

**IBN TAYMIYYAH'S RESPONSE ON DIVINE  
PREDETERMINATION IN HUMAN ACT:  
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

BY

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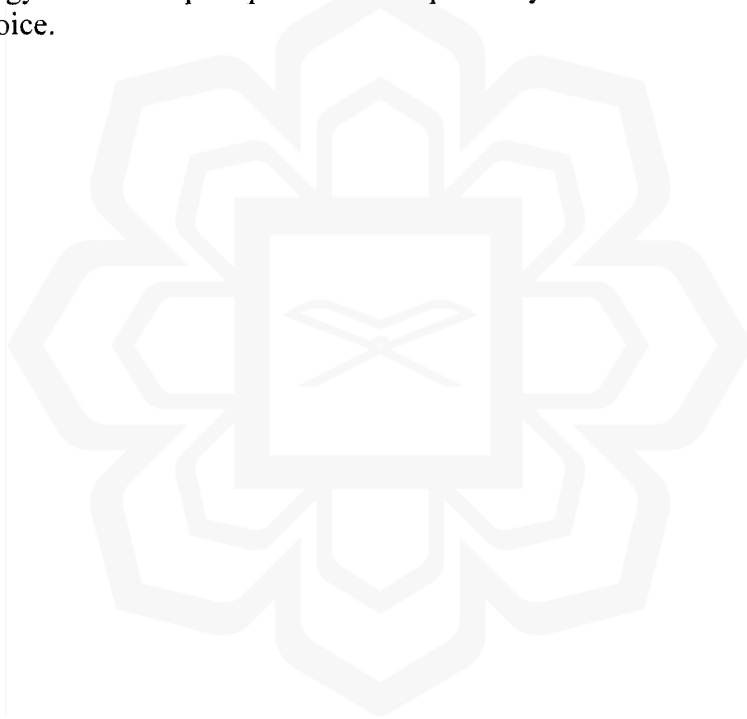
A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for  
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Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human  
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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation attempts to explore Ibn Taymiyyah's thought on the involvement of divine predetermination in human acts. The researcher used the descriptive qualitative method to gather the required data and the deductive and comparative approaches to analyse the data related to Islamic theological groups, namely the Qadarites, Jabarites, and Ash'arites. These three groups dominate the debate on the relation of human agency to divine determination. However, they address the issues in different ways. The Jabarites believe in determinism and deny effort, while the Qadarites believe in libertarian freedom and therefore, deny predetermination. The study finds Ibn Taymiyyah strictly refuting the Qadarites, Jabarites, and Ash'arites. He, however, adopts a few selected arguments from these three groups and then builds his own methodology in an attempt to provide a compatibility between divine determination and human choice.



## خلاصة البحث

تحاول هذه الرسالة استكشاف تفكير ابن تيمية في تورط التحديد الإلهي في الفعل البشري. لجمع البيانات المطلوبة، يستخدم الباحث المنهج النوعي الوصفي مع المنهج الاستنتاجي والمقارن في تحليل البيانات المتعلقة بالجماعات اللاهوتية الإسلامية وهي القادرية والجبارية والأشعرية. تهيمن هذه المجموعات الثلاث على النقاش حول علاقة الفاعلية البشرية والعزيمة الإلهية ولكنها جميعاً تعالج القضايا بطريقة مختلفة. والجريون هم جماعة تؤمن بالتحتمية وتنفي الجهد. بينما، القادريون هم المجموعة التي تؤمن بالحرية التحررية التي تنكر التحديد المسبق. توصلت الدراسة إلى أن ابن تيمية يدحض بدقة المقدار والجري والأشعري، لكنه يتبنى بعض الحجج المختارة من تلك المجموعات الثلاث ثم بنى منهجته الخاصة في محاولة لتوفير التوافق بين الإرادة الإلهية والاختيار البشري.

## APPROVAL PAGE

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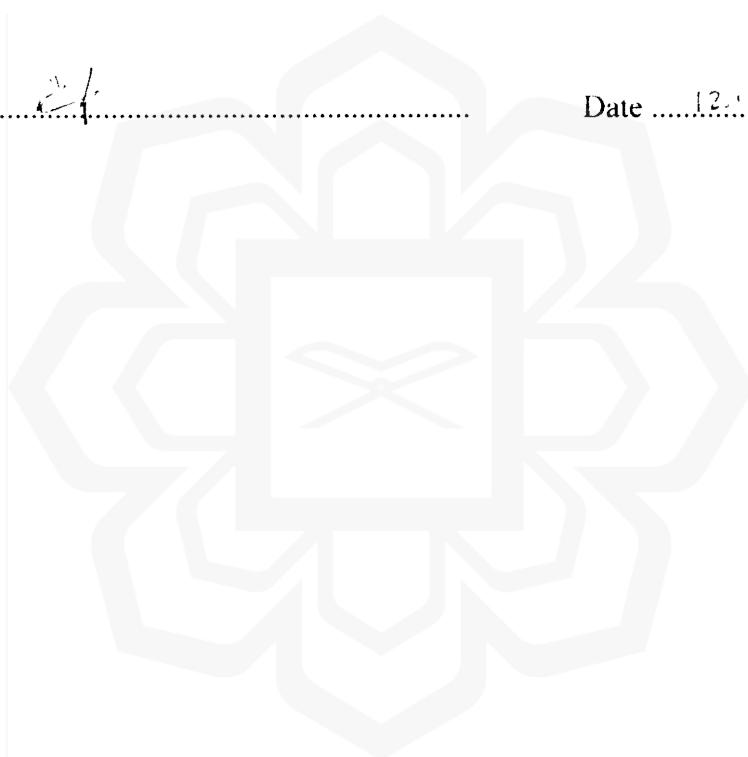
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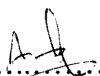
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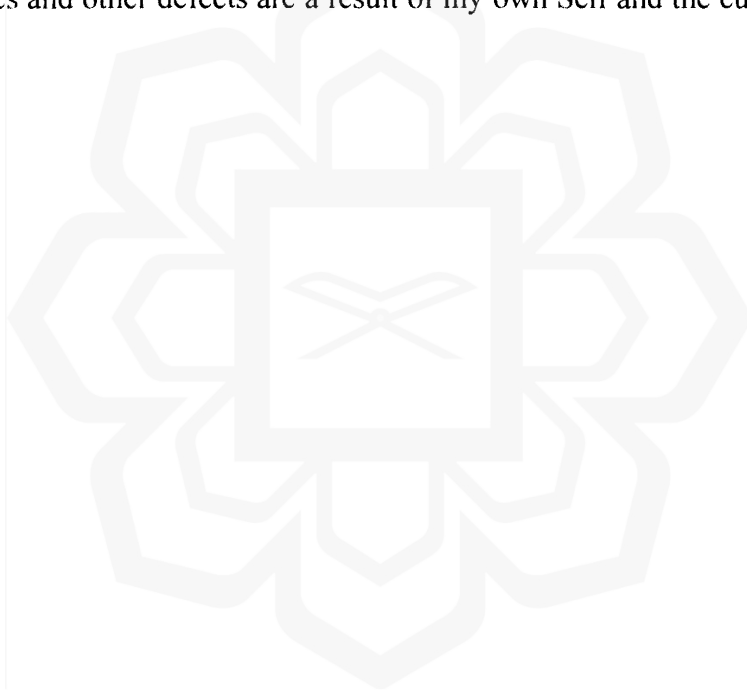
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All Praise is to the Lord, Owner, Cherisher, Caregiver, Sustainer, and Nourisher of All creation and I pray that Allāh (SWT) showers His Blessings and Salutations on His Final Messenger the Prophet Muḥammad ibn Abdullāh (PBUH) and on his complete household, Companions, Spouses, and on all faithful believers until the End of Times.

Furthermore, I thank Allāh (SWT) for inspiring and guiding my dear Professor and supervisor Dr. Isham Pawan in guiding me throughout this study and providing me with insightful feedback and corrections. May Allāh (SWT) have mercy on him on the Day whereof there is neither doubt nor escape.

I acknowledge that all good written in this study comes from Allāh (SWT) and all mistakes and other defects are a result of my own Self and the cursed devil and his associates.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	ii
Abstract in Arabic.....	iii
Approval Page.....	iv
Declaration.....	v
Copyright Page.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
Table of Contents.....	viii
Transliteration Arabic-English.....	x
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	3
1.3 Research Questions.....	4
1.4 Objectives of the Research.....	5
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	5
1.6 Scope of the Study.....	6
1.7 Research Methodology.....	6
1.8 Literature Review.....	7
<b>CHAPTER TWO: BIOGRAPHY OF IBN TAYMIYYAH.....</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	13
2.2 Name and Family.....	13
2.3 Background.....	14
2.4 Intellectual Background.....	15
2.5 Style of Teaching.....	18
2.6 The Struggle of Ibn Taymiyyah.....	19
2.7 Affair in Divine Attributes.....	23
2.8 Conclusion.....	25
<b>CHAPTER THREE: IBN TAYMIYYAH'S RESPONSE TO THE MU'TAZILITE, ASH'ARITE AND JABARITE.....</b>	<b>26</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	26
3.2 The Meaning of Preponderance.....	26
3.3 The Debate of Predetermination Under Early Muslims.....	27
3.3.1 The Scripture.....	28
3.3.2 Political Context.....	31
3.4 Response of Ibn Taymiyyah Toward Muslim Theologians.....	32
3.4.1 Response to the Volitionists.....	33
3.4.2 Response to the Determinist.....	36
3.5 An Attempt for An Intermediary Position by Al-Ash'ari.....	38
3.6 Ibn Taymiyyah's Response to Al-Ash'ari.....	41
3.7 Conclusion.....	43

<b>CHAPTER FOUR: IBN TAYMIYYAH'S VIEW ON GOD'S PREDETERMINATION OF ACT AND THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF HUMANS.....</b>	<b>45</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	45
4.2 Preordained through Divine Will and Knowledge .....	45
4.2.1 Position of Divine Knowledge.....	48
4.3 God is the Preponderator of Human Act .....	50
4.3.1 Man's Causative Ability .....	52
4.3.2 Intervention Through Human Will but Not Power .....	58
4.4 Man is the Accountable Agent .....	61
4.5 Conclusion .....	64
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>71</b>



## TRANSLITERATION ARABIC-ENGLISH

أ: و: ئ	'i; 'u; 'a	ط	t
ب	b	ظ	z
ت	t	ع	'
ث	th	غ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
ح	ḥ	ق	q
خ	kh	ك	k
د	d	ل	l
ذ	dh	م	m
ر	r	هـ	h
ز	z	و	w
س	s	و (long)	ū
ش	sh	ي	y
ص	ṣ	ي (long)	ī
ڌ	ḍ	ي (short)	i; a; u

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The discussion concerning predestination and the relationship with human free will is something that is written excessively about. The Greek philosopher Aristotle argued that the topic of predetermination influences our view and understanding of the order of universe, human liberty, human responsibility and happiness.<sup>1</sup> Also Muslim scholars have developed their own creed and belief system on predestination and free will.

In the lifetime of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) there was no debate concerning the issues of human free will and predestination. This is because the Prophet (PBUH) had cautioned his companions to not speculate on the question of free will and predestination. As Muslims expanded into the areas of non-Muslims, new philosophies, ideologies, and religions were encountered whom regularly challenged Islamic beliefs.

In order to have an answer on raised questions by Christians, Jews, and others and to canonize the Islamic belief system, various schools of scholastic theology arose. The Mutazilite were the first full-fledged theological school that standardised and tried to indulge in answering supra natural aspects of Islamic belief.

One of these theological issues was whether God is just or not. Question of Gods' justice is interconnected with the issue of free will and whether human action is predetermined or not. This led to debates and became a major issue that developed even further. For example, if humans have no free will, meaning that God controls all human thought and action, why is there a Day of Judgment and Hell and Heaven when humans

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<sup>1</sup> John Dudley, *Aristotle's Concept of Chance: Accidents, Cause, Necessity, and Determinism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), 2.

never had any control over their deeds? These difficult and many other theorems were raised and discussed.

Needless to say, as times passed, there were many interpretations, thus schools of theology within Muslim societies. Some of the early parties participating in theological discussions were the Jabrites, the Qadarites and the traditionalist ulama', also known as *ahl al-Ḥadīth*, which is mainly represented in the Ḥanbalite school of thought. The Jabrites were the advocates of total determinism. They refused the idea of free agency in man and held that human action is controlled and determined by God. On the other hand, the Qadarites and the rationalist Mu'tazillites, maintained the idea of independence of man in terms of both his will and power. In between these two extreme positions, Ash'arites, followed the moderate path and developed the idea of acquisition (*Kasb*) in order to explain the reason why man should be responsible for his action.

The fourteenth century Muslim jurist, Ibn Taymiyyah also contributed on the issues related to divine determination and human act. Praised for his incredible intelligence and knowledge, Ibn Taymiyyah made himself distinct from other classical Islamic theologians and philosophers. Whereas Ibn Taymiyyah opposed the Mu'tazillites who claim that God does not intervene in human action, meaning that there is complete freedom of will. He also disagreed with the Ash'arites, whom he brands as determinists.<sup>2</sup> As will be discussed later on, Ibn Taymiyyah adopted Al-Rāzī's concept of preponderance as part of his theological doctrine. His doctrine is greatly influential in modern Islamic thought and thus of interest in this study, where the focus lies on Ibn Taymiyyah's views on divine predetermination in human act.

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<sup>2</sup> Jon Hoover, *Ibn Taymiyya's Theodicy of Perpetual Optimism* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 140.

In modern times, radical groups have risen that use their doctrines and ideologies concerning predestination and human free will for political gain. They argue that it liberates them from the fear of consequence or repercussion.<sup>3</sup> Having some clear answers or at least a framework that can help navigate through these challenging questions are crucial area of study that must be explored. Therefore, the theory of Ibn Taymiyyah, being a very commonly referred scholar, on predestination and free will is interesting in the sense that one studies Ibn Taymiyyah's creed which may lead to more understanding of radical groups and their ideologies. Hence, this study aims to look at the views of Ibn Taymiyyah on the relationship between divine determination and human agency through the theory of Al-Rāzī's preponderance argument which will be analysed thoroughly and critically.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Divine determination on human act is a controversial topic in the discourse of Islamic theodicy. Theodicy, as described by Alvin Plantinga, is the intellectual discourse on answering the questions of why God allows evil and how this relates to the free will of humans.<sup>4</sup> It has been abused by atheists and people who argue against God as to whether God is just or not. Thus, as Muslims we have duty to defend any concerns that may be raised by non-Muslims. To make Islam a religion that persistently interconnects its past with present issues, Islamic scholars refer to the era of the Prophet (PBUH), his companion and the view of the pious predecessors (*Al-Salaf al-Salih*), in order to get guidelines for understanding the confronted issue.

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<sup>3</sup> Shiraz Maher & Alexandra Bissoondath, *Al-Qadā' wa-l-Qadr: motivational representations of divine decree and predestination in salafi-jihadi literature*. (British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, 2019) 46:1

<sup>4</sup> Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 10.

Ibn Taymiyyah, one of the most celebrated Muslim scholars has written exhaustively on theodicy. This research highlights the issue of divine determination and its relationship with ethics in Ibn Taymiyyah's epistemological system. The current study focusses on Ibn Taymiyyah's position on the combination of divine determination and causality, whereof God is the Originator and Creator,<sup>5</sup> while Man is accountable for their deeds.<sup>6</sup> With a special reference to the preponderance (*murajjih*) argument that was first coined by Fakhr Al-Dīn Al-Rāzī.<sup>7</sup> This research has as its goal to contribute to the existing literature by investigating how Ibn Taymiyyah makes use of and improves the preponderance argument in the concept of causality while stating his position and reacting and refuting positions of others.

### 1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aims in answering the following questions:

- 1- Who is Ibn Taymiyyah and what is the background of his intellectual development?
- 2- What is Ibn Taymiyyah's view on divine predetermination of events and the accountability of humans in executing them?
- 3- What is Ibn Taymiyyah's view on predetermination and causality in contrast with the Mu'tazillite, the Jabrite and the Ash'arite positions?

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<sup>5</sup> Ibn Taymiyya, *Minhāj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah fī Naqḍ Kalām al-Shī'ah wa al-Qadariyyah* (Riyadh: Jāmi'at al-Imām Muhammad b. Su'ūd al-Islāmiyya, 1406/1986), 3:236.

<sup>6</sup> Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmu' fatawa shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyya*, eds. 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Muḥammad b. Qāsim and Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Muḥammad, (Cairo: Dār al-Rahma, n. d), 3:150.

<sup>7</sup> Ayman Shihadeh, *The teleological ethics of Fakhr Al-Dīn Al-Rāzī* (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2006), 21.

#### **1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH**

- 1- To study about Ibn Taymiyyah's intellectual background.
- 2- To examine the combination of Ibn Taymiyyah's view on God's predetermination of human act and the accountability of humans in executing them.
- 3- To highlight the relevance of Ibn Taymiyyah's view on predetermination and causality that determine human accountability in contrast with the Mu'tazillite, the Jabrite and the Ash'arites

#### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study is significant in the sense that it analyses the different approaches that justify the compatibility between human agency and divine creation in the light of Ibn Taymiyyah's worldview. This study is valuable because human responsibility and predestination are topics on which significant research is conducted, but there is still a lack of deep understanding of classic literature and its role in modern societies.

Therefore, this study strives to analyse the well-known Ibn Taymiyyah as it investigates his views on human responsibility and predetermination. Even though the writer knows that no decisive answers will come from this study, nevertheless, if more knowledge is available on what Ibn Taymiyyah thought about these topics, there can be more understanding between various sects of Islam that use Ibn Taymiyyah for propagating their worldviews. Since Ibn Taymiyyah has a respected position in all 'forms' of Islamic thought and ideologies, he and his views can play an important role in improving the intra-connection of Muslims and between Muslims and non-Muslims.

## 1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study includes the position of Ibn Taymiyyah on predestination, human free will, and the relationship between them. Moreover, it discusses the Ibn Taymiyyah's critics on other ideologies, with special focus on the Mu'tazillite, Ash'arite and Jabrite. This all is done in the context of the preponderance argument that is adopted by Ibn Taymiyyah and which has formed his theory.

## 1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is mainly based on library research. Hence, it is qualitative not in quantitative. The qualitative methods primarily rely on content analysis for which it uses descriptive, evaluative, and analytical methods. Moreover, the works of Ibn Taymiyyah from *Minhah* and *Majmuk Fatawa* will be used as primary sources. Furthermore, other writings and sources that are related to him with reference to his works that emphasize the areas related to the proposed study.

The secondary sources are not less important to this study. They include several works of early and contemporary scholars which discoursed on his thought and the view on human agency among early scholars.

To analyse the data and information obtained, the researcher will use the following methods:

- 1- Descriptive Method: This method is used to describe the historical background of Ibn Taymiyyah's life and thought.
- 2- Analytical Method: This method is applied in investigating the emergence of Ibn Taymiyyah's thought in Indonesia and examining his thought on creed (*'aqīdah*).

- 3- Evaluative Method: This method is used to investigate and access the acquired information regarding Ibn Taymiyyah's possible theological solution on the problem.

## 1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several books and articles which have been written on the issue of Islamic theodicy from Ibn Taymiyyah's perspective. In this review of conducted studies, the most important works dealing with his view are covered.

An important study relevant to this topic is Jon Hoover's book "*Ibn Taymiyyah's: theodicy of perpetual optimism*."<sup>8</sup> The author gives a comprehensive overview on Ibn Taymiyyah's theodicy. For this study, his explanation of God's compatibility in creating human deeds alongside human agency and responsibility are interesting. The author's approach in explaining how Ibn Taymiyyah uses al-Rāzī's famous preponderance without a preponderate is very comprehensive. The author explains the relation between divine will and human act. However, the author briefly analyses divine compulsion (*jabr*) of human acts by the intermediaries of human will and power. In the current study, there is a focus on Ibn Taymiyyah's view on the relation between Divine Will and human action.

From the contemporary Tunisian Islamic thinker Rachid Ghanouchi, the book *al-Qadar 'ind Ibn Taymiyya* is considered an important book.<sup>9</sup> This book deals directly with the research topic and clarifies historically how Ibn Taymiyyah entered the theological debate on the issue of predetermination as a reformist against the domination of deterministic views from Sufi's and volitions doctrines from

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<sup>8</sup> Hoover, Jon. *Ibn Taymiyya's Theodicy of Perpetual Optimism*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2007)

<sup>9</sup> Rachid Al-Ghanouchi, *al-Qadar 'ind Ibn Taymiyya* (Beirut: Maghrib Center for Research & Translation, 1999)

philosophers. Being very thin in size, this book offers only a glimpse of Ibn Taymiyyah's view on the law of cause and effect in human nature. The author explains that it is tied to God's Will, even though humans possess free will. Although the author fails to elaborate the intervention of God's Will in originating human act widely, he articulates the solution of Ibn Taymiyyah which is neither fall into determinism nor volitions. Nevertheless, the book is full of rich sources and material on Ibn Taymiyyah.

In his PhD dissertation named *The Metaphysics of The Idea of God in Ibn Taymiyyah's Thought*, Abdel Hakim Ajhar evaluates the notion of God and the process of creation. He studies the possible combination of causative nature and the activity of God's will, which is explained differently by Ibn Taymiyyah in contrast to other kalam schools, including the Ash'arites.<sup>10</sup> He examines and determines the attribute of God which regarded as independent intermediary entity. Then he differentiates between the action of God and the action of a created being. For Ibn Taymiyyah's view on divine predetermination, this dissertation provides minor details. However, to critically analyse Ibn Taymiyyah's method on the gnostic knowledge of God and how they can be related in this study was beneficial. In this study, the writer draws attention to the influence or interference of God's Will and Knowledge in human determination when generating an act.

Ahmadi Thaha presents in his book, *Ibn Taymiyyah Hidup Dan Pikiran-Pikirannya*, Ibn Taymiyyah's thought on numerous issues.<sup>11</sup> The work of Ahmadi Taha has been considered as an important source in the study of Ibn Taymiyyah, especially in the Malay language. This book gives background information on Ibn Taymiyyah and his method facing the challenges in his time. The author focusses in this book on Ibn

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<sup>10</sup> Abdel Hakim Ajhar, "*The Metaphysics of The Idea of God in Ibn Taymiyya's Thought*," Phd thesis. (McGill University Montreal 2000)

<sup>11</sup> Ahmadi Thaha, *Ibn Taimiyah Hidup Dan Pikiran-Pikirannya*. (Malaysia: Penerbit Panamas. 1984)

Taymiyyah's religious views. It shows how Ibn Taymiyyah derived new opinions and extracted beneficial and new conclusion from the verses of the Qur'ān, the Prophetic sayings, and opinions of predecessors. The author argues that Ibn Taymiyyah does not reject predetermination but briefly points out the sheikh's view on predetermination, which is highly related to the concept of causality and does not emphasize how causality influences human act. In our work, greater attention is given on causality as not being independent from God's will.

Ssekamanya Siraje Abdallah wrote a PhD dissertation called "*Al-Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyyah on The Legitimacy and Status of Ilm Al-Kalam*".<sup>12</sup> In his dissertation he analyses the approach of Ibn Taymiyyah towards *'Ilm al-Kalām*. He also illustrates how Ibn Taymiyyah responds to discussions concerning scholastic questions on the essence and the attributes of God, wherein his approach is a literalistic one. This book will be used to compare the views of Ibn Taymiyyah with other great Ash'arite scholars.

Victor Makari in his book "*Ibn Taymiyyah's Ethics: The Social Factor*" provides ideological concepts of Ibn Taymiyyah.<sup>13</sup> The book expounds on the theological views and opinions of Ibn Taymiyyah. The work of Makari has been acknowledge as an important source in the study of Ibn Taymiyyah. It shows how Ibn Taymiyyah derived new beneficial views and conclusions from the verses of the Qur'ān, the Prophetic sayings of Prophet Muḥammad (Peace be upon Him) and statements and opinions from pious predecessors. This book explains how Ibn Taymiyyah's positions himself between the Jabrites and the Qadarites. The book provides minor details on human agency. However, this is a beneficial book for a critical analysis of Ibn Taymiyyah's method and how they can be applied in his theodicy narrative.

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<sup>12</sup> Ssekamanya Siraje Abdallah, *Al-Ghazali And Ibn Taymiyya on The Legitimacy and Status of Ilm Al-Kalam*, ( Phd dissertation International Islamic University Malaysia 2000)

<sup>13</sup> Victor E. Makari, *Ibn Taymiyyah's Ethics: the social factor* (California: Scholars Press 1983)

Serajul Haque wrote the book “*Imam Ibn Taymiyyah and His Projects of Reform.*” This book is very beneficial work since it has many primary sources.<sup>14</sup> The author describes the totality of Ibn Taymiyyah’s thought. In all of this, he only briefly touches upon Ibn Taymiyyah’s doctrine on theology and philosophy, such as a short mentioning of Ibn Taymiyyah’s thoughts in refuting philosophers. Nevertheless, this book is full of rich sources and materials on Ibn Taymiyyah.

Saleh As-Saleh’s book “*The Salaf’s guide to the Understanding al-Qadaa’ wal Qadar*” is based on the view of pious predecessors on predestination.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, it gives an idea on Divine Will which guides human. It also deals with some theological issues including the universal will, legislative will and the preserved tablet (*lawh al-Mahfuz*). By discussing the universal will of Allāh (SWT) in the view of the pious predecessors, As-Saleh’s book helps understanding the link between Divine Will and human deeds. Even though he mentions Ibn Taymiyyah’s criticism of the Jabrites, but he does not elaborate on Ibn Taymiyyah’s own views of Divine Will in human deeds.

Dr. Umar S. al-Ashqar’s book “*Divine Will and Predestination in The Light of Quran and Sunnah*” explores the Islamic theodicy issue in depth.<sup>16</sup> He explains in such a way that it becomes understandable for a man. The author mainly refers to the Qur’an and the Sunnah, but also Ibn Taymiyyah’s views and words are elaborated. He covers some of the historical debates that took place on this issue within the Ummah, which makes it a rich source of information for the current study.

There are also several articles which have been utilized in this research. The first one up for discussion is an article written by Livnat Holtzman called “Debating the

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<sup>14</sup> Haque, Serajul, *Imam ibn Taimiya and his projects of reform* (Dhaka: Islamic Foundation Bangladesh 1982).

<sup>15</sup> Saleh As-Saleh, *The salaf’s guide to the understanding al-qadaa’ wal qadar* (Daar Al-Bukhari)

<sup>16</sup> Umar S. al-Ashqar: *Divine Will and Predestination in The Light of Quran and Sunnah* (International Islamic Publishing House 2005)

Doctrine of Jabr (Compulsion): Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya Reads Fakhr Al-Dīn Al-Rāzī.”<sup>17</sup> Also an article by Mohsen Kadivar entitled Human Action Within Divine Creation: a Muslim Perspective.”<sup>18</sup> The third article is written by Shiraz Maher & Alexandra Bissoondath, namely, *Al-Qadā’ wa-l-Qadr: motivational representations of divine decree and predestination in salafi-jihadi literature.*”<sup>19</sup> These articles have provided the researcher valuable data concerning this topic and more books and articles will be relied on as work progress on this study.

From the researcher's review, some of the consulted literature discuss the issues from a general perspective, like Al-Ashqar, Ismaeel and Ahmadi, while some concentrate on Ibn Taymiyyah’s position in the issues of predestination and human will, like Hoover, Makari, Ghanouchi. However, none of the above-mentioned works focuses its concern on the interference of Divine Will in human act. The other literature is useful in this study for background information on the position of other scholars and theological groups in Islam. This is necessary to form a comprehensive view of Ibn Taymiyyah’s position.

The present study studies the views of Ibn Taymiyyah on the relationship between God’s predetermination and how it determines the deeds and the accountability of humans, with a special reference to the argument of preponderance in causality. The abovementioned literature touches on this topic but the researcher wishes to conduct an in-depth exploration and analysis of Ibn Taymiyyah’s position. The ideas can be

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<sup>17</sup> Livnat Holtzman, “*Debating the Doctrine of Jabr (Compulsion): Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya Reads Fakhr Al-Dīn Al-Rāzī,*” in *Islamic Theology, Philosophy and Law: Debating Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya*, ed. Birgit Krawietz and George Tamer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 61–93.

<sup>18</sup> Mohsen Kadivar, *Human Action Within Divine Creation a Muslim Perspective* in *God’s Creativity and Human Action, Christian and Muslim Perspectives; A Record of the Fourteen Building Bridges Seminar*; Editors: Lucinda Mosher and David Marshal, (Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC, 2017), pp.7-22

<sup>19</sup> Shiraz Maher & Alexandra Bissoondath, *Al-Qadā’ wa-l-Qadr: motivational representations of divine decree and predestination in salafi-jihadi literature* (British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, 2019)

elaborated in great depth, the researcher will discuss various arguments put forward and show how the preponderate argument adds more to the understanding of Ibn Taymiyyah's position on how God is the originator of human act. This study attempts to connect the ideas from various works of Ibn Taymiyyah on the topic of theodicy, which ultimately will lead to a clear theoretical framework. This study is hoped to be a considerable contribution in the field of Islamic thought.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **BIOGRAPHY OF IBN TAYMIYYAH**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Every time Ibn Taymiyyah's name is stated, many Muslim scholars usually have different interpretations regarding his teachings. He was one of the notable icons who had lived in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, whose way of thinking and perspectives have frequently been debated and discussed by academic scholars, both within oriental and Islamic interests. He had generated several academic works in scientific areas. His diligence can be seen in his passion for the field of research and in creating academic works for comparison. His great authority and allegedly provocative thinking had forced great academics to discuss his role in Islam before some of his critics and supporters were even born.

Ibn Taymiyyah was highly recognised for voicing the values of the predecessor citizens (*salaf*) in his extensive text. It is also evident that he firmly encouraged Muslims to stay true to al-Qur'an and al-Sunnah and to oppose unnecessary conformity (*taqlid*). He strongly condemned Kalam theologians, philosophers, and Sufism followers, since he found that much of the teachings introduced by these groups had been contradictory to the Qur'an and the prophetic principles. To understand Ibn Taymiyyah's nature more personally, the author segments this topic into different sections.

#### **2.2 NAME AND FAMILY**

His full name is Taqī al-Dīn ‘Abd ‘Abbās Ibn ‘Abd Halīm Ibn ‘Abd Salām Ibn Taymiyyah. He was born in Harran, Syria, on 10th Rabi 'al-Awwal 661 AH / 1263 CE.

Harran was then known as a centre of Greek philosophy and knowledge.<sup>20</sup> Subsequently, it shifted to become the centre of study for the Hanbali School of Jurisprudence, owing to the efforts of Ibn Taymiyyah's descendants.<sup>21</sup>

### 2.3 BACKGROUND

Ibn Taymiyyah was born into an educated household, and his father was one of the Islamic authorities who had demonstrated a deep conformity to the values of the Hanbalite School.<sup>22</sup> When he was only six years old, Ibn Taymiyyah and his relatives migrated to Damascus to escape the Mongolian conquest and the cruelty of the Tartar army. Accordingly, Ibn Taymiyyah and his relatives migrated to Damascus to escape from the immense danger of assassination and tyranny. In the cover of darkness, the family travelled only with their sole necessities, mainly textbooks, and sheltered in the shadows throughout the day until they reached Damascus for protection.<sup>23</sup>

Ibn Taymiyyah saw first-hand the cruelty and ruthlessness of the Tartar army towards the people of Syria and felt first-hand how difficult and horrible it was to escape the tyranny of the Tartars. That situation led him to intense feelings and resentment towards the invaders, which can be seen clearly in his writings, in which he promoted jihad.

His father, Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-Maḥāsīn `Abd al-Ḥalīm (d. 682 AH / 1283 CE), was a great scholar from a household widely acknowledged as a home of knowledge and historically a part of the Hanbali Madhab Law School. Shortly after they

<sup>20</sup> Mohd Sulaiman Yasin, *Pengantar Falsafah Islam*, (Kuala Lumpur, Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka, 1982), 138-9.

<sup>21</sup> Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Shaikh-ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, Life and Achievements*, Trans. Muhyiddin Ahmad (London: Uk Islamic Academy, 2005), 18.

<sup>22</sup> Muhammad Abu Zahrah, *Ibn Taymiyyah Hayātuhu Wa 'Asruhu - 'Ar'uhu Wa Fiqhuhu*, (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-Araby, 2000), 16-17.

<sup>23</sup> Abu Zahrah, *Ibn Taymiyyah Hayātuhu wa 'Asruhu*, 18.