

ISLAMIC THEOLOGICAL DISCOURSES AND THE LEGACY OF KALAM GESTATION, MOVEMENTS, CONTROVERSIES



Edited by Mustafa Shah

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**Islamic Theological Discourses
and the Legacy of *Kalām***

Gestation, Movements and Controversies

*Edited and Introduced
by Mustafa Shah*

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arguments (**Chapter Fifteen**).⁷³ Abrahamov concludes that such forms of knowledge were frequently awarded primacy over speculatively derived arguments.

The figure of al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm looms large in the history of early Zaydī theological thought as the founder of the Imāmate in Yemen and it is the question of whether he was influenced by Christian theological ideas which is examined by Madelung (**Chapter Sixteen**). He takes the view that although it has been widely thought that his theology betrays Mu‘tazilī influences, in fact his own doctrinal positions, which can be gauged through his refutation entitled *al-Radd ‘alā al-Naṣāra*, were honed through debates and disputations with adversaries. Staying with Zaydī theology and the question of influence, Maher Jarrar’s study seeks to demonstrate specific types of *imāmī* influences in early Zaydī theological thinking (**Chapter Seventeen**). He underscores the significance of the different strands of thought which were encompassed under the Zaydī label.

The literary works of al-Jāhīz (d. 255/868-9) underline his unassailable status as a distinguished litterateur and a passionate defender of rational theology. The question as to whether his early theological thought shows ‘humanist’ tendencies is explored by van Ess (**Chapter Eighteen**). He argues that al-Jāhīz innovatively sought, albeit unsuccessfully, to place psychology within the vector of *kalām*. Al-Jāhīz was the author of the *Faḍā’il al-Mu‘tazila* (*the Merits of the Mu‘tazilites*), which was the subject of a stinging critique composed by Ibn al-Rawandī (fl. third/ninth century). Outraged by the critique, the Mu‘tazilī luminary, al-Khayyāt (d. ca. 300/913) composed his *Kitāb al-Intisār wa’l-radd ‘alā Ibn al-Rawandī* (*The Book of Defence and Denunciation of Ibn al-Rawandī*).⁷⁴

It was a contemporary of al-Jāhīz, Dāwūd ibn Khalaf al-Zāhirī (d. 270/884), who laid the foundations for the Zāhirī school of thought which espoused a legal and theological approach to law defined as being nominally ‘literalist’. The Andalusian jurist Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064), author of the doxography, *al-Fiṣal (faṣl) fī’l-milal wa’l-ahwā’ wa’l-niḥal* and the manual on the principles of law, *al-Iḥkām fī uṣūl al-aḥkām*, is the school’s most accomplished adherent. Observers of Zāhirī thought have made the indisputable point that the Zāhirī approach to law is ultimately a form of rationalism and a similar peculiarity with regards to doctrinal positions espoused within the school is discerned by Al Makin in his study of influences in Ibn Ḥazm’s theology (**Chapter Nineteen**).⁷⁵ Through his gauging of the Zāhirī discussions of the question of ‘The Hand of God’, Al Makin argues that Ibn Ḥazm, who was also an adept logician, actually adopts a metaphorical explanation which contradicts the literalism seemingly espoused by Zāhirīs.

In his treatment of the Ash‘arī teaching on the non-existent and the possible (**Chapter Twenty**), Frank assesses the conceptual intricacy of their teachings on the issue, dismissing the impressionistic views of their thought promulgated by classical Islamic philosophers, who questioned the efficacy of the forms of argumentation they employed and their attitudes towards the use of Aristotelian logic and the value of *burhān*.⁷⁶ As Frank has resolutely insisted

⁷³ Josef van Ess. Die Erkenntnislehre des ‘Adudaddin al-If, Wiesbaden, 1966. Hansu Hüseyin. ‘Notes on the Term *Mutawātir* and its Reception in *Ḥadīth Criticism*’, *Islamic Law and Society* 16, (2009:16), 383-408

⁷⁴ See the theological discussions in Al-Jāhīz’s *Rasā’il al-Jāhīz*. 2 vols. (ed.), Muḥammad al-Sūd. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2000.

⁷⁵ Adam Sabra. ‘Ibn Ḥazm’s Literalism: a Critique of Islamic Legal Theory’ (I) *al-Qanṭara* (2007: XXVIII.1), 7-40, (10-11). For the relationship between Ibn Ḥazm and the other schools see Sabine Schmidtke. ‘Ibn Ḥazm’s Sources on Ash‘arism and Mu‘tazilism’. In *Ibn Ḥazm of Cordoba: the Life and Works of a Controversial Thinker*, pp. 375-402. Amr Osman. *The Zāhirī Madhhab (3rd/9th-10th/16th Century): A Textualist Theory of Islamic Law*. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

⁷⁶ This is the Aristotelian concept of *apodeixis*: namely, providing manifest proofs through demonstration.

THE INFLUENCE OF ZĀHIRĪ THEORY ON IBN ḤAZM'S
THEOLOGY: THE CASE OF HIS INTERPRETATION
OF THE ANTHROPOMORPHIC TEXT
"THE HAND OF GOD"

AL MAKIN
McGill University

ABSTRACT

Both the Bible and the Qur'ān contain anthropomorphic passages, and so a theological debate over their interpretation is very common in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In the Qur'ān, there are several anthropomorphic texts which describe God as having bodily features like those of human beings. For instance, God is said to have a face, eyes, feet, and hands. Various attempts were made to interpret such texts, either literally by accepting the corporeality of God or metaphorically by avoiding the implication of anthropomorphic texts. It is interesting how Ibn Ḥazm, who upheld Zāhirī theory (maintaining the literal meaning), tried to interpret Qur. 38:76, 5:67, 48:10 and 36:70 where reference is made to "the Hand of God." On the one hand, he felt he should maintain the literal meaning, according to which god is supposed to have hands. On the other hand, he declared himself to be a defender of *tawḥīd* (the unity of God), which demanded that he reject all possibility of similarities between God and any of his creatures. This paper will focus on Ibn Ḥazm's argument by looking at his *al-Fiṣal wa al-Mīlāl wa al-Niḥāl*.

Ibn Ḥazm, a theologian, philosopher, jurist, and moralist, was born at Cordova in 384 A.H. (994 A.D.) and died at Manta Lisham in 456 A.H. (1064 A.D.).¹ From childhood onwards he lived through several

¹ There are many versions of Ibn Ḥazm's genealogy; for instance according to al-Ḥumaydī his name was 'Alī ibn Aḥmad, while according to Ibn Bashkuwāl the name is 'Alī ibn Isma'īl, and according to al-Qāḍī al-Sa'īd al-Jayānī, his name is 'Alī ibn Muḥammad; see Yāqūt, *Irshād al-'Arab ilā Ma'rifa al-Adīb: al-Ma'rūf bi Muḥjam al-Udabā aw Ṭabaqāt al-Udabā*, ed. D.S. Margoliouth, vol. 5 (Cairo: Maṭba'ah Hindiyah, 1925), 84-86; al-Ḥumaydī, *Jadwat al-Muqtabis fī Tārikh 'Ulamā' al-Andalus*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1983), 489-90; al-Ḍabbī, *Bughyat al-Multamīs fī Tārikh Rijāl Ahl al-Andalus*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, vol. 2 (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Miṣrī, 1989), 543-44; Ibn al-Bashkuwāl, *al-Silah fī Tārikh A'immat al-Andalus wa 'Ulamā'ihim wa Muḥaddithihim wa Fuqahā'ihim wa Udabā'ihim*, ed. 'Izzat al-Aṭṭār al-Ḥusayn, vol. 2 (Cairo: Maktab Nashr al-Thaqāfah al-Islamīyah, 1955), 395-96. There is also another version of Ibn Ḥazm's genealogy: Aḥmad ibn Sa'īd ibn Ḥazm ibn Ghalīb ibn Ṣāliḥ ibn Khalāf

traumatic experiences. For instance, during the political struggle among Andalusians, Berbers and Slavs, his father fell into disgrace after the fall of the 'Amirids and the replacement of the Caliph Hishām II by Muḥammad al-Mahdi. He was even forced to flee the country with his family when Madīnat al-Zāhrah was attacked. Ibn Ḥazm himself was very active politically, and was jailed or exiled many times. Under the reign of Hishām II, for example, he was imprisoned by the Slav general Wādi. Furthermore, Ibn Ḥazm was exiled to Almeria and his house in Balāt Mughhīth destroyed. Later, he was once again imprisoned because he was suspected of being a supporter of the Umayyad dynasty.² Having had several bad experiences in political life, he decided to devote himself to intellectual work, such as writing and teaching.³

In terms of character, Ibn Ḥazm was a sensitive man. Later on it was very obvious that he always favored frankness and mutual understanding and felt repugnance for any kind of falseness, deceit, or simulation in political, social, scientific, and religious life. Ibn Ḥazm, as a moralist, confronted all the inconsistencies of mankind. He was a passionate defender of the truth, and tried to base all his theories on incontrovertible evidence.⁴

ibn Ma'dān ibn Sufyān ibn Yazīd; see Ibn Khallikān, *Ibn Khallikān's Wafāyat al-A'yān*, trans. Moinul Haq, vol. 3 (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1964), 320-26. His ancestor was the *mawla* (client of) the Umayyads. However, for Dozy Ibn Ḥazm's ancestors were Spanish Christians; this was accepted by García Gomez and Simonet; see A.G. Chejne, *Ibn Ḥazm* (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1982), 20-22. For a further account of Ibn Ḥazm's biography see also R. Arnaldez, "Ibn Ḥazm," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. B. Lewis, V.L. Menage, C.H. Pellat, J. Schacht, vol. 3 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971), 790-99; idem, "Ibn Ḥazm," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade, vol. 6 (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 564-65.

² These terrible events were recorded in his *Tawq al-Hamāmah fī al-Uḥfāh wa al-Ullāf* (Beirut: al-Muassasah al-'Arabīyah li al-Dirāsah wa al-Nashr, 1993); trans. into English by A.J. Arberry, *The Ring of the Dove by Ibn Ḥazm: A Treatise on the Art and Practice of Arab Love* (London: Luzac and Company, 1953).

³ He wrote many works; for instance, in *fiqh*, *al-Muḥalla* (Cairo: Idārat al-Tibā'ah al-Muniriyyah, 1933); in theology *al-Fiṣal*; in Qur'anic studies, *Kūtib fī Ma'rifaṭ Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*; on the Margin of Firuzabadī, *Tanwīr al-Miqbās min Tafīr ibn 'Abbās* (Egypt: Mustafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1951); in psychology, *Tawq al-Hamāmah*; in ethics *Akhlāq wa al-Siyār fī Mudāwāt al-Nufūs* (Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīdah, 1980), and in philosophy, *Marātib al-'ulūm*. See C. Brocklemann, *Geschichte des arabischen Literatur*, vol. 1 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1937), 400, Supplementband 1, 692; Chejne lists 137 works; see his *Ibn Ḥazm*, 301-13.

⁴ Later, this attitude of frankness on the part of Ibn Ḥazm influenced his expression of Zāhirī theory; see, Arnaldez, "Ibn Ḥazm," 729.

Zāhirī School and Theology

The Zāhirī of school of law was founded by Abū Sulaymān Dāwūd ibn 'Alī ibn Khālāf, who was born in Kūfah in approximately 270 (815) and died in Baghdad in 270 (884).⁵ The main teaching of this school was the importance of maintaining the literal meaning or outward (*zāhir*) aspect of the texts making up the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*. Therefore, the Zāhirīs were hostile to any attempt at applying human reasoning, whether by analogy (*qiyās*), *istiḥāb*, *istiḥsān*, or *taqlīd*, in interpreting the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*.⁶

Ibn Ḥazm was a prominent member of this Zāhirī school, which by his time had reached its zenith in Spain.⁷ As a member of the Zāhirī school he held to the literal meaning in interpreting the texts, and declared that there is no hidden meaning (*bāṭin*) in them. It was the literal meaning that had to be accepted, and any attempt to trace the hidden meaning was useless. Ibn Ḥazm fought against the Ḥanbalites who were known to favor analogy in deriving *fiqh*,⁸ and it was he who introduced Zāhirī theory into theological discussion.⁹

In theology, Ibn Ḥazm was opposed to both the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites, since both schools used metaphor in assigning meaning to doctrine. For Ibn Ḥazm, what was true for *fiqh* was also true for theology; there too, the literal meaning should apply. Accordingly, based on the Zāhirī theory, every text dealing with theological matters should be understood as it is, without searching for hidden meaning in the

⁵ For a further account of his biography; see J. Schacht, "Dāwūd ibn 'Alī ibn Khālāf," in *Encyclopædia of Islam*, 2d ed., 2: 182-83; I. Goldziher, *The Zāhirīs: Their Doctrine and Their History*, trans. Wolfgang Behn (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971), 27; Brockelmann, *Geschichte*, 1:194, Supplementband 1:312; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafāyāt*, 4:273-79.

⁶ R. Strothmann, "al-Zāhirīya," in *The First Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. M.T.H. Houtsma, A.J. Wensinck, H.A.R. Gibb, W. Heffening and Levi-Provençal, vol. 8 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1936), 1192-93; Goldziher, *The Zāhirīs*, 30.

⁷ Omar A. Farrukh, "Zāhirism," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy: With Short Accounts of Other Disciplines and the Modern Renaissance in Muslim Lands*, ed. M.M. Sharif, vol. 2 (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1963), 282.

⁸ Ibn Ḥazm's polemics against the Hanbalites were also motivated by political factors; see Robert Caspar, *Traité théologie musulmane*, vol. 1 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Studi Arabi e d'Islamitica, 1987), 216.

⁹ Goldziher, *Zāhirīs*, 123-4; Ibn Ḥazm also refutes the use of intuition (*ilhām*), hearsay (*khabar*), interpretation (*ta'wīl*), deduction (*istinbāt*), personal approval (*istiḥsān*), legitimating matters passed over in silence (*dalīl khūfāb*), looking into matters other than those mentioned in the Qur'ān (*ta'tīl*), holding belief on the ground that it was held by one's predecessors or some prominent contemporaries (*taqlīd*), analogy (*qiyās*), and opinion (*ra'y*), as sources; see Omar A. Farrukh, "Zāhirism," 284.

text, for as the Qurʾān says it is *tibyān* for everything.¹⁰ For example, God should be understood exactly as He describes himself in the text of Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*, and not otherwise.¹¹ Also, Ibn Ḥazm understands that Paradise, Hell, resurrection, the *jinn*, and angels are real things. Humans are obliged to believe what is stated in the text of the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*, without questioning how, and anyone who refuses to believe any of the verses of the Qurʾān is *kāfir*.¹²

The Rejection of Anthropomorphism and Attributes in General

Ibn Ḥazm declares that he is a defender of *tawḥīd*, and so in order to accomplish this he rejects two important concepts of *kalām*, namely anthropomorphism and the attributes of God.¹³ Actually, Ibn Ḥazm was in a unique position, in that he disagreed with the two main schools of *kalām*, the Muʿtazilites and the Ashʿarites, since both schools relied on metaphorical interpretation in dealing with texts of anthropomorphism.¹⁴ Based on Zāhirī theory he defended the concept of *tawḥīd*, as the Muʿtazilites did, by rejecting any kind of attributes to God.¹⁵ For

¹⁰ "Tibyān li kulli shayʿ," verse 16:89.

¹¹ See, his *al-Muḥalla*, in the chapter on *Tawḥīd*.

¹² Arnaldez, "Ibn Ḥazm," 797.

¹³ Ibn Ḥazm actually counters the Jewish concept of anthropomorphism which according to him is based on Genesis 1:26 and 1:27, that God created Adam based on His image, since for Ibn Ḥazm God never resembles His creatures. See especially, Ibn Ḥazm's debate with Ibn Nagrila in R. Arnaldez, "Controverse d'Ibn Ḥazm contre Ibn Nagrila le juif," in his *Aspects de la pensée musulmane* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1987), 178. However, there were some Muslims who admitted the doctrine of anthropomorphism such as Hishām ibn Ḥakam, Karramites and some Sunnites; see al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Milal wa al-Nihāl*, ed. W. Cureton (London: Society for the Publication of Oriental Texts, 1946), 77; Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1976), 106; Daniel Gimaret, *La Doctrine d'al-Ashʿarī* (Paris: Cerf, 1990), 254-56; W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology: An Extended Survey* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985), 81; W. Madelung, "Hishām ibn Ḥakam," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d. ed., 3: 496-98.

¹⁴ For example, the prominent Muʿtazilite al-Zamaksharī interpreted hand in 38:76 and 36:70 as *istīʿārah* which refers to action (*ʿamal*); see his *al-Kashshāf ʿan Haqāiq al-tanzīl wa ʿUyūn al-Aqāwil fi Wujūh al-Taʾwīl*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dār al Maʿrifah, n.d.), 292 and 334. While in Qur. 5:67 which states "tied up hand," al-Zamaksharī refers to *bukhl* (stingy), whereas "widely outreached hand" means *al-jūd* (generous), see his *al-Kashshāf*, 1: 350-51. Also, for other Muʿtazilites, "hand" refers to benevolence, see Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, trans. Andras and Ruth Hamori (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 105-6.

¹⁵ Muʿtazilites defended *tawḥīd*, one of their five principles, which also included *ʿadl* (justice), *al-manzil bayn al-manzilatayn* (between the two positions), *al-waʿd wa al-waʿd* (promises) and *al-amr bi al-maʿrūf wa nahy ʿan al-munkar* (recommending the good and

him, it is not allowed to assign any kind of attribute to God except those by which God describes himself in the text. Therefore, for him Ash'arite practice of assigning attributes to God were beyond the text. That is why he treated Mu'tazilites somewhat more gently than he did the Ash'arites.¹⁶

As with anthropomorphism, he also rejected reliance on metaphorical interpretation in general, a practice indulged in by Mu'tazilites,¹⁷ as well as the theory of *bi lā kayfa* (without questioning how) favored by the forefathers (*salaf*) and the Ash'arites.¹⁸ However, in rejecting the concept of anthropomorphism, Ibn Ḥazm did not rely on the text of the Qur'ān and *hadīth* but tried to support his argument with incontrovertible evidence (*burhān*) supported by 'aql *al-badīhat* (primary or *a priori* reason), sensory perception (*al-ḥiss*), the science of language, and logic.¹⁹

His argument was as follows. First, he refuted those who held the concept of anthropomorphism and who argued that everything must have *jism* (body) and 'ard (accident). Ibn Ḥazm criticizes this statement by rearranging the logic of this argument as follows; everything in the world has body and accident, these things require an arranger, the arranger must be body or accident, and the actor (*fā'il*) of the arranger is neither body nor accident. Ibn Ḥazm emphasizes that this evidence could be understood easily by the senses (*al-ḥiss*) and reason ('aql). Furthermore, he argues that if the actor is a body, then necessarily the body must consist of length, depth and width. These categories are

prohibiting the bad). In defending *tawhīd*, Mu'tazilites denied any resemblance of God to His creature, for example they refused the concept of anthropomorphism and to give attributes to God outside His essence, God cannot be seen with the human eyes; see L. Gardet and M.M. Anawati, *Introduction à la théologie musulmane: essai de théologie comparée* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1948), 47-9; al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Milal*, 31.

¹⁶ The Ash'arites admitted that God has attributes which are separate from His essence such as hearing, knowing, and powerful; see al-Ash'ārī, *The Theology of al-Ash'ārī*, trans. Richard J. McCarthy S.J. (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1953), 12-14; Michel Allard, *Le Problème des attributs divins dans la doctrine d'al-Ash'ārī et de ses premiers grands disciples* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1965), 84-85.

¹⁷ Binyamin Abrahamov, *al-Kāsim b. Ibrāhīm on the Proof of God's Existence: Kitāb al-Dalīl al-Kabīr* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), 27; idem, *Anthropomorphism and Interpretation of the Qur'ān in the Theology of al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm: Kitāb al-Murtashid* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 5-7; Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology*, 105-6.

¹⁸ L. Gardet and Anawati, *Introduction à la théologie*, 66. The theory of *Bi lā kayfa* was originally from the Ḥanbalite scholar al-Barbahārī who claimed that this teaching was from Mālik ibn Anas, al-Barhārī stated that God should be described as in the text without questioning how or why; see Binyamin Abrahamov, "The *Bila Kayfa* Doctrine and its Foundations in Islamic Theology," *Arabica*, 42 (1995), 365-66.

¹⁹ As he already explained regarding the theory of *tamyīz* in his introduction of his *al-Fiṣal*; see also Omar A. Farrukh, "Zāhīrīsm," 282.

impossible to apply to God. It is also unreasonable that God should be described as a body without formation (*mu'allaf*). Next, based on the science of language, he disagrees with the concept which states that a thing (*shay'*) and body are similar.²⁰ For him, a thing is similar to existence (*mawjūd*), since both are synonyms (*mutarādif*). In addition, body refers to length, depth, and width, which consist of six categories: up, down, behind, in front of, right, and left. For him, these categories cannot be ignored by anybody, and he who ignores them is stupid (*jahl*) and impudent (*waqqāh*). God can neither be described by these categories nor as body, accident, movement, or silence, since all of them require time and space, and time and space are temporal.²¹

Ibn Ḥazm differentiates between assigning name and anthropomorphism;²² thus it is not anthropomorphist if we call ourselves the actors and God the actor, for this is dealing with names not anthropomorphism. Anthropomorphism is to admit that the two things are similar. The conclusion reached by Ibn Ḥazm is that there is no evidence (*burhān*) in the text which states that God is a body, even though there is enough evidence which prohibits us from assigning this description to God as a body.²³

Hand of God in the Text

A. Qur'ānic Verses

1. 38:76

He said: O Iblīs! What hindereth thee from falling prostrate before that which I have created with both My hand . . .²⁴

²⁰ This statement counters Hishām Ibn Ḥakam's argument that everything which exists must be body, and God exists, so He is a body; see Madelung, "Hishām," 497.

²¹ Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fiṣal fi al-Mīlāl wa al-Ahwā' wa al-Niḥāl*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Naṣr and 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Umayrah, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1985), 276-81. Compare Ibn Ḥazm's arguments with similar ones that state that God is not a body, for example, al-Baqillānī, *al-Tamhīd: fi al-Radd 'Alā al-Mulḥidat al-Mu'aṭṭilah wa al-Rāfidah wa al-Khawārij wa al-Mu'tazilah*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ḥuḍayrī and Muḥammad 'Abd al-Hādī Abū Ruwaydah (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1943), 87-90; al-Ash'ari, *The Theology*, trans. Richard J. McCarthy, 9 and 17.

²² Actually, Ibn Ḥazm admits the ninety nine names of God which, according to him, are based on the Qur'an and *ḥadīth*, while the others are not; Daniel Gimaret, *Les noms divins en Islam* (Paris: Cerf, 1988), 20-21.

²³ Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fiṣal*, 2: 280-81.

²⁴ "He" refers to God; Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of The Glorious Koran: An Explanatory Translation* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1948), 470.

2. 5:67

The Jews say: Allah's hand is fettered. Their hands are fettered and they are accursed for saying no. Nay, but both His hands are spread out wide in bounty.²⁵

3. 48:10

Lo! Those who swear allegiance unto thee (Muhammad), swear allegiance only unto Allah. The Hand of Allah is above their hands.²⁶

4. 36:70

Have they not seen how We have created for them of Our handiwork the cattle, so that they are their owners.²⁷

B. *Ḥadīth*

The Dispensers of justice will be seated on the pulpits of right beside God, on the right side (*yamīn*: right hand) of the Merciful, Exalted and Glorious. Either side of the Being is the right side (*yadayh*: both hands) of the both equally meritorious . . .²⁸

C. *Ibn Ḥazm's Interpretation*

In interpreting the texts, Ibn Ḥazm first of all refutes the opinions of the Mu'tazilites that *al-yad* refers to *nīmah* based on metaphorical meaning. He also refutes the Ash'arite opinion that the meaning of *aidīnā* (our hands) (36:70) is *al-Yadānī*. For Ibn Ḥazm this is false (*bāṭil*) and

²⁵ Pickthall, *Meaning of The Glorious Koran*, 127.

²⁶ Pickthall, *Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, 529.

²⁷ Pickthall, *Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, 454. According to al-Bayhāqī these verses are considered to be ambiguous (*mutashābihah*), i.e., contrary to the *muḥkamāt* (self evident), so nobody can reveal the inner meaning (*bāṭin*) of the verses. However, Ibn Ḥazm does not agree with the inner meaning; see Binyamin Abrahamov, "The *Bila Kayfa*," 368; al-Bayhāqī, *al-I'tiqād wa al-Hidāyah ilā sabīl al-Rashād 'alā Madhāb al-Salaf wa Aṣḥab al-Ḥadīth*, ed. al-Sayyid al-Jumaylī (Beirut: 1988), 94.

²⁸ This *ḥadīth* is included in Muslim's collection entitled *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ed. Mūsā Shāhin Lāshīn and Aḥmad 'Umar Hāshim, vol. 4 (Cairo: Muassasah 'Izz al-Dīn, n.d.), 106; this translation is by 'Abdul Hamīd Ṣiddīqī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: Being Traditions of the Saying and doings of the Prophet Muḥammad as Narrated by His Companions and Compiled under the Title al-Jāmi' us-Ṣaḥīḥ by Imam Muslim*, vol. 18 (Lahore: S.H. Muhammad Ashraf, n.d.), 1016; Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal: Wa bi Hāmishih Muntakhab Kanz al-Ummāl fī Sunan al-Aqwāl wa Aqwāl wa Af'āl*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), 159; Nasa'ī, *Sunan al-Nasa'ī, Sharḥ: Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, Hashiyah: Imām al-Sindī*, vol. 8 in *Kitāb al-Quddāh* (Cairo: Maṭbaat Miṣriyah, n.d.), 221; see also in the *Sunan* of al-Tirmidhī in commentary *surah* 5:3, in the *Sunan* of Ibn Majah in *Muqaddimah*, 13; see A.J. Wensinck, *Concordance et Indices de la Tradition Musulmane: Les Six Livres, Le Musnad d'al-Darimi, le Muwatta' de Malik, le Musnad de Ahmad Ibn Hanbal* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967), 5:378, 7:379 and 381; Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fiṣal*, 2:249.

rather close to anthropomorphism.²⁹ Instead, he proposes two possible theories. Firstly, any such statement should be regarded as applying to God as a whole, as he states: “The Hand does not mean anything except God himself.” Secondly, he relies on the science of language.³⁰

In the first theory, that the hands do not mean anything other than God himself, he defends the *tawhīd* principle that God has no similarities at all with any kind of creature in the world. As he states in his defense, God cannot be described by any kind of category, such as time, quality, width, place, length, depth, etc. However, in terms of his theory of literal meaning, he is inconsistent. As he always states that there is no hidden meaning in the text and that we should understand the text exactly as it is, then the Zāhirī theory upheld by Ibn Ḥazm in this matter fails somewhat. If Ibn Ḥazm really applied the literal meaning, he would be trapped in the anthropomorphist interpretation which insists that God has a hand. However, he does not do so; rather, he avoids giving it any meaning. The meaning of hand is that it is God himself.

In the case of *yamīn* (the right hand of God) in the *ḥadīth*, Ibn Ḥazm relies on the science of language, maintaining that in Arabic the right hand refers to *al-ḥazz al-afḍal*. As for the word *al-ḥazz al-afḍal* (the better fortunate), he cites the poetry of al-Shammakh: “When the banner is lifted up, ‘Arābah would find the nobler fortune.”³¹ So, according to Ibn Ḥazm, the meaning of the *ḥadīth* is that “everything belonging to God is more fortunate and the nobler.” In relying on this poetry, Ibn Ḥazm, is inconsistent with Zāhirī theory. At the earlier discussion he obviously rejected the metaphorical approach employed by Ash‘arites

²⁹ Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fīṣal*, 2:347-9. Actually, there are many other texts which describe God as having eyes, face, feet, sitting on the throne: *Wajh Rabbik* (face of God) 55:27, *qadamah* (foot of God) in a Ḥadīth in *Sunan* of al-Tirmidhi, 4:96, *‘Ayuninā* (eyes of God) 2:115, *‘Asabi’ Allāh* (fingers of God) Saḥīḥ Muslim in *Qadr*, 2654; see also Ibn al-Qutaybah, *Ta’wīl Mushkīl al-Qur’ān* (Cairo: Markaz al-Aḥram li al-Tarjamah wa al-Nashr, 1989); Binyamin Abrahamov, *Anthropomorphism*, 2-3.

³⁰ According to Goldziher, Ibn Ḥazm relies either on lexica in order to find a meaning which is compatible to the spiritual meaning of God, or bases his decision on linguistic usage in declaring it to be a superfluous addition; see Goldziher “The Zāhirīs,” 151. For Watt, Ibn Ḥazm’s attitude in the anthropomorphism is rather close to Ḥanabalite’s *bi lā kayfa*, *Islamic Philosophy*, 114. Actually, Ash‘arī avoids to give the meaning of hand too, because he held the theory of *bi lā kayfa*; see al-Ash‘arī, *al-Ībānah ‘an Uṣūl al-Diyānah* (Cairo: Idārat al-Ṭibā‘ah al-Munīriyah, n.d.), 37. However, he rather chooses to look for the figurative meaning, 39; Binyamin Abrahamov, “The *Bila kayfa*,” 369.

³¹ *Dīwān al-Shammākh ibn Ḥarār al-Dhubayānī*, p. 336. Al-Shammākh sings the praise of ‘Arābah ibn Aus from the tribe Mālik ibn Aus, in poem no. 18: “Idhā mā rāyah rufī‘at li majidd, talaqqāhā ‘Arābah bi al-Yamīn”; Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fīṣal*, 2:349.

and Mu'tazilites. However, he finally employs it here himself. This indicates that Zāhirī theory is insufficient, in that not all the texts of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* can be taken literally, but rather it demands other possible meanings such as metaphorical meaning.

Conclusion

It seems that Ibn Ḥazm was forced by Zāhirī theory to interpret anthropomorphic texts, such as the "hand of God," in such a way as to preserve God's unity. This however led to inconsistency in applying the Zāhirī belief that the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* should be interpreted in literal fashion. Thus in interpreting the Qur'ānic and *ḥadīth* text referring to the "hand of God," he had to resort to the metaphorical approach that he condemned in others.