

early times were more knowledgeable of the narrations than the Sunnīs of his time.¹⁷⁶⁹ He then says of his own time:

And we praise Allāh that in this time there are a people who understand this affair and are concerned with it such as al-Mizzī and Ibn Taymiyyah and al-Barzālī and Ibn Sayyid al-Nās and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Ḥalabī and Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī...

He mentions six or seven other names and alludes to a group besides them too. This is a clear recognition of Ibn Taymiyyah being someone who is from the specialists in this field. Al-Dhahabī then speaks of the jurists from the Mālikiyyah, Ḥanafiyah, Shāfi'iyah and Ḥanbaliyyah, speaking of the excellencies and outstanding qualities of each of their schools. Under the section on the Shāfi'iyah he writes:¹⁷⁷⁰

For by Allāh, my eyes have not glanced upon anyone with more expansive knowledge, and nor [anyone] of a more powerful intelligence, than a man called Ibn Taymiyyah, alongside his abstemiousness in food, clothing and women, and alongside [his] standing for the truth and making jihād with everything that is possible.¹⁷⁷¹ I have become tired in evaluating and inspecting him until until I became fatigued over [many] long years. I did not find that he was deferred between the people of Egypt and Shām, and [that] their souls detested him, derided him, rendered him a liar, and declared him a disbeliever except due to [their]¹⁷⁷² arrogance and amazement, excessive passion for leadership, and derision of the senior [scholars].¹⁷⁷³ So look and see the evil outcome of claims and love of prominence, we ask Allāh, the Exalted for pardon. A [group] of people went against him who were not more god-fearing than him, and nor more knowledgeable or abstemious than him.¹⁷⁷⁴

¹⁷⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 32. And this indicates that al-Dhahabī makes a distinction between Ahl al-Kalām and the Sunnīs, Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah.

¹⁷⁷⁰ See p. 38 of al-'Ajmī's taḥqīq.

¹⁷⁷¹ This is a clear praise of Ibn Taymiyyah, his knowledge, intelligence and piety, and great efforts in da'wah and jihād.

¹⁷⁷² Al-Dhahabī is referring to the opponents of Ibn Taymiyyah from the jealous and bigoted Ṣūfī Ash'arīs, and the proof for this is what follows of how al-Subkī used to speak of al-Dhahabī

¹⁷⁷³ The context indicates this is in reference to those who were adversaries to Ibn Taymiyyah, who reviled him, attacked him, brought his affair to those in authority with a view to silencing him, driven by seeking leadership and amazement with themselves.

¹⁷⁷⁴ This a belittlement of those people and a raising of Ibn Taymiyyah over them.

Rather, they would pass over the sins of their own associates, and the sins of their friends,¹⁷⁷⁵ and Allāh did not mobilize them against him due to their piety and nobility,¹⁷⁷⁶ rather because of his [own] sins¹⁷⁷⁷ and what Allāh repelled from him and his followers is much more.¹⁷⁷⁸ And nothing transpired over them except some of what they deserved, so do not be in any doubt about that.¹⁷⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷⁵ This indicates their insincerity, and the ulterior motives they had in attacking Ibn Taymiyyah.

¹⁷⁷⁶ This is another belittlement of Ibn Taymiyyah's opponents, those Qalandarī Ṣūfīs and their likes, and the Ash'arites whom al-Dhahabī would speak against and for which Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī made attacks upon al-Dhahabī. As for Tāj al-Subkī, then Allāh put him to trial for he was accused with kufr, and declaring intoxicants to be lawful. Al-Zarkalī said in *al-A'lām* (Dār al-'Ilm lil-Malāyīn, 2002, 4/184):

And some Shaykhs gathered against him and accused him of kufr and making alcohol lawful, and they brought him tied in chains from Shām to Egypt. Then he was released and returned to Shām, where he died of plague. Ibn Kathir said, "Such trials and severities occurred to him that have not occurred to any qādī like him."

And the author of *Jalā al-'Aynayn bi Muḥakamah al-Aḥmadayn*, Abū al-Barakāt Khayr al-Dīn al-Alūsī (d. 1317H) said (al-Maktabah al-'Aṣriyyah, 2006, p. 42):

And Shaykh 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī [d. 973H] quoted in his book *al-Ajwibah al-Marḍiyyah* that the people of his time accused him of kufr and making the consumption of alcohol to be lawful, and of fornication, and that he used to wear a belt and girdle at night time and take them off during the day. They gathered against him and brought him bound and tied from Shām to Egypt, and hoardes [of people] came from Shām to testify against him. Then compassion reached him at the hand of Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn al-Isnawī.

Al-Sha'rānī, being quoted here, is the Ḥanafī Ṣufī.

¹⁷⁷⁷ A believer is tried by Allāh on account of his own sins as a means of purification.

¹⁷⁷⁸ Meaning Allāh repelled from Ibn Taymiyyah and his associates and followers much more from the evil of those Ash'arī Ṣūfīs, the lovers of leadership and those amazed with themselves, compared to the sins that brought on these tribulations for them.

¹⁷⁷⁹ The context indicates this statement is in reference to those Ash'arī Ṣūfīs because the entire passage is filled with praise of Ibn Taymiyyah, mentioning his superiority over them in knowledge, piety, da'wah and jihād, and that the adversaries did not have any excellence over Ibn Taymiyyah in piety such that Allāh punished their opponent because of it. So all of this indicates that this is

And about the Ḥanbaliyyah he comments:

And the ignoramuses speak about their 'aqīdah and accuse them of tajsīm (anthropomorphism),¹⁷⁸⁰ and that it is binding for them, yet they are innocent of that, except [what is] very rare,¹⁷⁸¹ and Allāh will forgive them.¹⁷⁸²

Then he makes brief comments on the knowledge of grammar, language, tafsīr, fiqh, and the foundations of the religion. Under this last topic, he says:¹⁷⁸³

in reference to those Ash'arī Ṣūfīs and not Ibn Taymiyyah and his associates. The verifier, al-'Ajmī commented on this passage saying:

I say: This is the sunnah of Allāh, the Exalted, in His creation in that no one from His righteous servants embarks upon da'wah and jihād in his path except that he will be harmed and tested, and his inevitable outcome will be rejection, expulsion and punishment, just as was done with Shaykh al-Islām - رحمه الله - and the words of the author [al-Dhahabī] - رحمه الله - in praising his shaykh, Ibn Taymiyyah, and extolling him is more famous than needs to be mentioned and more numerous that can be collated. From that is his saying in Tadhkirah al-Ḥuffādh (4:1496), " And he was amongst the oceans of knowledge, from the limited intellectuals, the ascetics, the unique individuals, the great braves, the most generous nobles. He was praised by both the one who agreed with him and the one who differed with him." And the author [al-Dhahabī] has a treatise on his biography called, *al-Durrah al-Yatmiyyah Fī Sīrah Ibn Taymiyyah*, which has been mentioned by the author of *Hadiyah al-'Ārifīn* (2/154).

See p. 38-39 of al-'Ajmī's taḥqīq.

¹⁷⁸⁰ These are the Ash'arites till this day of ours, and al-Dhahabī himself was a Shafī'ī in fiqh and he was not with the Ash'arites in their Jahmite creed.

¹⁷⁸¹ Alluding to those Ḥanbalīs who fell into excess in affirmation (ithbāt) such as al-Qādī Abū Ya'lā and Ibn al-Zāghūnī. And in any case, the mistakes of the Ḥanbalīs are minor compared to what occurred of deviation amongst the others, the Ḥanafīs, Mālikīs and Shafī'īs, and there was much more repugnant tajsīm from the Ḥanafīs and Shafī'ī Kurds than anything that arose from the few and rare Ḥanbalīs who erred, and we have discussed this matter elsewhere in this work.

¹⁷⁸² See p. 39 of al-'Ajmī's taḥqīq.

¹⁷⁸³ See pp. 42-43 of al-'Ajmī's taḥqīq.

And safety is more befitting for you, and if you become skilled in the uṣūl, and what follows on from it of logic and wisdom [philosophy], and the views of the very first ones, and the *majāzāt al-ʿuqūl*¹⁷⁸⁴ and alongside that you hold fast to the Book, the Sunnah and the uṣūl of the Salaf, and you bring reason and revelation together, then I do not think that you would reach the rank of Ibn Taymiyyah in that, and nor will you come close to it by Allāh.¹⁷⁸⁵ And I have seen what his affair turned to of his derogation, boycotting, declaring him astray, declaring him a disbeliever, and rejection [of him] in both truth and falsehood.¹⁷⁸⁶ He used to illuminate, enlighten to the signpost of the Salaf [in the views of the people] before he entered into this craft.¹⁷⁸⁷ Then, in the eyes of portions of mankind he became dark, eclipsed, gloomy, and to his enemies, he became a dajjāl, fabricator, disbeliever, and to factions of the intelligent and virtuous, he was a virtuous innovator, a skilled verifier.¹⁷⁸⁸ And to the generality of his associates, he was

¹⁷⁸⁴ The intent of al-Dhahabī by this phrase *majāzāt al-ʿuqūl* is unclear, it appears that it relates to the variety of different understandings found in the intellects of different people, Allāh knows best.

¹⁷⁸⁵ This is a clear praise of Ibn Taymiyyah in his knowledge of all of these affairs, and this is also found clearly in al-Dhahabī's biographical accounts, of his knowledge in all sciences.

¹⁷⁸⁶ It is not possible for al-Dhahabī's statement, "*in truth and in falsehood*" to refer to all the matters mentioned in the sentence as that would imply that takfīr was made of Ibn Taymiyyah in truth, as it was in falsehood, and al-Dhahabī never made or implied takfīr of Ibn Taymiyyah, rather he rebuked and criticized those who declared Ibn Taymiyyah a kāfir, as has preceded in the various biographical accounts.

¹⁷⁸⁷ Here al-Dhahabī is mentioning the views of the people both before and after Ibn Taymiyyah entered into the craft and art of refuting upon the uṣūl of the Salaf. And he says that he was considered one who illuminated to the signpost of the Salaf by the people and afterwards the people split into their perception of him. To some, he changed from illumination to darkness, to others, he became a dajjāl, fabricator, disbeliever, to others he was a virtuous skilled innovator, and to others he was a reviver of the religion.

¹⁷⁸⁸ The Jahmite, Nuh Keller, added to his multitude of academic frauds when he claimed that al-Dhahabī declared Ibn Taymiyyah an innovator. He said in his essay "*Who or what is a Salafi?*":

It is interesting to note that al-Dhahabi, who is listed by the "Salafis" alongside Ibn Taymiyya in the above list, has himself characterized Ibn Taymiyya as an innovator. His precise words were: He [Ibn Taymiyya] was a virtuous and outstanding scholar, very accurate and meticulous in his intellectual examinations, but

the carrier of the flag of Islām, and the protector of the territory of the religion and the reviver of the Sunnah, this is what I say to you.¹⁷⁸⁹

Al-Dhahabī himself had much criticism against the Ash'arites of his time and those before him, and the difference between his speech regarding Ibn Taymiyyah and his speech regarding the Ash'arites is that with respect to the latter, his speech was on matters of creed. As for Ibn Taymiyyah, the most that can be said was that al-Dhahabī took issue with the manner in which he dealt with his opponents, as a result of which he and his followers and associates were put to trial.

guilty of introducing innovations in the Religion (mubtadi'). These words were reported by the hadith master al-Sakhawi in his book *al-I'lan wa al-tawbikh*.

As you can see, this is a fabrication upon al-Dhahabī who is simply listing the various perceptions and views taken towards Ibn Taymiyyah after he began to refute the Philosophers. This type of misquotation is frequent amongst these Jahmites, through them they misguide those who do not have the means to verify the quotes and citations, especially to a non-Arabic speaking Western audience. Keller also claimed in this same essay:

Ibn Hajar mentioned Dhahabi's *Nasiha* in *al-Durar al-kamina* (1:166), and so did al-Sakhawi in *al-I'lan wa al-tawbikh* (p. 504).

And both of these are lies. For Ibn Hajar makes no mention in the place cited by Keller of this alleged advice. The biography of Ibn Taymiyyah runs from page 144 to page 160, and after mentioning the persecution of Ibn Taymiyyah for his beliefs, he quotes the great praise for Ibn Taymiyyah found in the biographical accounts, and from them the statement of Abū Fath al-Ya'marī which has preceded earlier, and likewise he quoted from al-Dhahabī (p. 158-160) in praise of Ibn Taymiyyah in an outstanding biographical account. As for the claim made against al-Sakhāwī this is also a lie, for he was referring to *Zaghal al-'ilm* and actually quoted three passages out of it, and was not referring to anything else. If he had been referring to this alleged advice, he would have quoted something from it.

¹⁷⁸⁹ In other words, after mentioning all these different stances taken towards him, what al-Dhahabī says is he holds the last view, that Ibn Taymiyyah was a defender of the religion and the reviver of the Sunnah and this agrees with all of the biographical accounts provided by al-Dhahabī of Ibn Taymiyyah in his works dedicated to that field. And the Jahmites do not quote this last sentence of al-Dhahabī which clearly reveals his intent and his true position!

Finally what indicates the sheer hypocrisy of the contemporary Jahmiyyah is the following collection of statements of Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī in criticism of al-Dhahabī:

This is our shaykh, al-Dhahabī, he possesses knowledge and religion, and he has excessive prejudice against Ahl al-Sunnah¹⁷⁹⁰, thus it is not permissible for him to be depended upon,¹⁷⁹¹ yet he is our shaykh and teacher, save that the truth is more worthy of being followed. And he reached excessive partisanship to a shameful level, and I fear for him with respect to the majority of the scholars of the Muslims, and their leaders who carried the Prophetic Sharīah,¹⁷⁹² for most of them were Ash'arites, and when he attacks and Ash'arī, he does not let anything remain nor leave [anything], and that which I believe is that they will be his disputants on the Day of Judgement.¹⁷⁹³

But this was not all that al-Subkī said of al-Dhahabī, he said what is much worse. These are some samples of his other statements:

And our shaykh - and the truth is more worthy of being said, and truth is more worthy of being chosen in the path - was very

¹⁷⁹⁰ Meaning, the Ash'arites.

¹⁷⁹¹ This indicates that al-Subkī considered al-Dhahabī to be from other than Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah.

¹⁷⁹² Those who carried the Prophetic Sharīah were the Companions, the Tābi'īn, their successors and then the Imāms of the ḥadīth, sunnah, fiqh and tafsīr. Their names are well known in the first three centuries, and they number in the thousands and not a single one of them was from the people of condemned *kalām*, for Ahl al-Kalām were a despised and contemptible group in the era of the Salaf. They were the true carriers who actually preserved and transmitted the religion. As for those who came after they were simply the recipients of the results of the efforts of those whom Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) had praised of the first three centuries. Alongside that, from justice, we do not reject the efforts and contributions made by any of the reputable Scholars, however, at the same time we do not accept bigoted partisanship and grandiose claims such as those found often in the writings of the Subkīs.

¹⁷⁹³ In his *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah* (2/13).

severely inclined towards the views of the Ḥanbalīs¹⁷⁹⁴ and he would often deride Ahl al-Sunnah...¹⁷⁹⁵

...And I looked at the "Tārīkh" of al-Dhahabī, in the biography of Shaykh al-Muwaffaq, Ibn Qudāmāh al-Ḥanbalī, and the Shaykh, Fakhr al-Dīn Ibn Asākīr. And he lengthened that one, but shortened this one, and he brought what leaves no doubt with the intelligent person, that nothing led him to do that except that this one is an Ash'arī and that one is a Ḥanbalī.¹⁷⁹⁶

... And that upon which I give a fatwā is that it is not permissible to depend upon the speech of our shaykh, al-Dhahabī in censure of an Ash'arī, and nor in expression of gratitude to a Ḥanbalī, and from Allāh is aid sought.¹⁷⁹⁷

... [for he is] either sealed of heart, feigns his oath, or relies upon the desire of his soul in his authorship.¹⁷⁹⁸

... As for the "Tārīkh" of our shaykh, al-Dhahabī - may Allāh forgive him - for alongside his virtue and his compilation (of history), he is loaded with excessive partisanship, No! and Allāh has taken him, for he increased in attacking the people of religiosity, I mean the poor ones (fuqarā')¹⁷⁹⁹ who are the finest of creation, and he reproached many of the Shāfi'i and Ḥanafī scholars with his tongue, and so he inclined, and became excessive against the Ash'arites and praised, and increased for the Mujassimah. And [if] this, is the

¹⁷⁹⁴ When he says "Ḥanbalīs", he actually means Ahl al-Sunnah opposed to the Ṣūfi Ash'arite heretics. For there were many Mālikīs who were opposed to them as well, and many of those who testified against Tāj al-Subkī in the year 767H when he was accused of kufr, making istiḥlāl of alcohol and the likes, were Mālikī jurists.

¹⁷⁹⁵ In his *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah* (9/103).

¹⁷⁹⁶ In his *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah* (2/24). These types of remarks prove that the speech of al-Dhahabī in *Zaghal al-'Ilm* is not against Ibn Taymiyyah but against the deviant Ash'arite Ṣūfis.

¹⁷⁹⁷ In his *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah* (2/25). And upon what basis did this bigoted Jahmite Ash'arī Ṣūfi fanatic give this fatwa? And this strengthens the case that the speech of al-Dhahabī in *Zaghal al-'Ilm* is directed squarely at Ibn Taymiyyah's enemies, not at Ibn Taymiyyah.

¹⁷⁹⁸ *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah* (2/15) - this is the meaning of the paragraph at the top of the page, and al-Subkī is attacking al-Dhahabī for the way he gave a biographical account of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī.

¹⁷⁹⁹ He means the deviant and extreme Ṣūfis and grave-worshippers who both Ibn Taymiyyah and al-Dhahabī spoke against.

Ḥāfidh, the spokesman, and the lofty, revered Imām, what then is your thought regarding of the average historian[?].¹⁸⁰⁰

... and with that you will judge with amazement at this al-Dhahabī, and you will know what the pauper (miskīn) is alluding to! So woe be to him and woe be to him¹⁸⁰¹ ...

And I swear a devout oath by Allāh that there is nothing with you except that you do not like his (al-Ash'arī's) name to be spread with goodness ... and what you conceal of your strong aversion towards him, if you were to manifest it openly, the swords of Allāh would have taken to you, and as for the supplication you have made, is this its place O pauper (miskīn)! ... Soon will you stand in front of Allāh, the Exalted, the day when he (al-Ash'arī) will come and there will be in front of him factions of scholars, from the four schools of jurisprudence, and the righteous from the Ṣūfīs, and the skilled erudite Ḥuffādh from the Muḥaddithīn, and then you will come wallowing in the oppression of al-tajsīm (anthropomorphism) which you claim you are innocent of, yet you are the greatest of callers to it. And you claim that you know this art, yet you do not understand from it even [the worth of] a tiny spot on a date pit and nor its membrane!¹⁸⁰²

¹⁸⁰⁰ *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah* (2/22).

¹⁸⁰¹ *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah* (3/352).

¹⁸⁰² *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah* (3/353), this is al-Subkī enraged at al-Dhahabī's biographical account of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī in which he felt al-Dhahabī did not do justice. So look at the filthy vile language of this towards his own shaykh and teacher (after his death) - may Allāh pardon him for this disgrace! Is this the manner of anyone with knowledge? And in Allāh is the refuge from bigoted partisanship which blinds both vision and insight. Imām al-Shawkānī wrote regarding this matter and defended al-Dhahabī against his pesky student, and explained that al-Dhahabī was a man who loved ḥadīth, and due to this he would [rightfully] praise those who are its true verifiers and skilled masters, as opposed to those who were overcome with taqlīd and were pre-occupied away from ḥadīth (such as kalām and the likes). Refer to *al-Badr al-Ṭālī'* of al-Shawkānī (pp. 627-628). And Bashār al-'Awwād, who printed al-Dhahabī's works, such as al-Siyar, also commented on this matter regarding al-Subkī's allegation that al-Dhahabī was partisan to the Ḥanbalīs, he said:

If al-Subkī had only said that he was biased against the Ash'arites and nothing more, he would have found attentive ears, and supporters may have researched into some of the texts which may have supported his opinion, with the knowledge that I studied *Tārīkh al-Islām* and I was not able to come across a single example that can rightly be labelled as a criticism of al-Ash'arī. Yes, we find

All of these quotes from al-Subkī indicate that the remarks of al-Dhahabī in *Zaḡhal al-ʿilm* are not about Ibn Taymiyyah, but his opponents and enemies. It was these types of Ash'arites who had a stronghold in Shām in no one was allowed to teach except whoever was upon the Ash'arite creed. Al-Dhahabī was prevented from teaching¹⁸⁰³ and this provides an indication of the type of climate that existed in that period in the context of which al-Dhahabī's speech can be understood. The most that can be said is that he found fault with Ibn Taymiyyah for taking the approach that he did,¹⁸⁰⁴ not that he disagreed with his 'aqīdah or his refutations of the people of falsehood, Ash'arites or otherwise. Further, al-Dhahabī has works in refutation of the Jahmiyyah Ash'ariyyah, from them *al-'Uluww lil-'Aliyy al-Ghaffār*, affirmation of Allāh's 'uluww and from them *Ithbāt al-Yad li Allāh Subhānahū Ṣifatan min Ṣifātihī*, affirmation of the attribute of hand as an attribute of the essence. And throughout his biographical works, it is apparent that he supports the 'aqīdah of the people of ḥadīth and athar, opposes the Ahl al-Kalām and considers them other than Ahl al-Sunnah.

The result of this discussion is that the Jahmites do not really have anything except their desire to cause commotion and divert the people's attention away from what is apparent, clear, unambiguous - which is the futility of their creed and its opposition to the creed of the Salaf and the early Kullābī Ash'arīs and its agreement with the dīn of the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah in many respects - and instead keep them focused on speech regarding Ibn Taymiyyah. This is calculated, it

some deficiency in the biographies of a category of the Ash'arites, [but] which has come from the [angle] of al-Dhahabī not embarking upon quoting the opinions of the opposers a great deal, due to his love of remaining safe.

...Al-Dhahabī was not a partisan towards the Ḥanbalīs with the meaning that al-Subkī has portrayed. For the man was a muḥaddith, he loved Ahl al-Ḥadīth and would show respect for them.

Refer to *al-Dhahabī wa Manhajihī Fī Tārīkh al-Islām* (pp. 462, 464).

¹⁸⁰³ Remember that al-Dhahabī was also a Shāfi'ite jurist, like those Ash'arites.

¹⁸⁰⁴ Being stern with his opponents, thereby giving them motivation to scheme against him, leading to harm upon himself.

is not done in ignorance, and the reason is that their own creed which is based upon the language of the Greek and Sabean, idol and star-worshipping pagan disbelievers¹⁸⁰⁵ is not something to which Allāh made the innate dispositions of mankind inclined.

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah and Allāh's Nuzūl

An altogether separate work would be needed to document the multitudes of academic frauds of these people against Ibn Taymiyyah, however, the smart and intelligent person is able to suffice with just a few illustrations to understand the reality of these people are who no more than pretenders to knowledge in a sea of intellectual confusion. In a lecture called, *The Biography of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī*, one of the Jahmites from Philadelphia said:

So this was their methodology, we don't say Allāh made *istiwā'* on the Throne *bi hadd*,¹⁸⁰⁶ with a limit, with a boundary, with a barrier.¹⁸⁰⁷ So he made *istiwā'* over the Throne and then there is a

¹⁸⁰⁵ Aristotle's *Maqūlāt* (Categories) known as substance (*jawhar*) and incidental attributes (*a'rād*), quantity (*kam*), quality (*kayf*), relation (*iḍāfah*) place (*ayn*), time (*matā*), position (*waḍ'*), action (*fi'l*), affection (*infi'āl*). With this language the Tawḥīd of the Mutakallimīn became a series of negations from Allāh, so Allāh is not a *jism* (body), nor a *jawhar*, nor *murakkab* (composed), nor divisible, nor in place, nor in direction, nor in the universe, nor outside the universe, nor above, nor below and so on. This speech is derived from the terminology of Sabean pagan, idol and star-worshippers, who would only describe Allāh with negations. In this regard, Ibn Surayj al-Shāfi'ī (d. 306H) stated:

The Tawḥīd of the people of knowledge and the Jamā'ah of the Muslims is "I testify none is worthy of worship except Allāh (alone) and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh". And the Tawḥīd of the people of falsehood is disputing about *al-a'rād* (incidental attributes) and *al-ajsām* (bodies) and the Prophet (ﷺ) was sent with the rejection of that.

Abū Ismā'īl al-Harawī with his isnād in *Dhamm ul-Kalām* (4/385-386) and Ibn Taymiyyah in *Bayān Talbīs al-Jahmiyyah*.

¹⁸⁰⁶ This is the saying of 'Abdullāh bin al-Mubārak, Imām Aḥmad and Ishāq bin Rāhūyah, as is documented about them, and they said this in refutation of the Jahmites who claimed Allāh is everywhere, in all places.

¹⁸⁰⁷ The use of the word *hadd* in this context refers to the existent reality (*qadr*) and description (*ṣifah*) by which one thing is distinguished from another, and the use of English words such as limit and boundary are not really sufficient or