ALBANIAN CONTEMPORARY QUR'ANIC EXEGESIS:

SHEIKH HAFIZ IBRAHIM DALLIU'S COMMENTARY

(Tafsir Al-Quran Kontemporari Albania: Ulasan Oleh Sheikh Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu)

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ABSTRACT:

The objective of this study is to explore and analyze the main intellectual and religious trends and tendencies in the writings of Albanian Ulema in their dealing with Qur'anic studies, in the modern time, in the Balkan Peninsula in Europe. In conducting this study, the researcher has utilized inductive, historical, critical and analytical methodologies. The Albanian lands in the Balkan Peninsula were governed and ruled by the Islamic Ottoman Empire for almost five centuries. Historically, to some extent and despite the conflicts and clashes, Albanians were able to show to the world a very good sample of peace, unity and harmony among themselves, as a multi religious and multi ethnic society. The attention and the engagement of the Albanian Ulema with the Our'anic sciences have been tremendous since the spread of Islam, and have to be taken into consideration. Despite the tough and serious political, economic and religious challenges in the 19^{th} and 20^{th} centuries, they were not distracted from conducting their learning and teaching affaires. As a result of very close contacts and relations with different ideologies, cultures and civilizations within the Ottoman mixed ethnicity and in the middle-east, the researcher based on different sources, was able to identify and discover Sunni Maturidi dogmatic approach in dealing with Quranic Exegesis in the Commentary of Sheikh Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu-a case study. The results and conclusions of this study are to be taken into consideration also, especially when we know that the current and modern historical sources of Albania are deviated almost completely and not to be trusted at all, because they failed to show to the Albanian people a real picture of Islam. They also failed to understand the great role and positive impact of Islam on their lives which was manifested by the Islamic Ottoman Empire.

Keywords: *Qur'anic exegesis, Ottoman empire, Sunni Maturidi, Sheikh Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, Albania.*

ABSTRAK:

Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk meneroka dan menganalisis aliran dan kecenderungan utama penulisan oleh intelektual dan ulama Albania dalam pengajian al-Qur'an, di semenanjung Balkan, Eropah pada era serba moden ini. Dalam menjalankan kajian ini, pengkaji sejarah, kritikal dan analitikal. Tanah Albania di menggunakan metodologi induktif, semenanjung Balkan telah ditadbir dan diperintah oleh Kerajaan Islam Uthmaniyah selama 5 abad. Berdasarkan sejarah, walaupun berdepan dengan konflik dan pertempuran, Albania mampu menunjukkan kepada dunia satu contoh terbaik tentang keamanan, kesatuan, dan keharmonian di kalangan mereka sebagai satu masyarakat berbilang agama dan juga etnik. Perhatian dan pembabitan ulama' Albania dengan sains al-Qur'an telah berkembang sejak penyebaran Islam, dan telah mendapat pertimbangan yang sewajarnya. Walaupun cabaran politik, ekonomi, dan agama agak sukar dan serius pada abad ke 19 dan 20, namun mereka tidak terganggu dalam melaksanakan urusan pembelajaran dan pengajaran. Hasilnya, hubungan yang akrab dengan pelbagai ideologi, budaya, dan tamadun di dalam etnik campuran Uthmaniyah dan juga Timur Tengah ditambah dengan pengkajian berdasarkan sumber yang pelbagai, membolehkan pengkaji mengenal pasti dan menemui pendekatan dogmatik aliran Sunnah

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Maturidi dalam berurusan dengan tafsir ayat al-Qur'an, berdasarkan ulasan Sheikh Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, sebagai satu bahan kajian. Keputusan dan kesimpulan kajian ini diambil kira, terutamanya apabila kita mengetahui bahawa sumber sejarah Albania moden dan pada masa kini diselewengkan hampir sepenuhnya dan tidak boleh dipercayai lagi, kerana mereka gagal menunjukkan kepada masyarakat Albania tentang gambaran Islam yang sebenar. Mereka juga gagal memahami peranan hebat dan impak positif Islam dalam kehidupan mereka, sebagaimana yang telah ditonjolkan oleh Kerajaan Islam Uthmaniyah.

Kata Kunci: Tafsir al-Quran, empayar Uthmaniyah, Sunnah Maturidi, Sheikh Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, Albania.

INTRODUCTION

Muslims of the Balkans in Europe were faced with numerous social, political, religious and ideological problems, and Albanian scholars were among the first to suffer the consequences of these challenges. In this context, Dr. Ismail Bardhi, a Macedonian Albanian famous researcher says:

"The Muslims of our region, such as the Albanians, Bosnians, etc., found themselves in a very difficult situation, and they experienced an intellectual crisis as well as a crisis of historical truth, and the shaking of the values of the modern civilization; many problems remained untackled or dealt with in outdated ways. However, their faith, their love for Islam and its brotherhood forced them to start occupying themselves with the Qur'anic commentary, among other things.¹

At this time, the commentary of the Qur'an appeared along with its translation. This was done by Albanians as well as Bosnians. It is interesting to note the almost simultaneous appearance of similar methods of Qur'anic commentary with small methodological differences. The first commentary among Albanians was published in 1929, by Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, whereas among Bosnians we see the commentary of Shukrija Alagic,² published in 1931, which was a translation of Rashid Rida's Tafsir".

During the early twentieth century a number of books were written on Qur'anic exegesis. There were Albanian scholars who have commented upon one third of the Qur'an in a scholarly way and an authentic method, such as the commentary written by Sheikh Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, which constitutes the topic of this paper.

There have also been commentaries upon specific verses and chapters of the Qur'an by other authors, such as the long commentary on the Sura al-Fatiha by Sheikh Hajj Vehbi Agolli-Dibra, the brief commentary of several chapters and some single verses by Sheikh Hafiz Ali Korça, the brief and concise translation and commentary of Sheikh H.Sharif Ahmedi, etc.

¹ On the crisis of Islamic thought, see Abu Sulayman Abd al-Hamid, *Azmat al-'aql al-muslim*, Dar al-alamiyya lil-Kitab al-islami, 2nd ed., 1992.

² Ismail Bardhi, *Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu dhe egzegjeza e tij kur'anore*, p. 160.

In this paper we shall deal with the personality and the commentary of Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, *The Essence of the Meanings of the Qur'an*, as well as his views on certain verses regarding important creedal matters, such as: the Divine Names, the Divine Attributes, seeing God the Exalted, etc.

The commentary of Sheikh Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu is one of the most voluminous and important ones during the modern period to have survived. Therefore we shall refer mostly to this commentary in comparison with other personalities and examples.

ON THE AUTHOR OF THIS COMMENTARY

Sheikh Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu was born in 1878 in Tirana-Albania. He hails from a religious and intellectual family. His birth coincided with the Albanian Renaissance movement, at a time when the first signs of separation from the Ottoman caliphate had appeared among Albanian intellectuals. He received his early education at his home town, where he quickly learned the *hifz* of the Noble Qur'an. The memorising of the Qur'an was a widespread phenomenon among Albanians, to the extent that there was rarely a scholar of religion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century who did not know the Qur'an by heart.

Sheikh Dalliu pursued his higher studies in religion at the Dar al-Ulum University of Istanbul, which was a major centre of different sciences and the study of Eastern cultures, and where courses were being taught in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. However, due to the difficult economic situation, he was forced to interrupt his studies, hoping to get back to them, but unfortunately he was never able to continue them. Sheikh Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu's personality was marked by a cosmopolitan culture, because he had extensive religious culture and deep knowledge. There is evidence that his life was replete with continuous efforts for the defending of the Albanian national identity from extinction and assimilation into the Greek, Italian, and Serbian cultures.

The first school established by Sheikh Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu was the school for girls, from which the first generation of Muslim lady-teachers emerged, and which played an important role in the cultural and Islamic history of Albania. In 1909, he was appointed a teacher of Albanian in the well-known Elbasan gymnasium, where he taught Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. The Sheikh was involved in the greater jihad with his soul, his tongue, and his pen. He was very eloquent, very precise in his speech, and he soon became well-known throughout Albanian territories for his beautiful sermons in mosques. Under such circumstances, Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu remarked in a public speech that: "Ignorance does not disappear with tanks and artillery, but rather with people who work in spreading knowledge."

He remained strong and steadfast in front of all these social and political turmoil's, until he passed away in Tirana, in 1952. He was indeed a Sheikh, a scholar, a cleric, and a patriot Muslim. May God have mercy upon his soul!

HIS WORK AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

As we mentioned, Sheikh Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu was a scholar of wide academic interests, which are reflected in his activity. His work focused on four main aspects: the religious, the social, the literary, and the political. Unfortunately, most of his writings were destroyed by the communist regime, and only a very small part of his opus has remained.

The testimony of his contemporary colleague Imam Vehbi Ismaili¹ confirms the large number of his writings. According to some scholars, he has been quoted as saying that Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu wrote thousands of pages. If this is true, it would place him in a unique position among Albanian Muslim scholars. This is not surprising at all, because he possessed the keys to the knowledge of different cultures, anmely their languages. It is a gift which God bestows to whomever He wants, He is the Glorious, the Exalted.

The following is a list of Sheikh Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu's works:

"Ajka e kuptimeve të Kur'ani Qerimit" *The Essence of the Meanings of the Qur'an*. This is his most voluminous work to have survived, in spite of the communist inquisition and terror in Albania. It is an incomplete commentary of the Noble Qur'an. He has commented up to the beginning of Chapter al-Tawbah, in three volumes.

In his book "Libri i së falmes", (*The book of prayer*) Sheikh Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu writes: "*The book* "Ajka e kuptimeve të Kur'ani Qerimit" (The essence of the Qur´anic meanings) has been translated by myself and published by the Muslim Community. There are also three unpublished volumes thereof..."²

Although it is incomplete, I thank God that this Albanian scholar has produced a fully methodological commentary, and I only wish he had finished it, but it was God's will that the author passed away without completing this noble task.

Through his commentary, he tried to readdress and solve mistaken opinions existing among Albanian Muslims, who were under the pressure of ideologies such as communism and its

¹ Imam Vehbi Ismaili is an Albanian from Shkodra. He studied at al-Az'har during the WW II, never to return to Albania again. He served as an imam, preacher and head of Albanian Muslim Communities in North America. He has written a large number or articles, books and has translated from Arabic and English into Albanian. He passed away in 2008, may God have mercy upon his soul!

² Feti Mehdiu, *Përkthimet e Kur 'anit në gjuhën shqipe*, p. 48.

vicious attack on religion, especially during the second and third decade of the twentieth century.¹ The Sheikh was forced to deal with such issues and to show the truth, which shows that he was conscious about the reality of his time and the challenges it raised.

I pray to Almighty God to choose sincere and devoted Albanian scholars who will continue this great, unfinished project, because the need is felt for such a work. There have been cases when several scholars could not complete their commentaries, but their sincere disciples finished them, such as: the Tafsir of Sheikh Muhammad Abduh, which was resumed after his death by Sheikh Rashid Rida, and Sheikh Rashid Rida reached with his interpretation until verse no: 101 Surat Yusuf. The same happened to the commentary of Sheikh Muhammad al-Amin Shankiti, which was continued by his devoted student Sheikh Muhammad Atiyah Salim, or with Imam Fakhr al-Din Razi's commentary, which was continued by his disciples on the same methodology. the Jalalayn which was written by Imam Jalaluddin Al Muhal-la (d-864) but he did not complete, and was continued by Imam Jalaluddin Al Suyuti (d-911)etc.

Other works by Sheikh Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu are:

"E lemja² **dhe jeta e të madhit Muhammad alejhisselam"**.³ (*The life of the great Muhammad*)

"Dhuntie Ramazani".⁴ (*Blessings of Ramadan*) In this work, the Sheikh comments upon the verse of fasting based on the exegesis of Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, and then goes on to talk about the religious, moral, and health benefits, as well as the economical aspects, and legal rules.

"**Degët e imanit**".⁵ (*Branches of Believe*)According to the author, this booklet is a translation of the commentary of the hadith from Bukhari, written by Mahmud Badr al-Din al-Ayni al-Hanafi.

"Besimi i Muslimanëve".⁶ (*The Beliefe of Muslims*) In this work the author points out some proofs for the existence of God, praising His Glory, stressing the virtues of the Prophet a.s., of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi.

"Ç'ashtë Islamizma?"¹(*What's Islam*) in which the author deals with certain features of *islam* and *iman*, according to the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*.

¹ On the religious and historical characteristics of Albanian territories, see the study by the Italian orientalist Roberto Maroko Dela Roka, *Kombësia dhe feja në Shqipëri*, pp. 117-142.

² "Shkodra" Publishers, Tiranë, 1934.

³ I secured a photocopy of this book from the National Library in Tirana, Albania. It has 228 pages, written in a simple, attractive and fluent prose.

⁴ "Tirana" Publishers, Tiranë 1935.

⁵ "Tirana" Publishers, Tiranë 1943.

⁶ "Tirana" Publishers, Tiranë 1942.

"Libri i së falmes". (*The book of prayer*) Here the author explains the principles of obligatory prayer, ritual purity, and their benefits. He has also translated and commented upon a few brief suras which are read by the praying person.

"Patriotizma² në Tiranë".³ (*Patriots in Tirana*)

Some of his translations are:

- Imam Baghawi's (d. 981 H.) *al-Tarikah al-Muhammadiyya*,⁴ translated as "Udha Muhammadane";⁵ (*The Muhammedan way*)
- 2. Umar Nassuh's: "Mësime teorike dhe praktike të moralit islam";⁶ (*Practical lessons about Islamic Ethics*)
- 3. Imam Nawawi's Forty traditions: **"Hadithi Arbain"**; (*Fourty Hadiths of Nawawi*)
- 4. **"Tajwid al-Qur'an"**, (*The Tajweed of Al Qur' an*) without referring to the original.⁷
- 5. A long list of works in prose, on literary and political critique.⁸

Sheikh Al Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu had other works also, however the communist regime in Albania has destroyed and burned a lot of his works. Similar to him happened to his colleague Sheikh Al Hafiz Ali Korca, a well-known scholar and exegete.

EXAMPLES OF SOME RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC VIEWS IN HIS COMMENTARY

* In his commentary of the word al-alamin " العالمين " ("the worlds") he writes:

"This word is used in plural and it applies to all the names - with the exception of Allah - both for micro beings and macro beings. All beings point to His Being and they cannot

¹ Qendra Islamike Amerikane Press, Detroit, 1992.

² "Imazh" Publishers, Tiranë 1995.

³ It was compiled during the period 1908-1915 in which the names of 150 patriots and Islamic figures, who experienced great tortures and ill-treatment by the Young Turks, were given, including his name. Sheikh Dalliu points out that the reason for their torturing was their insistence on the necessity of education in Albanian.

⁴ Vol. 1, "Tirana" Publishers, Tiranë 1936.

⁵ This book has been re-published in 2000 by the AIITC in Tirana. Essentially, it deals with the beliefs of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*, on the Qur'an, monotheism, innovation in religion, different sciences, the great sins and the ills of the heart. This book had a great impact, filling a wide gap in Islamic literature in Albanian.

⁶ "Tirana" Publishers, Tiranë 1935.

⁷ "Sanxhakçia" Publishers, Tiranë 1921.

⁸ For more information on the life, works and thought of Sheikh Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliut see the following references: Ismail Bardhi, *Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu dhe egzegjeza e tij kur'anore*, pp. 75-100; Zekaj, *Zhvillimi i kulturës islame ndër shqiptarët gjatë shek. XX*, pp. 309-312; "Feja, kultura dhe tradita islame ndër shqiptarët" by: Hysni Myzyri, "*Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu për mësimin shqip në etapën e fundit të Rilindjes*", pp. 405-410; Feti Mehdiu, *Përkthimet e Kur'anit në gjuhën shqipe*, Shkup: Logos-A, 1996, pp. 21-30; Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, *Patriotizma në Tiranë*, op. cit., pp. 37-48; *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfi Islam Ansiklopedisi*, Baglarbashi, Kisikli caddesi, 7, Üskudar - Istanbul 1997, vol. 15, p. 92; Faik A. Kasollja, *Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, jeta e vepra*; Sinan Tafaj, *Jeta e Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliut*; Rezarta Delisula, *Tiranasi që përktheu Kur'anin* (online); Ibrahim Hasanaj, Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, Vepra letrare, "Dokrra hini"; "Grenxat e kuqe të Tiranës"; Petrit Kuse, *Një ëndërr e ime*, Botimet enciklopedike, Tiranë 2000, pp. 91-95.

exist without His care and design, which is why the "al" is used, in order to show generality and continuity. They must all offer praises to Him as is due. All creatures are in need of His supervision, protection, and care. The commentary of the verse "Rabbilalamin – Lord of the worlds" "رب العالمين" – is thus also God is the Creator and Master of all the worlds".¹

* Occasionally he points out the secrets hidden in the verses, such as in the verse: إياك نعبد "

" "*Iyyake na 'budu – Thee alone we worship!*"; where he writes:

"Although the reader of this verse is singular, it does not say "The alone I worship" the verse is in plural, because there are other brothers and servants of God, pious people (awliya') and angels, and it is greatly hoped that God will accept this prayer. This is the reason why the congretional prayer has been ordained, because a good work is worthier and more acceptable to God when it is performed in congregation ..."²

* Sheikh Dalliu mentions different opinions on an issue and then chooses the best. In the

commentary of the verse:

﴿صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ﴾ [الفاتحة: ٧]

"not of those who earned Thine Anger nor of those who went astray!", he says:

"Some scholars say that those who earned God's anger are the Jews, and those who went astray are the Christians. The preferred view for the majority (jumhur) is that those who earned God's anger refers to the sinners and wrongdoers of every nation, whereas those who went astray are those who do not know how to reach the true God, and prefer to remain in darkness..."³

One wonders why the Sheikh preferred this explanation. He did not mention the source

for such an opinion, except if we suppose that he relied on the rules of usul al-fiqh العبرة بعموم اللفظ لا

meaning that: the lessons and benefits from the Qur'anic and prophetic texts must be بخصوص السبب "

deduced from the general meaning and structure of the phrase, and not the specific reason for the revelation of those texts, and therefore the Sheikh refers to the essential meaning of the verse for which it was revealed, and he is very precise in this.

* Occasionally he provides elaborations on important religious matters, as in the verse:

"Who believe in what has been revealed to you...", he says that each Muslim must believe in the earlier revealed books, namely the Torah of Moses a.s., the Injil of Jesus a.s. and in the Psalms of David a.s. in general, and that one must not believe in details thereof. Whereas in the case of the Qur'an, a Muslim must believe in it both in general and in particulars, because it contains Islamic principles in which he must believe fully. The detailed knowledge of the verses' meanings is a general obligation (fard kifaya), not an individual one (fard ayn)."⁴

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

² *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 20-21.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 40.

* As regards the scientific exegesis, Sheikh Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu was known for his intellectual skill, illuminated and open-minded ideas. He had outstripped all his contemporaries in Albania due to his extensive knowledge. In the commentary of the verse:

﴿الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً ... ﴾ [البقرة: ٢٢]

"Who has made the earth a resting place for you, and the sky as a canopy..."¹, he says that it refers to the spherical shape of the earth, which has also been proven by scientific facts. In the beginning the earth was a bright burning mass of gas like a star in the sky², and after a long period of time the fire cooled down to an intermediate state which is neither solid, nor liquid, until it became suitable for life ³.

This was a brief description of his method in commentary, as expounded in the material that was available to us. It is no doubt a strong, scientific, objective, precise method, away from passions and inclinations, which only prove Sheikh Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu's level of knowledge and competence, may God have mercy upon his soul!

EXAMPLES OF SOME POLITICAL VIEWS IN HIS COMMENTARY

As we mentioned, Sheikh Dalliu had an extensive knowledge in religious, social, economic,⁴ political, and even military and security issues.

In his commentary of the verse:

فَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا
 [
 [البقرة: ٢٤٢]

"And their Prophet (Samuel) said to them, "Indeed God has appointed Talut (Saul) as a king over you...",⁵ the Sheikh says that the appointing of Saul as the king of Bani Israil shows that the ruler has a crucial role in the state, and in protecting the interest of his people. He must be religious, courageous, who knows internal and external affairs. Such rulers must be obeyed as long as they do not contradict the constitution, in which case they must depose him. The soldiers must also respect the orders of their commanders in battlefield, and opposing them is forbidden, because the believers must unite in jihad in God's way...⁶.

The lessons learned from the Qur'anic verses are valuable also in political and security

domains, in which the author applies the principles of jurisprudence (قواعد أصول الفقه) and the

¹ al-Baqarah, 22.

² *Ajka e kuptimeve*, vol. 1, p. 66-82.

³ For more details see: Halid Abd al-Rahman al-Aqq, *Usul al-tafsir wa qawa'id*, Beirut: Dar al-Nafais, 2nd ed., 1986, pp. 217-224; al-Rumi, *Usul al-tafsir wa manahijuh*, Riyad, Maktabah al-tawbah, 1413 AH, p. 94; al-Qardawi, *Kayfa Nata'amal ma' al-Qur'an al-adhim*, Cairo: Dar al-shuruk, 1st ed., 1999, pp. 324-369; Sayyid Qutb, *Fi dhilal al-Qur'an*, Dar al-shuruk, Cairo, 11th ed., 1985, vol. 1, pp. 180-181; al-Shatibi, *al-Muwafaqat*, vol. 2, p. 69; al-Dhahabi, *al-Tafsir wa al-mufassirun*, pp. 364-381; al-Ghazali, *Ihya'*, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 289; al-Suyuti, *al-Itqan fi ulum al-Qur'an*; Beirut: Dar al-fikr, 1979, vol. 4, pp. 27-31.

⁴ Such as the prohibition of usury, which he deems as a cause of economic, cultural and industrial damage. The application of usury destroys these goods, which are necessary for a people's development and blossoming ($Ajka \ e$ kuptimeve, vol. 1, p. 428).

⁵ al-Baqarah, 247.

⁶ Ajka e kuptimeve, vol. 1, pp. 373-9, 380-1, 613.

Qur'anic science definitions (قواعد علوم القرآن) to deduce conclusions on political or economic issues: issues:(العبرة بعموم اللفظ لا بخصوص السبب) "The conclusion must be drawn based on the general meaning and not the context of revelation.

*In his commentary to the verse:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ﴾ [النساء: ٥٨]

"Verily! God commands that you should render back the trusts to those to whom they are due; and that when you judge between men, you judge with justice..."¹, the Sheikh addresses his call to the leaders and rulers of different countries, in order for them to work accordingly, in which case they will be strengthening the foundations of their state, otherwise the state will collapse. In his view, regardless of the cause of the revelation of this verse, it has universal applicability, and safety refers to both this world and the next.²

Here, again we can see his precision in the clarification of political, state and security issues, according to the concept of *al- Istihsan* (favourable judgement or view)

THE USE OF THE QUR'ANIC TEXT ACCORDING TO THE MAZ'HAB AL MATURIDI FOR GUIDANCE TO BELIEF IN GOD THE EXALTED

Here we intend to clarify Shaykh Dalliu's method and his orientation in commentary as it is evident that he uses the Qur'anic text to support his creed and his maz'hab. As it is known from the other sources Sheikh Ibrahim Dalliu and all Albanian classical and contemporary scholars as well as Albanian Muslim, they belong to the school of Hanafi Maz 'hab in the jurisprudential issues, and they belong to the school of Maturidi in the creedal-aqidah issues. This ideological believe has been reflected into the methodology of Sheikh Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu's Qur'anic exegesis. The following examples demonstrate clearly this matter.

* In his commentary of the verse:

﴿الَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِينَاقِهِ ...﴾ [البقرة: ٢٧]

"Those who break God's Covenant after ratifying it,³ he says:

"Here God's covenant is the pact which is established between God and them, and this covenant is the intellect,⁴ which He gave them to recognize God the Exalted, to prove His His existence and confirm the message of Muhammad a.s., because when God created the light of thought and gnosis in the human intellect, this was a kind of covenant that they will believe in Him, accepting His Unity, and believing in the message of the Prophet a.s.

¹ En-Nisaë, 58.

² Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 806-7. On the question of the Shari'ah and human rights, see: al-Qadi Burhan al-Din Ibrahim ibn Ali al-Ya'muri (Ibn Farhun), *Tabsirat al-hukkam fi usul al-uqud wa manahij al-ahkam*, Beirut: Dar al-kutub al-ilm, n.d.; Ibn Taymiya, *al-Siyasah al-shar'i fi islahi al-ra'i wa al-ra'ijjeti*, Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, pp. 30-72.

³ al-Baqarah, 27.

⁴ Imam Nasafi points out the opinion of several commentators on the meaning of this verse, one of which is the meaning presented by Shaykh Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu. See the *Tafsir* of Nasafi, vol. 1, p. 78.

The intellect suffices to understand and confirm the arguments of monotheism and prophethood. $^{\prime\prime}$

* Shaykh Hafiz Dalliu repeats the same idea in his commentary of the verse:

" whenever there comes to you Guidance from Me",² in which he says:

"The categorical formulation of the verse regarding the sending of the messengers seems to be saying: "If there comes a prophet unto you, well and fine, otherwise it is not an obligation for Me to send a prophet unto you. If there comes a messenger, this is a favor from God for His servants, and if not, you have the intellect which offers proofs for belief in God and His Unity, through your reading of the signs of the universe."³

This statement has been heavily influenced by the ideas of Imam al-Maturidi. In his commentary of the verse:

"Those who break God's Covenant after ratifying it" ⁴

Imam al-Maturidi says that recognition of God means the pledge given to God in two forms: the pledge of the creatures that they will testify to the Unity of God the Glorious, as in the Qur'anic verse:

إَنْ فُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ [الذاريات : ٢١]
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"And in your own selves, will you not see?" 5

The second form concerns the pledge regarding the message brought by the prophets and the messengers, as in the verse:

﴿وَقَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ لَئِنْ أَقَمْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَيْتُمُ الزَّكَاةَ وَآمَنْتُمْ بِرُسُلِي وَعَزَّرْتُمُوهُمْ...﴾ [المائدة: ١٢]

"And Allah said: "I am with you: if ye (but) establish regular prayers, practise regular charity, believe in my messengers, honour and assist them..."⁶

إِذَا أَحَدَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكْتُمُونَهُ...
 [آل عمران: ١٨٧]

"(And remember) when God took a covenant from those who were given the Scripture to make it known and clear to mankind, and not to hide it.." 7

Thus, according to the Maturidis, the recognition of God, despite its being evident and deductive, has been ingrained in the soul before thought.⁸ Belief in God is an instinct which God has placed into existence, which testifies to His Being and feels this truth.⁹

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 78.

² al-Baqarah, 38.

³ *Ajka e kuptimeve*..., vol. 1, p. 98.

⁴ al-Baqarah, 27.

⁵ al-Dhariat, 21.

⁶ al-Ma'ida, 12.

⁷ Bel-Qasim al-Ghali, *Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, Hayatuh wa ara'uh al-aqadiyya*, p. 98, quoting from Abu Mansur al-Maturidi's *Ta'wilat al-Sunnah*, vol. 1, p. 80.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 98-99.

⁹ Sayyid Qutb, Fi dhilal al-Qur'an, vol. 3, p. 668.

As for the obligatory knowledge of God and the paths leading to it, this has been dealt with by many mutakallimun, both in the past and present. The different strands that have appeared in the Islamic world regarding this issue have been summarized in a recent thesis by a scholar¹ who points out that there existed a group who claimed that the knowledge of God is hermeneutical; according to another group, knowing God is obligatory, while according to others it comes from inspirations, and still others say that it comes from the Imam.

In addition to these strands, there are also the following orientations:

 The oldest school of this strand is the rationalist, Mu'tazilite school, according to which God is known through reason, studying, analysing, and logic, i.e. rationally (*bi al-nadhari*). This kind of thinking which seeks to arrive at the reality of

things, must be the first obligation, as the Mu'tazilite Imam al-Qadi Abd al-Jabbar says in reply to the question as to what is man's first obligation: "The analysis or scrutiny of the scientific proofs and the proofs from the created order which lead to the knowledge of God the Exalted". One of their imams exaggerates so much as to say that whoever does not know God through proofs is an unbeliever, because the opposite of knowledge is ignorance and ignorance is disbelief (kufr)! This extremism is no doubt a straying from the straight path...

- 2) The traditional school, i.e. the school of the pious ancestors may God be pleased with them, according to them, the knowledge of God belongs to the unseen and it cannot be perceived by the intellect, and therefore one must rely on what has been related by the Companions from the Prophet a.s.
- **3)** The synthesis between the traditional and the traditional schools. This is the way of the Ash'arites, for whom knowledge of God is established through the Shari'ah, through reasoning, and intellection. It is the Shari'ah which orders intellection and meditation through the Qur'anic texts, the Sunnah, and consensus *(ijma')*. The Qur'an praises the role of the intellect in discerning truth from falsehood. This schools is seen in the words of the great Ash'arite Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali r.a., who elevates the intellect and appreciates it highly. He says that the intellect and revelation are complementary: the Shari'ah is the outer intellect, and the intellect is the inner Shari'ah. Intellect is like the foundation, whereas Revelation is the building; the foundation without a building is useless, and no building can stand without a foundation.²

¹ Neither the author or the publisher specify whether the work is Master thesis or a Phd disertation.

² al-Ghali, op. cit. pp. 90-94; Hoxha Hajredin, *Takamulul al-wahy wa al-aql wa al-hawass fi islam al-ma'rifah* (unpublished work, written under the mentorship of Dr Ibrahim Rajab, International Islamic University of Malaysia,

4) The intuitive or hermeneutical school of Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, which is based on the spirit and intuition. It can be clarified in accordance with the following points:

THE NECESSITY OF INTELLECTION

Man can know God through the intellect, because He has ordered us to think, meditate and take lessons, as in the following Qur'anic verse:

فُلِ انْظُرُوا مَاذَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ﴾ [يونس: ١٠١]

"Say: Behold all that is in the heavens and the earth," ...¹

﴿سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحُقُّ﴾ [فصلت : ٥٣]

"We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that it is the truth..." $^{\rm 2}$

Although Imam al-Maturidi speaks about the necessity of intellection and ratiocination as well as the great value of the intellect, he also speaks about the necessity of prophethood and revelation, since the intellect alone cannot know the truth because of passions, contentions, and conflicts, which prevent it from reaching the truth. The way of intellection and ratiocination is not an easy one, as he explains in his work *al-Tawhid*:

"There are reasons why the intellect needs revelation. The first reason is the existence of contention among creatures as to which group is right, and there is no one to judge among them, in order to show them that in which their hearts and words unite. It is well-known that dissent is the source of every destruction and all this evil is in the intellect. No one knows this better than the Creator and the Forgiver, hence the need for a prophet from Him. In addition, it is known that the intellect is often seized by foolishness, sadness, and different human problems. Also, different kinds of pain and numerous worries preoccupy the intellect and hinder it from knowing the truth clearly in every aspect. Also, different emotions and pleasures preoccupy the intellect, hence the need for a messenger from God to show them the truth in moments of doubt. God alone is powerful. Praise be to God, I clarified the need of the intellect for prophethood and guidance, as well as its incapacity to grasp everything...!"³

^{1998.} Some Islamic philosophers like al-Kindi and Ibn Rushd try to establish the harmony between revelation and reason... See: Ibn Rushd, *Kitab fasl al-maqal wa taqrir ma bayn al-Shari 'ah wa al-hikmah min al-ittisal*, ed. George Hourani, Leiden: Brill Publishers, 1954; Muhammad Amara, *al-Madi wa al-mithali fi falsafah ibn Rushd*, Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 2nd ed.

¹ Yunus, 101.

² Fussilat, 53.

³ al-Tawhid, ed. Fet'h Allah Halif, Alexandria, Dar al-jami'ah al-misriyya, 1970, pp. 182-3.

As far as the argument of the Maturidis on the necessity of intellection and ratiocination, one of their great imams¹ argues about the necessity of rational argument through the words of God on the people of the cave, who said:

....رَبُّنا رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَنْ نَدْعُوَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَهًا ﴾ [الكهف: ١٤]

" Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, never shall we call upon any god other than ${\rm Him}^{\prime\,2}$

He also relies on the verse of Abraham seeking God in the stars, the sun, and the moon, until he found the truth:

﴿فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ اللَّيْلُ رَأَىٰ كَوْتَبًا قَالَ هَٰذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَا أُحِبُ الْآفِلِينَ ﴾ [الأنعام: ٧٦] When the night covered him over with darkness he saw a star. He said: "This is my lord." But when it set, he said: "I like not those that set."³

Precisely at this point the Maturidis join the Mu'tazilites in the glorification of the intellect's role, and in its priority in argumentation. The difference between the Mu'tazilites and the Maturidis is that the Ahl al-sunnah among the Maturidis and Ash'arites believe in the necessity of the existence of the principles of the Shari'ah as an instrument which comes from God. According to the Mu'tazilites⁴ this instrument is the intellect and not the Shari'ah revealed by God. According to the Mu'tazilites good and evil are two entities. Deeds are good or evil in themselves: evil and goodness are inherent. The intellect is capable of discerning the evil or goodness of a deed before the Shari'ah says anything about it..⁵

In the chapter on Shariah in his Muwafaqat, Imam Shatibi says:

"As for the mu'tazilite doctrine, they declare the evil or goodness of something based on the intellect, which is the general way of discerning good from evil in the world. According to them, the Shari'ah reveals what the intellect says, neither less nor more..."⁶

Imam Al Zamakhsheri, also proves this truth in his commentary, by defending his Mu'tazilism and trying to free himself from the exoterical aspect of these texts:

﴿رُسُلًا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنْذِرِينَ لِقَلًّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ﴾ [النساء: ١٦٥]

" Messengers as bearers of good news as well as of warning in order that mankind should have no plea against God after the Messengers. And God is Ever All-Powerful, All-Wise".⁷

﴿وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا﴾ [الإسراء: ١٥]

"And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger".¹

¹ Ibid., p. 96, quoting from Abu al-Mu'min al-Nasafi, *Bahr al-kalam*, p. 6.

² al-Kahf, 14.

³ al-An'am, 76.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁵ Irfan Abd al-Hamid Fattah, Dirasat fi al-fikr al-arabi al-islam, p. 213.

⁶ al-Muwafaqat, vol. 2, p. 357.

⁷ al-Nisa', 165.

Al Imam Al Zamakhshari raises the following question:

"How can people have a claim after the prophets have been sent, when the latter are replete with proofs from God, through which gnosis is reached. The prophets themselves reached this gnosis based on intellection of these proofs, and they did not know that they had been chosen as prophets until their analysis of these proofs? We say: The prophets must pay attention to awaken people from slumber and incorrect vision. Likewise, the proponents of Divine justice and Unity, who have spoken at length about religious matters, clarifying the issues of obligation of learning the Shari'ah, say: the prophets are sent to eliminate the excuses and to perfect the proof (of God over His creatures), so that they will not say: "*If Thou did not send prophets to awaken us from slumber and warn us about what we must pay attention to*…"²

From all of the above, it can be seen that Shaykh Hafiz Dalliu points out the role of the intellect as sufficient to achieve knowledge of God's Unity and His existence through the proofs in the created order. This is a Mut'azilite influence on his thought.³

In Zamakhshari's view, the role of prophets is the awakening of the intellect from slumber and heedlessness, and in order to pay attention to what it must pay attention!

The view of Mu'tazilites which says that the human intellect is sufficient to understand the unity and existence of God, without sending the Revelation through messengers; is not correct! because many Qur'anic verses clearly show that the Prophet did not know what the Qur'an or true faith was before the Revelation, so how could the intellect be sufficient to achieve knowledge of God's unity and His existence! as it is demonstrated clearly in the following verses:

"And thus We have sent to you Ruh of Our Command. You knew not what is the Book, nor what is Faith. But We have made it a light wherewith We guide whosoever of Our slaves We will..."⁴

The Almighty Allah says again:

وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُو مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخُطُّهُ بِيَمِينِكَ إِذًا لَارْتَابَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ
 العنكبوت:٢٩]
 [العنكبوت:٢٩]

¹ Al Isra', 15.

² al-Kashshaf, vol. 1, p. 389

³ On Maturidi creed see: Nur al-Din al-Sabuni's (d. 580 AH0) *al-Bidayah fi usul al-din*, with critical comments on the margins by Bekir Topaloglu, Ankara, Islamic Community of Turkey, 5th ed., 1995, pp. 16-31; Nureddin Es-Sabuni, "Maturidiyye akaidi"; - Arastirma ve notlar ilavesiyle tercume edem prof. dr. Bekir Topaloglu, Marmara Universitesi, Ilahiyat fakultesi, Kelam Ilmi Ögretim Uyesi, Diyanet Isleri Baskanligi Yayinlari, Ankara, 5. Baski, 1995, 71-74. Also see: *Ebu Mensur al Maturidi, Tevilatul-Kur'an*, prepared by: Ahmet Vanlioglu and revised by: prof.Dr.Bekir Topaloglu, printed by:Mizan Yayinevim Istanbul, 2005, 1st. Vol. pg: 57

⁴ al-Shura, 52-53.

"And thou wast not (able) to recite a Book before this (Book came), nor art thou (able) to transcribe it with thy right hand: In that case, indeed, would the talkers of vanities have doubted"

And the Almighty Allah swt says again:

﴿وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهُ بَشَرٌ لِسَانُ الَّذِي يُلْحِدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْجَمِيٌّ وَهَٰذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِيٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴾ [النحل: ١٠٣] "We know indeed that they say, "It is a man that teaches him." The tongue of him they wickedly point to is notably foreign, while this is Arabic, pure and clear".

Also, people didn't know about values and high human morals, as these following verses demonstrate clearly. The Almighty Allah says:

المُوَإِنْ تُطِعْ أَكْثَرَ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يُضِلُوكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنْ يَتَبَعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ﴾ [الأنعام: ١١٦] "And if you obey most of those on the earth, they will mislead you far away from God's

*Path. They follow nothing but conjectures, and they do nothing but lie".*¹

Allah, exalted be He, says again:

"And when the news of (the birth of) a female (child) is brought to any of them, his face becomes dark, and he is filled with inward grief! He hides himself from the people because of the evil of that whereof he has been informed. Shall he keep her with dishonour or bury her in the earth? Certainly, evil is their decision"²

There are many verses on this issue, but there is no space here for all of them.

Left to itself, the intellect will be lost amidst the deviated and destructive thoughts and currents, which will eventually lead only to perdition, loss, and destruction. In order for the intellect not to stray in the dark corners of heedlessness and forgetfulness, God the Glorious promises that He will continuously send messengers as guides, after which the intellect may believe or disbelieve, as there is no reason left for misguidance. If the intellect is offered all kinds of pleasures and amusement of this world, it will certainly like them all, considering none of them as evil, such as prostitution, theft, robbery, murder, etc. So, intellect alone is not a correct measure which is protected against obstacles in discerning the truth from falsehood, good from evil. If there is a disagreement between the rational and the traditional, the latter is preferred over the former, and not vice versa, as pointed out by the analysts.

Without support from Divine inspiration, the light of the intellect is weak and pale. How far from us are the philosophers and the rationalists, who have strayed through history!

Shaykh Muhammad Nasib Rifa'i mentions some beautiful words at the margins of the summary of Tafsir Ibn Kathir on the following verse:

¹ al-An'am, 116.

² al-Nahl, 58-59.

فَوَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا
 إِ الإسراء: ١٥]

" And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger". He says:

"Until we have sent a Messenger, because a messenger (rasul) may not be a prophet (nabi)." If they receive a book, it clarifies matters for them and this is their messenger; or if they hear the radio on Islam and faith. So, you are a messenger, the Qur'an is a messenger, the voice of the radio is a messenger in the sense of conveying a message. The Shaykh expands on the meaning of the word rasul, which is mentioned in the verse above. He also believes that intellect in itself cannot reach knowledge independently, without a book, a radio, or something similar. In his commentary of this verse Ibn Kathir says that God does not punish anyone before the coming unto them a proof through a messenger, because God is just.¹

HIS VIEW ON SEEING GOD IN THE DAY OF RESURRECTION, ON THE GREAT SINNER, AND THE INCREASE IN FAITH:

رؤية الله تعالى يوم القيامة :Seeing God the Glorious *

Shaykh Hafiz Dalliu elaborates on another issue in tafsir, which is confirmed by the Ahl al-Sunnah and denied by the Mu'tazilah. In his commentary of the verse:

﴿ لَا تُدْرَكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ﴾ [الأنعام : ١٠٣]

"No vision can grasp Him, but He grasps all vision. He is al-Latif, Well-Acquainted with all things" ², he deals with this issue which has been debated upon by the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Mu'tazilah, by analysing the arguments of both groups in a summarized way, and then rejects the opinion of the Mu'tazilah that God cannot be seen, inclining towards the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah which believes that such a thing is possible.³

According to the school of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah, and a great Maturidi scholar, Imam Nur al-Din al-Sabuni al-Maturidi,

"The followers of the truth say that seeing God the Magnificent with one's eyes in the Day of Resurrection is possible with the mind and obligatory with hearing. Contrary to them, the Mu'tazilites, the Najaris, the Kharijites, the Zaydis, and Rafidis think differently. The followers of the truth use as a proof the question Moses to God, mentioned in the verse:

هِفَالَ رَبِّ أَرِبِي أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْكَ قَالَ لَنْ تَرَابِي﴾ [الأعراف : ١٤٣] 4. "O my Lord! Show me (Thyself), that I may look upon Thee".

Also, in other verses it is said:

¹ Taysir al-ali al-qadir li ikhtisar tafsir Ibn Kathir (Maktaba al-Ma'arif, Riyad, 1989, vol. 3, p. 16.)

² al-An'am, 103.

³ Ajka e kuptimeve, vol. 2, pp. 1259-1260. See also the discussion of the great sins from a Mu'tazilite and Kharijite point of view, in whichhe criticizes convincingly bothviews, based on the verse: *God does not forgive that a partner be associated to Him, and He forgives every other sin...*; vol. 2, pp. 794-795, 1044-1045.

⁴ al-A'raf, 143.

" Some faces that Day shall be radiant. Looking at their Lord".¹

" So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord".²

" For those who have done good is the best and even more".³ Based on a narration from the Prophet a.s., most of the commentators believe that even more means seeing God. Many traditions have been related on this issue, such as: "You shall indeed see God just as you see the full moon and you are not harmed in seeing it!" which has been transmitted by twenty one Companions and great scholars r.a., and it cannot be denied."⁴

This is the truth on the question of seeing God from both the rational and Shari aspect. God the Glorious will be seen on the Day of Resurrection by the people of Paradise, but not in the same way as they see each other in this life. If the intellect is pure, it does not refuse such a thing,⁵ since it cannot be imagined that the believers be deprived from the pleasure of seeing God the Exalted in the Day of Resurrection.

We are deprived of seeing Him in this world, because Moses asked God to see Him, but He did not fulfill his wish, and we too accept this Divine decree and we are patient in hope that we shall meet and see God in the eternal life of the Hereafter, otherwise there would be no difference among us and the disbelievers, on whom God says:

*Nay! Surely they will be veiled from seeing their Lord that Day.*⁶ From the Shari'ite view, view, there are many verses and traditions which prove and confirm the seeing of God be the believers on the day of Resurrection *insha Allah.*⁷

صاحب الكبيرة :THE GREAT SINNER

The defence of the creed of Ahl al-Sunnah and Jama'ah by Shaykh Dalliu can be clearly seen in many other questions of faith, which we cannot elaborate in details here, and we shall content ourselves with only a few of them:

In the commentary of the verse:

¹ al-Qiyama, 22-23.

² al-Kahf, 110.

³ Yunus, 26.

⁴ al-Sabuni, *al-Bidayah fi usul al-din*, pp. 34-41.

⁵ al-Akhisari Hasan Kafi (al-Bosnawi), *Rawdat al-jannah fi usul al-i'tiqad*, ed. Fikret Karcic, Ibrahim Muhammad Zayn, International Islamic University, Malaysia, 2002, p. 38.

⁶ al-Mutaffifin, 15.

⁷ Abu Ja'far al-Tahawi, Sharh al-aqida tahawiyya, Beirut, al-Maktab al-Islam, 4th ed., 1991, p. 203.

...they are the successful.¹ In a summarized way, he says that Muslim sinners will be brought out of the Hellfire before they receive their deserved punishment and this is contrary to the Mu'tazilite view,² because according to them the great sinner will be in an intermediate position, having left belief but entered disbelief. So he is neither a believer nor a disbeliever, and if he dies without repenting, he will be in Hellfire forever.³

forever.³

Shaykh Hafiz Dalliu deals with questions of kalam and creed according to Ash'arites, Maturidis, traditionists, Mu'tezilites, ad Kharijites, such as the increase of faith, whether forbidden earnings are part of sustenance or not, etc. This support of the view of Ahl al-sunna can be seen in the commentary of the verse:

Who believe in the unseen.⁴ In dealing with the definition, parts, and conditions of faith (iman) according to these doctrines, he points out the question whether belief with the heart (tasdiq) sufficient to escape punishment and earn eternal bliss. The Shaykh points out that according to the Ash'arites this suffices for salvation,⁵ whereas Hanafis deem it insufficient, as there must be a testimony by the tongue after belief with the heart, except in situations of fear from an enemy.⁶ Shaykh Dalliu continues: "This is the preferred view view on this issue, because God reproaches those who know the truth, but do not testify to it with words."

He does not mention the verse he alludes to, which is probably the following aya:

﴿يَعْبِفُونَ نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنْكِرُونَهَا﴾ [النحل : ٨٣]

They recognise the Grace of God, yet they deny it.⁷ And only God knows the truth!⁸

¹ al-Baqarah, 5.

² Ajka e kuptimeve, vol. 1, p. 42.

³ al-Sabuni, op. cit., p. 80; Nasafi, Sharh al-aqidah al-tahawiyya, pp. 365-367, 416-417.

⁴ Al-Baqarah, 3.

⁵ This is probably the view of the followers of al-Ash'ari like al-Baqillani, who writes in his Bab al-qawl fi ma'na aliman: "If someone says: Inform us what do you mean by faith, tell them 'We mean the belief in God the Exalted. Knowledge and faith are in the heart." If they ask: "What is your proof?", tell them: "All linguists are unanimous that etymologically iman means faith even before the revelation of the Qur'an and the sending of the Prophet, and there is no other iman in Arabic, as the following verse proves: ... but you will never believe us even when we speak the truth (Yusuf, 17). Likewise the expression, "so and so believes in intercession" or "so and so does not believe in the punishment in the grave" (Tamhid al-awa'il wa talkhis al-dala'il, ed. Imamuddin Ibn Haydar, Beirut, Muassasahthaqaf, 1st ed., 1987, p. 389. Al-Ash'ari does not mention this in his summary of the creed of Ahl al-Sunnah in al-Ibanah an usul al-diyanah, Matba'ah Dar al-Ansar, pp. 20-23. However, some Maturidi dignitaries such as al-Sabuni, say: "Our fellow scholars say that faith is belief in the heart and the testimony is a condition for the application of the rules in this world." Imam Abu Hanifa says the same in his al-Alim wa al-muta'alim, and this is the choice of Imam Maturidi and Husayn al-Bajali, and the most correct of the two narrations of Imam al-Ash'ari, al-Bidaya fi usul al-din, pp. 87-88. What Shaykh Dalliu quotes is from the later Ash'arites, who believed that faith is belief, which suffices to make one a believer and save him from chastisement on the Day of Resurrection. This is one of the two narrations. However, there is another opinion related by al-Ash'ari, which is considered the more precise of the two, namely that belief does not suffice; one must have belief in the heart and witness by the tongue in order to have responsibility in this world. We incline toward the second opinion, because through words doubts, accusations, and suppositions about the silent believer are removed.

⁶ The rules of this world, such as ritual bath, burial, the funeral prayer, and inheritance are some of the principles which depend from the declaration of the two testimonies or belief with words, otherwise one believe in God in the Hereafter, and a disbeliever in the herebelow, because according to the Bosnian scholarof the seventeenth century Shaykh Hasan Kafi al-Akhisari, in his book *Rawdat al-jannah fi usul al-i'tiqad*, p. 30, "Testimony is a sign and condition to apply Islamic norms on him".

⁷ al-Nahl, 83.

⁸ Ajka e kuptimeve, vol. 1, pp. 33-36, 38.

This is our treatment of the method, references, and some ideas of Sheikh Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu's commentary. We wish he had been able to complete this commentary, but it was God's decree that he passed away before finishing this major project. Perhaps God will enable one of His sincere servants among Albanian scholars to continue this important task.

CONCLUSION AND THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Praise be to God, who helped us to reach the end of this study, with following important remarks and conclusions.

The history of Albanian Muslims is a distorted and fabricated history. The dark, hidden hand of communist countries like former Soviet Union, Bulgary, Greece, former Yugoslavia helped in the compilation of its texts. The primary goal of this communist historiography was fighting and distorting Islam and the Muslims. This study revealed the opposite of what has been stated in these sources. It was a great blessing from God for Albanians to accept Islam, because it saved them from the abyss of disbelief, idolatry, atheism, destruction, assimilation and extinction into the light of faith, vigilance, guidance and stability. The other important issue is the peaceful spread of Islam in this area, and not through violence or "the sword", as the official Albanian historiography has claimed for so long. People embraced the new faith voluntarily, and this calls for an objective rewriting of the interaction of Islam with Albanian history.

Albanian Muslims showed a great interest in religious matters, which can be seen in several phenomena such as their interest in learning the Hifz of the Qur'an and teaching it to their children, their interest in building mosques, in sending their children to study in Islamic countries etc. With the passing of time, their intellectual level rose to the extent that they started analysing some major religious and social issues, such as the emancipation of Albanian Muslim woman, the adoption of the Latin alphabet, etc.

This study confirms the efforts and works of great figures of learning in Albania, and their great resistance against the secular and communist challenges it the first half of the twentieth century.

The study also revealed the existence of doctrinal tendency in the study of the Qur'an among Albanian scholars, namely the Maturidi school, whose leader was Shaykh Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu. Based on the study of his ideas on issues of creed, I saw that at times he applies the method of interpreting the verses dealing with Divine Atributes and at times he applies the method of the salaf in other matters. In other issues, he was under the influence of the Mu'tezilites, as was the case with some earlier Maturidi imams, whom he followed in the question of the rational verification of good and evil. We provided examples for this and later clarified the truth about this matter, stating that the most correct view is that of the pious ancestors, including Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Abu Mansur Maturidi and Ibn Taymiyya (may God have mercy on them all!), who said that these Attributes had to be confirmed as they were revealed without comparison, privation, or personification, because only God knows their true meaning.

The study revealed the high intellectual level of the Sheikh hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu and his scientific strength in the modern period, his deductive capacity in dealing with the verses of the Qur'an, and the elaboration of various scientific topics. He was not just transmitter and translator from other languages, but he also had his personal opinions, which history has recorded. He interacted with the Qur'anic texts in order to reach the much sought truth. He was knight in these scientific, exegetical, and literary battlefields.

This study confirmed the love of Albanian scholars for the Noble Qur'an, their appreciation and relying therein during the most difficult periods of their history such as secularism, communism, atheism, dictatorship, imprisonments, torture, etc. The also had great interest in studying, analysing, and learning the Noble Qur'an by heart from their earliest contacts with Islam.

Among other important results is the fact that institutional work for restoring the original form of Islam in the minds and souls of Albanians must increase, because this study pointed out the great hatred towards Islam among Albanian thinkers, due to the still-persisting communist influences and distortions of religious truths, seeking to drive people away from religion. I also recommend the researchers to study and investigate on more such scholars, because they played other numerous roles besides the ones I studied. The await for the objective researchers to remove the dust from their works, and to speak up about their scientific and patriotic activities.

These were some of the scientific results which I reached during this study. I believe strongly that this study was based on my individual effort within my intellectual limits to give some selected examples from Albanian scholars of the modern period, and clarify their views on some important Qur'anic issues, and their capacities to implement the Qur'anic texts in their intellectual life. This study is the only one of its kind in the Balkans among Albanians , dealing with the historical, political, intellectual, religious and exegetical aspect from an Islamic point of view.

In the end, I pray to God the Almighty that I have offered the Islamic library and the Albanian readers and my fellow Muslim brothers in Malaysia in particular a valuable scientific work. If I was right, it is from God, and if I was wrong it is from myself and the devil (far he be from us!).

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