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Debating Ibn Taymiyya
and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya

Edited by
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and Georges Tamer

in collaboration with
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Birgit Krawietz, Berlin, & Georges Tamer, Columbus, May 2012

Appropriation of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya

Challenging Expectations of Ingenuity

Alina Kokoschka and Birgit Krawietz

For many centuries, the Damascene Muslim scholar Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350) has been viewed mainly as the devoted pupil of his teacher Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), academic attention falling, however grudgingly, primarily to the master himself. Having originated among Arab contemporaries, this contrasting attribution henceforth gained wider currency until early Salafi reformers, for their own purposes, “rediscovered” both authors. Their work suddenly precious and meaningful, Ibn al-Qayyim’s and Ibn Taymiyya’s standing abruptly increased in the context of the Islamic heritage. Nevertheless, the persistent impression of Ibn al-Qayyim’s submissiveness, even within Western scholarship from the late 19th century until recently, is all the more perplexing inasmuch as this period witnessed an astounding surge both of printed works by Ibn al-Qayyim and of significant Arabic secondary literature discussing him. Our introduction focuses on the exaggerated binary perception regarding both these authors, which is a strangely twisted phenomenon. It can be surmised that there are some deeper, structural reasons at work for such an attitude of disregard for Ibn al-Qayyim, on the one hand, and either admiration or demonization of Ibn Taymiyya on the other. As such, we also suggest taking into account the historical development of European ideas of ingenuity and their potential impact. This relativising approach enables us to then argue in favour of alternative, modified conceptions of scholarly potential within the framework of Muslim cultures and societies in the widest sense. Taking Ibn al-Qayyim as a case study, we employ the concept of appropriation to highlight, analyse and appreciate similarly important intellectual activities. In fact, this attitude may in itself be influenced not only by writings in anthropology, art history, literature

studies and so forth, but also by general Western outlooks that have meanwhile changed. As such, appropriation both counteracts the persuasiveness of prior *creatio ex nihilo* narratives and stresses the important role of imaginative cultural brokers.

The phrase “appropriation of” in the main title of this introduction points in different directions: Ibn al-Qayyim is tremendously influenced by the ideas and enactments of Ibn Taymiyya, yet also selectively reshapes them; further, he creatively integrates countless manuscripts from his own voluminous library. Beyond this, Ibn Taymiyya himself owes a great deal to his predecessors, to the scholars of his time and even to his opponents – a fact that may have been blurred to a considerable degree both by his harsh vituperations and his tendency to conceal quotations and borrowings as such. A strong case in point is Anke von Kügelgen’s demonstration, in this edited volume, of how much Ibn Taymiyya actually absorbed from philosophy. He shares this strategy with many other Ḥanbalī and later Salafī authors, all of whom are very anxious to acquit themselves of any trace of recent influence and to re-root or transplant their message in early Islamic times. Likewise, the overall feature of productive appropriation characterizes negotiation with Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim by other scholars up to (post-)modern times, notably, but not exclusively by Salafis; even the negotiations of semi-scholars and all sorts of laypeople share this characteristic. In his article “Appropriating the Past. Twentieth Century Reconstruction of Premodern Islamic Thought”, Ahmad Dallal discusses his understanding of such a “reconstruction” as “not intended to carry any negative or pejorative connotation”. He tries to “avoid the equation of reconstruction and distortion” and suggests it would be better “to shift the focus of examination from the assumed absolute origins of this tradition to the continuous process through which it is regenerated”.¹ In this sense, we perceive Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim as the twin peaks of Ḥanbalī/Salafī literary output that currently enjoys the greatest popularity, for whatever reasons; yet, we propose to distinguish between the very different circumstances of the productivity of these two – and consequently also other – scholars. This does not ignore scholarly findings like those of El-Rouayheb,

1 Dallal, Ahmad: Appropriating the Past. Twentieth Century Reconstruction of Premodern Islamic Thought, in: *Islamic Law and Society* 7 (2000), pp. 325–358, here p. 326, where Dallal encourages us to “identify the mechanisms through which a tradition is endowed with different meanings at different historical moments”.

who traces the (un)popularity of Ibn Taymiyya over five centuries, discusses assumed proto-Salafis' and early revivalists' commitment to this figure, and stresses that his importance must be historically relativized: "From a little-read scholar with problematic and controversial views, he was to become for many Sunnis of the modern age one of the central figures in the Islamic religious tradition."²

The present volume provides glimpses into some of the grandest fields of Islamic intellectual history – such as theology, jurisprudence and philosophy – by elucidating some of their subgenres. Although an edited volume on the same two authors was published relatively recently,³ the exploration of their writings is far from exhausted (and, as a matter of fact, gained considerable momentum with regard to Ibn al-Qayyim only at the turn of the 21st century): research needs to be done, in a collective effort, on various levels. Hence, this volume addresses: (i) the oeuvre of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya; (ii) ways in which their works are intertwined; (iii) modes in which these two writers of Islamic law and theology make use of prior authors; (iv) the manner in which they both (re)construct and normatively refer to an ideal(ized) early Islamic past; and (v) the processes by which they themselves become appropriated by later authors who are not necessarily full-fledged scholars.

To avoid the widespread feature of biological metaphors (most famously enshrined in the notion of Ibn Taymiyya being the "father" of Islamic fundamentalism)⁴ and to steer clear from implying respon-

2 El-Rouayheb, Khaled: From Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d. 1566) to Khayr al-Dīn al-Ālūsī (d. 1899). Changing Views of Ibn Taymiyya Among Non-Ḥanbalī Sunni Scholars, in: Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Ahmed (eds.): *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, Karachi 2010, pp. 296–318, here p. 305.

3 Rapoport and Ahmed, *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, Karachi 2010; Bori, Caterina and Holtzman, Livnat (eds.): *A Scholar in the Shadow. Essays in the Legal and Theological Thought of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah*, in: *Oriente Moderno* 15 (2010).

4 Sivan, Emmanuel: Ibn Taymiyya. Father of the Islamic Revolution; Medieval Theology & Modern Politics, in: *Encounter* 60 (1983), pp. 41–50; Jansen, Johannes J.G.: Ibn Taymiyyah and the Thirteenth Century. A Formative Period of Modern Muslim Radicalism, in: *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 5–6 (1987–88), pp. 391–396; Krawietz, Birgit: Ibn Taymiyya, Vater des islamischen Fundamentalismus? Zur westlichen Rezeption eines mittelalterlichen Schariatsgelehrten, in: Manuel Atienza, Enrico Pattaro, Martin Schulte, Boris Topornin and Dieter Wyduckel (eds.): *Theorie des Rechts in der Gesellschaft*, Berlin 2003, pp. 39–62, here pp. 50–55; Rapoport, Yossef and Ahmed, Shahab: Introduction, in: idem (eds.), *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, pp. 3–20, here p. 4.

sibility for any sort of ensuing appropriation by others, we refrain from labelling Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim as the double-helixed DNA within the nucleus of (post)modern Salafism or anything like this; rather, we opt for the model of a repository that is selectively employed by different actors for all sorts of purposes in accordance with their respective agendas. Therefore, agency in the production of meaning is attributed respectively to all multifarious parties. By such processes of combined adoption and exclusion, in which all sorts of techniques of compilation and blending are applied, the material transforms and constantly takes on new qualities. Obviously the rich scholarly output of these two postclassical masters significantly contributes to Islamic law, theology and also philosophy.⁵ However, it even serves as a huge repository for various ends, transcending – and, according to many, descending from – the confines of higher Islamic learning. To highlight some such manoeuvres in detail is likewise the concern of this book. It cuts vastly across centuries, depicting three decisive timescapes: the period of the *salaf ṣāliḥ*, the imagined age of the pristine and most-authentically-inspired first three generations of Islam; the period of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya; and, finally, from the age of printing onwards to the Internet. Hence, this introduction focuses on (1) 20th-century Western secondary literature on Ibn al-Qayyim, (2) the topos of Ibn Taymiyya's – if not general Ḥanbalī – intransigence, (3) the paradigm of Ibn al-Qayyim being the eternal pupil and (4) a more differentiated conception of creative scholarship.

1. Western Secondary Literature on Ibn al-Qayyim in the 20th Century

As a matter of fact and for reasons that still require reflection, the beginning of the 21st century has witnessed a sudden surge in publications regarding Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya. In due course, the present volume incorporates these findings. However, it is worthwhile to also take a closer look at what happened or, rather, did *not* happen previ-

5 We do not use the expression (late) medieval; compare Leder, Stefan: Postklassisch und vormodern. Beobachtungen in der Mamlukenzeit, in: Stephan Conermann and Anja Pistor-Hatam (eds.): *Die Mamlūken. Studien zu ihrer Geschichte und Kultur; zum Gedenken an Ulrich Haarmann (1942–1999)*, Schenefeld 2003, pp. 290–312. See also Kahl, Hans-Dietrich: Was bedeutet "Mittelalter"?, in: *Saeculum* 40 (1989), pp. 15–38.

ously: that is to say, 20th century Western scholarship on this author hardly exists. Even Henri Laoust (1905–1983), the frontrunner of Ibn Taymiyya studies, and, some decades later, the “voice in the wilderness” of George Makdisi (1920–2002) – who explored the Sunni revival and the decisive role of Ḥanbalism – did not have much to say about Ibn al-Qayyim.⁶ Of course, the excessive media hype since the killing of Anwar al-Sadat in 1981 has widely broadcasted allegations of Ibn Taymiyya’s proto-fundamentalism and of his siring of modern terrorism; however, this did nothing to encourage scholarly publications on his “well-known” student. Neither did this occur in the wider research about Salafism or Muslim reformers. Although it has been common wisdom for a long time that Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim were rediscovered and appropriated especially by early Salafi writers in the decades around the turn of the 20th century,⁷ we can speak neither of a sketchy outline of the oeuvre of Ibn al-Qayyim nor of in-depth studies of major traits. As a rule, Ibn al-Qayyim is referred to only in passing, this acknowledgment being more ceremonial than expressing genuine interest in his writings.⁸ Most importantly, throughout the 20th century, not a single book on him was published⁹; meanwhile, other (mediocre) premodern Muslim writers received extensive monographic treatment.

6 See Sourdél, Dominique and Sourdél-Thomine, Janine: Henri Laoust 1905–1983, in: *Revue des études islamiques* 52 (1984), pp. 3–16; Laoust, Henri: Ibn Qayyim al-Djawziyya, in: *EP*, vol. 3, pp. 821–822. Although George Makdisi in his *Ibn Taymiyya. A Sūfi of the Qādiriyya Order* (in: *The American Journal of Arabic Studies* 3 (1975), pp. 118–129) ventured to point out – see also his article on The Hanbali School and Sufism, in: *Boletín de la Asociación Española de Orientalistas* 15 (1979), pp. 115–126 – the Sufi dimension of Ibn Taymiyya’s thought at a time when the Hanbali scholar was still perceived as an arch-enemy of Sufism, he did not wrestle with Ibn al-Qayyim, whose work is so strongly immersed in Sufi topics, rhetoric and emotional dispositions. The Sufi influence on Ibn al-Qayyim has more recently been demonstrated by Anjum and Schallenberg. In general, there are various reasons why “the entire school of Ḥanbalī thinkers suffered from an unjustified negligence by Western research for many decades”, as is told by Bori and Holtzman, Introduction, p. 36.

7 His work was appropriated, by, for instance, Muḥammad ‘Abduh, Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, and certain members of the Iraqi al-Ālūsī family; this is not to mention earlier scholars, such as Ibrāhīm al-Qūrānī, Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī and Muḥammad al-Shawkānī.

8 Bell as the foremost exception is tackled here a bit later.

9 We are speaking here only about official publications on the book market; otherwise worth mentioning is an unpublished dissertation by Nawir Yuslem Nurbain: *Ibn Qayyim’s Reformulation of the Fatwā*, Ph.D. thesis, Montreal 1995.

However, several (shortened) translations (of more spiritually-oriented writings) have been published since the last decade of the 20th century. Noting the content of these works, however, causes one to question their analytical capacity. The most frequently discussed topic is prophetic medicine (*al-tibb al-nabawī*), an issue dealt with by Ibn al-Qayyim especially in his *Zād al-māʿād*.¹⁰ Almost as popular are renderings of Ibn al-Qayyim's monograph on the soul, his *Kitāb al-Rūḥ*;¹¹ another focus is moral psychology with a Sufi flavour.¹² Obviously, it can be easily determined that the initiative to translate Ibn al-Qayyim into European languages comes from within Muslim circles or institutions. Nevertheless, despite their primary appeal to Muslim audiences, such translations will also influence Western academia in the long run. There is only one translation project in which no Muslim background is discernable, namely Dieter Johannes Bellmann's German version of Ibn Qayyim al-Ğauziyya: *Über die Frauen. Liebeshistorien und Liebeserfahrung aus dem arabischen Mittelalter*.¹³ This loosely assembles "reports about women" (*akhbār al-nisāʾ*), i. e. (pseudo-)historical narrations on the characteristics of women, with a special emphasis on their jealousy, their infidelity and prostitution. Bellmann mentions that the ascription of the monograph to Ibn al-Qayyim is dubious and discusses remarks identifying Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1201) as the correct author¹⁴; yet, in his bizarre epilogue he cannot help but indulge in an

On Nurbain's contribution, see Krawietz, Birgit: Transgressive Creativity in the Making. Ibn Qayyim al-Ğawziyyah's Reframing within Hanbalī Legal Methodology, in: Bori and Holtzman, *A Scholar in the Shadow*, pp. 43–62.

10 Translated by Muhammad Al-Akili as *Natural Healing with Tibb Medicine. Medicine of the Prophet*, Philadelphia 1993; translated by Penelope Johnstone as *Medicine of the Prophet*, which was published in Cambridge, UK by – notably – The Islamic Texts Society, 1998; yet another edition has been offered by Raymond J. Manderola under the title *Healing with the Medicine of the Prophet*, Riyadh 1999.

11 Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya: *The Soul's Journey After Death. An Abridgement of Ibn al-Qayyim's Kitāb ar-Ruh with a Commentary of Layla Mabrouk*, London 1987; idem: *Le paradis. Hadi el arwah ila bilad el afrah; résumé par Fdal Haja and trad. Hébri Bousserouel*, Paris 1995.

12 *Patience and Gratitude. An Abridged Translation of 'Uddat as-sabirin wa dhakhirat as-shakirin*, edited by 'Abdassamad Clarke and Nasiruddin al-Khat-tab, London 1997, reprint 1998.

13 Munich 1986.

14 [Pseudo-] Ibn Qayyim al-Ğauziyya, Taqī al-Dīn: *Über die Frauen*, Munich 1986, p. 463. Holtzman, Livnat: Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, in: Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (eds.): *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography*, Wiesbaden

exploration of the tension between the rigid posture of Ibn al-Qayyim as a religious scholar and the juiciness of the stories of this anthology.¹⁵ It is an oddity that, of all things, Western 20th-century scholarship chose for translation a single monograph that Ibn al-Qayyim not only did not write, but that also runs highly contrary to his concerns. Nevertheless, one could perhaps take this incident as symptomatic of the fact that, for a long time, Western publications could hardly make sense of Ibn al-Qayyim at all, whereas – in contrast – research on Ibn Taymiyya has, for decades now, followed clearly defined interests, however political, polemical, or not strictly scholarly they might be.

When we reckon the number of articles, book chapters and the like in Western research on Ibn al-Qayyim, we cannot come up with more than about a dozen contributions throughout the 20th century.¹⁶ It becomes obvious that few people involved in Western Islamic Studies have examined Ibn al-Qayyim in even a minor way. Of these examinations, Joseph Normant Bell's book *Love Theory in Later Hanbalite Islam* is highly important, inasmuch as it not only provides a chapter on Ibn Taymiyya¹⁷ but also devotes two chapters to Ibn al-Qayyim's relevant writings,¹⁸ furthermore undertaking the first Western attempt of chronologizing some of the latter's work. One also has to note Livingston's article on "Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah. A Fourteenth Century Defense

2009, pp. 202–223, here p. 206, clarifies: "Ibn al-Jawzī composed a work entitled *Aḥkām al-nisā'* (Laws regarding Women), whose content is different from *Akhbār al-nisā'*. Nevertheless, *Akhbār al-nisā'* appears in a list of Ibn al-Jawzī's works in several biographies, which leads to the conclusion that it is indeed his work." It is not the first time that people have confused these two Ḥanbalīs with similar names; see Hijāzī, 'Iwāḍ Allāh Jād: *Ibn al-Qayyim wa-mawqifuhu min al-tafkīr al-islāmī*, Cairo 1960, pp. 26–27; Abū Zayd, Bakr b. 'Abd Allāh: *Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya. Ḥayātuhu, āthāruhu, mawāriduhu*, Riyadh 1412/1991/92, pp. 24–29, 202–208.

15 [Pseudo-] Ibn Qayyim al-Ğauziyya, *Über die Frauen*, pp. 448–450, 465.

16 It is probable that we have missed a publication or two, but the ones we *have* mentioned are those that usually resurface in the discourse of Islamic Studies. We exclude from this counting the laudatory accounts of Abdul Azim Islahi: *Economic Thought of Ibn al Qayyim (1292–1350 A. D.)*, Jeddah (International Center for Research in Islamic Economics, King Abdulaziz University) 1984 (Research series in English; p. 20), and Saiyed Ahsan's very short general article Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah, in: *Islam and the Modern Age* 12 (1981), pp. 244–249.

17 Albany, New York 1979, pp. 74–91.

18 Bell, *Love Theory*, pp. 92–124 et passim. [Pseudo-] Ibn Qayyim al-Ğauziyya, *Über die Frauen*, pp. 456–459, only enumerates and quickly comments on some of Ibn al-Qayyim's most important works without any footnotes or references to time; his afterword, therefore, cannot count as such an attempt.

Against Astrological Divination and Alchemical Transmutation”¹⁹ with a follow-up article two decades later.²⁰ A third person who must be given credit for his early publication on Ibn al-Qayyim is Moshe Perlmann, who narrates a sort of rough outline of Ibn al-Qayyim’s work “Rescuing the Distressed from Satan’s Snares” (*Ighāthat al-lahfān min maṣāyid al-shayṭān*). Perlmann’s devil article is basically a useful overview of the table of contents with some additional information.²¹ In similar fashion, in 1935 Cooke provides an explanatory overview of the contents of the “Book on the Soul”.²² Apart from that, there are only two issues that have drawn serious attention to Ibn al-Qayyim from 20th century scholarship, viz., the aforementioned genre of prophetic medicine in the important research of Irmeli Perho,²³ including embryology²⁴ and a discussion of the rituals and

19 Livingston, John W.: Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah. A Fourteenth Century Defense Against Astrological Divination and Alchemical Transmutation, in: *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 91 (1971), pp. 96–103. Compare Yahya J. Michot: Ibn Taymiyya on Astrology. Annotated Translation of Three Fatwas, in: *Journal of Islamic Studies* 11 (2000), pp. 147–208.

20 Livingston, John W.: Science and the Occult in the Thinking of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, in: *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 112 (1992), pp. 598–610. Compare Yahya Michot: Between Entertainment and Religion. Ibn Taymiyya’s Views on Superstition, in: *The Muslim World* 99 (2009), pp. 1–20.

21 Perlmann, Moshe: Ibn Qayyim and the Devil, in: *Studi orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi della Vida*, 2 vols. 2, Rome 1956, pp. 330–337; it is based on the edition by Muḥammad Hāmid al-Fiḳī. However, Perlmann’s monograph “Samau’al al-Maghribī Ifḥām al-Yahūd. Silencing the Jews” (in: *American Academy of Jewish Research Proceedings* 32 (1964), pp. 1–104) does not specifically identify the exact proportions of Ibn al-Qayyim’s quotations of the work in his *Hidāyat al-ḥayārā*, although it draws attention to the fact and presents an Arabic edition of the text. His remarks on Ibn al-Qayyim could already be read much earlier in his “Ibn al-Qayyim and Samau’al al-Maghribī”, in: *Journal of Jewish Bibliography* 3 (1942), pp. 71–74.

22 Cooke, Francis T.: Ibn al-Qayyim’s Kitāb al-Rūḥ, in: *The Muslim World* 25 (1935), pp. 129–144. The latter topic has more recently engaged scholars like Geneviève Gobillot and especially Tzvi Langermann. See the latter’s contribution in this volume.

23 Perho, Irmeli: *The Prophet’s Medicine. A Creation of the Muslim Traditionalist Scholars*, Helsinki 1995.

24 Weisser, Ursula: Ibn Qayyim al-Ğauzīya über die Methoden der Embryologie, in: *Medizinhistorisches Journal* 16 (1981), pp. 227–239; Bummel, Julia: *Zeugung und pränatale Entwicklung des Menschen nach Schriften mittelalterlicher muslimischer Religionsgelehrter über die “Medizin des Propheten”*, <http://www.sub.uni-hamburg.de/opus/volltexte/1999/244/>, accessed Sept. 04, 2011.

ethics of the raising of children.²⁵ This very slow-beginning and still-scattered perception of Ibn al-Qayyim as an author in his own right hardly reminds one of Ibn Taymiyya, and the profile that emerges is very different. However, some topics are associated with both authors simultaneously, such as legal methodology – as tentatively analysed by Kerr²⁶ – and, of course, the complex field of the veneration of saints and visitation of graves,²⁷ which persistently haunts people around the globe and fuels the perception of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim as notorious troublemakers.

In conclusion for the century under discussion, the writings of Bell, Bummel and Perho in particular can be qualified as profound and as effectively preparing the ground for later research. Bummel, for instance, enhanced the analysis of the emerging importance of Ibn al-Qayyim in the field of bioethics.²⁸ Despite this, the extremely low number of contributions on Ibn al-Qayyim in Western languages throughout the 20th century²⁹ stands in stark contrast to the multiple

25 Adamek, Gerhard: *Das Kleinkind in Glaube und Sitte der Araber im Mittelalter*, Ph.D. thesis, Bonn (Universität Bonn) 1968; Giladi, Avner: *Children of Islam. Concepts of Childhood in Medieval Muslim Society*, New York 1968, pp. 10–34 et passim; idem: Gender Differences on Child Rearing and Education. Some Preliminary Observations with Reference to Medieval Muslim Thought, in: *al-Qantara* 16 (1995), pp. 291–301, here pp. 295–299, 301, and idem: Some Notes on Tahniq in Medieval Islam, in: *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 47 (1988), pp. 175–179, here pp. 175, 177–178.

26 Kerr, Malcolm H.: *Islamic Reform. The Political and Legal Theories of Muhammad ‘Abduh and Rashid Rida*. Berkeley and Los Angeles 1966, pp. 68, 77–79, 88–89, 99–100, 191–196. Compare Al-Matroudi, Abdul Hakim: *The Hanbali School of Law and Ibn Taymiyyah. Conflict or Conciliation*, London and New York 2006, pp. 132–136.

27 Taylor, Christopher S.: *In the Vicinity of the Righteous. Ziyāra and the Veneration of Muslim Saints in Late Medieval Egypt*, Leiden 1999, chapters 5–6, pp. 168–218.

28 The strategic use of Ibn al-Qayyim’s writings enabled Saudi Arabian scholars, and scholars from other countries, to expand the period before the ensoulment of the embryo to up to 120 days in their debates about abortion. On this linkage, see Eich, Thomas: Die Diskussion islamischer Rechtsgelehrter um pre-marital screening und die Abtreibung behinderter Embryonen, in: Thomas Eich and Thomas Sören Hoffmann (eds.): *Kulturübergreifende Bioethik. Zwischen globaler Herausforderung und regionaler Perspektive*, Freiburg and Munich 2006, pp. 152–178, here pp. 163, 166–170, 174.

29 Bori and Holtzman, writing as late as 2011, comment on the situation as follows: “Yet, a student of Ibn al-Qayyim embarking upon research on the thought of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah will eventually start with a meagre handful of stud-

publications on Ibn Taymiyya on the one hand and the high demand from Arabic readers on the other. Ibn al-Qayyim's works are reprinted again and again;³⁰ the main and growing bulk consists of mostly uncritical Salafi editions that flood the book market, which has simultaneously been injected with an increasing amount of translations. Ibn al-Qayyim's monographs pile up in bookshops from Berlin to Jakarta; they have become – in various forms – a pervasive feature especially on the Internet.³¹ Many Muslim authors quote and have appropriated not only Ibn Taymiyya but also Ibn al-Qayyim; hence, there is also a considerable number of academic publications on Ibn al-Qayyim in Arabic that unfortunately cannot be reviewed here for lack of space. However, with this high level of activity in mind, it seems all the more necessary to look back in astonishment. Why, for a whole century, has Western scholarship nearly unanimously avoided paying attention to Ibn al-Qayyim, especially at a time when his (re)invented relevance was already generally known? One might argue that Ibn al-Qayyim's Arabic is not easily accessible to the average reader, especially because of his frequent quotations from Koran and Hadith. Furthermore, Ibn al-Qayyim hardly ever manages to keep his story short, most of his monographs being greatly repetitive, meandering, multi-layered and spread over more than one book volume. Although these factors may represent certain impediments to quickly accessing Ibn al-Qayyim and to continuing to read him, we surmise that such a lasting blindness may rather have deeper, structural reasons. Our fourth section will unpack these and suggest them for discussion. Beforehand, we must revisit the fact that both our authors met not only considerable resistance in their own period and negligence in later centuries, but – for distinctive and only partly overlapping reasons – have had remarkably bad press in modern Western scholarship.

ies, then painstakingly hunt for more references to Ibn al-Qayyim mainly in works dedicated to Ibn Taymiyyah", Bori and Holtzman, Introduction, p. 15.

30 Detailed studies of such printing patterns over time that also include publishing locations, the involved publishing houses and key figures, as well as the changing emphasis on various topics, are still desiderata.

31 On this, see for example the article by Annabelle Böttcher in the present volume.

2. The Topos of Intransigence

In his *Encyclopaedia of Islam* entry on the Ḥanbalīs that was published in 1971, Laoust diagnoses an “often intransigent rigidity of the dogmatic position of Ḥanbalism”.³² This expresses both a familiar value judgement and popular perception. Consequently, nine years later, Makdisi in his turn deplores the widespread contempt for Ḥanbalī authors, “who are variously regarded as conservative to the core, rigid, intransigent, even fanatical”.³³ He attributes this trend primarily to the 19th century, “the great enemy of Hanbali studies”³⁴, and identifies Goldziher as the figurehead of such disregard.³⁵ Here is not the place to dwell on the genesis of this attitude in Arabic sources. Suffice it to say that nowadays in Arabic the idiomatic phrase “don’t behave like a Ḥanbalī” (*lā takun ḥanbaliyyan*) means to be not too rigid or fussy. The famous Ḥanbalī preacher Ibn al-Jawzī, for instance, is also regarded as “l’un des plus intransigeants *‘ulamā’* de son temps”.³⁶ Intransigence was, of course, neither invented nor monopolized by the Ḥanbalī school, but is a recurrent pattern in Islamic history. Already the Khārijīs (*khawārij*), who had seceded from the camp of the caliph ‘Alī, were unwilling to compromise: “for many Muslims, early Kharijis were the first intransigent group to emerge among Muslims.”³⁷ Again Laoust speaks of “l’intransigence khārijite”³⁸ and henceforth it is the Khārijīs with whom Ibn Taymiyya is most often compared. Like him, the leaders of early Khārijite thinking were “no arm-chair

32 Laoust, Henri: Ḥanābila, in: *EP*, vol. 3 (1971), pp. 158–162, here p. 158.

33 Makdisi, George: The Hanbali School and Sufism, in: *Boletín de la Asociación Española de Orientalistas* 15 (1979), pp. 115–126, here p. 115.

34 Makdisi, George: Hanbalite Islam, in: *Studies on Islam*, translated and edited by Merlin L. Swartz, New York and Oxford 1981, pp. 216–274, here p. 219 [translated from “L’Islam Hanbalisant”, in: *Revue des études islamiques* 42 (1974), pp. 211–244; 43 (1975), pp. 45–76].

35 Makdisi, Hanbalite Islam, p. 223; compare Krawietz, Vater des islamischen Fundamentalismus?, p. 58.

36 Hartmann, Angelika: La prédication islamique au moyen âge. Ibn al-Ğauzī et ses sermons (fin du 6/12^e siècle), in: *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 5–6 (1987–88), pp. 337–345, here p. 338.

37 Saeed, Abdullah and Hassan Saeed: *Freedom of Religion, Apostasy and Islam*, Aldershot and Burlington 2004, p. 24.

38 Laoust, Henri: *La profession de foi d’Ibn Baṭṭa. Traditionniste et jurisconsulte musulman d’école hanbalite mort en Irak à ‘Ukbarā en 387/997*, Damascus 1958, p. xlix.

theologians.”³⁹ It tends to be overlooked, however, that Ibn Taymiyya himself also severely criticized the Khārijīs, stressing that no Companion of the Prophet was among them and that no *ṣaḥābī* had ever forbidden anyone to fight them.⁴⁰ Stubbornness and unwavering defence of his peculiar convictions have become the trademark of this scholar *cum* activist. And hence, Brunschvig, too, qualifies Ibn Taymiyya as “a la vez intransigente y anticonformista.”⁴¹ It is stated that contemporaries must already have perceived the singlemindedness with which he was “completely dedicated to a cause”, so much that Donald Little in 1975 asked the famous – and not completely ironically intended – question “Did Ibn Taymiyya have a Screw Loose?”⁴² Though Ibn Taymiyya’s “intransigence led to repeated imprisonment”,⁴³ the related multiple inquisitions (*miḥan*) – in the hallowed tradition modelled by the eponym of the Ḥanbalī school of law, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 855) – contributed to Ibn Taymiyya’s halo. Indeed, the latter appears as the natural heir par excellence to this imagined typically Ḥanbalī trait: “Ibn Ḥanbal’s rigor and personal courage were most spectacularly emulated by the Damascene jurist Taqī al-Dīn b. Taymiya.”⁴⁴ What captivates contemporaries and later admirers of Ibn Taymiyya is the paradigmatic situation of wholehearted insistence on and standing up for one’s beliefs. It is no surprise, then, that Ibn Taymiyya has become the most famous prison inmate of Islamic history, appropriated as an icon of reference for political prisoners. While some cherish Ibn Taymiyya for his “unsurpassed moral courage, intensity, and intellec-

39 Watt, W. Montgomery: Khārijite Thought in the Umayyad Period, in: *Der Islam* 36 (1961), pp. 215–231, here p. 218.

40 Jansen, Johannes J. G.: Ibn Taymiyyah and the Thirteenth Century. A Formative Period of Modern Muslim Radicalism, in: *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 5–6 (1987–88), pp. 391–396, here p. 392.

41 Brunschvig, Robert: Los teólogos-juristas del islam en pro o en contra de la lógica griega, Ibn Ḥazm, al-Ġazālī, Ibn Taymiyya, in: *al-Andalus* 35 (1970), pp. 143–177, here p. 169.

42 Little, Donald: Did Ibn Taymiyya have a Screw Loose?, in: *Studia Islamica* 41 (1975), pp. 93–111, here p. 105.

43 Schallenberg, Gino: Ibn Taymīya on the ‘*ahl al-bayt*’, in: Urbain Vermeulen and Jo van Steenberghe (eds.): *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, vol. 3 (Proceedings of the 6th, 7th and 8th International Colloquium organized at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in May 1997, 1998 and 1999), Leuven 2001, pp. 407–420, here p. 408.

44 Cooperson, Michael: *Classical Arabic Biography. The Heirs of the Prophets in the Age of al-Maʾmūn*, Cambridge 2000, p. 109.

tual vigour”,⁴⁵ for others he mutated into a convenient code word for evil, most often based on the snowballing hearsay of experts, such as Irshad Manji: “And if that doesn’t attest to Ibn Tammiya’s contemporary reach, get this: Sayyid Qutb’s exiled brother, Muhammad, taught Osama bin Laden in Saudi Arabia”.⁴⁶

However, both camps agree that Ibn Taymiyya sometimes implemented his teachings by vigilantism, enacting his doctrines in a two-fold manner.⁴⁷ His intransigence emerges not only in the trials as such, but also in his excesses against, for example, Christians and those Muslims he perceived to be deviant. His is a case of radical activism⁴⁸ in the form of jihad and intervention in public space against individual evil-doers (*al-amr bil-ma’rūf*): “Ibn Taymiyya is an activist, convinced that God calls upon Muslims to undertake the responsibility of combating external enemies as well as internal evils.”⁴⁹ As such, his life appears as a constant construction site, as a rushing back and forth between different fronts, and as a ceaseless migration between the spheres of political intervention, teaching, personal enmities and chastisement of colleagues and contemporaries, intrigues against the establishment, military interventions and key points of contention as expressed in certain fatwas or epistles. Because of his special combining of political activism with intellectual production and his simultaneous combat on numerous battlefields, Ibn Taymiyya’s life has attracted extraordinary biographical attention.⁵⁰ It is probably due to his various interventions, his harsh rhetoric of “us *versus* them” and his pointed statements that the life of

45 Sivan, Ibn Taymiyya, p. 42.

46 Manji, Irshad: *The Trouble with Islam Today. A Muslim’s Call for Reform*, Toronto 2005, p. 147.

47 An example is already his first public appearance. In 1294, Ibn Taymiyya organized a riot against a Christian scribe named ‘Assāf al-Naṣrānī, who was accused of blasphemy against the Prophet Muḥammad, Henri Laoust: La biographie d’Ibn Taimiyya d’après Ibn Kaṭīr, in: *Bulletin d’études orientales* 9 (1942–1943), pp. 115–162, here p. 118. Ibn Taymiyya’s treatise *al-Ṣarīm al-maslūl ‘alā shātim al-rasūl* was written in this context, see Turki, Abdelmagid: Situation du “tribunaire” qui insulte l’islam, au regard de la doctrine et de la jurisprudence musulmanes, in: *Studia Islamica* 30 (1969), pp. 39–72.

48 Makari, Victor E.: *Ibn Taymiyyah’s Ethics. The Social Factor*, Chico 1983, p. 27: “To strive in the divine way was for him to stand up and to take action in the name of God.”

49 Michel, Thomas: Ibn Taymiyya’s *Sharḥ* on the *Futūḥ al-Ghayb* of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, in: *Hamdard Islamicus* 4 (1981), pp. 3–12, here p. 7.

50 Bori, Caterina: The Collection and Edition of Ibn Taymiyya’s Works. Concerns of a Disciple, in: *Mamlūk Studies Review* 13 (2009), pp. 47–67, here pp. 51–52.

Ibn Taymiyya has fuelled the imagination of so many observers. His biography seems to follow familiar scripts, and appears as if it were destined for film. The ensuing oversimplifications and shortcut interpretations of his multifaceted writings have been criticised;⁵¹ hence there are various differentiated readings in the realm of academia. Michael Cook emphasizes that albeit “his notorious disposition to rock the boat”, Ibn Taymiyya made “no attempt to cultivate street-power”.⁵²

3. The Paradigm of the Eternal Pupil

Against the backdrop of the histrionic life of his master, the biography of Ibn al-Qayyim (and, indeed, that of any other scholar) looks much less spectacular, more so as Ibn Taymiyya is “so eccentric, charismatic, original, and captivating, and his writings so voluminous, that next to him a person with a more gentle profile like Ibn Qayyim al-Ğawziyyah runs the risk of looking dull.”⁵³ This impression unfolds on various levels and it applies to the person as much as to the oeuvre. There is no need to replicate here the distinctive but intertwined biographical trajectories of both authors. Suffice it to mention that, unlike Ibn Taymiyya, his pupil Ibn al-Qayyim did not spend his life fighting on several fronts. The latter’s inquisitorial experience in and outside prison (*mihna*)⁵⁴ and the fierce criticism he encountered for issuing fatwas and defending theological stances in line with his famous teacher also elevated him – in the eyes of admirers – to the ranks of heroic resistance and moral courage. Taken as a whole, however, his life is very much a life of writing. Ibn al-Qayyim is described as being well aware of the shortness of man’s lifetime; he therefore worked incessantly, even when separated from his private hometown library.⁵⁵ Instead of revisiting their entangled life

51 The call for a painstakingly close reading has notably been made by Yahya Michot; compare, for instance, his: Ibn Taymiyya’s “New Mardin Fatwa.” Is Genetically Modified Islam Carcinogenic?, in: *The Muslim World* 101 (2011), pp. 130–181.

52 Cook, Michael: *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought*, Cambridge 2000, pp. 149–150. See the chapter by Abdessamad Belhaj in the present volume.

53 Bori and Holtzman, Introduction, p. 16.

54 Krawietz, Birgit: Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah. His Life and Works, in: *Mamlūk Studies Review* 10 (2006), pp. 19–64, here p. 24.

55 Al-Baqrī, Aḥmad Maḥmūd: *Ibn al-Qayyim min āthārihi al-‘ilmiyya*, Beirut 1404/1984, p. 142.

histories, we trace in the following the idea of “minority” in virtually everything – apart from the amount of written output and spiritual devotion⁵⁶ – when it comes to Ibn al-Qayyim, a pattern that resurfaces on a regular basis. The pervasive perception of being second(ary) is fed by several factors, such as Ibn al-Qayyim’s unabashed admiration for Ibn Taymiyya, his apparently uncritical subordination to his ideas, his personal modesty and humbleness, as well as his editorial and intellectual curating of Ibn Taymiyya’s heritage.

After Ibn Taymiyya had returned from Egypt, Ibn al-Qayyim became his most ardent follower and spent one and a half decades with him in Damascus, leading to nearly two years in prison – physically apart, but with a shared vision. Contrary to the custom of studying with several different teachers, Ibn al-Qayyim was obviously overwhelmed by Ibn Taymiyya,⁵⁷ so much so that he “dedicated the next fifteen years of his life to study only with Ibn Taymiyyah, and he soon succeeded in establishing himself as the latter’s senior disciple.”⁵⁸ This strong intellectual and emotional attachment seems to have tied Ibn al-Qayyim to his hometown during the earlier period of his life.⁵⁹ Anjum points out that the relationship even transcended Ibn al-Qayyim’s status as a master student of Ibn Taymiyya and that especially the *Madāriḡ al-sālikīn*, his famous commentary on a Ḥanbalī Sufi manual, provides vivid insights into this lasting, deeply felt affection, since it “also addresses the question of the relationship of Ibn Qayyim al-Ğawziyyah’s spiritual vision to his teacher Ibn Taymiyyah.”⁶⁰ Therein, he expresses “exceeding reverence and love for his teacher, Ibn Taymiyyah (...) perhaps more than in any other work”,⁶¹ so that Anjum suggests a comparison to “the

56 Krawietz, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, pp. 22–23.

57 For his other teachers, see Holtzman, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, pp. 206–207; Abdul-Mawjūd, Salāḥud-Dīn Ibn Alī: *The Biography of Imām ibn al-Qayyim*, translated by Abdul-Rāfi Adewale Imām, Riyadh 2006, pp. 43–51. Holtzman struggles to extend the list, so that Ibn al-Qayyim meets the familiar pattern of expectations.

58 Holtzman, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, p. 210.

59 Abdul-Mawjūd, *Biography*, pp. 63–67, apparently feels awkward that Ibn al-Qayyim has not lived up to the widespread norm of searching for knowledge in other locations (*ṭalab al-ilm*) and accordingly tries to appease his readers; Krawietz, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, p. 23.

60 Anjum, Ovamir: Sufism without Mysticism. Ibn Qayyim al-Ğawziyya’s Objectives in *Madāriḡ al-sālikīn*, in: Bori and Holtzman, *A Scholar in the Shadow*, pp. 161–188, here p. 162.

61 Anjum, Sufism without Mysticism, p. 163.

type of intense spiritual affection that we have become familiar with in the case of Rumi and Shams-i Tabrizi.”⁶² It was out of the question that Ibn al-Qayyim would openly criticize a theological standpoint taken by Ibn Taymiyya.⁶³ Another factor sustaining this idea of “minority” is Ibn al-Qayyim’s modest family background. His agnomen (*laqab*) as “the son of the Superintendent of al-Jawziyyah Law College” is “an indication of the father’s occupation and social status.”⁶⁴ However, while the term ‘superintendent’ may sound somewhat acceptable in English, ‘janitor’ may be the expression that comes closer; that is to say, Ibn al-Qayyim’s own career is one of enormous social climbing, even though he – not least because of his loyalty to Ibn Taymiyya – definitely did not make it to the top. As a constant reminder, his low social background as “the son of a janitor of the Jawziyya” was permanently inscribed in the scholar’s agnomen.⁶⁵ One may speculate as to whether Ibn al-Qayyim suffered from these circumstances; one may also surmise as to whether his compulsive acquiring of manuscripts and quest for role models and spiritual emulation – be that of Ibn Taymiyya or of the Prophet Muḥammad – might have had something to do with this lowly origin. Ibn Taymiyya’s superior command of scholarship and unabashed self-confidence must have had a special appeal for Ibn al-Qayyim. Nevertheless, in contrast to the arrogant Ibn Taymiyya, he comes across in the sources as constantly struggling with a lack of self-confidence, in no way eager to indulge in harsh accusations of oth-

62 Ibid, p. 164, n. 9.

63 Nevertheless, he would do so on some jurisprudential issues; *ibid*, p. 164.

64 Holtzman, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, p. 208. Compare Irmeli Perho, Climbing the Ladder. Social Mobility in the Mamluk Period, in: *Mamlūk Studies Review* 15 (2011), pp. 19–35, here p. 19.

65 Perho, Climbing the Ladder, p. 20, includes caretakers of mosques (sg. *qayyim*) among “the lowest paid employees of the religious institutions, but even though they worked among the scholars, they were not necessarily scholars themselves” and in her conclusion, p. 34, she stresses, “that social advancement cannot have been easy, and a successful climb up the social ladder was an exception rather than a rule.” A laudatory biography tries to put these circumstances in another light by labelling the occupation of the father as “director” and offering further cover-up reading: “It is sufficient source of his pride that he should be in charge of this school because of the great influence it had amongst all the schools of that time” and that, afterwards, “his offspring and his grandchildren became famous with this ascription”, Abdul-Mawjūd, *Biography*, pp. 24–25. The fact that the father had some rudimentary knowledge of hereditary regulations has confused some writers, as if he had already belonged to the lower strata of scholars, Krawietz, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, p. 21.

ers, but rather filled with extraordinary humbleness and piety.⁶⁶ At any rate, it is hardly imaginable that Ibn Taymiyya would have put up with someone as noisy and uncompromising as himself. Among his group of followers it was him who was undoubtedly in charge,⁶⁷ while Ibn al-Qayyim ranks regularly as his most famous disciple.⁶⁸ The habitus of subordination to Ibn Taymiyya may have curbed Ibn al-Qayyim's individual ambition and caused a sort of writer's block even when he was no longer juvenile, as is insinuated. For instance, the translators Michael Abdurrahman Fitzgerald and Moulay Youssef Sitine comment, it "appears that only after his teacher's death did Ibn al-Qayyim begin his own prolific period as a writer." At this point Ibn al-Qayyim must have had a coming out of sorts: "This stage of his life was also marked by much travel, learning and teaching, as well as several pilgrimages to Mecca, where he even lived for some time."⁶⁹ By the time of Ibn Taymiyya's death in 1328, Ibn al-Qayyim was already at the age of 37 or 38. He wrote the overwhelming majority of his contributions after this date;⁷⁰ one wonders with what exactly he had been occupied before then⁷¹ and why his own scholarly production witnessed such a large incubation period before the extraordinary amount of text production of his later decades. We do not know whether he might have written parts of his work already during Ibn Taymiyya's lifetime and refrained for whatever reason from publishing them. It has long been assumed that Ibn al-Qayyim played the central role in the collection and arrangement of Ibn Taymiyya's works, although exactly how and by whom the widely scattered pieces were assembled still needs more investigation.⁷² Ibn Taymiyya is one of those scholars who brilliantly mastered various genres of the religious sciences.⁷³ He himself, how-

66 Holtzman, *Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah*, pp. 210–211.

67 Bori, Caterina: *Ibn Taymiyya wa-Jamā'atuhu*. Authority, Conflict and Consensus in Ibn Taymiyya's Circle, in: Rapoport and Ahmed, *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, pp. 23–52, here 25, 28, 30 et passim.

68 One hesitates to call the others famous. This applies only to some traditionalist Shāfi'īs who somehow sympathized with Ibn Taymiyya; *ibid*, p. 37.

69 *Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya on the Invocation of God. Al-Wābil al-Ṣayyib min al-Kalim al-Tayyib*, translated by Michael Abdurrahman Fitzgerald and Moulay Youssef Sitine, Cambridge 2000, p. xi.

70 Holtzman, *Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah*, p. 206.

71 On his occupations and pursuits, see Abdul-Mawjūd, *Biography*, pp. 69–71.

72 Bori, *Collection*, p. 58 et passim.

73 Weismann, Itzhak: *Taste of Modernity. Sufism, Salafiyya, and Arabism in Late Ottoman Damascus*, Leiden and Boston 2001, p. 263.

ever, did not invest any energy or diligence into pre-structuring his posthumous fame either by means of systematic presentation, by convenient arrangement or by attentive care to his works. It is uncertain whether he regarded all the pieces of writing he haphazardly handed out in response to fatwa requests as really part of his oeuvre – indeed, it is uncertain whether he thought in such terms at all. He developed the issuing of religious legal advice into a central means of self-articulation in order to express his own intellectual concerns; the short form of “the fatwa became for him a major vehicle for the expression of his ideas”.⁷⁴ Ibn Taymiyya at times even gave different titles to one and the same piece of his writing⁷⁵ and there are many other circumstances that impede a precise mapping of his output. Nevertheless, an astonishing amount of his writing has survived the centuries, although already his contemporaries did not have a clear overview of it. Certain aspects of Ibn Taymiyya’s work might have failed the test of time were it not for the devoted efforts of his admirers, be they Ibn al-Qayyim or others. It is a lucky historical coincidence that such an impulsive author, who constantly shifted from one topic to the other and from one front to the next, was preserved, (re-)arranged, systematized and further developed by willing admirers.

Any description of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya seems to start with the remark that he was a prolific writer. However, this does not quite imply that he was productive in the fullest sense of the word; rather, without stating it too bluntly, the expression conveys a certain reservation about the quality of his output. Some scholars have no qualms about airing their disregard for him. The main assumption behind both approaches is the epigonal character of his person and oeuvre. In probably involuntary irony, the editors of *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma* hail Ibn al-Qayyim as “the second master of Islam” (*shaykh al-islām al-thānī*) in conjunction with the first master of Islam (*shaykh al-islām al-awwal*) Ibn Taymiyya.⁷⁶ The label “polygraph” is likewise problem-

74 Weiss, Bernard: Ibn Taymiyya on Leadership in the Ritual Prayer, in: Muhammad Khalid Masud, Brinkley Morris Messick, and David Stephan Powers (eds.): *Islamic Legal Interpretation. Muftis and Their Fatwas*, Cambridge, MA, and London 1996, pp. 63–71, here pp. 63–64.

75 Ibn Taymiyya: *A Muslim Theologian’s Response to Christianity. Ibn Taymiyya’s al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, edited and translated by Thomas F. Michel, Delmar 1984, p. 68.

76 Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, p. 11. Another service by Abū Zayd, *Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya*, pp. 129–156, delves into the relationship between Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim.

atic, inasmuch as it relieves readers of the burden of pondering the question *wes Geistes Kind der Autor ist* and trying to make sense of his writings. That is to say, this label may restrict, from the start, a perspective on a writer's consistence, inner convictions, developing agendas, decisive turns and so forth in favour of a tempting logic of sheer numbers. This is dangerous and misleading, all the more so since in 1979 Bell already identified certain phases of and the influences dominating Ibn al-Qayyim's works, signalling that "the various shifts in stress or disciplinary framework discernible in the writings of Ibn al-Qayyim correspond to fairly distinct periods in his career."⁷⁷ Therefore, turning him into a copy of Ibn Taymiyya and perceiving him mainly as his master's voice – an allegation already lodged by his contemporaries – blocks important avenues of research. Though even from the start this allegation of imitation and slavish adherence loomed large on the part of the enemies, Abū Zayd still feels the need to dedicate a section of 17 pages to maintain that "Ibn al-Qayyim is no copy of his master (*laysa nuskhā min shaykhihi*) Ibn Taymiyya."⁷⁸

From the beginning and to this day, however, the allegation of mere replication could not be strictly upheld, given Ibn al-Qayyim's scholarly stature and output. As such, we find the similarly widespread and, in fact, complementary narrative of a sort of against-all-odds-creativity. It is pointed out that, at the most, he managed to find a niche for himself while still generally following the path of Ibn Taymiyya: "Ibn Qayyim absorbed all the ideas of his master and took extraordinary pains to revive the popularity of his works but at the same time he carved out a separate identity for himself."⁷⁹ In that sense, the "separate identity" conceded to or defended for Ibn al-Qayyim seems to consist primarily of the empty spots that Ibn Taymiyya's sweeping brush left untouched or that the latter took no interest in covering. This identity henceforth appears as scattered individual topics associated with the name of Ibn al-Qayyim and resurfacing in 20th-century Western scholarship on a piecemeal basis, as has been demonstrated, such as the issue of children or prophetic medicine. Despite the importance granted to those works, their status is still minimized by the impression of a second-class originality, in the sense that Ibn al-Qayyim managed to use the energy that was left to him – i.e., not already

⁷⁷ Bell, *Love Theory*, p. 101.

⁷⁸ For historical details, see Abū Zayd, *Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya*, pp. 139–156.

⁷⁹ Ahsan, Sayyid: *Life and Thoughts of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab*, Aligarh 1988, p. 33.

absorbed by catering immediately to the demands of Ibn Taymiyya and later to the ordering of the latter's legacy of scattered writings – to scratch out a little corner for himself. In view of such perceptions, we deem it no longer sufficient – especially on the part of Ibn al-Qayyim connoisseurs – to join the “yes-he-can” mantra while it remains somehow tainted both by the impression that he was basically spellbound by Ibn Taymiyya and that he was caught in eclecticism of sorts. Bori and Holtzman deplore that Ibn al-Qayyim's “broad literary corpus remains almost unexplored” and diagnose: “Although some of Ibn Qayyim al-Ğawziyyah's works were recognized as unique and, in some cases, were used as the almost exclusive source for research, Ibn al-Qayyim was almost never credited for them as an independent and substantial thinker.” The crux is that his framing as a “diligent pupil of Ibn Taymiyyah (...) implies a lack of originality on Ibn al-Qayyim's part that makes him unworthy of proper scientific research.”⁸⁰ Yet, is independence really the precondition of originality? What exactly is independence supposed to mean? Relativizing the validity of such a claim by unpacking its historical influences and cultural constructedness, the idea of creative independence will be challenged in the next section. And, if originality proves not to be an absolute criterion, what could be more viable criteria?

4. Challenging Expectations of Ingenuity via Appropriation

In their introduction to *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, the editors Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Ahmed assert: “Ibn Taymiyya was, by almost universal consensus, one of the most original and systematic thinkers in the history of Islam.”⁸¹ The nearly “universal consensus” they have in mind here is at most a modern, academic one brought about by Sunni revivalism after half a millennium of negligence in Arabic sources.⁸² As for the last part of the statement, the systematic character attributed to Ibn Taymiyya has to be relativized, since he usually did not produce structured overviews – even less so in the

⁸⁰ Bori and Holtzman, Introduction, p. 15.

⁸¹ Rapoport and Ahmed, Introduction, p. 19.

⁸² This has been demonstrated in the same volume; see El-Rouayheb, *Changing Views*, pp. 270, 311. A study comparable to his is lacking for Ibn al-Qayyim.

realm of jurisprudence⁸³ – but displayed a series of creative outbursts. Bori stresses that Ibn Taymiyya “did not have a systematic mind”, but was “unsystematically explosive both in the quantity and the quality of his works”.⁸⁴ This is very much in confluence with his typical format because it perfectly fit his mode of performance, for “fatwa literature does not attain the degree of systemization that is found in the great treatises and, as a rule, does not admit of such highly extended argumentation as is found in *uṣūl al-fiqh*-work.”⁸⁵ The engagement on behalf of Ibn Taymiyya (and his work), above all by Ibn al-Qayyim but also by other followers and admirers, should be regarded as a huge accomplishment in itself: (i) socially, by recognizing and asserting Ibn Taymiyya’s importance, i.e. backing someone who was often not acknowledged by the establishment and partaking in his protests; (ii) materially and practically, by identifying, collecting and ordering his scattered notes; (iii) and not least, intellectually, by curiously exploring the breaches made by him, spelling out implications, and developing and systematizing his ideas.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, we do not want to pursue these “auxiliary” functions and their merits any further here, because it is not yet the decisive point we finally want to make; in addition, the above argumentation again bears the risk of ending up in the double bind of apologetics. Coming back to the cited axiomatic statement of Rapoport and Ahmed, we are hesitant to endorse even the remaining middle element, namely the claim that Ibn Taymiyya was “one of the most original (...) thinkers in the history of Islam.”⁸⁷ We do not undertake to flatly deny this assertion of supreme originality, but rather to note the broader intellectual climate in Western literature that reinforces such value judgements.

In an article on Mamluk *belles lettres* and the role of poetry therein, Thomas Bauer argues that it is simple-minded to evaluate this literature *per se*, because one should also consider the historical develop-

83 Krawietz, *Transgressive Creativity*, pp. 43–49.

84 Bori, *Collection*, p. 55.

85 Weiss, *Ibn Taymiyya on Leadership*, p. 64.

86 It must be added that well-versed modern scholars like the Egyptian Muḥammad Abū Zahra (d. 1974) may appreciate Ibn Taymiyya’s writings “because they are clear, illustrative and illuminating, never complicating or obscuring things” (*fa-innahā wāḍiḥa mushriqa nayyira lā taqīd fihā wa-lā ibhām*), Abū Zahra, *Ibn Taymiyya. Hayātuhu wa-ʿaṣruhu wa-ārāʾuhu wa-fiqhuhu*, Cairo 1952, p. 521. The majority of his readers would not endorse this, but would rather bemoan his utter conciseness – to put it mildly.

87 Rapoport and Ahmed, *Introduction*, p. 19.

ment of taste and its related predilections and displeasures in Europe.⁸⁸ He stresses the specific importance of colonial trajectories and their impact on the perception of Oriental poetry and concludes “that Mamluk Arabic literature is not characterized by stagnation and a lack of innovation but rather by a steady and gradual development”. The latter, “however, did not evolve towards the same endpoint as Western literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.” Dismissing certain segments of this literature as stagnant primarily has to do with “the lack of developments that mimicked and confirmed Western models.”⁸⁹ Both features – i. e. steady development and nonconformity with long-prevailing Western models of innovation – very much apply to the case of Ibn al-Qayyim. We suggest, therefore, that the thorough disregard for Ibn al-Qayyim and his persistent portrayal in the Western secondary literature as an epigone is not a coincidence having to do solely with his specific case,⁹⁰ but rather may be strongly influenced by the tenacious Romantic notion of the genius and the exaggerated hailing of invention, especially since the era of colonial expansion and industrial capitalism. In the course of the 18th century, originality and “its moral antonym plagiarism”⁹¹ became the cornerstone of debates about artistic genius. Only the invention of the concept of the “original genius” transformed the appropriation of texts – for example in the form of repetition – into a “problem”; in the Baroque period, for instance, exact repetition was taken for granted as an element of the fine arts.⁹² The idea of the “original genius” is often dated back to Robert Wood’s “Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer”,⁹³ which also strongly influenced conceptions of creativity across Europe.⁹⁴ Here,

88 Bauer, Thomas: Mamluk Literature. Misunderstandings and New Approaches, in: *Mamlūk Studies Review* 9 (2005), pp. 105–132, here pp. 105, 108.

89 Bauer, Mamluk Literature, p. 116.

90 Another candidate would be Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505).

91 Buelow, George J.: Originality, Genius, Plagiarism in English Criticism of the Eighteenth Century, in: *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 21 (1990), pp. 117–128, here p. 117.

92 Glasmeier, Michael: “Loop. Zur Geschichte und Theorie der Endlosschleife am Beispiel Rodney Grahams”, key note speech, May 5, 2011 in the course of the conference “Wiederaufgelegt. Zur Appropriation von Texten und Büchern in Büchern” (May 5–7, 2011), organized by Annette Gilbert, Peter Szondi-Institute, FU Berlin.

93 Wood, Robert: *An Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer. With a Comparative View of the Ancient and Present State of the Troade*, London 1769.

94 Compare Fredriksson, Martin: The Avant-Gardist, the Male Genius and the Proprietor, in: *Nordlit* 21 (2007), pp. 275–284, here p. 278.

the very same mechanism is of course applied if we take Wood's essay as the founding event.⁹⁵ This attitude has long been questioned in arts and music – with DaDa collages and ready-mades to Street Art and digital music – as they are practised, and should likewise be questioned not only in studies of music, literature, and arts but also in such “alien” subjects as Islamic Studies. However, these “alien” fields have hitherto shown a certain predilection for innovators who present themselves with the air of novelty and give the impression that they are not indebted to others – so as to leave other competitors behind.

Although Ibn Taymiyya does not claim *creatio ex nihilo* creativity for himself, he greatly devalues recent and older competitors. He presents himself as being committed to the *salaf ṣāliḥ* as the first three generations of Islam, and this move functionally allows him to brush aside and devalue what so many generations of scholars had gathered. Distancing himself from those closer to his own time in favour of earlier referees thereby enhances his legitimacy. With his *salaf ṣāliḥ* formula, Ibn Taymiyya offered a thorough and effective clean-up program. No wonder, then, that this has become and is regularly used as a powerful tool by “reformed” Muslim scholars and/or activists around the globe, especially when they return to their local communities with the impetus to tidy up the deviations of lived Islam in the name of the holy sources and the knowledgeable early forefathers. The West – of which Oriental and later Islamic Studies in its different variants are part – has for some time fostered and socially rewarded the encouragement and applauding of ostentatious self-posing, the by-passing of traditions or predecessors, and even the ignoring of those who have lent a helping hand, and this has affected reception of such behaviour in Western contexts. Against such a background, a figure like Ibn al-Qayyim, combining some general Muslim notions of a sober habitus, respect towards elders, courtesy, immersion in pious practices, and so forth, appears as the complete antithesis of well-deserved stardom. His status is greatly aggravated by his endless quotations and extraor-

95 For a more thorough account of “when imitation became plagiarism” see Buelow, Originality, and Jaffe, Kineret S.: The Concept of Genius. Its Changing Role in Eighteenth-century French Aesthetics, in: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 41 (1980), pp. 579–599. Compare Brunner, Anette: Der zum Himmel erhobene Blick als Ausdruck enthusiastischen Schöpfungstums. Die Darstellung der Invention im Künstlerbildnis der Goethezeit, in: *Paragrana. Internationale Zeitschrift für Historische Anthropologie*, suppl. 2 (2006), pp. 57–72.

dinary personal humility – an attitude that in some modern settings might be perceived as downright pathological. Ibn al-Qayyim would never voice criticism of Ibn Taymiyya even if some occurred to him. It is inadequate on the part of Western Islamic Studies to expect that Ibn al-Qayyim should explicitly distinguish himself via criticism of Ibn Taymiyya in order to signal being his own man. It is also inept to demand this kind of criticism as a starting point from which his scholarly merits can be inferred. It cannot be overlooked that figures like Ibn al-Qayyim are much less appreciated among non-Muslims and that his habitus is taken as an unmistakable sign of inferiority, often triggering contempt. In contrast, Ibn Taymiyya's cocky aggressiveness and air of superiority represent the ultimate alternative model to the devotional piety and intellectual long-windedness of Ibn al-Qayyim. This does not mean that Ibn Taymiyya is highly esteemed everywhere, but he is definitely "respected" – either as a great theologian/scholar/activist or as a powerful, dangerous villain (whose violent "impact" is felt even centuries later). Despite the wide range of congruence in terms of doctrine and methodology shared by the two authors, in recent times Ibn Taymiyya has met modern European-bred Western expectations of ingenuity to a much greater degree; he bears, after all, their "unmistaken" insignia, like self-aggrandizement and cultivation of sudden inspiration. It is a strange coincidence of history that this duo represents such contrasting ends of the scale in matters of habitus and self-presentation. However, apart from the strikingly complementary symbiosis between Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim, we surmise that there are other phenomena that are relevant to Islamic Studies which likewise emanate from the same overall cultural disposition: we propose, for example, the utter Orientalist/Western fondness for and strange aestheticization of "independent" Islamic jurisprudence (*ijtihād*), the prevalent lamenting rhetoric about the closing of its door and about the evil principle of imitation (*taqlīd*). However, space does not allow us to follow up on this or similar other narratives. Hence, we must finally turn to a constructive reconfiguration of Ibn al-Qayyim's intellectual calibre and propagate an alternative or, rather, complementary model of scholarly ingenuity. The widespread impression of eclecticism can be challenged by suggesting the concept of the appropriation of especially postclassical Arabic writings on theology, jurisprudence and philosophy. While in the field of cultural and social studies, literature studies, or arts the angle has shifted toward a new approach to creativity and originality, an equivalent is

still lacking in Islamic Studies.⁹⁶ From this perspective, the study of Muslim practices of citation and legitimization offers a deeper understanding of them, especially with regard to changing modes in the era of digital data.⁹⁷ We suggest exploring and highlighting this unfolding appropriation, including paths not taken by Ibn al-Qayyim, his creative quoting practices and genre transgression, as well as presenting him as the epitome of appropriation.

4.1. Unfolding Appropriation

Ibn al-Qayyim's outward conformity with and praise of Ibn Taymiyya should not be taken as a blanket compliance with all the latter's opinions, insofar as he is extremely picky about which of his master's ideas he actively takes up, pursues and propagates. Where he is not enthusiastic about the latter's topics, arrangements and pitches, he simply does not mention them: he sees no need to openly criticise. The paths Ibn al-Qayyim did not take in relation to Ibn Taymiyya's writings, however, have not hitherto been systematically explored; they are, at most, alluded to. Therefore, instead of watching for Ibn al-Qayyim to explicitly distance himself from Ibn Taymiyya, we surmise that interpreters should pay more attention to his silent omissions, slight variants and quotations from Ibn Taymiyya that quite often disclose a slightly shifted meaning by way of translocation and a specific combination with other authors. A diligent context-sensitive comparison of their writings allows the reader to discern the emergence of subtle divergent drafts of this kind.⁹⁸ On the other end of the scale, Ibn al-Qayyim grossly adopts "alien" elements and incorporates large quantities, if

96 For an overview, see Aigner, Anita: Einleitung. Von 'architektonischer Moderne' zu 'Architektur in der Moderne'. Kulturelle Grenzüberschreitungen, in: idem (ed.): *Vernakuläre Moderne. Grenzüberschreitungen in der Architektur um 1900. Das Bauernhaus und seine Aneignung*, Bielefeld 2010, pp. 7–35, here especially pp. 11–13.

97 Carmen Bauer has shown the proximity of digital techniques, like threads in online forums, and Muslim practices of argumentation: Zurück zum Quellcode. Salafistische Wissenspraktiken im Internet, in: *inamo* 57 (2009), pp. 37–42, here p. 39.

98 Compare Frenkel, Yehoshua: Islamic Utopia under the Mamluks. The Social and Legal Ideals of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, in: Bori and Holtzmann, *Scholar in the Shadow*, pp. 67–87, here p. 81, with regard to cemetery rituals, and especially the chapter by Hoover in the present volume.

not huge building blocks, of more or less direct quotations. Appropriation is the central rubric under which we look at the immense scale of discernable processes.

We understand appropriation as a set of practices that – consciously or unconsciously – occupy meaning. An object, figure, sign, formulation, topic, narrative, style and so forth is turned into something that, within the logic of the personal life practice, is “made one’s own (*proprius*)” and by this “appropriate”. This is beyond any notion of “copy and paste” or of mere repetition or imitation. Thilo Schwer distinguishes three different types varying in the degree of appropriation and creativity: (i) small “seemingly obstinate” gestures of identification with the object, (ii) individual combination and “recoding”, and (iii) encompassing modifications, after which the original object cannot be recognized anymore.⁹⁹ “Recoding” in particular has the power to question hierarchies of appropriate and inappropriate, “high” and “low”, “orthodox” and “heterodox”. So what is being appropriated in our case of the two Shaykhs of Islam? There are, for instance, (i) concepts, styles, arguments, terms, (ii) biographies and historical figures, (iii) narratives, (iv) practices, and (v) material, like manuscripts. Ibn Taymiyya appropriates Greek philosophers’ writings; Ibn al-Qayyim appropriates the writings of Ibn Taymiyya, but not necessarily his style; Muslim authors and activists appropriate both of them in order to underline their Salafi or Wahhabi claims and a myriad of detectable facets. Translation and thereby transformation of meaning is another issue pertinent to this broad set of possibilities.¹⁰⁰ While the ideas of intertextuality in a Kristevan sense are the basis of our understanding, this approach must be extended to include a notion of the subject/agent, thereby tracing practices rather

99 Schwer, Thilo: Persönliche Aneignung versus kommerzielle Verwertung im Möbeldesign, in: Birgit Richard and Alexander Ruhl (eds.): *Konsumguerilla. Widerstand gegen Massenkultur?*, Frankfurt and New York 2008, pp. 55–68, here p. 55. Referring to A. I. Sabra and others, Tzvi Langermann depicts appropriation as the first phase within a process that leads to a “naturalization” of science (The Naturalization of Science in Ibn Qayyim al-Ğawziyyah’s *Kitāb al-Rūb*, in: Bori and Holtzman, *A Scholar in the Shadow*, pp. 211–228, here p. 211). We, however, work with a much broader and complex understanding of appropriation pertinent to art history, anthropology and others fields that avoids the expression naturalization.

100 See especially the chapters of Arif, Böttcher, Özervarli, Preckel and Riexinger in this volume, although the findings of Translation Studies have not yet been applied in research on Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya.

than merely analysing results.¹⁰¹ To understand current appropriation of works of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim in, for example, Malaysia and Indonesia, the tool of intertextuality is not sufficient; an intertextual approach requires transparency in order to even perceive, much less analyze the different layers of influence and references. This is not possible with the “invisible” editors who produce the pamphlets that are sold on street corners.

4.2. Quotation and Compiling

To start, the religio-legal literature of the so-called Koranic sciences is full of quotations from the holy sources of Koran and Hadith. In varying quantities, but especially by Ḥanbalī scholars, such quotations are constantly interpolated in the course of an oral or written production and presentation of sense. A particularly striking example is the legal sub-genre of Fatwa literature, whose condensed line of argumentation is often structured and fed according to the hierarchy of the sources of jurisprudence the author acknowledges. In order to constantly explore and expand the realm of pious knowledge, various techniques of quoting and compiling are applied. While it is true that Ibn al-Qayyim quoted Ibn Taymiyya excessively, scholarly attention has not focused enough on the plethora of other authors he cites or employs.¹⁰² He himself had assembled an impressive number of manuscripts from various disciplines in his library, and the implications of this possession and passion have not yet been explored in detail. At any rate, in those times “the concept of authorship and ‘copy-right’ was quite different from our understanding” and Ibn al-Qayyim is definitely a “great recycler” of the work of others and – to a great degree – also of himself.¹⁰³ This feature of multiple and even lengthy quotations has led Holtzman to label Ibn al-Qayyim as a “mimetic”

101 For example, Holthuis endeavours to assemble prototypes of the different manifestations of intertextual relations between literary texts in the sense of a taxonomy; Holthuis, Susanne: *Intertextualität. Aspekte einer rezeptionsorientierten Konzeption*, Tübingen 1993, pp. v, 34.

102 Ibn Ḥazm is but one example. Holtzman scrutinizes Ibn al-Qayyim’s reading of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in this edited volume. On Samau’al al-Maghribi see our n. 21.

103 Krawietz, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, p. 62.

writer.¹⁰⁴ Yet, using all sorts of manuscripts as a huge repository was in accordance with the conventions of the time and did not detract from his scholarly status. One cannot imagine his contemporary, expert readers taking such blended, compiled works as mere copies; they, too, were used to such additions and most probably were quite sensitive to reading between the lines and paying close attention to nuances. They could not have expected him to state his viewpoint bluntly from the beginning. We need to know more whether, to what degree, and how the process of “merely” copying manuscripts was distinguished from rearranging them and fusing additions to them – in this case, we must know exactly how work was organized and distributed in the studio of Ibn al-Qayyim (and other scholars). Modern electronic devices now allow for a much more diligent deciphering of such processes – a fact that may greatly enhance research on this author and lead to a refined appreciation of his imaginative composing skills.

4.3. Genre-Transgression and Transformation

The topical systematization of Hadith compendia provided convenient corridors for the development and differentiation of new genres. The constitution of new genres and sub-genres has been and still is an ongoing process of Islamic – or Islamicate – writings. However, along with the Western idea of the original genius came the demand to follow a “pure” style adhering to a certain genre. Congruently, many people have low regard for cultural techniques such as pastiche, collage, and montage, inasmuch as they are the outcome of a “polluting” mixing of objects from distinct categories. The act of selecting, discarding, compiling and contextualizing does not count as the outcome of a creative mind but as a “service”. Hence, as has been shown, Ibn al-Qayyim is portrayed as a service provider on behalf of his master. Yet, such techniques are the very basis of pious Islamic writings within the frame of Koranic sciences proper and even beyond. As a postclassical scholar with a personal inability or unwillingness to be concise, Ibn al-Qayyim produced a considerable number of highly complex and compact works that often do not fit into one genre alone. His later huge compendia, especially, embody an ongoing process of synthesizing different elements in multiple variations and rearrangements.

104 Holtzman, *Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah*, p. 205 et passim.

Thereby, he often transgresses familiar boundaries and genre-categories and deliberately blurs and possibly even constitutes or co-develops new genres.¹⁰⁵ In an article in 2006, Krawietz attempts to subsume Ibn al-Qayyim's oeuvre under genre-headings, only to ultimately find that his contributions cannot be deciphered and evaluated within a corset of clear-cut genre-categories.¹⁰⁶ His fusing creativity, increasing manoeuvres of criss-crossing, redirecting, compiling, and "reframing" are perhaps a much truer expression of his scholarly merits than anything else that has hitherto been discussed in this introductory chapter. Frenkel has pointed out that such techniques of Ibn al-Qayyim's work are detached from predictable topic-genre correlations, since "there is no clear evidence that he preferred particular genres for specific themes; rather, he addressed the same topic in several works, regularly manipulating this line of reasoning in order to serve his aim."¹⁰⁷ It is therefore important to keep in mind that genres should be conceptualized as dynamic entities with a heterogeneous internal structure.¹⁰⁸ We are confronted with texts that, on the surface, are reproductive and try to deny their subjectivity, although they constantly and in a rather subversive manner produce new significance.¹⁰⁹ It must be added that our Ḥanbalī author seems to derive intense spiritual blessing from this type of creative textual journeying. Frenkel has emphasized: "Through the extensive use of Hadith quotations and citations from earlier scholars, Ibn Qayyim al-Ġawziyyah virtually obliterated the boundaries of time and space, creating connections between remote eras and areas."¹¹⁰ In this sense, writing – or more precisely rewriting, which entails a process of detecting new dimensions by which the divine guidance, through innumerable perspectives, holds the world together – provides him and

105 Perho, *The Prophets's Medicine*.

106 Krawietz, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, p. 62 et passim. Krawietz, Transgressive Creativity, analyses the degree to which his *Ilām al-muwaqqiʿin* oscillates between the format of an *adab al-mufti* treatise and an *uṣūl al-fiqh* manual. Various later writings of his are much more genre-transgressive than this early example.

107 Frenkel, Islamic Utopia, p. 70.

108 Zymner, Rüdiger: Gattungen aus literaturwissenschaftlicher Sicht, in: Stephan Conermann (ed.): *Was sind Genres? Nicht-abendländische Kategorisierungen von Gattungen*, Berlin 2011, pp. 7–21, here p. 18.

109 Conermann, Stephan and El Hawary, Amr: Ausklang. Das Problem der Gattungsbestimmung in transkultureller Perspektive, in: Conerman, *Was sind Genres?*, pp. 316–324, here p. 322.

110 Frenkel, Islamic Utopia, p. 86.

his pious readers with ongoing enchantment. The aesthetics of “repetition” and constant divine realization powerfully evoke his increasing Sufi leanings. It requires further research to analyse the degree to which a pattern of transgression prevails in his oeuvre or whether one should argue with, for example, de Certeau, that Ibn al-Qayyim had no space of his own so that the only remaining possibility was, “sich innerhalb einer vorgegebenen Struktur einzunisten.”¹¹¹

5. Master of Appropriation

An oeuvre of such vast dimensions could have been produced only by fusion on a large scale, especially since Ibn al-Qayyim emerged as “author” relatively late in his life. He is such a great recycler that any of his contributions can be expected to show up in more or less transformed shape somewhere else in his writings. Ibn al-Qayyim’s wide reading, erudition, intellectual landscape and capacity to combine and blend are extraordinarily consistent, even daring. There is no scope in this chapter, unfortunately, to determine either the pattern of selected topics and overall concerns he recycles and appropriates or how they evolve during his lifetime.

A last shift in perspective is due. We do not deem it incidental that the publications of Ibn al-Qayyim on the Arabic book market have witnessed such a tremendous surge. The Ibn al-Qayyim available in printed edited versions at the turn to the 20th century can hardly be compared to the omnipresent figure at the turn to the 21st century; that is to say, the gradual evolution of this phenomenon with its multiple or revised editions, short versions etc. can provide telling insights into the patterns of audience interests. Concerning the reconstruction of his oeuvre and its authentic shape, today’s editions not only make Ibn al-Qayyim’s works much more accessible than the dispersed manuscripts of previous times, allowing for helpful insights; they simultaneously and contrariwise increase the already existing obscurity and disorder.¹¹² On the other hand, his oeuvre is used as a kaleidoscopic repository by an increasing number of readers, with few or no scholarly credentials, from a broader range of social strata, who nevertheless project their agendas onto his work and infuse his agendas, likewise,

¹¹¹ De Certeau, *Kunst des Handelns*, p. 92.

¹¹² Krawietz, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, p. 63.

into theirs. Since the voluminous compendia seem to be too overwhelming for casual readers, the modern book market offers all sorts of single chapters, piecemeal selections, shortened versions or anthologies with other authors. While such editors often hail themselves for the service done to religious knowledge, for the most part readers – and not only the average ones – become all the more confused. Not infrequently, a 20th century or (post)modern consumer even combines his own musings or his leftover university manuals with quotations from Ibn al-Qayyim; as a consequence, a rising flood of publications claiming Ibn al-Qayyim as the author, including many paperbacks, is pouring forth. Accordingly, the authenticity of the contents of the shorter publications, in particular – but also of several larger synthetic works – must be thoroughly tested. At times, these pious self-appointed editors dress up their medleys with fancy titles deliberately reminiscent of famous, authentic titles of Ibn al-Qayyim's or someone else's real oeuvre. Ardent readers often seek a profound elevation of spirit. Religiosity flourishes and sells – especially if not protected by copy-right regulations. Ibn al-Qayyim is an extreme example of a premodern Arabic scholar being dismembered, in terms of scholarly corpus, into the minutest entities imaginable then reconstructed in multiple ways. Perhaps one should not join in the bashing of “Salafi primitivists”¹¹³ but acknowledge – from a scientific point of view – that such maneuvers can raise awareness of the highly structured nature of Ibn al-Qayyim's work, which still itself displays many seams of composition and integration. “Ibn al-Qayyim lite” is available everywhere and has entered the rhetoric of many contemporary Muslim authors, such as Yūsuf al-Qarāḍāwī (himself a great recycler or, better, appropriator). Such processes of nostrification led to a completely different breadth of effect in the Muslim audience which in turn reacts with enhanced or modified structures of needs and desires. On the Internet, Ibn al-Qayyim may still not generate more hits than Ibn Taymiyya, especially due to political polemics, but the contexts in which – one meanwhile hesitates to say – his “teachings” are employed are tremendously variegated and diverse. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya has in almost no way been “the first man on the moon”, but we suggest depicting him as the master of appropriation.

113 We take this expression from Christopher Melchert in the present volume.

Apart from what they themselves understand as their own scholarly merits, the ensuing contributions from an international committee of authors demonstrate considerably different dimensions of these processes of appropriation – from most subtle variations to considerable changes of function. Authors have been grouped to highlight thematic and disciplinary links. We aim to attain a differentiated perspective by further elucidating, by means of these chapters, the concept of appropriation. Part one comprises contributions to theology, more specifically to the role of human agency: Sait Özervarlı compares “Divine Wisdom, Human Agency and the *fiṭra* in Ibn Taymiyya’s Thought”, a key topic in this genre; in “Debating the Doctrine of *jabr* (Compulsion): Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya Reads Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī”, Livnat Holtzman traces one of the important sources of Ibn al-Qayyim; Gino Schallenberg’s “Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s Manipulation of Sufi Terms: Fear and Hope”, demonstrates *inter alia* how the classical theological problem of free will versus predestination is (directly or indirectly) likewise addressed in the subgenre of Sufi writings on the mystical path. Part three is dedicated to “Ibn Taymiyya and Philosophy”. In “The Poison of Philosophy: Ibn Taymiyya’s Struggle For and Against Reason”, Anke von Kügelgen analyzes the ways in which Ibn Taymiyya appropriated Greek philosophy and the thinking and/or methodology of its Muslim heirs, debating whether his strategy is compatible with his outspoken vendetta against philosophy. With “The Curse of Philosophy: Ibn Taymiyya as a Philosopher in Contemporary Islamic Thought”, Georges Tamer has written a complementary article that deals with Ibn Taymiyya’s perception in modern times and ultimately speculates whether or not Ibn Taymiyya should be portrayed as a philosopher or as a theologian. The other three parts do not focus on mainly one genre, but traverse variant fields and vast spacial and temporal distances: part two, on the “Career of Books” (while the term ‘book’ has to be understood for the earlier periods as monograph), ranges from our Ḥanbalī authors’ century to later ones up to the beginning of the 21st. Geographically, it travels from 14th century Damascus to the Indian subcontinent and to contemporary Indonesia. In “The Relation of Ibn al-Qayyim’s *Kitāb al-Rūḥ*: Some Literary Aspects”, Tzvi Langerman provides insight into his ongoing research on a specific book of Ibn al-Qayyim, which is perhaps the monograph with the most sympathetic reception in non-partisan, wider Sunni circles. Christopher Melchert, in “Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya to the Ḥanbalī School of Law”, measures quoting patterns by other Ḥanbalī authors and thus

tests the significance of both authors, examining why Ibn al-Qayyim made an even lesser impact than Ibn Taymiyya. The contribution by Syamsuddin Arif entitled “Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya in the ‘Lands Below the Wind’: An Ideological Father of Radicalism or a Popular Sufi Master?” deals with translations into other ‘Oriental’ languages, since Indonesia is the demographically largest Muslim country in the world and Indonesian translations from the Arabic also have a great impact on the religious landscape in neighboring Malaysia. In “Screening Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān’s Library: The Use of Ḥanbalī Literature in 19th-Century Bhopal”, Claudia Preckel turns to Ḥanbalī influences on the Indian Ahl-i Ḥadīth-movement; she depicts the collection, translation and overall appropriation activities of the spouse of the third female ruler of the North Indian Local Dynasty of Bhopal as a decisive agent in that process. Part five examines appropriations “Outside the Arab World”: Martin Riexinger highlights “Ibn Taymiyya’s World-view and the Challenge of Modernity: A Conflict Among the Ahl-i Ḥadīth in British India”, while Annabelle Böttcher, in her contribution entitled “Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya as Changing Salafi Icons”, considers contemporary Germany. Part four, “Inclusion and Exclusion in Islamic Theology and Law”, assembles articles on either law or theology under the shared rhetoric of punishing deviance as well as the “us *versus* them” mentality with which both Ḥanbalī authors are so persistently associated: Abdessamad Belhaj presents “Law and Order According to Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya: A Re-Examination of *siyāsa shar‘iyya*”; Dominik Schlosser elaborates on “Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s Attitude Toward Christianity in *Hidāyat al-ḥayārā fī ajwibat al-yahūd wal-naṣārā*”, while Jon Hoover speaks out “Against Islamic Universalism: ‘Alī al-Ḥarbī’s 1990 Attempt to Prove that Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya Affirm the Eternity of Hell-Fire”. Needless to mention, the current arrangement could easily have been shaped otherwise.

Section 1: Human Agency

Divine Wisdom, Human Agency and the *fiṭra* in Ibn Taymiyya's Thought

M. Sait Özervarli

Ibn Taymiyya, although a follower of the traditionalist path of *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth* in theology and of the Ḥanbalī School in jurisprudence, was generally an independent-minded thinker with a critical approach to other views and did not follow his predecessors blindly. Unlike earlier traditionalist scholars, he sought to present an alternative theology based on the Koran and the Sunna, while engaging with the discourse of philosophical theology. His focus on philosophical debates led him to a deeper rationalistic approach despite his traditionalist background and a confrontational stance on intellectual issues and figures. The large number and variety of his students also show that people of different backgrounds had confidence in his scholarship. Among his students were Shāfi'īs, like al-Dhahabī and Ibn Kathīr; the Sufi 'Imād al-Dīn al-Wāsiṭī; moderate Ḥanbalīs, like Ibn Mufliḥ or al-Ṭūfī; and many others.

Ibn Rajab (d. 795/1393), the leading Ḥanbalī biographer, underscores that although the traditionalist groups greatly respected Ibn Taymiyya, they were not happy with his debates with theologians and philosophers or his indulgence in discussing their issues. He points out that a number of Ibn Taymiyya's contemporary Ḥanbalī scholars did not approve of and tried even to prevent him from some of his views, which they regarded as contradicting the main position of the school.¹ Especially his legal decisions demonstrate his self-determination in expressing his own views no matter how different from previous ones. In an essay based on three interesting fatwas of Ibn Taymiyya, Benjamin Jokisch displays persuasively how the scholar reached new conclusions by employing different analogies and referring to some partial consensuses.² In previ-

1 Ibn Rajab, Zayn al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad: *Dhayl 'alā ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila*, Beirut n.d., vol. 2, pp. 393–394.

2 Jokisch, Benjamin: *Ijtihad* in Ibn Taymiyya's *Fatāwā*, in: Robert Gleave and Eugenia Kermeli (eds.): *Islamic Law. Theory and Practice*, London and New

ous works of mine I gave examples of Ibn Taymiyya's critical approach in theology, on issues such as arguments for the existence of God, Divine Will and human responsibility, causality etc.³ In this chapter I will highlight Ibn Taymiyya's focus on the extent of divine wisdom in creation and its relationship to human free will and agency in connection with human nature (*fiṭra*). Moreover, I will identify the place of the love of God, which in his thought provides a more profound acknowledgement of divine wisdom than rational argumentations do.

1. God's Wisdom and Human Capacity

An important point of emphasis by Ibn Taymiyya regarding God's relationship with the universe and human beings is the issue of wisdom (*ḥikma*) in divine actions. All Muslim theologians accepted that the actions of God were purposeful and meaningful and that they did not happen accidentally or for no reason. Not all of them, however, viewed the existence of causes and aims for God's actions: the Ash'arīs in particular, unlike the Mu'tazilīs, argued that causes would limit the supremacy and authority of God and would mean dependency on those causes. According to the Ash'arīs nothing should imply any kind of underestimation of God's omnipotence or impose upon Him a necessity to perform an action. They put more emphasis on His power and considered that a possible correlation may lead to a sort of limitation of divine infinity. God's power could not be limited or surpassed, in the Ash'arī approach, for the sake of wisdom. Causation may explain His wisdom in understanding various divine actions in a better way, but it would generate a direct or indirect dependency on that specific cause for God. God may be seen as needing that cause in

York 1997, pp. 119–137 and Jokisch, Benjamin: *Islamisches Recht in Theorie und Praxis. Analyse einiger kaufrechtlicher Fatwas von Taqī 'd-Dīn Aḥmad b. Taymiyya*, Berlin 1996. For a long list of Ibn Taymiyya's distinctive fatwas, see Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl 'alā ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila*, vol. 2, pp. 404–405, and al-Karmī, Marī b. Yūsuf: *al-Kawākib al-durriyya fī manāqib al-mujtahid Ibn Taymiyya*, edited by Najm 'Abd al-Raḥmān Khalaf, Beirut 1986, pp. 141–145.

3 Özervarli, M. Sait: *İbn Teymiyye'nin Düşünce Metodolojisi ve Kelamcılara Eleştirisi*, Istanbul 2008, pp. 118–161; idem: The Qur'anic Rational Theology of Ibn Taymiyya and His Criticism of the *Mutakallimūn*, in: Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Ahmed (eds.): *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, Karachi 2010, pp. 78–100. See also Hoover, Jon: *Ibn Taymiyya's Theodicy of Perpetual Optimism*, Leiden and Boston 2007.

order to act, or as being incomplete without the cause. Moreover, the Ash'arīs assume that the view of causation in divine actions would also turn the act of creation into a rotation within a vicious circle without end.⁴ The Mu'tazilīs, however, see this cautious approach as unnecessary and worry that such arguments would leave God's actions aimless with no explanation. For them causation does not bring any limitation to God's attributes, provided that the causes are not necessary.⁵

In January 1315, Ibn Taymiyya was asked whether God considers any cause or purpose in His creation and, if so, whether the cause would become pre-eternal or not; or, if not, whether this means He is occupied with absurdity. These conditions highlight the complex, multifaceted nature of the issue. Ibn Taymiyya explains his position, taking a middle way between the positions of the Ash'arīs and Mu'tazilīs.⁶

In his response, Ibn Taymiyya points out the comprehensive character of the issue since it is related to divine actions, attributes, names, and principles, and reminds us that it has become one of the most debated topics. Following a summary of the views of various schools, Ibn Taymiyya criticizes both philosophers and theologians for using the wrong or deficient arguments. In his view, acknowledging causes and aims in God's actions results neither in the pre-eternity of the cause, nor in the limitation of His authority. Because God's actions are related to the universe and the created beings, therefore their causes can only be created. The pre-eternity of such causes is not imaginable for Ibn Taymiyya, since they are generated and employed through God's will. If the causes had an eternal nature, there would not be any origination or creation in the physical existence.⁷

4 For the Ash'arī view of divine wisdom, see al-Bāqillānī, Abū Bakr: *Tamhīd al-awā'il wa-talkhīṣ al-dalā'il*, edited by 'Imād al-Dīn Aḥmad Ḥaydar, Beirut 1987, pp. 50–52; al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn: *Kitāb al-Arbā'in fī uṣūl al-dīn*, edited by Aḥmad Ḥijāzī al-Saqqā, Cairo 1986, vol. 1, pp. 350–354; al-Taftazānī, Sa'd al-Dīn: *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, edited by 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Umayra, Beirut 1989, vol. 4, pp. 301–302.

5 For the Mu'tazilī view, see Ibn Mattawayh, Abū Muḥammad Ḥasan b. Aḥmad: *al-Majmū' fī al-Muḥīṭ bil-taklīf*, edited by Jean Joseph Houben and Daniel Gimaret, Beirut 1986, vol. 2, pp. 179–180.

6 Ibn Taymiyya, Taqī al-Dīn: *Majmū'at al-Rasā'il wal-masā'il*, edited by Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, Beirut 1983, vol. 5, p. 285; Ibn Taymiyya, Taqī al-Dīn: *Majmū' Fatāwā*, edited by 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Qāsim al-'Āṣimī al-Najdī, Riyadh 1991, vol. 8, p. 81.

7 Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū'at al-Rasā'il wal-masā'il*, vol. 5, pp. 286–290; Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, vol. 8, pp. 82–85, 377–381.

The Muʿtazilis overlooked the omnipotence of God in order to prove His justice, and the Ashʿarīs ignored justice in order to demonstrate His omnipotence, and therefore, Ibn Taymiyya argued, both schools failed to present a complete picture of divinity, since both qualities need to be equally underlined. In his view, since all His actions wisely and purposefully take place of His free will, He cannot be determinedly in need of purposes or become perfected by them. If He were considered to be in need of purposes, then he would also be regarded as being in need of attributes, which is pointless. The purposes are parts of actions, and mutually brought into being by God without any preceding source. Therefore, there is no obstacle to the existence of causes, motives, or purposes in His actions.⁸ Moreover, he says, if there is no other argument, God's infinite knowledge would be enough to prevent aimless acts by Him. The idea of an aimless creation would be against the divine essence and qualities.⁹

It is clear that Ibn Taymiyya held a more rational approach to divine actions than other Sunni theologians and particularly the Ashʿarīs. As Fazlur Rahman pointed out:

Ibn Taymiyya reinstates into Muslim theology the doctrine of the purposiveness of the Divine behaviour, a doctrine so strenuously denied by Ashʿarism, Maturidism, and Zahirism as compromising the omnipotence of God's will and His dissimilarity to His creation. This purposiveness is God's involvement in the destiny of man and from this he directly deduces the idea of God as the Commander or the Shariʿa-Giver. He next strives to distinguish the planes at which the Will and Wisdom of God are respectively meaningful.¹⁰

Furthermore Ibn Taymiyya does not see a real problem with divine wisdom in apparently evil situations in nature or human life. A lack of comprehension of the hidden purposes behind evil should not affect a broad approach regarding divine wisdom. We cannot deny our definite knowledge about many purposeful actions in the universe because of some cases, certain details of which may have not been discovered. If the being of a thing is more important than the partial harms it causes,

8 Ibn Taymiyya, Taqī al-Dīn: *Minhāj al-sunna al-nabawiyya fī naqd kalām al-shīʿa wal-qadariyya*, edited by Muḥammad Rashād Sālim, Cairo 1989, vol. 1, pp. 145–147; Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿat al-Rasāʾil*, vol. 5, p. 337; Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ Fatawā*, vol. 8, p. 146.

9 Ibn Taymiyya, Taqī al-Dīn: *Kitāb al-Nubuwwāt*, Beirut 1985, pp. 258–259 and 271–274.

10 Rahman, Fazlur: *Islam*, Chicago 1979, pp. 113–114.

he argues, it would not be acceptable to reject it by highlighting its harmfulness. As he wrote:

We know that God is All-Wise and everything He does and everything He commands. Our lack of knowledge in the wisdom of some particulars does not undermine what we know of Him from His being All-Wise. We do not reject what we do not know regarding the details of His Wisdom out of what we know from His Wisdom. [For example] We know that whoever knows the knowledge of the expertise of mathematicians, physicians, and grammarians, while not possessing their qualities which make them deserving to be called mathematicians, physicians, and grammarians, this will not undermine what they say because of a lacking in one's knowledge of its perspective. Therefore, the servants of God are more distant from having knowledge about God and about His Wisdom in His creation than what common people have of knowledge about mathematics, medicine and grammar.¹¹

He declares that those who oppose divine wisdom are in contradiction with many verses of the Koran (21:17), (23:115), (75:36), and so on.¹²

In all creatures, even in harmful beings and painful situations, Ibn Taymiyya finds wise aspects, and he responds to arguments regarding the existence of absolute evils and their effects on innocents. According to Ibn Taymiyya, the extent of divine blessings minimizes all kind of evil appearances, because humans are not able to see all the facets of created beings. He considers the evilness of those apparently wicked existents, therefore, as "relative" due to their role in the universal being and the ultimate goodness of creation.¹³

Likewise in Ibn Taymiyya's view, divine wisdom also requires humans to be real owners of their actions despite their being created by God. In classical Muslim theological texts, human actions are discussed in a separate section titled *khalq af'āl al-ibād* that refers to various theories. While the Mu'tazilīs attribute actions fully to men and the Jabrīs to God, the Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs accept the role of both in human actions. The Ash'arīs in their acquisition (*kasb*) theory, for instance, argue that human actions are created by God and only acquired by humans through a power offered to them just at the time of action. Therefore, in their theory humans are not the real owners

11 Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, vol. 6, p. 128.

12 Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, vol. 16, pp. 297–299.

13 Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, vol. 14, pp. 300–318; Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū'at al-Rasā'il wal-masā'il*, vol. 5, pp. 319–320.

of their actions but only the acquirers of them.¹⁴ The Māturīdīs have a similar approach by suggesting that actions have different aspects (sg. *jiba*), some of which are connected to God's creation and the others to humans' acquisition. Thus, both schools try to propose an alternative view to the absolutist interpretations regarding human agency or predestination.¹⁵

Addressing mostly the Ash'arīs, Ibn Taymiyya criticizes the acquisition theory of Sunni theologians and blames it for being quite similar to the Jabrī position, which denies the role of humans in their actions. According to Ibn Taymiyya, although human actions are a part of God's creation, individuals are the genuine agents of their deeds. In other words, God is the ultimate Creator by providing circumstances and offering the power of action; individuals, however, are uniquely responsible for owning the actions by acting freely through their will.¹⁶ But Ibn Taymiyya does not regard the acquisition theory as being sufficient to explain human free will and full responsibility. The theory is both ambiguous and incoherent in opposing rival theories by other schools. Therefore, he says, Muslim scholars regarded three theories, namely Nazzām's (d. between 220–230/835–844) "leap" (*tafra*), Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī's (d. 320/933) "modes" (*aḥwāl*), and al-Ash'arī's (d. 324/935) "acquisition" (*kasb*) as the least comprehensible and most peculiar theories in the history of Muslim thought.¹⁷

Trying to find solutions to the problem, Ibn Taymiyya describes two aspects of divine will. One of them is the creative predestined will, which plans major events in the universe (*al-irāda al-qadariyya al-kawniyya*), and the other the religious moral will, which guides daily

14 For the theory of acquisition see Swartz, Merlin: Acquisition (*kasb*) in Early Kalām, in: Samuel Miklos Stern, Albert Hourani and Vivian Brown (eds.): *Islamic Philosophy and the Classical Tradition*, Columbia 1972, pp. 355–387; Abrahamov, Binyamin: A Re-examination of al-Ash'arī's Theory of *Kasb* according to *Kitāb al-Lumā'*, in: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1–2 (1989), pp. 210–221.

15 On details of the Ash'arī and Māturīdī positions, see al-Ash'arī, Abū al-Hasan: *Kitāb al-Lumā' fi al-radd 'alā ahl al-zaygh wal-bida'*, edited by 'Abd al-Azīz 'Izz al-Dīn al-Sayrawān, Beirut 1987, pp. 116–123; al-Māturīdī, Abū Manṣūr: *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, edited by Bekir Topaloğlu and Muhammed Aruçi, Ankara 2003, pp. 357–410.

16 Ibn Taymiyya, *Minhāj al-sunna*, vol. 2, pp. 294–302, vol. 3, pp. 13–14, 145–146; Ibn Taymiyya, Taqī al-Dīn: *Dar' ta'arud al-'aql wal-naql*, edited by Muḥammad Rashād Sālim, Riyadh 1979–1983, vol. 1, pp. 81–86.

17 Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb al-Nubuwwāt*, pp. 199 and 206; Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, vol. 8, p. 467.

activities of humans (*al-irāda al-dīniyya al-amriyya*). There is a difference between these two aspects of divine will, due to the involvement of human responsibility in the latter one.¹⁸ He therefore criticizes the Ash'arīs for not paying attention to this crucial difference and for tending toward determination in human actions, almost like the Jabrīs. The Ash'arī view, he argues, does not propose any proper role for human beings in producing actions at some point in their life.¹⁹

However, Ibn Taymiyya thinks, that it would be impossible to practice any religious obligation without freedom of action or a free will to act. If human will was not vital in the occurrence of actions, God would not ask individuals to perform according to their capacity, and no difference would be seen between moral and immoral people.²⁰ Defining the actions as acquisitions of humans, Ibn Taymiyya emphasizes, would limit the power and capacity of humans and would not offer any reason to distinguish between acquiring and doing an action.²¹ The ambiguity of the Ash'arīs about such a difference implies a kind of inclination toward determination in human actions. Moreover, he says, it gives individuals only a symbolic role in their activities, as a result of lacking sufficient authority in their decisions.²²

With this eclectic approach, Ibn Taymiyya accepts humans' ownership of their actions without denying God's eventual creation and without falling into complex theories, such as of the theory of acquisition. For instance, while he refers to God's creation, he also describes humans as originators (*muhdith*) of their actions, a term that Sunni theologians often avoided using. The Koran, he says, refers in many verses to various actions directly attributed to humans, and the Muslim community has no doubt about their being the real – not the metaphoric – doers of their actions.²³ Therefore, in Ibn Taymiyya's theory, humans are naturally free in their acts, for God does not force them to do things. Even if they are constrained by other individuals or groups, humans are essentially qualified with free will and under normal cir-

18 Ibn Taymiyya, *Taqī al-Dīn: Majmū'at al-Rasā'il al-kubrā*, Cairo 1323/1905–06, vol. 2, pp. 69–71.

19 Idem, *Minhāj al-sunna*, vol. 1, pp. 397–398.

20 Idem, *Majmū'at al-Rasā'il al-kubrā*, vol. 1, p. 361. See also Rahman, *Islam*, p. 114.

21 Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū' Fatawā*, vol. 8, pp. 118–119; Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū'at al-Rasā'il wal-masā'il*, vol. 5, pp. 315–316.

22 Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū' Fatawā*, vol. 8, p. 467; Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb al-Nuwwāt*, p. 206.

23 Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū' Fatawā*, vol. 8, pp. 459–460.

cumstances are able to choose what to do, which makes them responsible for their actions.²⁴

Some of his contemporaries claimed that Ibn Taymiyya's solution to the problem actually caused further problems. In their view, attributing actions to humans and connecting them to God's creation would generate a kind of partnership between God and humans. Ibn Taymiyya responded that in such examples various attributions could take place at the same time if the aspects and relations were different. For instance, a person is a child of a parent and at the same time a creature of God. Similarly, a fruit belongs to a tree and is also created by God. Since the relations are not the same in these examples, one cannot observe a partnership between them, he states. He therefore claims the same argument is valid for human actions.²⁵ Moreover, for him, since humans are created by God, human actions are naturally extensions of divine creation, although they happen of humans' free will. Nevertheless, human actions must depend on their own will, otherwise the actions would not take place.²⁶

In the light of these opinions it can be said that Ibn Taymiyya considered human actions as being created by God indirectly. Humans are created with the power of acting, and they perform their actions freely through this given power. Besides, unlike other Sunni theologians, Ibn Taymiyya does not find any difficulty in a person's having the ability (*istitā'a*) to act potentially before the time of his actions. In his view, the *istitā'a* exists both before and during the time of actions.²⁷ Those who deny the human ability to act before the time of actions do not have any evidence from the authoritative sources. Contrarily, he says, the Koran clearly states that the *istitā'a* was offered to humans for worshipping as a blessing, so theologically there should be no problem in defending its potential existence in advance.²⁸

Compared with the acquisition theory, Ibn Taymiyya's approach to solving the problem looks clearer, and in his view it does not create confusion in the mind. Indeed, the aforementioned idea of indirect creation of actions, he suggests, avoids their belonging to God. According

24 Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, vol. 8, p. 464.

25 Ibn Taymiyya, *Minhāj al-sunna*, vol. 3, p. 146.

26 Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, vol. 16, pp. 237, 341–342.

27 Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, vol. 18, pp. 172–173. For other Sunni views on *istitā'a*, see al-Ash'arī, *Kitāb al-Lum'a*, pp. 132–136; al-Māturidī, *Kitāb al-Tawhīd*, pp. 410–420.

28 Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, vol. 14, pp. 103–104.

to this assumption, the actions can only be objects of God's creation through humans, but they cannot be considered His actions.²⁹ By this view, Ibn Taymiyya accepts the occurrence of actions through their first causes and denies the attribution of possible evil actions to God, which would cause another theological problem.

It is possible, therefore, to argue that, regarding the issue of divine wisdom and human agency, Ibn Taymiyya moved towards a rational theology more explicitly than early Ḥanbalīs and Ash'arīs. In addition, he did not strictly follow the views of his school, but instead made combinations out of rival theses. As Gimaret pointed out, he seems to be closer to Māturīdīs, and even more parallel to the Mu'tazilī theologian Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī (d. 436/1044).³⁰ In fact, al-Baṣrī influenced other Sunni theologians, such as 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Uṣmānī (d. 552/1157), and it would not be strange for him to be one of the sources of Ibn Taymiyya. Nevertheless, al-Juwaynī demonstrated a similar approach in one of his latest treatises, *al-'Aqīda al-niẓāmiyya*, if not in his earlier works.³¹ Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) refers to Juwaynī's diverging view, and suggests that it was originally held by Muslim philosophers and the Mu'tazilī Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī.³²

2. *Fiṭra* as Evidence from the Perspective of Divine Wisdom

The discussions regarding human nature explore mostly the meaning and interpretation of the term *fiṭra*, rather than considering it an argument for belief in God. Muslim thinkers have discussed the term since the early period in various fields, mainly in exegetical, legal, and moral works. Ibn Taymiyya, however, following in the footsteps of some scholars, developed a theological argument in the light of his views on divine wisdom and guidance. In Islamic thought, human nature is

29 Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū'at al-Rasā'il wal-masā'il*, vol. 5, pp. 318–319.

30 See Gimaret, Daniel: Théories de l'acte humain dans l'école hanbalite, in: *Bulletin d'études orientales* 28 (1977), pp. 165–178.

31 Imām al-Ḥarāmayn al-Juwaynī, 'Abd al-Malik b. Yūsuf: *al-'Aqīda al-niẓāmiyya*, edited by Aḥmad Hijāzī al-Saqqā, Cairo 1979.

32 Al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn: *Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn wal-muta'akhkhirīn min al-'ulamā' wal-hukamā' wal-mutakallimīn*, edited by Ṭāhā 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Sa'd, Cairo n.d., p. 194.

generally discussed using the Koranic term *fiṭra*.³³ The term is based on the Koranic phrase “the patterns of God upon which He has made mankind” (*fiṭrat allāh allatī faṭara al-nās ‘alayhā*, see 30:30).³⁴ The term *ṣibghat allāh* (coloring of God) in another verse (2:138) is accepted as another of the Koran’s descriptions of human created nature.

Although some scholars interpret the *fiṭra* theologically as “Islam”, “religious belief”, “original testimony”, “neutrality” etc., it is mostly explained as a human quality in its first creation that has the ability to know its creator and inclines toward good manners. It is thus defined as the pure and primary human nature created by God, distinguishing humans from other creatures. Divine wisdom allows humans to have such ability in order to enable them to pursue goodness with their own initiatives. Muḥammad Asad (d. 1992), therefore, renders the term as “natural disposition”.³⁵ Hadith collections also include *riwāyas* regarding inborn human nature. Among them, the famous Hadith saying “all children are born in the *fiṭra*” (*kull mawlūd yūlad ‘alā al-fiṭra*)³⁶ is also

33 The word *fiṭra* comes from its root *f-t-r*, and has various literal meanings, such as “to open”, “to divide”, “to invent”, “to create”, and so on. It refers to innate human nature and having a special sort of self-distinctive capacity or ability. See Ibn al-Manzūr, Jamāl al-Dīn: *Lisān al-‘arab*, Beirut 2000, vol. 11, pp. 196–198. For a comprehensive study on the concept of *fiṭra* among Muslim thinkers, see Gobillot, Geneviève: *La fiṭra. La conception originelle; ses interprétations et fonctions chez les penseurs musulmans*, Cairo 2000.

34 Various verbs and nouns deriving from the root *f-t-r* occur in the Koran 19 times; the exact word *fiṭra* as cited above occurs only once. In this specific verse (30:30) it says: “And so, set up your face for the true religion, as you incline naturally toward truth in accordance with the *fiṭra* in which God has created humans, there is no change in God’s creation [...]”. It is interpreted as meaning that all types of created beings have their own representative nature with standard qualities. Humans have a specific nature, too. Although traditions differ from society to society, the characters and attributes of human nature are the same in all parts of the world. These common aspects, both abstract and concrete, comprise the basic ontological structure of humans.

35 Asad, Muhammad (transl.): *The Message of the Qur’an*, Bristol 2003, p. 697.

36 For the various versions of the tradition, see al-Bukhārī: *Ṣaḥīḥ*, “Janā’iz”, pp. 80, 93; Muslim: *Ṣaḥīḥ*, “Qadar”, 6; Abū Dāwūd: *Sunan*, “al-Sunna”, 17; Ibn Ḥanbal, Aḥmad: *Musnad*, Istanbul 1992, vol. 2, pp. 275, 393, 410. Livnat Holtzman gave a paper on this *fiṭra* tradition and its use in the international conference on *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times* at Princeton University. Holtzman, Livnat: Human Choice, Divine Guidance and the *fiṭra* Tradition. Ibn Taymiyya’s and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s use of Hadīth in Theological Treatises, in: Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Ahmed (eds.): *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, Karachi 2010, pp. 247–265.

connected to the original neutral purity of human nature, which may change in different directions during one's lifetime.

In this Koranic approach supported by traditions, each person has a human nature by virtue of being created; it consists of his or her original and distinctive qualities that would direct activities if left unaffected by his or her family or social environment. Thus, all kinds of essential elements that make us human, including the ability to believe, are within the scope of this concept. Humans' instinctual bodily actions, though displaying their nature in some sense, are insufficient if they are not in accordance with inner moral consciousness. The majority of scholars considered this human distinction from other creatures a sign of divine wisdom and benevolence that led them to great material and spiritual achievements.³⁷ The common point in the discussions is that some thinkers believe happiness can be reached by merely protecting the qualities of human nature and avoiding the effects that may degrade it, even in the absence of education. Ibn Ṭufayl's (d. 581/1185) philosophical novel, *Ḥayy b. Yaqzān*, tries to demonstrate this positive dimension of human nature.

Most of them, however, did not evaluate human nature as a means of discovering divine wisdom by acknowledging a transcendent existent in God's creation. Even in theological books, the majority of the *mutakallimūn* did not include the human nature argument among their proofs of the existence of God: focusing mainly on the cosmological argument, they paid some attention to the design (*nizām*) argument, which emphasizes the perfect harmony within the natural world. In the classical period, only a few independent-minded scholars, such as al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 869), Muṭahhar b. Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī (d. 966?), al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. early 11th century), and al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), touched upon human nature as an argument for the divine existence, without discussing it in detail. In the later period, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) paid more attention to this argument.

Unlike his fellow Mu'tazilīs, Abū 'Uthmān al-Jāḥiẓ suggests that, for human beings, believing in God is based on natural knowledge rather than argumentative reasoning (*naẓar*). All humans (if not ignorant), he argues, know that God is their creator; they need a prophet to receive His divine message; and they are convinced by this natural knowl-

37 The Koran describes some humans who do not follow their *fiṭra* qualities as "they have hearts but they don't understand with them, they have eyes but they don't see with them, they have ears but they don't hear with them, they are like animals, or even below them!" Koran (7:179).

edge.³⁸ Muṭahhar al-Maqdisī emphasizes that, despite the differences in their traditions, communities, countries, and views, societies around the world do not differ in having a belief. There is a word for God in all languages, and people usually take refuge in their beliefs when they face dangers.³⁹ al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī, too, in his division between necessary and rational knowledge, cites the existence of God as self-evident (*badīhī*) knowledge, because all rational beings agree that they were not their own creators. Al-Isfahānī considers Abraham's identification of God with a star, the moon, and the sun, mentioned in the Koran (6:76–77), a sign of the human inborn nature to believe in God. That the majority of people pray to God in desperate situations and that most communities observe some sort of belief is further evidence of the inner foundation of believing.⁴⁰ In *Iḥyāʾ ulūm al-dīn*, al-Ghazālī also clearly indicated that human nature and the examples of the Koran do not require further proofs (*fī fitrat al-insān wa-shawāhid al-qurʾān mā yughnī ʿan iqāmat al-burhān*).⁴¹

Although some Muslim thinkers in the earlier period discussed using human nature as an argument, no one had made it theory yet. In order to build a natural relationship between human inner capacity and divine guidance, Ibn Taymiyya constructed the concept of *fiṭra* as an alternative argument in Islamic theology to the *kalām* cosmological (*ḥudūth*) argument.⁴² In classical Islamic theology, the methods of argumentation to prove the existence of God are called *ithbāt al-wājib*, which means proving the existence of the Necessary Being. The exis-

38 See al-Jāhiz, Abū ʿUthmān: *al-Dalāʾil wal-ʾitibār alā al-khalq wal-tadbīr*, Beirut 1988. See also Vajda, George: La connaissance naturelle de Dieu selon al-Gāhiz critiquee par les muʿtazilites, in: *Studia Islamica* 24 (1966), pp. 19–33.

39 Al-Maqdisī, Muṭahhar b. Ṭāhir: *Kitāb al-Baḍʾ wal-taʾrīkh*, edited by Clément Huart, Baghdad n.d., vol. 1, pp. 58–60.

40 Al-Isfahānī, al-Rāghib: *al-ʾItiqādāt*, edited by Shamran al-ʿAjli, Beirut 1988, pp. 34–38.

41 Al-Ghazālī, Abū Hāmid: *Iḥyāʾ ulūm al-dīn*, Cairo 1933, vol. 1, pp. 93–94.

42 Henri Laoust refers in a footnote to Ibn Taymiyya's use of *fiṭra* as a proof of the existence of God. He describes the proof as our innate and universal belief in Him (*l'innéisme et l'universalité de notre croyance en lui*). See Laoust, Henri: *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politiques de Takī-d-dīn Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyya, canoniste Hanbalite. Né à Harrān en 661/1262, mort à Damas en 728/1328*; thèse pour le doctorat, Cairo 1939, p. 153, n. 1. See also Ssekamanya, Siraje Abdullah: Ibn Taymiyya's Theological Approach Illustrated. On the Essence (*Dhat*) and the Attributes (*Sifat*) of Allah, in: *al-Shajarah* 9 (2004), pp. 43–61, here pp. 50–51; Anjum, Ovamir: *Reason and Politics in Medieval Islamic Thought. The Taymiyyan Moment*, Madison 2008, pp. 267–273.

tence of God is also regarded as the highest level of existence, in contrast to the contingent spheres of other existences. All sort of existences depend on His existence in order to come into being. The Koran cites the existence of God as an undeniable truth and more often emphasizes His unity and unshared authority in order to reject polytheistic beliefs.

In Islamic thought and medieval philosophy in general, thinkers employed various ontological, cosmological, and teleological arguments to prove the existence of God. Among these arguments, the cosmological one is based on the idea of the Prime Mover (*Causa Prima*) of the ancient philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle, in order to explain motion in the universe. In Islamic intellectual history there is a special emphasis on cosmological arguments, which were applied to Muslim theological thought with their specific terms *ḥudūth* and *imkān*. In addition, teleological forms of arguments were also used under titles such as design (*nizām*) and providence (*ināya*) to explain the universal system. The existence of God, however, is not like any other physical existence, because it eludes direct perception. His existence can only be understood through an acknowledgment of creation and traces of His signs in the world. The employment of these arguments helped to raise the level of the belief from an imitation of others to a serious personal conviction. In addition, the argumentation process aimed at removing doubts about the existence of God that could come to the mind of believers.

Ibn Taymiyya, however, followed an alternative path. He spent his efforts to highlight the sufficiency of human nature and persistently criticize the *ḥudūth* of Muslim theologians. The Koran and the Sunna, Ibn Taymiyya argues, offer a cognitive unity through both knowledge and practice, in order to reach a point of contact with His wise and infinite qualities; the method of the theologians, however, leads only to abstract knowledge.⁴³ Moreover, the divine message is indicated in a manner that is harmonious with innate human reality, and its proof is direct. The logical instructions of the theologians, on the other hand, use only deductive or analogical reasoning, and therefore their efforts do not convince all aspects of the human being. To put it in his words:

In the distinction of the Koranic theological method, God commands worship of Him, which provides perfection of the soul and its righteousness. Its aim and end is not limited to mere affirmation of Him, which is the purpose of the *kalām* method. These two [approaches] do not cor-

43 Ibn Taymiyya, *Dar' ta'arud al-'aql wal-naql*, vol. 1, pp. 201–208.

respond to each other, neither in methods nor in objectives. Indeed the Koranic method indicates to us that it is primordial and approachable, enabling us to reach the specific goal. [In contrast] the other is analogical and distant, allowing us only to reach a type of goal, not the essence. As for the goals, the Koran informs about knowledge and the practice of it. It thus combines the two human faculties of knowledge and practice, which are sensation and motion; intentional perception and reliance; along with oral and practical. As God says, "Worship your Lord." Worship necessarily entails knowledge of Him, having penitence and humility before Him, and impoverishment for Him. This is the goal. The *kalām* method secures only the benefit of affirmation and admission of God's existence.⁴⁴

According to Ibn Taymiyya, the revealed and transmitted sources contain their own rational foundations, which are suitable for the logic of the divine message and satisfy people of different educational backgrounds. They also contain the evidence required to verify the principles of religion and therefore have no need for extraneous theories, whether by theologians or philosophers. For example, rational proofs of the existence of God and of resurrection after death, which are based on observation of the natural world, can easily be derived from some Koranic verses. The theologians use abstract methods to reach a conclusion that normally could have been taken directly from the revealed text. They prove the existence of God in a way that tests human rationality beyond its bounds, speculating by means of a complicated cosmological argument. This theory however, raises difficulties in reconciling the eternity of God with His creation in time. The Muslim Peripatetic philosophers tried to solve the problem by proposing the eternity of the universe in time but not in essence. Ibn Taymiyya completely rejects the eternity of the universe in any form, but also criticizes the theologians for denying any cause or purpose in creation. In his view, God brings things into existence purposefully, through His absolute will and power, as observed in the physical world. Therefore, while rejecting the possibility of eternity for any created being, he accepts the eternity of creation, which does not mean in his opinion an endless chain of causes, but rather the continuity of God's perpetual acting and creating.⁴⁵

44 Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ Fatāwā*, vol. 2, p. 12.

45 Ibn Taymiyya, *Daʾr taʾarūḍ al-ʿaql wal-naql*, vol. 1, pp. 354–367; Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ Fatāwā*, vol. 18, pp. 222–230. On the differences between Ibn Taymiyya's views on creation and those of the philosophers and theologians, see Hoover,

The *ḥudūth* argument may demonstrate the need for a Creator, Ibn Taymiyya maintains, but it does not prove it in reality. Besides, in the Koran, the existence of God is firmly grounded in the creation of concrete and visible entities (*āyān*) by God. The continuous creation of the universe, humans, animals, and other physical beings in a perfect way is there for all to see. It constitutes a more direct proof of the existence of God than theological and philosophical theories.⁴⁶ The cosmological argument in fact makes the issue of divine existence more tangled and less grounded in reality.⁴⁷ However, the knowledge of God by our inner nature, Ibn Taymiyya suggests, does not require proofs and argumentation to discover His existence. If the person did not know and believe in God prior to the theoretical proofs of the theologians, he would not be able to connect the proof with God. To know God without proof is like knowing a person without knowing his name, or understanding and using things without knowing the rules:⁴⁸ "The essence of declaration of belief in God and its confession," he states, "is placed in the hearts of all humans and jinns" (*anna aṣl al-iqrār bil-ṣānī wal-ittirāf bihi mustaqirr fī qulūb jamīʿ al-ins wal-jinn*).⁴⁹ Ibn Taymiyya gives a specific example to explain his point: those who plan to visit the Kaaba for pilgrimage already know that it exists and may be familiar with some of its attributes through descriptions given by previous visitors and confirmation expressed by guides. Just as people perceive the immediate relation between daylight and the sun or smoke and fire without going into philosophical propositions or logical analogies, a similar relation can be easily set up between created and Creator.⁵⁰

Thus, in Ibn Taymiyya's view, within *fiṭra* the knowledge of truth and human attestation of truth exist, as well as the recognition of false-

Jon: Perpetual Creativity on the Perfection of God. Ibn Taymiyya's Hadith Commentary on God's Creation of this World, in: *Journal of Islamic Studies* 15 (2004), pp. 287–329, here pp. 293–295; al-Ālūsī, Husām Muhyī al-Dīn: *The Problem of Creation in Islamic Thought. Qur'an, Hadith, Commentaries, and Kalam*, Baghdad 1968, pp. 95–96, 185–186.

46 Ibn Taymiyya, Taqī al-Dīn: *Majmūʿat Tafsīr*, edited by ʿAbd al-Ṣamad Sharaf al-Dīn, Mumbai 1993, pp. 210–212.

47 Ibn Taymiyya, *Darʾ taʾrūḍ al-ʿaql wal-naql*, vol. 1, pp. 38–99; idem, *Majmūʿ Fatāwā*, vol. 3, pp. 303–304. For detailed discussion of the *ḥudūth* argument, see Craig, William Lane: *The Kalām Cosmological Argument*, New York 1979.

48 Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ Fatāwā*, vol. 1, pp. 48–49.

49 Idem, *Darʾ taʾrūḍ al-ʿaql wal-naql*, vol. 8, p. 482.

50 Idem, *Majmūʿ Fatāwā*, vol. 2, pp. 70–74.