

DIALECTIC OF THEOLOGY AND MYSTICISM IN ISLAM: A STUDY OF IBN TAYMIYYA

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ABSTRACT

Islamic theologians and sufi orders are rarely considered to have totally different ways of discovering the truth of God. In the view of Ibn Taymiyya, on the contrary, Islamic theology and mysticism, both together strive to deliver people to understand the existence of God so they are, accordingly, willing to do good and leave the bad. This what will bring into the perfection of human soul. What makes it different is that Islamic theology (*kalām*) is more theoretical, while mysticism is more practical. Islamic theology as a theoretical mean leads man to the logical belief. Yet, the realization of this logical belief will practically be appeared when it was charged by Sufism. Yet, Ibn Taymiyya denies such concepts as “union with God” as the highest goal of human life. Absorption into the God and contemplation into the highest Reality should be realized in terms of *sharīʿa*. For him, the supreme absorption is the absorption in worshipping (*ʿibāda*) God.

Keywords: *Islamic theology, mysticism, ascetic, epistemology, fiṭra, waḥdat al-wujūd.*

ABSTRAK

Umumnya, teolog dan Sufi dipandang berusaha menemukan kebenaran Tuhan dengan caranya masing-masing yang berbeda dan tidak saling terkait satu sama lain. Namun sebaliknya, bagi Ibn Taymiyyah, kalam dan tasawuf sama-sama berupaya untuk mengantarkan manusia memahami keberadaan Allah, sehingga bersedia melakukan kebaikan dan meninggalkan keburukan demi mengantarkan manusia pada kesempurnaan jiwa. Bedanya, kalam lebih bersifat teoritis sementara tasawuf lebih bersifat praktis. Kalam sebagai sarana teoritis dapat mengantarkan manusia kepada keyakinan logis. Keyakinan logis ini baru akan terealisasi nyata secara praktis melalui melalui tasawuf. Meski demikian, Ibn Taymiyyah menolak konsep penyatuan diri dengan Tuhan sebagai tujuan utama manusia. Melebur dalam diri Tuhan dan kontemplasi atas Realitas tertinggi, menurutnya, harus dilihat dari aspek syariah. Baginya, puncak dari kesatuan adalah penyembahan dan ibadah kepada Tuhan.

Kata-kata Kunci: *Teologi Islam, mistisime, epistemologi, fithrah, waḥdat al-wujūd.*

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Introduction

Islamic theology and mysticism (Sufism) are two branches of knowledge, in which one is closely related to the other, except in their epistemological aspects. *Tawḥīd* (unity of God) is based on scripturales, namely the Quran and *ḥadīth* (reports of the teachings, deeds, and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad), while mysticism is based on *al-qalb* and *al-dhihn* (*presumption*), a belief that something is true even though it has not been proved (Marechal 1927, 47). In theology, the truth is methodologically achieved through language (Lundbom 2014, 164) or found in answer and query (*jawāb wa su'āl*). There is a *mas'ūl*, one who is asked because he has promoted a thesis for which he is “responsible,” and there is a *sā'il*, an interrogator who tries to question this thesis (vas Ess 1970, 23); while in Sufism is obtained through meditation and absorption in thoughts (*tafakkur*) and contemplation (*dhikr*) (Simuh 1996, 103). The truth obtained by the theological method is debatable, whereas through mystical methods are absolute, because it is essentially the word of God.

Theology and mysticism use different approaches. Theology is more formal with its standardized rules, while mysticism is non-formal and is characterized by inward activities out of formal rules that prevail in law or *sharī'a*. The principal difference between the knowledge of the mystic and that of the theologian is that the former attains knowledge through unveiling which is meta-reason while the latter through reason. When a subject knows through reflection, the mode of its knowing is through “reason” (*aql*), and when it knows directly from God, the mode of knowing is through “heart” (*qalb*). In fact, the only real difference is in the modality of knowing, for the knowing subject is the same.

According to the Islamic theology, a distance between God and human exists, and its applicability of *tawḥīd* (unity of God) contains three principles: *First* is duality. God and creatures are considered as separated and independent entities to each other. *Second* is ideation. There is an ideational relation between these two entities. The point of reference is the power of understanding. As an important part of knowledge, understanding can include all gnoseological functions, such as remembrance, memory, imagination, reasoning, observation, intuition, or consciousness. Human being is created with understanding so they can understand the willing of God, either through His sayings or creations. *Third* is teleology. The nature is created with a goal in order to meet His intention, that is, to work according to His plans (Farūqi 1986, 74).

Meanwhile, Sufism considers God and humans are in unity, i.e. unity

of being (Burckhardt 2008, 69). R. Nachman as quoted by Mark (2009, 68–69), said “The chas between man and God can be bridget. Man can come into contact with God and, moreover, man can indeed be formed into God (in a sense), by being absorbed into God, uniting with the unity of God and being transformed into a part of Him”. Here, we see that both fields of knowledge of God have their own paradigms.

This paper aims to introduce Ibn Taymiyya’s response to both disciplines. Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328), well known also as Islamic Reformer (*Mujaddid al-Islām*) (Kathīr 1932, 135–36), is a prominent scientist, great fighter and prolific writer and an independent scholar. He was not bound to anyone or any schools in Islam. Nevertheless, at the same time, he did not refuse to accept and defend others’ opinions and any Islamic school of thought as long as the opinions fit in the Quran and *ḥadīth* (Amin 1991, 8). For this reason, the elaboration of his thought about both disciplines becomes interesting.

Concerning theology and Sufism, according to Ibn Taymiyya each entity has its own paradigm. He says, “It is common that one of them secludes itself from the other, and each claims that the truth of God can only be achieved through its path” (Taymiyya 1930, 85).

The emergence of these two opposing extremes in the two disciplines makes Ibn Taymiyya consider the both theology and Sufism as heretical. He sees the ideas and practices of Sufism as heretical, especially the core idea that the trustee can break away from the *sharī’a*. Similarly, he firmly states that “theology has no place in Islam, and theologians, such as al-Juwaynī, al-Ghazālī, and al-Shahrastānī, dedicating their life to the discussion of this knowledge, finally realized their mistakes. Therefore, they returned to the Quran and *ḥadīth*” (Taymiyya 1930, 68). Ibn Taymiyya also states that Shahrastānī acknowledged and realized that discussing the science of Islamic theology in a full energy is foolish and fruitless. In discussing this issue, al-Rāzī was in conflict with himself. He even believed that he was plagued by confusion (Taymiyya 1949, 69). In *Minhāj*, his scholarly work, Ibn Taymiyya quoted Imām Aḥmad and Abū Yūsuf who state that whoever gains knowledge through scholastic theology (Islamic theology), he will become an atheist. He cited Imām Shāfi’ī “that the Islamic theologians should be beaten with shoes and the branches of date palm trees and then be herded through towns so that people know the painful consequences of those who acquired knowledge from theology” (Taymiyya 1954, 387).

Given the overview, it seems that Ibn Taymiyya objected the two disciplines. However, his thought needed to be reviewed, for it turned out that he did not leave it. Indeed, he retained them by applying dialectics

and methodologies that make the two disciplines work together to gain knowledge and comprehensive truth. The problem is, how does Ibn Taymiyya construct these two disciplines so that they can work together?

Dialectics as a Method of Thinking

At the time of Aristo, the dialectic used to replace the word of logic, because it is not so popular to name a method of thinking at that time. Dialectics is better known as a method of thinking stems from Hegel. He regarded as a representation of dialectical thinking (Hartnack 1998, 10). Dialectics is a method used by Hegel in the understanding of reality as a journey towards the idea of perfection. According to him, to study material are vanity because it is merely a manifestation of the development of the idea. With the dialectic, to grasp the idea as reality becomes possible. Dialectics can be understood as “the theory of the union of opposites”. Dialectic is “the theory and practice of weighing and reconciling juxtaposed contradictory argument for the purpose of arriving at truth, especially through discussion and debate, or method of arguing with probability on any given problems as an art intermediate between rhetoric and strict demonstration” (Neufecdt 1993, 380).

There are three elements or concepts in understanding the dialectic: first is *theses*; second as opposed to the first one is called the *antithesis*. These two elements of the opposition then came a third element which reconciles both called *synthesis*. Thus, dialectics can be defined as the totality of the thought process, that is, each element of conflicting (deny and denied), contradict each other (against and opposed), as well as the mutual-mediated (mediate and mediated).

To understand the triadic process (thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis), Hegel uses the German word, *aufheben*. This word means “deny”, “save” and “lift”. So, for the Hegelian, dialectic is not to eliminate contradictions by denying one of them, but more than that. Thesis and antithesis, each have the truth and then promoted to a higher truth.

The dialectic stage following the process: delaying the conflict between thesis and antithesis; save the elements of truth from the thesis and antithesis; and maximizing the conflict to reach a higher truth. Thus, this method aims to develop a dynamic process of thinking, solving problems that arise because of their contradictory arguments, and eventually obtained a rational agreement.

There is no absolute truth without going through the dialectical process. Each stage of the latter contains all the previous stages. Like

solution, nothing changed as a whole, but was given a place as an essential element in its entirety. Dialectics is the science of the most common laws governing the development of nature, society and thought. While the method of dialectical means investigation and interaction with nature, society and thought. And so, dialectics also meant the dialogue. Socratic dialectic method, for example, is a method or a way to understand the dialogue. Dialogue means two-way communication, there is someone talking and someone else is listening.

In the context of Islamic thought, dialectics is a thought process that is never separated from the development of Islamic law and theology. The emergence of various schools of thought in Islamic theology, cannot be separated from the dynamic development of society and politics in the early era (Nasution 1986, iv).

The era of 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib, of course, contributed most to the emergence of streams in Islamic theology. Initially, the discussion is limited to political issues, but later these issues to join the realm of religion (theology). The themes that emerged by at the time associated with issues of major sins, the believers (*mukmin*) and unbelievers (*kāfir*), even to talk about the essence of divinity through sense approach. Theology is contrary to the views of the Sufis from whom reason is not a valid instrument in addressing various issues related to the Godhead and other supernatural nature, but warned that plays a role in it. It is difficult to prove definitively that the view of Ibn Taymiyya puts the mind and heart in balance—a response to two previous opposing views. However, seeing his criticism on the two views, there is a possibility that true.

Many religious texts collide with social development. Religious beliefs which came later are also dialectically against to each other. Religious ideas that are *ẓanni* (debatable) inevitably have to be open to be changed in order to adjust to the realities of the public think in recent era.

However, it should be explained that the dialectic as a method of thinking is, in this sense, based on the Quran and *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, which is none other than the transcendental rational method, i.e the attempt to analyze empirical facts and installed it in spiritual awareness, then build a transcendent vision in solving a problem (Taymiyya 1949, 387). Operationally, transcendental rational method is based on the scripture and wisdom can be run and practiced by placing the Quran and reason (unity of mind and *qalb*) in a dialectical relationship to understand the reality. Thus, the reason is not only to understand the reality of his physical dimension, but also a metaphysical dimension can be captured through a process of transcendence. In practice, the dialectic method here is understood as a transcendental rational method

which is trying to put the theology and mysticism in a dialogical relationship that is functional, not structural subordinative.

Viewed in this way, these two disciplines, theology and mysticism, has no opposition. Both aim to get the truth of God and religion in general. In one hand, mysticism perhaps appeared earlier in Islamic thought as in early Islamic era, there has been a lot of religious views that lead to Sufism, for example, the tradition of *ṣuffah* in the era of the Prophet and the emergence of the Neo-Platonism later. Historically considered, in another hand, the emergence of Islamic theology that occurred in the era of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭalib and Mu‘āwiyya is not necessarily as the antithesis of mysticism, and they only differ in methodology.

Ibn Taymiyya criticism on theology and Sufism should more appropriately be seen as a critique of the methodology, and not a criticism of the substance of the two disciplines, as it is going to be explained later. The way in which Ibn Taymiyya merges these two disciplines methodologically is by placing the Quran as a mediator. Revelation is the source of religious knowledge, while reason and intuition, each has limitation in accessing that knowledge. Rationalism that were so dominant in theology, the he modifies to be a combination of pure reason and revelational doctrines, whereas mystical expressions like *hulūl*, *ittiḥād*, *waḥdat al-wujūd*, *fanā’* are still but controlled by reason and *sharī‘a*.

The Source of Knowledge According to Ibn Taymiyya

Ibn Taymiyya’s epistemology focuses on the concept of *fiṭra*. *Fiṭra* is an Arabic word that has no exact English equivalent although it has been translated as ‘primordial human nature’ (Izzati 2002, 93), ‘disposition’, ‘constitution’, or ‘instinct’. *Fiṭra* has a physical component as well as a spiritual one. The *fiṭra* of the human body is its beauty and perfection as created by God. Although created perfectly by God, humans are permitted to enhance their appearance through means approved by God, such as clothes, bathing and perfumes. These are changes to surface appearance, but not to one’s essential *fiṭra*. In a mystical context, it can connote intuition or insight. Islam is also called *dīn al-fiṭra*, the religion of human nature, because its laws and its teachings are in full harmony with the normal and the natural inclination of the human *fiṭra* to believe in and submit to the Creator.

Fiṭra enables human to obtain innate knowledge and knowledge from environment. Innate *fiṭra* refers to the reason (*quwwa al-‘aql*), while what comes from the environment refers to *fiṭra al-munazzala*, that is a revelation in the form of the Quran and *ḥadīth* (*Sunna*) of the prophet.

According to the Quran (16: 78) and (30: 30), he stated that “men were born without any knowledge but have been awarded potential called *fiṭra*” (Taymiyya 1398, 43).

The qualities contained in the *fiṭra* consist of intellect (*al-quww al-‘aql*), offensive/appeal (*al-quww al-shahwa*) and defensive/anger (*al-quww al-ghaḍab*). Intellect is a potential that serves humans to know (*ma’rifa*) about God (Allāh) and his oneness. This potential enables human’s faith on Him. Denial of God, as the result of malfunction of this ability, may take the form of infidelity (*kufr*) and polytheism. Human’s mind can distinguish between benefits and detriments, which deed that leads to good or bad or evil, both in the world and the hereafter.

The ability to know the good and bad, right and wrong is called *al-naẓr* and *al-irāda*. *Al-naẓr* consists of cognition, perception, and comprehension. *Al-irāda* includes emotional skills and the ability to make assessment. Therefore, human tends to naturally do good things and leave the bad ones. Ibn Taymiyya says, “With the *fiṭra*, man will accept the truth and deny the fault. This ability enables man to move (*al-ḥaraka*)” (Taymiyya 1398, 458). Offensive is the ability that serves to induce some pleasant and useful objects. Denial and deviation of this ability may result in conducting prohibited deeds. Defensive ability potentially serves to prevent man from any detriment. Denial and misuse of this ability may cause a man to commit a crime (Taymiyya 1398, 147–48).

In relation to the *fiṭra*, the potentials, and the possible realization of the potentials, men can be classified in one of three categories. First is serene man, whose intellect is greater than his other abilities. This kind of man is what is stated in the Quran to be *al-naḥs al-muṭmainna* (QS. 89: 27-28). Human in this level is the ideal one. Second group is man whose three qualities work equally. Man in this level is considered unstable (*al-naḥs al-ammāra*). Most of human being is in this category. The third category is those whose intellect is often overwhelmed by their other two qualities (offensive and defensive). Therefore, they are considered lower than animals (*al-naḥs al-ammāra bi al-sū*) (QS. 6: 119).

Knowledge in terms of *al-‘ilm*, according to Ibn Taymiyya, can be classified into two categories. First, knowledge about Allāh, and second, is the knowledge about His laws, the scopes and definitions. The classification is based on the source. In terms of the object, knowledge can be classified into two aspects. First is the knowledge about anything exists, and second is the knowledge about religion. The latter classification is more general because the knowledge about Allāh, the scopes and definitions can be included in the knowledge on religion (Taymiyya 1398, 401). “Knowledge

can be obtained through rational reasoning, empirical knowledge, and researches. Human's knowledge, especially religion, is obtained through traditional knowledge or authority that is called revelation or Quran (*naqliyya*), intuitive (*kashfiyya*), and reasoning (*'aqliyya*)" (1398, 333).

Accepting the true knowledge through intuitive makes Ibn Taymiyya also a figure of *ṣufi*. He is regarded as a *ṣufi* (*salaf*) specializing in the *maḥabba* (love) concept. Indeed, many people were amazed at this statement, especially those who consider Ibn Taymiyya as an anti-Sufism person. Whereas he was a prolific writer espousing to Sufism and truth obtained through intuition (*mukāshafa*) (Praja 1990, 74–81).

In the field of religion, Ibn Taymiyya classified knowledge into two: *uṣūl al-dīn* or *al-fiqh al-akbar* that talks about theology (*tawḥīd*); and *uṣūl al-fiqh* or *'ilm al-sharī'a* that refers to the deeds to be done or left, or an option to do or to leave the deed. Both classifications follow the laws that work for any other sciences. The laws stated that any science have objective and subjective qualities. In the former, a person has no understanding of existence of the object. For example, the existence of God, the prophets, angels, and the hereafter. They do exist although humans are not aware of the existence or they ignored them. The latter shows that the existence of the object depends on whether a person does or does not have knowledge on the object (Taymiyya, n.d., 1:129) .

What has been stated by Ibn Taymiyya was such epistemological arguments provide background for *tawḥīd* (the doctrine of God's oneness and the *shahāda* (creed) as well as other pillars of faith. In other words, those are epistemological arguments of the religious science. From the epistemological foundation, he developed the religious foundation as "the explained texts are logic" (*muwāfaqāt ṣarīh ma'qūl li al-ṣahīh al-manqūl*) and "the foundation of religion with its branches was explained clearly by the Prophet Muhammad" (*innā uṣūl al-dīn wa furū'ahā qad bayyanahā al-rasūl*).

The epistemological arguments placed Ibn Taymiyya as an Islamic rationalist. For him, truth, especially that is related to *Allāh* and the Prophet, is fixed and remained unchanged. His rationalism was evident not only in his epistemological arguments, but also in his concepts on human's *fiṭra* that serves to distinguish the good and the bad, the right and wrong. It is similar to what Rene Descartes has stated, that "God gives human the quality to be able to correct any of the mistakes" (Russel 1974, 550).

Al-tajrībāt al-ḥissiyya (empirical experiments) is an empirical experience in which knowledge that becomes the source of truth can be obtained by empirical experience. Empiric experience is one of the methods to obtain knowledge through *qiyās* (analogy). Repeated knowledge forms

rational and convincing axioms. The experience was obtained through research and observations, for example, observing particular repeated symptoms of certain realities and the effects of the symptoms. Experiences of others can also be the source of truth (Taymiyya 1949, 387).

Ibn Taymiyya's disapproval towards the Aristotelian logic was in the concept of *al-tajribat*. According to this view, the experience of other people cannot be used as reasons unless it is experienced by the person itself. If the arguments was accepted, then the revelation that we know as the source of truth and that is believed to be the truth from God by means of transmission cannot be used as arguments (Hallaq 1961, 151). If the truth was obtained through *al-tajribāt al-ḥissiyya* (empirical experiments), the premises that are built based on *al mutawātīrāt* (transmitted data) or revelation can be used as arguments or convincing source of truth. Similarly, spiritual symptoms that are not experienced by all people can be convincing source of truth (Taymiyya, n.d., 1:92–98). The acceptance of *al mutawātīrāt* as the method to obtain truth of knowledge is constructed to provide backgrounds for the Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*) and tradition (*ḥadīth*), as well as, indeed, to justify the intuitive truth (Sufism).

Based on the two methods applied, third method namely *al-istiqrā'* or inductive reasoning was constructed. It is a method to apply the religious teachings in daily life. Therefore, methodologically, the truth of religious practices, especially laws were carried out through *qiyās* (analogy), those are *al-tanzīl* (particular) and *al-shumūl* (universal). Universal concept for the *al-kullīyya* (universal) in Ibn Taymiyya's perspective only existed in mind. Thus, universal religious teachings cannot be practiced without recognizing the social realities.

Ibn Taymiyya also stated that sense originates from heart (*qalb*). If the quality of the mind achieves its perfection then it ends in the human's brain. Sense that ends in the brain means the knowledge. In terms of quality, sense that is centered in *qalb* seems to be the willingness or *al-irāda* that becomes and causes movement or *al-ḥaraka*. *Qalb* (heart) or *al-qalb* and *al-qulūb* in the Qur'an is often considered an organ that serves man to think, for example, in the phrase "and have they hearts wherewith to understand" (*qulūbun ya'qilūna bihā*) (QS. 22: 46).

Hence, Ibn Taymiyya stated that *qalb* is the center of reasoning, thought, and willingness. Further, human should foster their *qalb*. Corrupt *qalb* ruins the body. Besides, Ibn Taymiyya also interpreted sense as instinct (*gharīza*). Therefore, he opposed the validity of certain *ḥadīth* that explained the privilege and virtue of the sense. *Ḥadīth* that stated the virtue of the sense was considered weak because there were transmitters who did not have the

quality of mu'tabar (most correct), such as according to *Dār al-Quṭnī* and *Ibn Ḥibbān*. Ibn Taymiyya did not explain the levels of humans sense nor elaborated them. (Prajā 1990, 28).

The criticism on Theology and *Ṣufism*

1. Theology: Faith without Mental State

At the beginning of the discussion, criticism has been submitted by Ibn Taymiyya against the Islamic theology. From the common perspective of Islamic orthodoxy, the Islamic theology has provided and accomplished its target to introduce God, encouraged a person to believe and maintain God's existence and several things related to it, such as belief in the angels, the revelations, the prophets, the judgment day, and the predestination.

However, in Ibn Taymiyya's perspective, the Islamic theology does not teach us how to make the people who recognized the elements of *tawḥīd* (pillars of faith) have the mental state (*aḥwāl*) and deep fear and love (*maḥabba*) towards God. What should a believer do to maintain the faith and what is the implication of the recognition. This is because the *mutakallimūn* (theologian) limited the role of reason to defending the faith, rejecting its positive employment outside the realm of *Sharī'ā* (Safi 1996, 112).

The validity and usefulness of the intellectual principles adopted by *mutakallimūn* were later questioned by Ibn Taymiyya, who affirmed causality as a principle intrinsic to human reasoning, and rejected the Ash'ari notion that the properties and effects of objects should be ascribed to the free act of the Divine Being not to the nature of the object itself. He wrote, as also Louay cited:

There are people who deny properties (*ṭabā'ī*) and effects (*quwwā*), as Abū Ḥasan al-Ash'arī and those who followed him from Imām Mālik's, Imām al-Shafi'ī's, and Imām Aḥmad's schools. These people who deny properties and effects (also) deny causes, saying: "Allāh brings the effect of a cause with it (*'indahū*), but not by it (*biḥī*).” Hence they say: "Allāh does not satisfy hunger by bread, or thirst by water; nor does He grow plants by water, but does that with it (*'indahū*), but not by it (*biḥī*).” These people contradict the Quran, *Sunna* and the *ijma'* of the early Muslim (*salaf*), and contradict reason and sense. For Allāh said in His Book: “*And He it is who sends the winds as heralds of glad tidings, going before His Mercy: when they have carried the heavy-laden clouds, we drive them to a land that is dead, make rain to descend by (biḥī) them, and produce every kind of harvest by (biḥī) them: thus shall we raise up the dead: Perchance you may remember,*” (Q.S. 7: 57). So Allāh told us that He causes water to descend by the clouds, and causes the fruits to grow by the water. He

further said: *"In the rain which Allāh sends down from the skies, and the life which He gives there by (biḥī) to an earth that is dead,"* (QS. 2: 164). And said: *"And We send down from the sky rain, charged with blessings, and We produced there by (biḥī) gardens and grain for harvests."* And said: *"Fight them, and Allāh will punish them by (biḥī) your Prophet know by their hands...?"* (QS. 50: 94). People know by their senses and reason that some things are causes of others, as they know that satisfying hunger is the result of eating, not counting; and that it happens by eating food, not by eating stones (Taymiyya 1978, 287–88).

Ibn Taymiyya rejected, however, al-Ghazālī's standpoint that logic is an essential and necessary science. He argued that while logic is not completely void of sound principles, it includes many unsound and unfounded principles. Ibn Taymiyya contended that the study of logic should not be required of the students of science not only because it includes unfounded notions, but also because the sound principles of logic are innate to human reasoning. The principles of reason, he concluded, are known to all people, hence requiring no special training within an independent science. Ibn Taymiyya's basic critique of logic may be reduced to the following three points:

First, reducing reasoning to three processes, syllogism, induction, and analogy, and rejecting other methods of reasoning is not warranted. For logicians have not proved that the intellect cannot employ other processes for acquiring knowledge. Ibn Taymiyya argued that inference is not limited to these three processes whereby the inference is made from the particular (deduction), or from particular to the universal (induction), from the universal to the particular (analogy). He proposes another process in which the inference is made by considering the relationship between two particulars which, unlike analogy, does not have any internal commonality. The example he cites for this type of inference is the knowledge a person may gain concerning the sunrise by observing the brightness of the day. Although Ibn Taymiyya did not provide a name for this type of knowledge, it is clearly knowledge based on a causal relationship.

Second, the knowledge gained by using logic does not necessarily represent knowledge about reality, but it could be purely subjective knowledge. Ibn Taymiyya contends that logic lacks the method needed for verifying the correspondence between words and objects. Defining the linguistic term is good only insofar as it brings precision to the language of science, but it does not establish the truth of linguistic terms. As he puts it: *"Definition does not help in conceptualizing the facts, but only in distinguishing one definiens from another"* (Taymiyya 1978, 267).

Finally, although the operation of logic brings about certain (*qaṭʿī*)

knowledge, one need not learn this operation under a separate science of logic since these processes are self-evident. (Taymiyya 1978, 218).

To fulfill the gap, Ibn Taymiyya stated that a person should develop intuitive quality (*kashfiyya*), maintain, and maximize the function of *qalb* (heart). Knowledge is not only obtained by logic (*al-'aql*), such as in the Islamic theology, but also by sense, that is heart, eyes, and hearing. Each sense has its own function and one completes the other. Heart serves to know abstract things that eyes can see. It functions to intellectualize everything. Ibn Taymiyya stated that strong believers are those who use their reason to seek the truth of God and their conscious mental state (*aḥwāl*), not lost of memories (Taymiyya 1986, 16).

Conversely, Sufism were less attracted to formal aspects of religion. Ibn Taymiyya provided two Sufis, *Uṭbah bin Ghulām* and *Aṭa al- Salm*, as exemplary of those who were labile and feared God. Yet, two extravagant views towards those Sufis exist by the statement that their mental state exceed the mental state of the companies of the prophet and that what they have done do not follow what the prophet taught them. Many observers see Sufism as a never ending journey. What they misunderstood was that in the journey, people need to control their sense and consciousness so that they can reach a balance condition. People are wandering with their consciousness. If they are not conscious then they may get lost. In addition, they have to have some guidance. This is the function of formal religious teachings.

The Islamic theology is so dense with logical thinking, but minimum in intuition. Allāh has the nature of *sama'* (listening), *baṣar* (seeing), *kalām* (saying), *irāda* (willing), *qudra* (ruling), or *ḥayā* (living). But Islamic theology does not explain how a worshiper can directly feel that God or *Allāh* sees and hears him; how someone feels when he recites the Quran and observes the universe as Divine rules. This kind of feeling can only appear if a person has the quality of *dhawq* (feeling). *Dhawq* can only be obtained and developed through Islamic mysticism or Sufism.

2. Mysticism : The Non-Functioning of Reason

Three core teachings of Islamic mysticism or Sufism became the concern of Ibn Taymiyya, that were published in *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikām* by Ibn 'Arabī, those are *ḥulūl* (God's incarnation) that was initiated by al-Ḥallāj; *waḥdat al-wujūd* (unity of existence) by Ibn 'Arabī; and *ittihād* (union with God) by 'Umar ibn Fāriḍ. Muslim authors give various interpretations of concept of *ḥulūl*. For some scholar, it means the appropriation of one thing by another or the 'infusion' of one thing into another.

In Islamic mysticism, *ḥulūl* expresses 'infusion', the indwelling of God in a creature, and it is often a synonym for *ittihād* (union with God). This refers to the incarnation of God or intermixing with his essence. Al-Ḥallāj (858-922) used the term *ḥulūl* to describe the mystic path. He claimed to have episodes of falling into trances in the presence of God. He would utter, during those episodes, some unusual comments such as "I am the Truth" (*Anā al-Ḥaq*).

Waḥdat al-wujūd doctrine says although existence is one, it has an inner and an outer aspect. The inner aspect of existence is a light that is the spirit of universe, and the universe is filled with that light throughout. It is this light that gives life to everything, including those things that we mistakenly modify as inanimate (Can, n.d., 234).

Ittihād means united into oneness. The level *ittihād* is superior to the level of *tawḥīd* because in the former there is only the notion of knowing God as one, while in the latter there is the notion of being one with God.

Generally, the concepts has similar perspectives. They do not explicitly distinguish God and man. The form of human being is the form of the creator or God incarnated in man or God unites with man.

According to Ibn Taymiyya, this system is the very reverse of the teachings of orthodox Islam. According to him, no place for such concept exists in Islam, in order to achieve the truth of God. Indeed, Ibn Taymiyya called the proponents of this doctrine as disbelievers or atheists. For him, mortality did exist, but it is based on the belief in duality, that is the creature and the creator as paradigm in theology.

Another mystical idea is *fanā'* or loss of consciousness or annihilation in God. that is not caused by prohibited object, may appear, but the condition means nothing but fleeting enjoyment and it is individual. *Fanā'* should mean consciousness, not lost of consciousness (ecstasy). The climax in mysticism is achieved when a person is in a state of ecstasy (Simuh 1996, 28).

Ibn Taymiyya classified *fanā'* into three types. *First*, mortal worship to other than God. It means that the worship should only for God. Fear, hope, trust, love, all of those is aimed only to God. Accordingly, these are the essence of *tawḥīd* (faith) and the perfection of sincerity and enjoyment. Upon this mortality did the prophets and scriptures were sent. *Second*, mortal view (*shuhūd* of the heart), that no other vision exists but God. A ṣūfī called this *aḥwāl* (mental state) or *jama'* (association). These people, according to Ibn Taymiyya, view the Divine names, attributes and laws either in creating and arranging. These people are claimed to be people with high *ma'rifa*, perfect vision of the heart, solid faith, mortality in testimony, unity in separation, and distance in unity. This is the perfect *shuhūd*. *Third*, mortal being other than God. This may come out from an atheist and the devotee of *madhhab*

of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, similar to what has been stated by Ibn ‘Arabī and those who are in line with him—the form of the creator is the form of the creature. It can be concluded that they did not believe in any other being but God (Taymiyya 1986, 37–38).

However, there are people who lose their memories because their emotion is overwhelmed by their sense. In addition, rational people lose their mind because they are too much performing ritual practices. The latter is called *muqarrabīn* (a person who is close to God). By referring to several *‘ulamā*, Ibn Taymiyya stated that their reasons are gifted by God and then God takes it through mortality. Nevertheless, people in this state are not ideal individuals. They can be called *ṣiddīq*, that is, people who cannot control their emotion, not those who violate the rules of the religions. They are just better than the stubborn people, no more than that.

The Unification between Theology and Mysticism

Dialectical can be defined as the process of thinking, containing thesis, anti-thesis, and synthesis. The synthesis comes up as new thesis and the cycles keep repeating. In the context of Ibn Taymiyya on theology and mysticism, both are Islamic treasures in which each attempts to attain knowledge about God. Islamic theology uses reason, while mysticism uses heart. Islamic theology lacks of spirituality, but rich in logic. Conversely, mysticism is rich in spirituality and poor in logical approach.

The concept of dialectics of Ibn Taymiyya did not assume that what is opposed to his views (antithesis) is the void. However, what is disputed can be combined through interpretation. Theology and mysticism are often the two disciplines are always dealing with the text of the Quran, and as far as we know, for him Quran is the most important sources. Ibn Taymiyya placed primary importance on revelation as the only reliable source of knowledge about God and about a person’s religious duties towards him. The human intellect (*‘aql*) and its powers of reason must be subservient to revelation. According to Ibn Taymiyya, the only proper use of *‘aql* was to understand Islam in the way the Prophet and his companions did, and then to defend it against deviant sects. However, Ibn Taymiyya never argued that the two disciplines have become damaged and void as contrary to the text of the Quran, but he tried to explain comprehensively. Even he himself was known as a leader of these two disciplines.

From the six pillars of faith given, Islamic mysticism seems to perceive God as the only object of devotion. The concepts of *ḥulūl*, *ittiḥād*, *waḥdat al-wujūd*, *fanā’*, *maḥabba*, and the whole context are only related to God. Other

pillars of faith are not the main concern of mysticism. That is the reason why Sufis seems to deviate the *sharī'a* (formal law). Spiritual value that can be taken and carried out after a person believes in the angels, the revelations, or the prophets. In the six pillars of faith, the belief in the revelation and the belief in the prophets are the inspiration of *sharī'a*. If there are ignored, then the issues of *sharī'a* will not come up.

Similarly, in the Islamic theology, because the aspect of rationality takes a dominance portion, the object of activities is only on how those six foundations of faith are believed and then strengthened using the logic. Not only minimum spiritual aspect of Divinity is on the theology, but also other articles of faith. In the aspect of Divinity, duality is the core concept. God exists but He is separated and is different from His creature. Creature is not the creator. Unification with God should not be defined and understood in a substantial context, but only on the maximum serenity when human makes connection with God. Ibn Taymiyya then said, "the requirement to be fulfilled by a Sufi was emphasizing the *sharī'a* and leaving the forbidden things, taking the ethics of religion (*sharī'a*) on his way to God and having ascetic (*zuhd*) quality, that is leaving unnecessary things and extravagant living" (Taymiyya, n.d., 1:180). Thus, people still have their consciousness to control their behavior. Mortality is not perceived as the state of losing the consciousness, but the ecstasy of having connection with God, controlled by clear awareness.

The Divine concept of Ibn Taymiyya, indeed, tends to be closer to the concept of *kalām* (theology), that is separating the creator from the creature, in contrast to Sufism that shows similarity between God and the universe. The keywords to understand the belief in God is the inner voice. In the psychological perspective, inner voice is defined as a subtle "being" that influences a person's character and behavior. To present Divine attributes in the heart, *asmā al-ḥusnā* (most beautiful Divine names) written in the Quran, can be recited and contemplated and then internalized in human's heart. Those names should not only be memorized then reasoned for the sake of maintaining God's existence.

Second articles of faith is belief in the angels. In Islamic theology, the angels are seen by their origins, names, number, and functions. As the principles of *tawḥīd*, the principles of angels may encourage the heart to seek for the world and the hereafter. The energy of the light of the angels goes beyond human's sight. The angels are spiritual creatures and are responsible of big accomplishments. Those who believe in angels can present the angels energy through purification from things forbidden by God. Thus, all the articles of faith can still be strengthened by reinterpreting the spiritual messages contained in them.

Ibn Taymiyya said that people, who believe in God with all their heart and behavior, have indirectly gathered knowledge (reason) and mental state. There will be no good and true deed without any reason and knowledge. Faith has conquered his tongue and deeds of his limbs. Faith that is closely innate in his heart and tongue will justify God and surrender to Him. The deed comes up from the heart and creates the knowledge. Everything ends in the recognition and submission to God (Taymiyya, n.d., 1:40) Taymiyya n.d., 40).

According to Islamic theology, human beings are born with an innate inclination of *tawhīd*, which is encapsulated in the *fiṭra* along with compassion, intelligence, and all other attributes that embody what it is to be human. It is for this reason that some Muslims prefer to refer to those who embrace Islam as reverts rather than converts, as it is believed they are returning to a perceived pure state. Ibn Taymiyya responded to Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr’s notion of *fiṭra* and argued that it is not merely a dormant potential which should be awakened from without, but rather the source of awakening itself, within the individual. The *ḥanīf* is not the one who reacts to sources of guidance, but one who is already guided and seeks to establish it consciously in practice (1981, 8:383).

Ibn Taymiyya’s argument against the Sufism is on two levels. *First*, there is the theological position that God has attributes, one of which is God as creator. Ibn Taymiyya believed that the Quran firmly establishes that God is the one who created, originated and gave form to the universe. Thus there exists a distinction between God the creator and the created beings. This is an absolute distinction with no possibility of merging. He then went on to say that those who strip God of his attributes and deny that he is the creator are just one step away from falling into the belief of *waḥdat al-wujūd*. This is the basis for the second part of his argument. Ibn Taymiyya believed that a Sufi is simply someone who is overcome by an outburst of emotion. For example, someone may deny God’s attributes but could then be overwhelmed by a feeling of love for God. However, the basis of that person’s knowledge is not the authentic information from the Quran, and so their weak intellectual foundation collapses with the onslaught of emotion. For according to Ibn Taymiyya, sense perception and emotions cannot be trusted, and the likelihood of being led astray by them is compounded when one has a basis of knowledge which is itself errant and deviant. One holds a proper belief in God and maintains a proper relationship with him, Ibn Taymiyya argued, by establishing a foundation of knowledge based on the Quran and authentic traditions.

Ḥulūl, ittiḥād, waḥdat al-wujūd, fanā’, which is the basis for criticism of Ibn Taymiyya will not actually disappear from his thoughts, but the concepts

which appears to conflict with the view of the Quran textually are defined by rational and empirical approach. The union of man with God is not interpreted by the physical form, but with condition and concentration. Similarly, humans fused with the spirit of the deity to do righteousness and truth.

Islamic mysticism or Sufism, as recognized by Ibn Taymiyya has the theoretical and practical aspects. Various objects of faith as theological matters, prophetic, and hereafter, has been discussed in his Islamic theology, so that people can believe and justify know without hesitation. Theology and Sufism has a strong bond in his religious discourse. Herein lies the uniqueness of theology Ibn Taymiyya, that there was a relationship between theology and mysticism. Only, Ibn Taymiyya was not satisfied with the confidence gained from Islamic theology arguments that favor the ratio in providing convincing knowledge of the truth.

For him, the argument that Islamic theology can bring a conviction against certain people, but he had no constancy. From here, Ibn Taymiyya also recognize the weaknesses of reason in understanding the metaphysics completely. Ibn Taymiyya said that true knowledge can be gained through the heart. However, the method used differs from the Sufis. According to the Sufis, the heart can be cleansed through meditation. For him, the heart is the end of the climax of the most perfect of human thought. With this heart, people make changes and activity, which is constantly monitored by the human mind.

So, for Ibn Taymiyya, mystics status (theoretical and practical) in his theology is not different from the logic (philosophy), namely as a means or method to provide a convincing knowledge of the truth, as has been seen in his structure of theology. This is the aspect of mysticism in the theology of Ibn Taymiyya. For him, heart involvement is seen empirically, and can be monitored through conscious human reasoning. Based on the relevance of his spirituality to theology, Ibn Taymiyya then could produce convincing knowledge of the truth of Islam, as expected in any theology. The method is called *sulūk* (journey) and is treading the path of God, but in a conscious state.

Conclusion

The dialectic of theology and mysticism (Sufism) are necessary as proposed by Ibn Taymiyya. The relationship between these two disciplines is like two sides of a coin that gives meaning to each other. Rationality aspect contained in the Islamic theology should be naturally controlled by the spirit of Sufism. Similarly, dominant spiritual activities of Sufism should be controlled by reason or consciousness. Both disciplines are then

interconnected and intercorrective. The synthesis of Ibn Taymiyya's thought that can be seen in his works is that there is no issue that is dismissed in both disciplines. Each has its own characteristics, both respond and control each other. The implication of those disciplines on religion is that both lead an individual to the understanding and practice of religion in a comprehensive way. A person who relies only on one field may live in resignation, disabling his sense to see God's Greatness. He will only see the spirituality without realizing the mysteries of the world. Without the senses, those mysteries can never be understood and explained. Many verses of the Quran have commanded human to use their senses to understand the greatness of God. Similarly, a person who only relies on his senses will face difficulties as well. Human's senses cannot fully explain the natural phenomena. Facts of the world cannot be understood by the senses without involving spirituality. If religion is perceived as the way to know and understand the Divine and the nature, there should be a balance between the use of senses and the heart (*qalb*) that leads to the balance between theology and mysticism.

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