جمعية العلماء ومدرسي الدين الإسلامي بسنغافورة

Persatuan Ulama dan Guru-Guru Agama Islam (Singapura)
Singapore Islamic Scholars & Religious Teachers Association

PERGAS

MUKTAMAR ULAMA

2021

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Published by

Persatuan Ulama dan Guru-Guru Agama Islam (Singapura)
Singapore Islamic Scholars & Religious Teachers Association
PERGAS

Conference Proceedings: Muktamar Ulama 2021 is a publication of Pergas. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of Pergas.

Transliteration Table

Arabic Character	Romanized
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	Í
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	Î
ض	Ì

Arabic Character	Romanized
ط	Ï
ظ	Đ
ع	'
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
ه	h
و	w
ء	'
ي	y

Vocal	Arabic Character	Romanized
Short Vocal	َ◌	a
	ِ◌	i
	ُ◌	u
Long Vocal	ا ، ى	É
	ي	Ê
	و	Ë
Diphthong	وْ	aw
	يْ	ay
	ي	iyy/Ê
	و	uww/Ë

A Wasaṭiyah Approach to Understanding Theological Absolutism[1]

A keynote address by Ustaz Dr Muhammad Haniff Hassan
at the Muktamar Ulama Pergas, 20th March 2021

Introduction

This article seeks to elucidate a *wasaṭiyah* approach to understanding what constitutes theological absolutism in Islamic theology. It begins with establishing a clear understanding of absolute and subjective truth as a foundation that would differentiate between a right and erroneous theological absolutism. It concludes with nine points on when absolutism in theological issue is merited and when it is not.

For the purpose of this article, theological absolutism refers to the view that there is only one absolute truth/ruling/standpoint in a theological issue and, thus, any contradicting views are regarded as falsehood (*bāṭil*) and rejected.

The Wasaṭiyah approach refers to the approach that recognises diversity even in the phenomenon of absolutism and strives to identify characteristics of each category from which right and erroneous theological absolutism could be determined. The approach refrains from taking an absolutist stance which simplistically positions theological absolutism as either totally merited or otherwise.

In analyzing the topic, the author employs library research, and all issues will be viewed from the lens of traditional Islamic studies discipline. It is noted that the term absolutism could also be found in philosophy i.e. moral absolutism/relativism, political science i.e. absolute sovereignty, and other disciplines. However, these permutations of absolutism from other disciplines are not the concern of this article.

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[1] This article is an improved version of original article in Muhammad Haniff Hassan, "*Wasatiyah* Approach to Understanding Truth", *Wasat*, no. 8, April 2016, available at https://wasatonline.wordpress.com/2016/04/01/wasatiyah-approach-to-understanding-truth-edition-no-8april-2016/ (8 June 2021).

It has been established among Muslim scholars of traditional Islamic studies that all theological issues in Islam could fall either under;

a)   *al-thawābit* - those that are immutable and cannot be compromised because they represent absolute truth in Islam

b)   *al-muthaghayyirāt* - those that are mutable or open to change in accordance with time, location and situation because they are founded on truth that is subjective.

What Muslim scholars differ on is on what constitutes *al-thawābit* and *al-mutaghayyirāt*.[2]

This differentiates scholars of traditional Islamic studies from scholars of other disciplines who profess that all truths are subjective because they are products of human intellect that is inherently limited thus making objective ideas impossible. This difference then becomes the basis for moral relativism philosophy. On this regard and in the context of this article, the author takes the same stand with Muslim scholars of traditional Islamic studies as mentioned above.

However, efforts to develop principled Muslims – those who will not compromise their religious principles or "sell them" to accommodate factors that relate to "the powers that be", the changing of time, the nature of the masses, economic gains or any other unscrupulous reasons may and, in fact, have resulted problems. This happens when they are not guided by the right understanding of *al-thawābit* which must be upheld and not compromised and, based on it also, an absolutist position could be ruled as valid and commendable.

Among the problems known in Muslim societies in various localities due to erroneous absolutism in theological issues due to the lack of comprehensive understanding between truths that cannot be compromised and those that could exist side-by-side with other opposing views with respect and tolerance are as follows:

• Fanaticism towards a group or "shaykh" due to the belief that the position held by group or "shaykh" represents the absolute truth

• Sectarian conflict

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[2] See Salah Al-Sawi (2009), *Al-Thawābit Wa Al-Mutaghayyirāt Fī Masīrat Al-`Amāl Al-Islāmiy Al-Mu`āşir*, no place: Sharia Academy of America; Rashid Sa`id Shahwan (2019), *Al- Ḍawābiṭ Al-Shar`iyah Li Al-Thawābit Wa Al-Mutaghayyirāt Fī Al-Islām*, Amman: Dar Al-Ma'mun; Salah Muhammad (2018), "Fiqh Al-Thawābit Wa Al-Mutaghayyirāt", *Manaretweb. com*, 7 January, available at http://www.manaratweb.com/%D9%81%D9%82%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D9 %88%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%AA-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA%D8%BA%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A 7%D8%AA/ (8 June 2021).

- Rigidity in religious issues

- Takfir - ruling other Muslims as apostates because they are regarded to have compromised the fundamentals of Islam

- Labelling other Muslims as heretic or deviant because they hold different views on certain religious issues

- Unending debate on certain religious issues and, as a result, wasting of the Muslims community's time, energy and other resources towards meaningful causes

- Loss of decorum or ethics in individual and social life.

Erroneous theological absolutism affects not only intra-faith relations, it has also serious effects on inter-faith relations when the issues involve Muslims' relationship with non-Muslims such as the ideas in *Al-Walā' Wa Al-Barā'*. This, therefore makes theological absolutism not only about preserving harmony within the Muslim community but also about harmony within the larger Singapore multi-cultural and religious society. In fact, theological absolutism could also be a national security issue because it is a key trait in the ideology of violent groups like Al-Qaeda and IS.

To address and prevent the above problems, elucidating the nature of truth in Islam is important to ascertain,

- right and erroneous absolutism in theological issues

- when a theological absolutism is commendable and when it is not

- the right decorum towards those with differing theological views

In fact, truth is the essence of Islam. The entire Islamic teaching is focused on the right understanding of truth. The Qur'an reminds Muslims to always strive to be with truth, or risk being on the side of falsehood (*bāṭil*) that would lead them astray from divine guidance. This is evident in the following verses,

وَلَا تَلۡبِسُوا۟ ٱلۡحَقَّ بِٱلۡبَٰطِلِ وَتَكۡتُمُوا۟ ٱلۡحَقَّ وَأَنتُمۡ تَعۡلَمُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

Meaning: "And do not overlay the truth with falsehood, and do not knowingly suppress the truth." (Al-Baqarah, 2:42)

$$ ٱلْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ ٱلْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾ $$

Meaning: "[This is] the truth from thy Sustainer; be not, then, among the doubters!"
(Āli `Imran, 3:60)

$$ فَذَٰلِكُمُ ٱللَّهُ رَبُّكُمُ ٱلْحَقُّ فَمَاذَا بَعْدَ ٱلْحَقِّ إِلَّا ٱلضَّلَٰلُ فَأَنَّىٰ تُصْرَفُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ $$

Meaning: "Seeing that He is God, your Sustainer, the Ultimate Truth? For, after the truth [has been forsaken], what is there [left] but error? How, then, can you lose sight of the truth?" (Yunus, 10:32)

Thus, having the right understanding and attitude towards truth is critical because it shapes the manner in which Muslims practise the religion. Without the right understanding and attitude, Muslims might fall into extremism such as being unnecessarily strict to himself or others, treating all truths as subjective and accusing others who disagree with his theological position as heretics.

Category of Truth

In the Islamic intellectual tradition, truth is divided into two broad categories; 1) definitive or objective truth (*al-qaṭ`iyāt* or *al-muhkamāt*), and 2) speculative or subjective truth (*al- ẓanniyāt* or *al-mutashabihāt*).

The superiority of the two is assessed on two attributes; a) authenticity (*al-thubūt*), and b) meaning (*al-dilālah*) and the quality of each attribute is determined by its; a) definiteness (*qaṭ`iy*), or b) non-definiteness (*ẓanniy*).[3]

With regards to authenticity, all verses in the Qur'an are regarded as definitely authentic.[4] This, however, does not apply automatically to hadith. Only a *Mutawātir hadīth* is regarded as definitely authentic.[5] Non-*Mutawātir hadīth* which is also categorised as *Ahad* has different degrees of authenticity and can also be classified as fake (*Mawdū`*). While there are *Ahad hadīths* that are classified as authentic (*Ṣahīh*

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[3] Qutb Muṣṭafa Ṣanu (2004), *La Inkār Fī Masā'il Al-Ijtihād (No Renunciation in Matters of Ijtihad)*, Kuala Lumpur: Dār Al-Tajdīd, pp. 21-3. See also Ibrāhīm bin Musa Al-Shāṭibi (no date), *Al-Muwāfaqat (Al-Shāṭibi's Book of Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence)*, no place: Dār Al-Fikr, vol. 3, p. 7-13.

[4] Ibid; Wahbah Al-Zuhayli (1986), *Uṣul Al-Fiqh Al-Islāmī (Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence)*, Beirut: Dār Al-Fikr Al-Mu`āṣir, vol. 1, p. 441; Muhammad Al-Khudariy (1981), *Uṣul Al-Fiqh (Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence)*, Cairo: Dār Al-Fikr, pp. 207-8.

[5] Ibid, p. 453; Ibid, p. 84; Muhammad Abū Zahrah (no date), *Uṣul Al-Fiqh (Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence)*, Cairo: Dār Al-Fikr Al-`Arabī, p. 213-5.

and *Hasan*), its authenticity is non-definite and, thus, it is considered as lower in rank as compared to *Mutawātir hadīth*.[6]

Definite in meaning refers to scriptures that have only one absolute meaning. No other possible meanings could be deduced except for one absolute meaning only. In contrast, scriptures that are non-definite in meaning are those that have many possible meanings due to the nature of word or context related to them. In this regard, both the Qur'an and hadith share the same probability of being definite and non-definite.[7] Examples cited in the table below would clarify.

For the purpose of ranking strength, authenticity is given more importance than meaning and definiteness is superior to non-definiteness.[8] The table below will help to provide greater clarity on the categories of scriptural evidence based on its definiteness and non-definiteness in authenticity and meaning and their ranking in supremacy within Islamic theology.

Type and Rank	Source	Example
1. Definite in authenticity and meaning (*Qat`iy al-thubūt wa al-dilālah*)	• The Qur'an • *Mutawātir hadīth*	• Believe that God revealed *Al-Tawrah* (Torah) and *Al-Injīl* (Bible) to prophet Musa (Moses) and `Isa (Jesus) respectively.[9] • Pillars of Islam are five; believe there is no God other than Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger, establishing prayers five times a day, payment of *zakah* (tithe), fasting in *Ramadan* and pilgrimage to Mecca.[10]

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[6] Ibid, pp. 454-5, 464-73; Ibid, pp. 84-5; Ibid, pp. 215, 227-8.
[7] Ibid, pp. 441-2.
[8] Ibid, p. 74.
[9] See the Qur'an, 3:3, 5:46.
[10] See Muhammad bin Ja`far Al-Kattāni (no date), *Nuẓum Al-Mutanāthir Min Al-Hadīth Al-Mutawātir (Collection of Mutawatir Hadith)*, Cairo: Dār Al-Kutub Al-Salafiyah, p. 42.

2. Definite in authenticity and non-definite in meaning (*Qaṭ`iy al-thubūt wa ẓanniy al-dilālah*)	• The Qur'an • *Mutawātir hadīth*	• Washing entire head during *wudū'* (ablution).[11] • God sitting on throne.[12]
3. Non-definite in authenticity and definitive in meaning (*Ẓanniy al-thubūt wa qaṭ`iy al-dilālah*)	• *Ṣahih* and *Hasan hadīth*	• Heirs who are eligible to inherit by way of *farā'iḍ* (stipulated share of inheritance) cannot inherit by way of *wasaṭiyah* (bequest/will).[13]
4. Non-definite in authenticity and non-definitive in meaning (*Ẓanniy al-thubūt wa ẓanniy al-dilālah*)	• *Ṣahih* and *Hasan hadīth*	• Impurity of dog.[14]

Of the above four types, only theological issues that are based on the first categorisation of type and rank are regarded by Muslim scholars as definite truth. The rest falls under the subjective truth category.[15]

For greater clarity, here are some other examples of issues are theologically regarded as definitive truth in Islam because they are based on scriptural evidence that are definite in authenticity (*qaṭ`iy al-thubūt*) and meaning (*qat`iy al-dilālah*):

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[11] See the Qur'an, 5:6.
[12] See the Qur'an, 7:54, 10:3, 13:2, 20:5, 25:59, 32:4 and 57:4. See also Al-Kattāni (no date), p. 44.
[13] See hadith, "Allah has appointed for everyone who has a right what is due to him, and *no bequest must be made to an heir* [emphasis added]." (Narrated by Al-Turmuzi, Al-Nasā'ii, Ibn Majah and Abū Dāwud).
[14] See hadith, "If a dog drinks from the utensil of anyone of you, *it is essential to wash it seven times* [emphasis dog]." (Narrated by Al-Bukharī and Muslim).
[15] Sanu (2004), p. 21.

- Prohibition of murder in Islam, "and *do not take any human being's life - [the life] which God has declared to be sacred* [emphasis added]- otherwise than in [the pursuit of] justice." (The Qur'an, 6:151)

- Prohibition of adultery, "And *do not commit adultery* for, behold, *it is an abomination and an evil way* [emphasis added]." (The Qur'an, 17:32)

- Obligation to fast during *Ramadan*, "O you who have attained to faith! *Fasting is ordained for you* [emphasis added] as it was ordained for those before you, so that you might remain conscious of God." (The Qur'an, 2:183)

- Obligation to fulfill promise and contractual agreement, "O you who have attained to faith! *Be true to your covenants* [emphasis added]!..." (The Qur'an, 5:1)

- Permissibility of trade in Islam, "…God has made *buying and selling lawful* [emphasis added]…" (The Qur'an, 2:275)

- Impermissibility of consuming carrion, blood and pork in Islam, "*Forbidden* [emphasis added] to you is carrion, and blood, and the flesh of swine…" (The Qur'an, 5:3)

- Oneness of God, "Say: He is *the One God* [emphasis added]…" (The Qur'an, 112:1)

- Muhammad is the Final Prophet, "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) *the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets* [emphasis added]…" (The Qur'an, 33:40)

There are no disagreements among all Muslim scholars – Sunni or Shiite – regarding the abovementioned theological positions. These are positions commonly held by all schools of Islam throughout history up till now because the verses from which the positions are derived are unambiguous and, thus, they are definite in meaning.

Some Muslim scholars include theological position that is based on *ijmāʿ* (consensus) as definite truth. However, this assertion is not without contention.

Ijmāʿ is popularly defined by Muslim scholars as a consensus of all *mujtahid* (Muslim scholars who are qualified to perform *ijtihād* in religious issues) of a certain period on religious issues.[16]

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[16] Al-Zuhayli (1986), pp. 490-5; Abu Zahrah (no date), p. 156; Al-Khudarī (1981), p. 271.

Indeed, *ijmā`* is recognised by Muslim scholars as one of the primary sources of Islamic ruling in the following order:

- the Qur'an

- the Prophet's hadith

- *Ijmā`*

- *Qiyās* (analogy).[17]

There is no doubt about the existence of *ijmā`* in religious issues. For example, one could find agreements among Muslim scholars, across time and theological schools, on the following religious issues:

- Belief in one God,

- The Qur'an is God's revelation to Muhammad,

- Muhammad is the Prophet of God,

- Jesus is a prophet and ordinary human being born to virgin Maryam, not divine and son of God,

- Five daily prayers are obligatory upon all Muslims,

- Fasting in *Ramadān* is obligatory.

However, upon closer scrutiny, these consensuses occurred only in the concurrence with the presence of definite scriptural evidence and in matters of *al-ma`lūm bi al-dīn bi al-darūrah* (what is necessarily known to be part of the religion) - the authenticity of the evidences and the unambiguity of the meaning from which the above theological stands are derived are uncontested. *Ijmā`*, in this regard, occurs dependent on definite scriptural evidence.[18]

There are many problems with regards to *ijmā`* at conceptual and practical level when there is no definite scriptural evidence and in matters other than *al-ma`lūm bi al-dīn bi al-darūrah*.[19]

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[17] Ibid, pp. 417-9; Ibid, pp. 156-60; Ibid, p. 203.
[18] Ibid, pp. 463-71, 487, 538-9, 575-8; Ibid, pp. 157-8.
[19] Ibid, pp. 490-1, 499-537, 571-81; Ibid, pp. 156-9, 167; Ibid, pp. 271-83.

From the definition, Muslims scholars disagree on issues such as what is the definitive criteria to qualify as a *mujtahid*, who are the mujtahids of a particular time who must agree for *ijmāʿ* to occur, and how to identify them. Even if there is an agreement to the answer to these conceptual questions, there was still one critical practical question that arises – can all the agreement, in any particular time, of every single *mujtahid*, dispersed across Muslim lands that spread from Morocco to the west and Khurasan to the east and Anatolia to the north and Yemen to the south, ever be achieved or objectively known?

Classical Muslim scholars disagreed on the answer to this question.[20] Imam Ahmad, the founder of Hanbalite school of jurisprudence, recognised *ijmāʿ* as a primary source of Islamic ruling only when it occurs among the companions of the Prophet. This is because he was of the view that *ijmāʿ* could only practically be achieved by the companions. Thus, the Hanbalites do not accept *ijmāʿ* of Muslim scholars after the period of the Prophet's companions.[21]

Due to these disagreements, Muslim scholars have always taken a cautious and prudent approach when dealing with claim of *ijmāʿ* on any theological issues. They would apply skepticism first and investigate thoroughly the claim before accepting it. Often after a thorough investigation, they would find that the claim is invalid or the meaning of the *ijmāʿ* was not as per the standard definition. Instead, it refers to the agreement or "*ijmāʿ*" of scholars of a particular school of jurisprudence or locality.[22]

It is on the same note and for prudence sake, *ijmaʿ* by itself is not included here as determiner of definitive truth.

Quantitative Assessment

Qualitatively speaking, all Muslim scholars recognise the existence of definite truth in Islam because there are indeed definite scriptural evidences that offer unambiguous and definite meaning as exemplified in the preceding section.

This position differentiates Islamic intellectual tradition from some theories in social sciences and humanities that question the existence of definite truth and claims all truths are subjective in view of them being the product of human interpretation.[23]

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[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid, pp. 571-8; Ibid, pp. 159-60, 167; Ibid, p. 285.
[22] Ibid, pp. 489-9, 574-5.
[23] See William James (1997), *The Meaning of Truth*, New York: Prometheus Books; John D. Caputo (2014), *Truth: Philosophy in Transit*, no place: Penguin Global.

Some proponents of these theories would even suggest that the authenticity of the Qur'an and all *hadiths* are not definite. It is just a theological construct or *ijtihād* of Muslim scholars.[24]

Nevertheless, traditional Muslim scholars are in agreement that definite truth is quantitatively very much less than subjective truth.

The reason is that the nature of the Qur'an itself allows for various interpretations to most of its verses. The wisdom behind the multiple interpretations produced by Muslims scholars from the flexibility of meanings inherent in Qur'anic verses would serve different needs and situations and thus fulfil Islam's primary function as the religion of all peoples, time, and places.

Subjective truths being more quantitatively than objective truths could also be rationally argued from the fact that the Qur'an is revealed in Arabic language – a language that is created from human experience. Being a human product, Arabic language is finite and, thus, can never capture the infinity of Allah's knowledge (The Qur'an, 18:109 and 31:27) embedded in the Qur'an. It would take more than literal understanding and countless interpretations to unpack Allah's infinite knowledge and wisdom in most of the Qur'anic verses. It is for the same reason also that verses of the Qur'an is known as "*āyah* (singular) or *āyāt* (plural)" which literally means sign. They are signs for meanings or simply put code for decoding and there are multiple ways to understand and decode them.[25]

Conclusion - Nine Guiding Points

If the above understanding of truth in Islam is accepted, then a Muslim must also accept some important implications of such understanding.

Firstly, truth in Islam follows a hierarchy and that objective truth is of higher hierarchy than subjective truth, despite being quantitatively less. This would mean Muslims must know the type of truth that he is holding to in order to know its strength and hierarchy when facing differing viewpoints. Thus, one must not present a truth that he believes in as *the* absolute truth that could not be challenged or opposing views are not allowed, unless it has been ascertained as such with necessary evidences.

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[24] Muhammad Mustaza Al-A`zami (2003), *The History of Qura'nic Text: From Revelation to Compilation*, Leicester: UK Islamic Academy, chapter 18; Abdullah Saeed (2008), *The Qur'an: An Introduction*, New York: Routledge, chapter 6; Ingrid Mattson, *The Story of the Qua'an: Its History and Place in Muslim Life*, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 99-100; M. Mustafa Al-Azami (2004), *On Schacht's Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, Lahore: Suhail Academy, chapter 5-8.
[25] Abdullah Saeed (2006), *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach*, New York: Routledge, chapter 6 and 8.

Secondly, most theological issues would have many viewpoints and interpretations and there could be many truths in contentious issues. This would mean it is not necessary for Muslims to hold one viewpoint all the time or in all contexts and there is no need to be rigid with one viewpoint or regard a differing viewpoint as necessarily deviant or heretical. When it is confirmed in the Islamic intellectual tradition that there are many viewpoints on an issue from various many credible scholars, a Muslim must then practice respect and tolerance and be open to other differing views.

Thirdly, prudence in seeking truth is to perceive all claims of truth as subjective first, since it is quantitatively much more, until proven otherwise. This would also mean that there could always be other viewpoints that are equally valid.

Fourthly, Islam recognises theological absolutism when it involves issues that fall under *al-thawābit* or *al- qaṭ`iyyat* (Type 1 in the table) because the truth in them is objective and definite. They must not be compromised except in situations where *rukhṣah* (concessionary rule) is permissible.

Fifthly, when theological absolutism is permitted, it must be accompanied with *adab* (decorum) and *hikmah* (wisdom) because both too are commanded by Islam. Having good intentions to uphold, promote and defend truth are not justifications for Muslims to be rude or violent towards others who disagree.

Sixthly, absolutism in theological issues is reprehensible when it involves *al- ẓanniyyāt* (Type 2-4 in the table) because truth in those issues is subjective. In general, theological issues that fall under *al- ẓanniyyāt* are open to diverse opinions among Muslim scholars. They are regarded as *masā'il khilāfiyyah* or *ijtihādiyyah* (contentious issues) where the established legal maxim, "*lā inkār fī masāil al-ijtihād (no renunciation in matters of ijtihād)*", should be uphold, except when there is evidence that the opposing view is void with the traditional Islamic studies discipline.

Seventhly, Islam's recognition of theological absolutism means that truth and moral relativism which are inconsistent with its key tenets and must be avoided by Muslims.

Eighthly, although Islam permits theological absolutism when involving *al-qaṭ`iyyāt*, Muslims must note that *al-ẓanniyyāt* in theological issues are quantitatively much more. As a result, the space for theological absolutism is very small and limited. Thus, prudence requires that Muslims should regard any theological issues as *al-ẓanniyyāt* first which necessitates the upholding of the abovementioned legal maxim, until proven otherwise. This would also mean that Muslims should not be quick to claim or accept a theological view as absolute truth. Since *al-ẓanniyyāt* is quantitatively much more, there are possibly other differing views in all claims of truth and in analysing the differing views, Muslims

should not necessarily rule that only one view could possibly be right because Islam recognises the possibility of multiple truths in one theological issue, unless when there is evidence that the issue involved falls under *al-qaṭ`iyyāt*.

Ninthly, the presence of scriptural evidence be it from the Qur'an or authentic hadith to support a theological viewpoint is not sufficient for absolutism or to make a claim of *al-qaṭ`iyyāt* because the scriptural evidence may not offer definite meaning to support the viewpoint. Similarly, the hadith may not be of the *Mutawātir* category that commands definite authenticity like the Qur'an.

Closing Remarks

Understanding truth is complex, despite its importance. This article represents only a small part of what eminent Muslim scholars have deliberated through history in their various noble works, yet it may already be complicated to many. Thus, Muslims must always seek right guidance from a credible and just authority in their search for truth.

Finally, the presence of scriptural evidence (the Qur'an and hadith) in one's argument for what he believes in is not sufficient to make a claim that his truth is absolute, and no other viewpoint can be accepted because the evidence may not provide *qaṭ`iy al-dilālah* (definitive conclusion in meaning) for the claim to be regarded as absolute.