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Al-Qanun Al-Kulliy: A Philosophy in Understanding Faith in Islam

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the concept of *al-Qanun al-Kulliy* as a philosophy in under-standing the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an and *Hadith* of the Prophet (S.A.W), both of which are needed in understanding faith-related issues. The concept here is that sense of purpose, considered priority in outward evidences of Islamic law, which has drawn criticism from Islamic scholars who cling to the methods of the *Salaf al-Salih*. To understand the concept of *al-Qanun al-Kulliy*, this paper relies on the analysis of some related sources, the study of which has shown that *al-Qanun al-Kulliy* is a philosophy in understanding matters of faith that was adopted by some theologians (*Ahl al-Kalam*). The paper also shows that Ibn Taimiyyah and his student, Ibn al-Qayyim, are among Muslim scholars who maintain firm criticism of *al-Qanun al-Kulliy* on the premise that it denies many faith-related issues stipulated by the texts of personality (*qat'iy*). The paper adopts a qualitative approach, being mainly a library-based research study. The aim of the paper is, therefore, to maintain *al-Qanun al-Kulliy* as a means to understand-ing faith in Islam if properly employed.

Keywords: Faith, Islam, *kulliy*, philosophy, *qanun*

INTRODUCTION

In the history of Islamic thought, various scholars have appeared with their own philosophical framework for understanding the Islamic faith as mentioned in the Qur'an and *Hadith* of the Prophet (S.A.W). The basis for the stance of some scholars in upholding the intellect to understand faith-

related issues is evidently informed by the *Jahamiyah, Jabariyah* and *Mu'tazilah*. The *Mu'tazilah* was more stunt in this matter, to the extent that its thoughts successfully influenced the government of al-Ma'mun, which made the thought propagated in the *Mu'tazilah* an official stand of the state in the concept of faith. Understanding of the Qur'an is being encouraged widely and has become the official stand of the government. In such a climate, Imam Ahmad Ibn Hambal was imprisoned for criticising the creed. Ibn Taimiyyah in his work opined that the *Mu'tazilah* led to the founding of *al-Qanun al-Kulliy*. These scholars believe that denial of the attributes that reveal God's greatness, among other matters, is due to the concept of *al-Qanun al-Kulliy*. It is, therefore, the aim of this article to review the concept of *al-Qanun al-Kulliy*, its origins, criticism concerning it and its accuracy in elucidating revelation. Thus, this paper further advances our knowledge of yet an important part of *Kalam* that has become neglected even by Muslim scholars.

Definition of Concept

This concept is intended to advance views and opinions framed by the intellect (*al-'aql*) from the truth as presented by the Qur'an and *Hadith* of the Prophet (S.A.W). In Faith and Sharia, explanations can be contrary to projections of the intellect. This concept is known as *al-Qanun al-Kulliy*. Ibn Taimiyyah explained that where there is conflict between evidence of intellect and revelation (*naql*), then the solution is based on:

i. A combination of the two things that contradict each other: This is impossible because we cannot combine two contradictory things.

ii. Rejection of the two things that contradict each other: This is impossible because one of the two contradiction must be accepted.

iii. Start with the evidence of revelation rather than the evidence of intellect: This is also impossible because the intellect is the origin of revelation. If we start with the evidence of revelation rather than of the intellect, we would be insulting the intellect. When the position of the intellect is insulted we would end up insulting revelation because the intellect is the origin of revelation.

iv. This means that common sense must take precedence over revelation: Then the explanation of the intellect to clarify the meaning of revelation shall be given close scrutiny (Ibn Taimiyah, 1950, p. 1).

According to Safar al-Hawaly, some of the supporters of the concept above were al-Razi, al-Ghazali, al-Juwayni, al-'Ijiy, Ibn Fawruq and al-Sanusi. Safar al-Hawaly attested that the concept of *al-Qanun* is to combine the teachings of revelation with the teachings of philosophy (al-Hawaly, 1986, p. 34).

This kind of concept denies the *Hadith* of the Prophet. Some scholars reject the use of the *Hadith* where it contradicts the Qur'an. They claim that most verses of the *Hadith* oppose the teachings of the Qur'an and the two are in conflict with one another. They believe that the *Hadith* is an unreasonable teaching in the form of intellectual law. The intellectual and logical concepts held by this group clearly show they are influenced by the views of the *Mu'tazilah*. They state that even if the *Hadith* were accepted by Muslims as a second source of law, its legitimacy is still disputed by the *Mu'tazilah*, consisting of philosophers and scientists. This shows that there is no final agreement on the validity of the *Hadith* as the final approval of the Qur'an (Kassim, 1992, p. 47).

The Greeks introduced the earliest concepts pertaining to understanding knowledge and reality. According to Aristotle, reality does not only contain meaning, it also coincides with basic metaphysics and high logic. He outlined the principles outlining reality in the following way:

i. Everything is in its own right. There can be no consent if there is no contradiction.

ii. From two possible sides to any question, one must be admitted and the other denied; the one admitted is the correct understanding.

iii. Between two contradictory statements, one must be affirmed and the other denied; there cannot be a third statement (Mohd, 1982, p. 98).

There is no doubt that the influence of philosophy on Muslims is one of the reasons for this problem. In this connection, al-Sayutiy explained that philosophy and logic had affected the thinking of Muslims, especially during the time of foreign nation states in the first century, but the scholars of *al-Salaf* played their role by preventing Muslims from receiving this influence. However, al-Sayutiy further expounded, the influence of philosophy began to spread in the times of Yahya Ibn Khalid Ibn Barmak, and it grew and flourished during the reign of al-Ma'mun, who encouraged the teaching of philosophy at that time (al-Sayutiy, n.d, p. 12).

Yahya Ibn Khalid encouraged the reading of Greek thinking. He procured Greek philosophical manuscripts from the Roman state where they had been archived safely for fear that if they were disseminated to the public, the people of Rome would subscribe to the religion of Greece. So when the books were endorsed by Yahya, the Roman state agreed to give them to him because in that way they believed they could bring harm to Islam. The King of the Romans is recorded to have said to his minister; "If it (the philosophy manuscript) were to be with the Nasarites and they have read it, it would have caused destruction to their religion and shattered their community. And I thought of sending it (the manuscript) to him (Yahya) and I would ask him not to return it. They would be tempted by it (the manuscript), and so we would be saved of its evil" (al-Sayutiy, n.d, p. 8).

A similar statement was recorded as having been made by one of the ministers of King Qubrus when al-Ma'mun asked for the philosophy books, who had said, "*These sciences would not get into an Islamic nation without damaging it and cause division and misunderstanding among its scholars*" (al-Sayutiy, n.d, p. 7). Because of the awareness of the danger that it could cause to Muslims, al-Shafi'i declared, "People were not ignorant and were not divided until when they sacrificed the Arabic tongue for [the] Aristotelic tongue" (al-Sayutiy, n.d, p. 15).

Al-Shafi'i mentions the fact as his response to the teaching of philosophy that affected the *Mu'tazilah* at that time, as they abandoned submission and obedience to the Qur'an and disputed the teachings of the Qur'an and the *Hadith* of the Prophet with their logical sense, thinking that the Qur'an was a created entity (al-Sayutiy, n.d, p. 15). Some among the *Mu'tazilah* affected by this philosophy were Wasil Ibn 'Ata', al-Huzayl, Ibn Siyar al-Nizzam, Ibn Khabid, Ibn 'Ubbad al-Sulamiy and Ibn Atras al-Numayriy (al-Shahrastani, n.d, p. 42-85).

Others such as Ibn Sina, al-Kindi, al-Farabi, al-Razi and Ibn Rushd are considered to have brought together revelation and Greek philosophy to produce a robust philosophy called Islamic philosophy. According to Aboebakar (1970, p. 15), the basis of Greek philosophical thought is also the basis of Islamic philosophy.

What is clear about the influence of philosophy on Muslims is that it damaged their faith. Those influenced by philosophical teachings raised the intellect to a higher position than the position of revelation. For example, al-Razi, according to Harun (1978, p. 21-22), was an individual who believed in the power of the intellect and did not believe in revelation. He believed there was no need for prophets and apostles and that prophets and apostles wrecked the lives of the people through their teachings. He noted that people subscribed to religion as tradition and as such, denied the possibility of miracles.

Al-Farabi considered God as sense; from sense, there emerges existence of the other. God was considered a form of the First Existence and that intellect arose as the Second Existence; this splitting of existence continued up to the 10th Existence (Harun, 1978, p. 27-28). He also said there were similarities between the Angels and the 10th sense. Ibn Sina held this same view.

This explanation clearly shows that the group that contradicted raised the intellect above the Qur'an and the *Hadith*. They made the intellect the chief of all laws and principles (Harun, 1978, p. 31). To understand this concept in more detail, it is necessary to review its main principles (Harun, 1978, p. 35).

Principles Contained in the Concept

The following explains the main principles contained in the above concept:

Intellect as an assessment to revelation. Those who adhere to the *al-Qanun al-Kulliy* will not receive revelation if it is not evaluated by the intellect. For them, the teachings of the Qur'an and the *Hadith* must

be in accordance with the intellect. If it is not, they reject it.

Al-Dhahabi narrated that Mu'az Ibn Mu'az, when he heard 'Amr Ibn 'Ubayd repeating from the *Hadith* the circumstances of a baby's existence in its mother's belly, recited from 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud, "If I had heard al-A'mash mention it, I would have rejected it, until he [said] even if I had heard the Prophet (s.a.w) saying it, I would have challenged it" (al-Dhahabi, 2004, p. 104-105).

Al-Qadi (1988, p. 690), one of the *Mu'tazilah* who clearly adhered to this principle, easily rejected the *Hadith* where it is associated with intercession (*shafa'ah*) that is received by believers who have committed major sins. In this regard, he stated of the *Hadith*, "My intercession (*Shafa'ah*) is for perpetrators of major sins, is not authentic." If it is valid, this *Hadith* is a single *Hadith* of the Prophet (*Ahad*) that does not generate any sience. Thus, he believed that this *Hadith* of the Prophet could not be used as an argument.

Al-Qadi (1988, p. 232) also denied that those who have faith will be able to see God on the day of judgement. He said that if God could be seen, God would be equal to His creation, and this means God's message would have to be rejected. Because everything can be seen in the future, this would be something seen by all. If God can be seen, He would have mass; if He had mass, He would be just like His creation. Therefore, it had to be denied that God would be seen in the Hereafter as stated by the *Hadith* in question, "Indeed you will see your Lord on the day of resurrection as you see the full moon…or as reported" (al-Qadi, 1988, p. 267). Al-Qadi firmly stated that this *Hadith* suggested that God was equal to His creation because the moon is seen as a round shape, high and luminous in the sky. Therefore, he attested, God should not be described. He explained that the information against the Prophet was a lie and that he had not said so; the message was just a fabrication. He said that even if the information were authentic it was only a single *Hadith* of the Prophet and it did not have any knowledge or benefit (al-Qadi, 1988, p. 268-269).

What is clear from the above statement is that the *Mu'tazilah* adhered to the principle that the intellect is superior to revelation. When the intellect sees a revealed message that seems illogical and unreasonable, it rejects it without compromise. This principle can be seen more clearly in al-Qadi's (1988, p. 226) statement that it is impossible for revelation by itself to explain the nature of God because the validity of the texts about the nature of God can only be decided by the intellect. Thus, he was explaining texts that described the nature of God. Al-Rumiy (1986, p. 53) said that the concept of the intellect by the *Mu'tazilah* can be seen from two goals; one, as freeing thought from any ties to revelation, and two, as making the intellect the absolute punisher.

They made every effort to adapt the texts of the Qur'an and the *Hadith* conform to common sense by their opinions. Al-Zamakhsyariy once stated when describing the intellect as the king on the stage,

"Perform your religi[ous duty] under the supervision of the authority, and do not accept the relation of so and so" (Al-Rumiy, 1986, p. 54).

This principle also affected Muhammad 'Abduh when he declared the first basis of Islam as the debate of the intellect to acquire knowledge, besides making the intellect a way to achieve true faith. The second basis of Islam according to 'Abduh was giving the text a more intellectual view than was apparent when there is conflict (Al-Rumiy, 1407H, p. 730).

The Shiites also displayed their stand on this principle. Al-Tusi, when criticising an opinion that the prophets and apostles in the context of *ma'sum* were inseparable from sin based on the evidence of *Surah Taha*, verse 121, which reads, "…And Adam disobeyed his Lord and he strayed," stated that those who thought so were wrong in their interpretation of the verse. In this context, he explained, the intellect did not necessarily understand the evidence of the words literally. Despite that, the truth of the matter was that the intellect required the prophets and apostles not to do wrong. Therefore, the verse should be interpreted in its literal sense. (al-Tusi, 1986, p. 262).

What is clear is actually a group of Shiites have been firmly clinging to the works of the famous *Mu'tazilah* with its principle that the intellect is superior to revelation, and it is on this principle that their argument concerning the nature of God and *qadar* (predestination) is based. *Qadr* (predestination) is the same as *Mu'tazilah*, as explained by Ibn Taymiyah (1986, p. 70).

One who was clearly from this group was Hitham Ibn al-Hakam, who thought that God has mass, although there are Shiites, *al-Jahiz* included, who did not think that God has mass. They also thought that God does not know anything until it happens (Ibn Taimiyyah, 1986, p. 71-73). They argued that the Qur'an was created and God cannot be seen in the Hereafter, and as such, rejected *qadar*, saying God is unable to give directions or mislead anyone (Ibn Taimiyyah, 1986, p. 99).

As for the *Jahmiyyah*, they were affected by the philosophical teachings introduced by Samaniyyah, a Hindu philosopher who only trusted what existed. So, al-Jahm Ibn Safwan supported the opinion that God absolutely exists without any nature (Abul 'Iz, 1987, p. 794). His teacher, Ibn al-Ja'd, also took lessons from the philosopher of Harran in addition to learning from a Jew who deviated from his religion, and who also had a relationship with Lubayd Ibn al-'Asam, who conjured the prophet. We therefore see that this group denied many established tenets of the faith (al-Baghdadi, 1977, p. 211).

The anti-*Hadith* who claimed to be patriots of freedom of thought (Kassim, 1992, p. 15) found that many of their religious beliefs clearly contradicted the stand of *Ahl al-Sunnah*. Some of these were:

a. Only cling to the the Qur'an;

b. Reject in *qadar* (predestination);

c. *Shahadah* is only '*la ilaha illa Allah*';

d. Reject intercession;

e. Reject miracles (*al-mu'jizah*);

f. Reject punishment of apostasy;

g. Reject stoning;

h. Everyone has the right to profess any religion;

i. Pray according to one's accepted way, and so on (Kassim, 1992, p. 139-150).

It is clear that the main principle was that the intellect was more valuable than revelation, and any teaching that did not conform with the intellect was rejected.

Intellect is absolute as a source of religion. This principle was clearly displayed by those involved in Theosophy, which had characteristics of philosophy. A basic understanding of the formation of *Wahdah al-Wujud* (Pantheism) proves that it was derived from the philosophy of Plotinus. According to Plotinus, the universe flowed from the original. The flowing out is the original equipment, and in this context God is not within the natural environment, but the environment is in God (Mohd, 1982, p. 132). Plotinus also believed that a first creature called intellect existed i.e. the world of thought. From the intellect, clearly came the human soul, which came after the birth of things. According to this philosophy, the closest thing to God is the intellect, as origin gave birth to the intellect as well as the mental world. According to Plotinus, the birth of a variety of things in nature, including humans as well as objects that are not organic, takes place as the shedding of energy into those objects (Mohd, 1982, p. 134).

It is clear from the statement above that this universe generated from gods. In this connection Sulaiman (1999, p. 38) explained that the notion *emanisasi* or beam is so obviously embraced by al-Farabi. He believed that God is the first intellect that caused the second intellect to exist through a process known as overflow, where the second intellect, then the third intellect were born and so on till the 10th intellect or the 11th. The spirits of humans on earth are made from the overflow of the 11th intellect.

Sirojudin (1999, p. 99-100) also explained that according to this understanding, the existence of something is an absolute existence, though this nature existed, but its existence exists as the shadow of the substance of God. This means all existence is only one fact of God. This thought was also shared by Naqiub Sayid al-Atas. This can be seen in the explanation that the doctrine of *Wahdah al-Wujud* (Pantheism) is the principal teaching of Theosophy arising from faith, when faith is born in the Islamic dimension, then W*ahdah al-Wujud* (Pantheism) is an inner dimension (Sulaiman, 1999, p. 69).

The teaching, *al-Ittihad* (merger), was that a servant united with his god. Such teachings were influenced by philosophy and ideas of Philon Alexander, who maintained that the ultimate goal was to unite with God in spirit and feeling. He believed that the highest knowledge was to look into the soul of a god that could not be known (Mohd, 1982, p. 129).

The ideology of *al-Hulul* is also sourced from philosophy. It states that God chose

certain people's bodies to exist after what was human in the body is removed. This concept was actually derived from Neo-Pythagorean philosophy, the founder of which was Moderatus from Gades, who lived in the first century. His teaching was developed by Nicomachos from Gerasa in the Arab states, and was further advanced by Noumenios from Apamea (Mohd, 1982, p. 127). According to this philosophy, the cleanest of all the stains is God, and all human nature is stained. Therefore, according to this doctrine, God can only be approached through spirit, because the spirit does not need any tool to be close to God. Hence this doctrine explained that the soul lives forever and moves from one generation to the other (Mohd, 1982, p. 127-128).

Harun stated that, according to the teachings of Theosophy, before God can take over the place in man, man must first get rid of the attributes of humanity. When people give up human nature, they go through the process of *al-Fana'* and *al-Baqa'*, travelling towards the divine attributes of God, where God is moving into the body of the human; this is when the spirit of God and the spirit of man unites (Harun, 1978, p. 89).

It is clear that there were thinkers who made the intellect the absolute source of religion, an idea that originated with the Greeks. In Islamic thought, this philosophy is wrong. It is unfortunate that many among the intellectual Muslims were influenced by these teachings.

Ridiculing the evidence of *naql*. This principle considered that the evidence of *naql* seems to be doubtful (*zan*) and was not strong evidence neither was it intellectual. When the intellect is considered the assessor of revelation, that revelation could come from God is simply not admitted. If revelation is to be accepted, it must succumb to being judged by the intellect. If the intellect affirms it, the doctrine of revelation is accepted; otherwise, it is not.

A careful study of the establishment of the *Mu'tazilah* shows that they exalted the intellect while ridiculing revelation. This is seen in the five bases or origins they held, namely, justice, faith, the promise of good and bad, *al-'amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice) and *al-manzilah bayn al-manzilatayn* (status among the middle range). For instance, in the case of faith, according to Abul 'Iz (1987, p. 793), such matters are determined based on the intellect, upon evidence of *naql*. According to al-'Ijiy, *naql* cannot produce a firm conviction unless it is found not to be contrary to the intellect, and if there is conflict between *naql* and *'aql*, then the *'aql* must be ahead of the *naql* (al-Sufyani, 1988, p. 194).

In this connection, it is clear that *naql* was subjected to the judgement of *al-'aql*. From the perspective of jurisprudence, this group of thinkers believed that *fiqh* cannot be trusted as it too would not allow for credible evidence. These thinkers, as did al-Razi and al-Juwayni, for example, distinguished between *al-Adillah* (evidence) and *al-Amarat*. According to them, outward evidence is *'am* (general), *mutlaq* (absolute),

qiyas (measurement), *khabar ahaad* (single informant *Hadith*) and *al-Istishab*. While this may be acceptable evidence, it was not accepted by these thinkers as evidence and was termed *al-Amarat*. For them evidence had to generate confidence (al-'Arusi, 1990, p. 23).

According to al-'Arusi (1990, p. 25), the two terms derived from the *Mu'tazilah* did not provide for tangible evidence and denied also the source of *Ahaad*, especially the attributes of God and the Hereafter. This was because these thinkers had already decided that everything rested on the intellect or '*ijma*' (consensus) among themselves or texts which in their view were *qata'i* (final proof). Therefore, since matters such as the punishment of the grave, intercession, *al-sirat* (Path) and *al-mizan* (scales) are explained by the Qur'an and the *Hadith*, and not by the intellect, they are not approved. Thus, to ensure that there was a difference between the evidence accepted by the group of thinkers as *qata'i* the terms *al-Dalil* (evidence) and *al-'Amarat* were coined; therefore, when there was a conflict between the evidence accepted by the intellect and *al-Amarat*, the evidence accepted by the intellect would be choosen over *al-'Amarat*.

In this connection, al-Razi (1992, p. 390-406) mentioned in his book of *usul* that the evidence of the Qur'an and the *Hadith* on issues of law was doubtful (*zan*); therefore, to accept the evidence, there must be 10 conditions, one of which was that the evidence could not be contrary to the intellect. If it was, then the intellect would be chosen.

It can be concluded that those who evaluated the texts of the Qur'an and the *Hadith* chose one of the following three options:

i.   Accept the explanation of the texts, acknowledging the conditions on the intellect;

ii. Interpret the explanation of the passages based on their own views; or

iii. Reject the texts because they cannot be accepted by the intellect.

It is thus clear that this group of thinkers were not convinced by evidence as given by the Qur'an and the *Hadith*. All evidence had to be accepted by the intellect only; otherwise it was rejected.

Uphold the interpretation (*ta'wil*). *Ta'wil* are the principles contained in this concept. Generally, *ta'wil* in this context means to change the meaning of an utterance from literal to deep meaning without reliance upon any valid evidence. Al-Amidi explained *ta'wil* as, "using a statement against its apparent connotation, and assuming it means the same." This gives to *ta'wil* one of three connotations as described by al-Shanqiti, namely:

i.   Changing the meaning of words that are not apparent to their apparent meaning based on the authentic evidence of the Qur'an and the *Hadith*. According to al-Shanqiti, *ta'wil* (interpretation) in this sense is true without *khilaf* (dispute). *Al-Jaar* (neighbour) is interpreted as *al-Shariik* (partner) as stated in the

Hadith, "*al-Jaar* (neighbour) or partners are more entitled to the goods shared" (Ibn Hajar, 1986, p. 437). Interpretting *al-Jaar* in the *Hadith* from the apparent meaning to mean *al-Syariik* is based on al-Shanqiti's words, "…and when the limits had been determined, and the ways had been changed, then it is no longer convertible property" (Ibn Hajar, 1986, p. 436).

ii. Changing the meaning of words that are not apparent to the apparent intention by a *mujtahid* (diligent). An example is Abu Hanifah's interpretation of women in the *Hadith*, "Any woman who got married without the approval of her guardian, her marriage becomes invalid." In the words of Sahih Sunan Abi Dawud, it is *mawaaliha*. He interpreted the word *imraah*, which means women in the apparent meaning, literally. It is the slave who is not independent. This *ta'wil* is not correct because the word *ayyu* (any) that preceeds *imraah* is of the general sense rather than the specific. *Ta'wil* of this type is known as *Ta'wilan ba'iidan* (distant interpretation) or *Ta'wilan Faasidan* (corrupt interpretation).

iii. Changing the apparent purpose to another meaning that is not apparent without any charge to the evidence. This type of interpretation is wrong and misleading, as practised by theologians, for example. Where texts outwardly clear are interpreted according to will, such as *al-Rafidah*, who interprets verse 67 of *Surah al-Baqara* as, "Allah commands you to slaughter a cow." This group of thinkers interpreted *Baqara*, the ostensible purpose of heifers, as '*Aayishah*, the intangible, without any evidence. This *ta'wil* is also likely to hold true for the nature of God (al-Shanqiti, 1991, p. 80-82).

This third connotation of *ta'wil* is a contingency in understanding the Qur'an and the *Hadith*. This type of *ta'wil* is invalid and the method deviates from authentic *ta'wil*. According to al-Julaynid (1983, p. 86), the *Khawarij* were the first to interpret passages of the Qur'an incorrectly. One example of invalid interpretation they made is of verse 71 of *Surah al-An'am*, "Say (Oh Muhammad): Shall we invoke other than Allah… ." They interpreted the verse with the intent that those on the right path are the Nahrawan (*al-Khaw-arij*). Another example is of verse 204 of *Surah al-Baqarah*: "And from amongst men is one whose speech about worldly life amazes you... ." They interpreted *man* as 'Ali (r.a), and that he was a hypocrite who spouted interesting speech about worldly life (al-'Ash'ar-i, n.d., p. 103).

The Shi'ites, as described by Ibn Qutayba, also claimed to have inner knowledge, and they interpreted verse 16 of *Surah al-Naml* to Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) as, "And Sulaiman inherited Dawud… ." They said that Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) had bequeathed his knowledge to the priest. They interpreted verse 67 of *Surah al-Baqarah* as, "Allah has ordered that you sacrifice a heifer." They

said that God had ordered the slaughter of Aisha (Ibn Qutayba, n.d, p. 49). They also legalised illegal items such as wine and carcasses, giving an invalid interpretation of verse 93, *Surah al-Ma'idah*, "There is no sin on those who believe and do good concerning what they taste… ."

The *Mu'tazilah* interpreted a lot of the verses of the Qur'an by changing the meaning of terms, for instance, they changed God's hands to grace and God's eyes to knowledge and rejected the idea that God had a face. They construed *al-Somad* as meaning *al-Sayyid* (al-'Ash'ar-i, n.d, p. 6).

In connection with *Tariqah al-Batiniyyah* (mysticism), according to Ibn Taimiyyah, they interpreted religion as a whole, considering the whole Qur'an as something tangible and necessary. They interpreted Muslims' prayers as performing a secret activity, fasting as hiding a secret and pilgrimage as a journey to their sheikhs. According to this group of thinkers, the general community were allowed literal interpretations, while a special inner circle could be entrusted with deeper understanding of the laws. For this reason, they did not observe many religious practices (Ibn Taimiyyah, 1985, p. 48).

CONCLUSION

This paper explored the invalidity of the principle of *ta'wil* employed by various sects in interpreting the Qur'an and the *Hadith*. These *ta'wil* caused them to stray from the approved teachings of Islam and to indulge in irregularities. This strongly suggests,

therefore, that the concept of preferring the intellect to reality as offered by the Qur'an and the *Hadith* is not the practice of all scholars. While the mainstream scholars validate the teachings of the Qur'an and the *Hadith*, one group of thinkers chose not to, doing injustice to the concepts of faith and Sharia. It is the stand of this paper that the *al-Qanun al-Kulliy* has been misused and exaggerated; it has too greatly absorbed the influence of Greek teachings imported without reservation into Islam. However, if properly and carefully employed, *al-Qanun al-Kulliy* could be of great service in understanding the message and content of the Qur'an, and, of course, the *Hadith* of the Prophet (S.A.W).

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