Law Foundation of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal’s Thought in Ilahiyyat Concept

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Abstract: Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal is very famous in traditions collector of Prophet Muhammad, but there are statements related to ilahiyyat that stated by him. Therefore, it is very important to understand the law foundation of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal’s thought in ilahiyyat concept. It is history study that explains a short biography of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and his statements about ilahiyyat concept. Based on the literature study that his law foundation in ilahiyyat concept is always commitment on the Koran and collection of traditions of Prophet Muhammad.

1. Introduction

Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal was born in Baghdad in Rabiulawal, 164 H/780 M, when the government of Bani Abbasiyah was lead by Muhammad al-Mahdi [1, 2]. This case is also stated by [3] who explained that Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal was born on a not strange date for our ear, it was on Rabiulawal, exactly one hundred sixty four from Hejira year of Prophet Muhammad.


Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal is a Muslim scholar in Islamic law, faith, and he is more famous in tradition collector of Prophet Muhammad. Some researchers have been studied about Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in term of his Islamic law, faith and tradition collection of Prophet Muhammad.

The biography of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal that starting from his born day, look for knowledge, a challenge during his life till death time are explained by [7]. In the explanation is stated that Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal’s followers were very explicit and sincere group. They did not want to decide to follow their self, but always follow the Koran and sunnah.

The school of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal is called Hanbali Madhhab. It is built by four main issues, the first is a legal law and understanding, the second is background social and politic, the third is theology controversy and the last is social activity and moral view [8]. In the third issue is explained that the Hanbali Madhhab is based on the controversy between Muktazilah’s thought who stated that the Koran is creature.

The biography of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal is also explained by [9]. He is an Imam in Ahli Sunnah wal Jamaah who believe the faith. It is explained that in the Baghdad government was lead by Harun ar-Rasyid dan Khalifah al-Makmun, there was debate between Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and Muktazilah Madhhab. The debate was around ilahiyyat concept. Ilahiyyat is every thing related to Allah [10]. It consists of existence argument of Allah, substance of Allah, characteristics of Allah and rukyat Allah [10, 11, 12].

The study of ilahiyyat concept has been booked by [13]. It was explained that Muktazilah Madhhab stated that the universe is proof of existence of Allah. Muktazilah Madhhab did not believe about the characteristic of Allah. They also stated that Allah can not be seen in the beyond. This explanation is also stated by [14] that Mukatzilah Madhhab did not believe that Allah can be seen by Muslim in the heaven. Because, if Allah can be seen, it means Allah is in a place.

This paper presents the law foundation of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal’s thought in ilahiyyat concept. To obtain this objective, the literature study is done. This study is related to some books that written by Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, especially the book entitle “Ushul as-Sunnah”.

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2. Methodology

It is history study that explains biography of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, also his speaking and writing in ilahiyyat concept. It is also explained by [15] that a method used in history study is qualitative study, because the study is look for a true facts that descriptive the last event. The qualitative study use content analysis that it is a analysis form to printed media, journal, book and writing report [16, 17].

This content analysis is used because Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal was death but his thought has been printed in books, thus his explanations can be studied until now. His main book used in this study is entitle “Ushul as-Sunnah”.

It is due to this book explanation is short, thus it is important to relate it to other Imams of Ahli Sunnah wal Jamaah, they are Ibn Taimiyyah al-Harrani, Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziah (because these Madhhabs were built by Hanbali Madhhab who stated that their view followed Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal) and Imam Abu Hasan al-Asy’ari (because in his faith always follow Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal).

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Law Foundation of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal’s Thought

The law foundation is a method that should be referred in the study of ilahiyyat concept. This method has been referred by Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and the other Imams who scholar of Ahli Sunnah wal Jamaah for deciding the content and thought of ilahiyyat concept. The law foundation that has been referred by Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal as thought foundation in ilahiyyat concept is

1. Commitment to Koran and Sunnah Muhammad.
2. Go far from bid’ah player.
3. There is no qiyas in the ilahiyyat concept

The all of law foundations used as basic of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and the other Imams who scholar of Ahli Sunnah wal Jamaah for deciding the content and thought of ilahiyyat concept. The law foundation that has been referred by Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal as thought foundation in ilahiyyat concept is

Ahli Sunnah wal Jamaah can not be changed by the other source. Therefore, every thing has been decided in the Koran and Sunnah Muhammad should be loyal and appreciate in the life.

It is suitable by Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal who use the Koran and Sunnah Muhammad are as the first law foundation in study of ilahiyyat concept. Argument to proof the existence of Allah, substance of Allah and characteristic of Allah are always based on the Koran and Sunnah Muhammad. Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal gives more priority to the Koran and Sunnah Muhammad that the mind. Moreover, he goes far to the logic and mind that can give bid’ah and disagreement.

Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal’s thought is suitable to Allah’s command who order to Muslim for believing to the Koran and Sunnah Muhammad. It is noted in an-Nisa: 59 of Koran;

“If ye differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if ye do believe in Allah and the Last Day: That is best, and most suitable for final determination. (an-Nisa: 59) “

Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal started to study the ilahiyyat concept with sentences in Koran and Sunnah Muhammad. He did not want to understand the sentences following the logic and philosophy. He and Ahli Sunnah wal Jamaah stated that arguments which are compulsory to believe the Koran as the faith source are noted in al-Baqarah: 1-2;

الْمَ حَدَّثَنَا الْلَّهُ الْدَّارِيُّ الْعَبَّاسُ وَالْعَلِيمُ الْبُكَرُ بَنُوَّ عِلَامُ يَا عَلِيمُ الْعَلِيمِ

“Meaning: …then if ye differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if ye do believe in Allah and the Last Day: That is best, and most suitable for final determination. (an-Nisa: 59) “

Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal’s commitment to Sunnah Muhammad for law foundation in ilahiyyat concept as stated in his book entitle “Ushul as-Sunnah”. He stated in this book that Sunnah is [2, 18, 19]

الْمَ حَدَّثَنَا الْمَلِيَّةُ يَا عَلِيمُ الْعَلِيمِ اسْتَحْتَبَّا بِهِمْ وَالْأَقْتَدَاءُ بِهِمْ

“Meaning: Ali’ Laam Miim. This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah. (al-Baqarah: 1-2) 

Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal’s commitment to Sunnah Muhammad for law foundation in ilahiyyat concept as stated in his book entitle “Ushul as-Sunnah”. He stated in this book that Sunnah is [2, 18, 19]
“Meaning: Stick to what it was the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. And emulating them.”

Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal stated that every one who follow the Messenger of Allah that they will be safety in the world and beyond. Especially in the ilahiyyat concepts, he always gives huge signal to the Sunnah Muhammad.

3.1.2. Go Far From Bid’ah Player

Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal is an Imam who always goes far from bid’ah. It is due to the bid’ah can fall down in to destroyed area. It is suitable to his statement in his book entitle “Ushul as-Sunnah”.

“Meaning: And go far from the cases of bid’ah.”

According to Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, all group who fall down in bid’ah area will be tortured by Allah in the hell. It is due to that they all have followed devil’s way. The prohibitions to follow the bid’ah player are also stated in Koran and Sunnah Muhammad [2, 19]

“Meaning: Follow (O men!) the revelation given unto you from your Lord, and follow not, as friends or protectors, other than Him. (al-A’raaf: 3)”

“Meaning: Verily, this is My way, leading straight: follow it: follow not (other) paths: they will scatter you about from His (great) path. (al-Anam: 153)”

Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal orders to be in right way (ash-Shirath al-Mustaqim) in the faith especially in ilahiyyat concept.

4. Conclusion

Based on the literature study can be concluded that the law foundation of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal’s thought in the ilahiyyat concept are;

1. Commitment to Koran and Sunnah Muhammad.
2. Go far from bid’ah player.
3. There is no qiyas in the ilahiyyat concept

5. References

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