

The Jurisprudence of Protection: A Comparative Analysis of *Isti'ādhah* in the Fatwas of Ibn Bāz and al-'Uthaymīn

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Abstract.

The discourse on *isti'ādhah* (seeking protection) remains particularly relevant in contemporary contexts where practices of spiritual protection, such as *ruqyah*, *tawassul*, and popular spiritualism, risk blurring the boundaries between *tanḥīd* (monotheism) and *shirk* (polytheism). This study aims to analyze the concept of *isti'ādhah* as addressed in the fatwas of 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Bāz and Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn, highlighting both convergences and divergences in their theological reasoning. The research utilizes a qualitative-comparative approach, employing library research and thematic content analysis, alongside the constant comparative method to examine primary fatwa sources. The findings reveal that both 'ulama agree on *isti'ādhah* as an essential element of *tanḥīd al-ulūhiyyah* (the oneness of Allah), which must be directed exclusively to Allah. However, their *istinbāṭ* (legal reasoning) differs: Ibn Bāz applies a deductive-practical approach focused on ritual guidance, while al-'Uthaymīn uses an inductive-systematic method that emphasizes theological classification. The primary contribution of this research lies in the reconstruction of the "Jurisprudence of Protection," a novel conceptual framework that systematically classifies *isti'ādhah* into three categories: *shar'iyyah* (prescribed), *ja'izah* (permissible), and *shirkah* (polytheistic). This framework provides crucial theological navigation for fatwa authorities and the Muslim community, helping them distinguish between legitimate spiritual protection practices, those permissible in limited circumstances, and those that deviate from the core principles of *tanḥīd* in contemporary religious practices.

Keyword: *Isti'ādhah*, Jurisprudence of Protection, Salafi Jurisprudence, Aqidah Discourse, Islamic Legal Reasoning

INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of worshipping Allah, *isti'ādhah* occupies a crucial position due to its intrinsic link to the principles of *tanḥīd* (Sari, Hafsyah, Fazela, Nayla, & Wismanto, 2024).

Linguistically, *isti'ādhah* denotes seeking refuge from perceived harm or evil (Indrawan, 2016). In Salafi jurisprudence, it is conceptualized as a sincere plea for protection addressed solely to Allah, from both outward and inward evils (Berriah & Post, 2026). The *shar'ī* basis of this practice is clearly evident in the Qur'an, especially in Surah Al-Falaq and An-Nas, which teach Muslims to always seek refuge only in Allah from the evil of creatures and supernatural disturbances (Hasbullah, Gade, Syahminan, & Silahuddin, 2024).

The discourse on *isti'ādhah* is not only important in the classical horizon but also remains relevant in the contemporary era. In modern society, interest in *ghaybiyyāt* (unseen) phenomena is still visible in various forms, such as alternative spiritual practices, *ruqyah* trends, the search for amulets or "protection" through paranormal mediums, and syncretism spread through social media and popular culture (Mubarok & Fuadi, 2026; Rassool, 2018). This phenomenon demonstrates that the human need for a sense of security and spiritual protection remains relevant, despite the rapid development of science and technology. Therefore, the study of *isti'ādhah* within the framework of *tawhid* (monotheism) is crucial to ensure that Muslims can distinguish between sharia-compliant protection and practices that undermine the purity of *aqidah* (faith) (Parveen, 2025).

The Qur'an also emphasizes the boundaries that must be observed in seeking protection. For instance, Surah al-Jinn: 6 addresses the practices of the *jāhiliyyah* (pre-Islamic) society, who sought protection from the jinn when entering certain places (Ibn-Kaṭīr, 2006). This verse indicates that not all forms of *isti'ādhah* are religiously justified (Wahidi, Benny Afwadzi, Syafril, & Riki Rahman, 2025). In the context of sound *aqidah*, seeking protection from beings other than Allah in matters that only Allah is capable of fulfilling is considered a serious deviation that jeopardizes one's salvation in the hereafter (Baqasi, 2023).

Therefore, a study on the boundaries of *isti'ādhah* is paramount to safeguarding the purity of *tawhid* (monotheism) against all forms of *shirk* (polytheism) (Muttaqin & Fitriansyah, 2022). The perspectives of contemporary scholars are necessary to ensure this concept is understood systematically and to prevent misunderstandings in religious practices (Diaz Supandi, 2025). Among the scholars who have given significant attention to this issue are 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Bāz and Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn. Their works on *aqidah* and their *fatwas* provide a rich source of material for systematic analysis (Syamsir, Septiadi, Nurhakiki, Al-Habsy, & Hidayah, 2021).

Over the past five years, research on Salafism and contemporary fatwas showed increasingly diverse developments. Adraoui (Adraoui, 2023) emphasized the importance of revising the typology of contemporary Salafism to capture the variations in Salafī orientations and expressions more

accurately. Meanwhile, Goshey (Goshey, 2022) revealed that authority within Salafi networks remained highly dependent on the transmission of knowledge and established relationships with authoritative scholars. In the Indonesian context, Aidulsyah (Aidulsyah, 2023) demonstrated that urban Salafism developed through social media, popular culture, and the religious styles of the younger generation, whereas Rijal (Rijal, 2025) asserted that the *hijrah* narrative acted as a crucial medium for the internalization of Salafi lifestyles among urban Muslims. From the perspective of *fatwa* studies, Wahid (Wahid, 2024) argued that recent research on online *fatwas* tended to focus on issues of religious authority, the transformation of *fatwa* media, and the social functions of *fatwas* in digital spaces.

In this regard, previous studies remained relevant as a foundational basis. Alzahrani examined Ibn Bāz's legal reasoning (*istinbāt*) methodology regarding issues of *aqidah* (Alzahrani, 2013), while Ondrej (2008) discussed al-'Uthaymīn's approach to contemporary tawhid issues (Beranek, 2008). Meanwhile, Sulaiman reviewed fatwas related to worship and ritual practices, including seeking protection from Allah in daily life (Adua, 2015). These studies provided a vital foundation for understanding the methodological styles of both *'ulama*, yet they had not specifically designated *isti'ādhah* as an independent focus of comparison.

Beyond those foundations, several recent studies moved closer to the themes of *tawhid*, *istighāthah*, and the boundaries of *shirk*. Harits et al. (Harits, Khadijah, & Kadiatmaja, 2025) affirmed that from Ibn Bāz's perspective, *tawhīd al-ulūbiyyah* functioned as the primary safeguard against the diversion of worship toward creatures; thus, all forms of devotional veneration to other than Allah were understood as threats to the purity of *tawhid*. Fasya et al. (Fasya, Zahro', & Agung Pranoto Kadiatmaja, 2025) demonstrated that classical *aqidah* literature remained relevant in explaining the concept of *istighāthah* and in distinguishing practices that stayed within the corridors of *tawhid* from those that shifted toward *shirk*. In line with this, Shofiyyurrohman et al. (Shofiyyurrohman, Muhammad Yasin Nasruddin, & Agung Pranoto Kadiatmaja, 2025) emphasized the importance of clearly differentiating between permissible *tawassul* and supplications to other than Allah that exceeded the boundaries of *tawhid*.

At a more conceptual level, Juniarta et al. (Juniarta, Bukhari, & Pranoto, 2025) demonstrated that theological exclusivity positioned tawhid as the basis of legal-ethical exclusivity that maintained spiritual purity and social stability. Meanwhile, Nuha et al. (Nuha, Muyassar, Ismail, & Pranoto, 2026) asserted that the declaration *lā ilāha illā Allāh* not only served as a theological proclamation but also functioned as an epistemological and ethical framework for understanding the relationship between faith, knowledge, and moral responsibility. Nevertheless, these studies remained partial—whether

addressing the methodology of *aqidah*, *istighāthah*, *tawassul*, or theological exclusivity—and had not specifically presented a comparative analysis that synthesized the fatwas of the two *‘ulama*, Ibn Bāz and al-‘Uthaymīn, into a classification framework of *isti‘ādhah syar‘iyyah* (religiously prescribed), *jā’izah* (permissible), and *shirkīyyah* (polytheistic). This gap serves as the point of departure for this research.

This study presents the Jurisprudence of Protection, a theological-legal framework designed to evaluate *isti‘ādhah* (seeking protection) within the broader doctrine of *tawhīd al-ulūbiyyah*. This framework offers a comprehensive analysis of spiritual protection practices by classifying *isti‘ādhah* into three categories: *shar‘iyyah* (prescribed), *jā’izah* (permissible), and *shirkīyyah* (polytheistic). Grounded in Islamic monotheism, it provides clear boundaries for assessing spiritual practices and ensures they align with the foundational principles of *tawhīd*. In this respect, the proposed framework is not merely a descriptive comparison of two fatwa authorities, but a reconstructive synthesis that integrates Ibn Bāz’s practical-ritual emphasis with al-‘Uthaymīn’s systematic-theological classification. Therefore, the Jurisprudence of Protection is positioned not only as a contribution to *aqidah* studies, but also to comparative fatwa studies and contemporary Islamic theology, particularly in clarifying the boundaries of legitimate spiritual protection within the framework of *tawhīd*.

Building on this conceptual basis, this study employs a library-based design with a qualitative-comparative approach to the primary fatwa sources of Ibn Bāz and al-‘Uthaymīn. The analysis addresses three main aspects: first, the concept of *isti‘ādhah* as articulated by each scholar; second, the *dalīl* and patterns of argumentation they employ in determining its legal status; and third, the similarities and differences in their views concerning the forms and boundaries of *isti‘ādhah*. In addition, this study examines the factors underlying their differing argumentative emphases, particularly with regard to *istinbāt* methodology and the orientation of their writings. Through this approach, the article seeks to map the thought structures of both scholars more systematically and to provide a clearer understanding of *fiqh al-isti‘ādhah* within the broader discourse of Islamic theology and fatwa studies.

Accordingly, this study aims not only to compare the perspectives of Ibn Bāz and al-‘Uthaymīn but also to reconstruct the concept of *isti‘ādhah* through a systematic engagement with their comparative insights. In doing so, it seeks to offer a clearer theological navigation for understanding the legitimacy, limits, and deviations of spiritual protection practices in contemporary Muslim contexts. In this way, the study addresses a gap in previous scholarship by moving beyond descriptive comparison toward a more integrated conceptual contribution to contemporary *aqidah* discourse.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative-comparative approach to analyze the theological *fatwas* of Ibn Bāz and al-‘Uthaymīn regarding *isti’ādhah*. This type of study was a library research that focused on both primary and secondary textual data. This approach was used to reconstruct the thought of these two ‘*ulama* through a reading of the original texts, without involving field data collection. According to Sugiyono (Sugiono, 2019), library research was effective for revealing normative thought patterns in Islamic studies, particularly in the comparative analysis of fatwas that required hermeneutic precision toward the original texts.

The research data sources consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were sourced from the official *fatwa* collections and the major works of the two ‘*ulama* (such as *Sharḥ Thalāth al-Uṣūl* and *Fatāwā Nūr ‘alā al-Darb*) accessed through authoritative printed editions. Meanwhile, secondary data sources encompassed academic journals related to Salafi thought and classical Hanbali school literature relevant to the discourse on tawhid and *isti’ādhah*. The unit of analysis in this study was the legal statements and fatwas discussing the classification and boundaries of *isti’ādhah*, whether *syar‘iyyah* (religiously prescribed), *ja’izah* (permissible), or *syirkīyyah* (polytheistic). Data collection techniques were carried out through a document review of both primary and secondary sources to identify thematic rulings regarding seeking protection from Allah versus seeking protection from creatures.

The analysis technique used was thematic content analysis, which involved identifying, coding, and categorizing legal arguments based on their normative and systematic nature. This method followed Braun and Clarke (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which facilitated the analysis of normative texts with precise results. Meanwhile, the comparison technique employed the constant comparative method to highlight similarities and differences in the patterns of legal reasoning (*istinbāt*), the use of *dalīl* (scriptural evidence), and the legal implications within the fatwas of the two ‘*ulama*. This approach was inspired by Glaser and Strauss (Glaser & Strauss, 1980) in grounded theory, which had been adapted in comparative studies of fatwa methodologies among contemporary Islamic institutions, such as the comparison of *fatwa* methods between the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) and *Dār al-Ifṭā’* of Egypt (Muhammad Amrul Irsyadi & Asmuni, 2024).

The data analysis process employed in this study involved a detailed thematic content analysis approach, which focused on identifying, coding, and categorizing legal arguments found within the fatwas of Ibn Bāz and al-‘Uthaymīn. In this process, coding refers to the identification of specific legal arguments related to *isti’ādhah*, based on their alignment with Islamic theological principles,

particularly the doctrine of *tawḥīd*. The coding stage began by systematically reading the primary fatwa sources and highlighting the legal arguments each scholar used to define and classify *isti'ādḥah* as either *shar'iyah* (prescribed), *jā'izah* (permissible), or *shirkīyyah* (polytheistic). For instance, Ibn Bāz's fatwas were coded based on his deductive approach, identifying the normative boundaries of *isti'ādḥah* directly from the Qur'an and Hadith, and categorizing practices that deviated from these sources as *shirk*.

In the categorization stage, the identified arguments were grouped according to the type of reasoning and legal justification provided by each scholar. This included differentiating between Ibn Bāz's emphasis on practical ritual application (such as the correct recitation of *isti'ādḥah* during prayer) and al-'Uthaymīn's more systematic theological framework, which categorized *isti'ādḥah* into distinct forms based on their theological validity (e.g., *syar'iyah*, *jā'izah*, and *syirkīyyah*). The categorization process ensured that each fatwa was placed in its proper legal context, allowing for a clearer understanding of the scholars' differing methodologies and their interpretations of *isti'ādḥah*.

This approach was inspired by Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic content analysis, which emphasized the need to analyze textual data in a way that captures both explicit legal arguments and underlying theological implications. The analysis was further refined by employing constant comparative analysis, which helped identify patterns and divergences in the fatwas, providing a systematic comparison between the legal reasoning of Ibn Bāz and al-'Uthaymīn. The ultimate goal of this methodology was to reconstruct the "Jurisprudence of Protection" framework, clarifying the boundaries of legitimate spiritual protection practices as they pertain to *isti'ādḥah*.

FINDING

The Concept of *Isti'ādḥah* According to 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Bāz

Ibn Bāz's thought demonstrated that *isti'ādḥah* was positioned not merely as a prayer for protection, but as an integral part of *tawḥīd* worship that must be directed exclusively to Allah. In *Sharḥ Thalāthah al-Uṣūl*, he asserted that *isti'ādḥah* constituted a manifestation of *tawḥīd al-ulūbiyyah*; thus, seeking protection from other than Allah was understood as a deviation from the correct corridors of *aqīdah* (ibn Bāz, 2017). The prioritized *dalīl* (scriptural evidence) in this explanation were Surah *al-Falaq*, Surah *an-Nās*, and Surah *al-A'raf* verse 200, all of which showed that true protection must be returned to Allah as the sole refuge from both manifest and hidden evils (ibn Bāz, 2017). This reading aligned with the findings of Harits et al. (Harits et al., 2025), who affirmed that from Ibn Bāz's

perspective, *tawḥīd al-ulūbiyyah* functioned as the primary safeguard against the diversion of worship toward creatures, such that all forms of devotional veneration to other than Allah were understood as threats to the purity of *tawḥīd*.

These normative principles were subsequently operationalized by Ibn Bāz into practical fiqh through *Fatāwā Nūr ‘alā al-Darb*, particularly in the procedures for reciting *isti‘ādhah* before *al-Fātiḥah* in *ṣalāt*, based on Surah *al-Naḥl* verse 98 and the *istiṭfāḥ* hadiths (ibn Bāz, 2007). From this, it was evident that Ibn Bāz’s approach did not stop at determining normative rulings but emphasized the translation of *naṣṣ* (scriptural texts) into an applicable, simple, and preventative ritual discipline. Consequently, the practice of seeking protection remained within the corridors of tawḥīd without burdening the performance of worship (Alzahrani, 2013).

The Concept of *Isti‘ādhah* According to Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-‘Uthaymīn

In contrast to Ibn Bāz’s more applicable style, al-‘Uthaymīn’s thought demonstrated a more systematic effort to transform *isti‘ādhah* from a mere devotional practice into an operational theological-legal classification. In *Sharḥ Thalāthah al-Uṣūl*, he divided *isti‘ādhah* into four types that strictly distinguished between *syar‘iyyah* (prescribed), limitedly *ja‘izah* (permissible), and *syirkīyyah* (polytheistic) protection (al-‘Uthaymīn, 2010). al-‘Uthaymīn positioned *isti‘ādhah* toward Allah and His Attributes within valid boundaries, while seeking protection from other than Allah was categorized as *shirk* (al-‘Uthaymīn, 2010). al-‘Uthaymīn’s emphasis on the boundaries between justified, limitedly permissible, and polytheistic *isti‘ādhah* aligned with the study by Fasya et al. (Fasya et al., 2025), which affirmed that classical *aqidah* literature remained relevant for distinguishing between requests that stay within the corridors of *tawḥīd* and practices that have shifted toward *shirk*. Along the same lines, Shofiyyurrohman et al. (Shofiyyurrohman et al., 2025) also demonstrated that the dividing line between valid tawassul and seeking protection from other than Allah must be emphasized so that the purity of faith remained guarded amidst popular spiritual practices that easily blur the boundaries of *tawḥīd*.

These classifications were subsequently deepened through *Al-Qawl al-Mufīd ‘alā Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* and *Majmū‘ Fatāwā wa Rasā’il*, particularly when al-‘Uthaymīn explained Surah al-Jinn verse 6, the meaning of *rabaq* (error), and the boundaries of *tawassul* through the Attributes of Allah (M. bin S. Al-‘Utsaimin, 2017; M. ibn S. Al-‘Utsaimin, 2003). Overall, al-‘Uthaymīn’s works systematically categorized *isti‘ādhah* into valid (*syar‘iyyah*), limitedly permissible (*ja‘izah*), and polytheistic (*syirkīyyah*)

forms based on scriptural evidence and legal reasoning, providing a structured reference for understanding the practice within the framework of *tawhīd*.

Comparative Matrix of Concepts and Methodology

Table 1. Dalīl and Legal Status According to Ibn Bāz & Al-‘Uthaymīn

Aspect/Fatwa	Ibn Bāz	Al-Uthaymīn
Primary Dalīl from the Qur’an	Surah Al-Falaq:1, An-Nās:1, Al-A‘raf:200, An-Naḥl:98	Surah Al-Falaq:1, An-Nās:1, Al-Jinn:6, Al-Baqarah:104, Luqmān:27
Hadith Dalīl	<i>Istiftāḥ</i> hadiths in <i>ṣalāt</i> (Bukhārī, Muslim)	<i>Kalimāt tammāt</i> hadith (Muslim), Umm Salamah hadith (Bukhārī)
Syar‘iyyah Rulings	General <i>sunnah</i> and <i>ṣalāt</i> rituals	<i>Sunnah Muakkadah</i> + <i>ja‘iz</i> (to capable creatures) + <i>tawassul</i> through Allah's Attributes
Syirkīyyah Rulings	Implicit: petitions directed to other than Allah	Explicit 3rd layer: to the deceased/jinn, heart's dependency on essences other than Allah, and praying to Allah's Attributes without attributing them to Him

Table 2. Methods and Approaches

Aspect/Fatwa	Ibn Bāz	Al-Uthaymīn
Approach	Deductive (Naṣṣ → Application)	Inductive-thematic (Classification → Tafsīr → Uṣūl)
Focus	<i>Tawhīd</i> in general + Ritualistic	Detailed classification & theological clarification)
Scope	Aqidah and practical fiqh	Aqidah, tafsīr, theological uṣūl
Objective	Ensuring tawhīd remains within ritual practice	Building a systematic framework of “Jurisprudence of Protection”

The comparative synthesis above revealed that although Ibn Bāz and al-‘Uthaymīn applied different *istinbāt* patterns, both remained united in an identical theological orientation: the protection of the purity of *aqidah* (al-‘Uthaymīn, 2010; ibn Bāz, 2017). Ibn Bāz focused on a preventative approach emphasizing *Sadd al-Dhara‘i‘*, so that his fatwas emerged as a theological safeguard against practices potentially obscuring tawhīd (Alzahrani, 2013; ibn Bāz, 2007).

Conversely, al-‘Uthaymīn emphasized structured theological logic, detailed legal classifications, and causality boundaries, allowing stricter distinctions between valid causes, limitedly permissible causes, and illusory dependencies leading to *shirk* (al-‘Uthaymīn, 2010; M. bin S. Al-‘Utsaimin, 2017; M. ibn S. Al-‘Utsaimin, 2003; Ghazali, 2018). Both ‘ulama reconstructed religious authority by positioning the fatwa as an epistemological filter against alternative spiritualism, syncretism, and non-sharia authority in the public sphere (Goshey, 2022; Suaedy, Alnizar, Ardiantoro, & Siroj, 2023). The protection of *aqidah* thus functioned as a doctrinal, epistemological, and moral framework, consistent with studies on theological exclusivity and the role of *lā ilāha illā Allāh* as a foundation of knowledge and ethical responsibility (Juniarta et al., 2025; Nuha et al., 2026).

Similarities in the Thought of the Two ‘Ulama Regarding *Dalīl* and the Concept of *Tawḥīd*

An analysis of five primary fatwa units revealed three main points of similarity between Ibn Bāz and al-‘Uthaymīn in understanding *isti‘ādhah*. First, both established Surah al-Falaq and Surah an-Nās as the fundamental normative basis for *isti‘ādhah*, such that seeking protection was understood as a form of exclusive dependency on Allah (al-‘Uthaymīn, 2010; ibn Bāz, 2017). Second, both agreed that *isti‘ādhah* was included within *tawḥīd al-ulūbiyyah* and, therefore, could not be diverted to other than Allah (al-‘Uthaymīn, 2010; ibn Bāz, 2017). Third, both utilized Surah al-Jinn verse 6 as the foundation for rejecting *isti‘ādhah* that leads to *shirk*, although al-‘Uthaymīn developed it with a more categorical explanation (al-‘Uthaymīn, 2010; M. ibn S. Al-‘Utsaimin, 2003). Consequently, the meeting point of the two ‘ulama lay not only in the selection of *dalīl* but also in an identical normative objective: preserving the purity of *aqidah* and preventing the shift of dependency from Allah to other than Him (Alzahrani, 2013; Beranek, 2008).

These three points of intersection can be summarized in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Similarities in *Dalīl* and the Concept of *Tawḥīd*

Aspect of Similarity	Ibn Bāz	Al-Uthaymīn	Tawḥīd Implications
Normative Foundation of <i>Isti‘ādhah</i>	Surah <i>al-Falaq</i> and Surah <i>an-Nās</i> as the primary <i>dalīl</i> for <i>isti‘ādhah</i>	Surah al-Falaq and Surah an-Nās as the basis for <i>syar‘iyyah isti‘ādhah</i>	Asserting exclusive dependency on Allah
Position of <i>isti‘ādhah</i>	Positioned as an act of worship	Positioned as an integral part of <i>tawḥīd al-ulūbiyyah</i>	Rejecting the diversion of <i>isti‘ādhah</i> to other than Allah
Rejection of <i>Syirkēyyah Isti‘ādhah</i>	The implications of <i>shirk</i> are explained normatively	Surah al-Jinn: 6 is explained more categorically	Preserving the purity of <i>aqidah</i> from deviations

This analysis demonstrates that both *‘ulamā* share foundational similarities in their use of *dalīl* and the conceptualization of *isti‘ādhah*, highlighting a unified approach toward maintaining the purity of *tawhīd*.

Differences in *Istinbāṭ* Patterns and Methodological Approaches

The differences between Ibn Bāz and al-‘Uthaymīn were primarily evident in how each *‘alim* (scholar) operationalized *dalīl* into the legal determination of *isti‘ādhah*. Ibn Bāz tended to apply a deductive-practical pattern, moving from *naṣṣ* (scriptural text) to legal determination, which was then directed toward direct application in *fiqh amali* (practical jurisprudence). This pattern was manifested in his collection of fatwas, where Surah *al-Nahl* verse 98 was not only utilized as a normative basis for *isti‘ādhah* but was also explained operationally in the procedures of *ṣalāt*, particularly regarding the recitation of *isti‘ādhah* before *al-Fātiḥah* with flexibility in the first *rak‘ah* (ibn Bāz, 2007).

In contrast to Ibn Bāz’s approach, al-‘Uthaymīn presented a more inductive-systematic pattern. He moved from the text toward classification, subsequently expanding it through exegesis (*tafsīr*) and jurisprudential (*uṣūlī*) clarification. This was evident in *Sharḥ Thalāthat al-Uṣūl*, which produced a classification of four types of *isti‘ādhah* (al-‘Uthaymīn, 2010), and was further extended through *Al-Qawl al-Mufīd ‘alā Kitāb al-Tawhīd* with the interpretation of Surah *al-Jinn* verse 6—specifically on the meaning of *rabaqan*— (M. ibn S. Al-‘Utsaimin, 2003), and was reaffirmed in his collection of *fatwas* through the discussion of *tawassul* through the Attributes of Allah (M. bin S. Al-‘Utsaimin, 2017).

More broadly, these differing patterns were consistent with recent studies showing that variations in fatwa outcomes generally arose from differences in *istinbāṭ* structures, the prioritization of *dalīl* selection, and the approaches taken in establishing the validity of legal arguments. Asman demonstrated that differences in *istinbāṭ* structures could produce different legal formulations even when based on the same normative theme (Asman, 2024), while Jalili et al (Jalili, Ulfa, & Sahid, 2023) affirmed that fatwa methods could be identified by the way sources were selected, legal validity was constructed, and religious answers were adjusted to the context of the issues faced. Within a broader framework, Suaedy (Suaedy et al., 2023), Whyte (Whyte, 2023), and Wahid (Wahid, Kususiyannah, & Abdullah, 2025) revealed that contemporary fatwa authority was determined not only by its legal content but also by the systematization of methodology, the mechanisms of knowledge transmission, the forms of argument legitimacy, and the level of public trust in the explanations constructed.

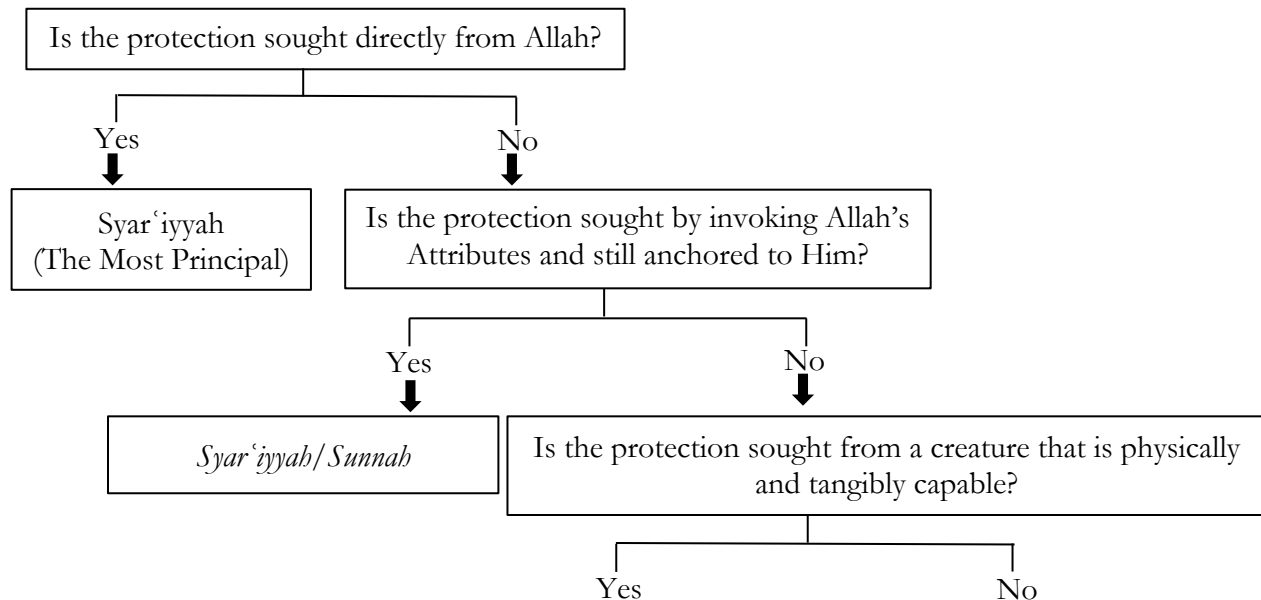
Table 4. Comparison of Istimbāt Patterns

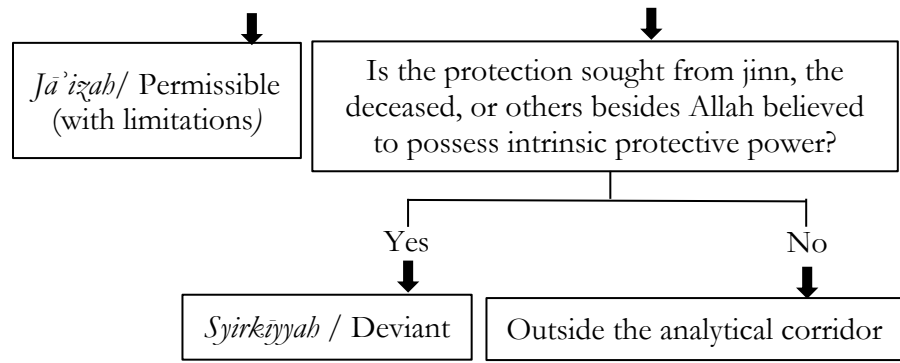
Methodological Aspect	Ibn Bāz	Al-Uthaymīn
Approach Pattern (<i>Istinbāt</i>)	Deductive (naṣṣ → ruling → application)	Inductive (texts → classification → tafsīr → clarification)
Primary Focus	<i>Fiqh amali</i> (practical jurisprudence) and ritual application	Theological conceptualization and legal classification
Form of Argumentation	Concise, normative, direct toward practice	Systematic, analytical, and layered
Output	Procedures of <i>ṣalāt</i>	A framework of four types of <i>isti'ādhab</i>

These methodological differences had a direct implication on the analytical outputs of each scholar, which determined the legal classification of *isti'ādhab* within the corridors of *syar'iyyah* (prescribed), *ja'izah* (permissible), and *syirkīyyah* (polytheistic) categories (al-'Uthaymīn, 2010; M. bin S. Al-'Utsaimin, 2017; ibn Bāz, 2007).

Flowchart: The Working Mechanism of "Jurisprudence of Protection" in *Isti'ādhab* Classification

The following flowchart illustrates the operational mechanism for classifying *isti'ādhab* as *syar'iyyah* (prescribed), *ja'izah* (permissible), or *syirkīyyah* (polytheistic), based solely on the descriptive analysis of Ibn Bāz and al-'Uthaymīn's approaches. This visual representation summarizes the classification logic derived from their practical application of *dalil* and methodological patterns

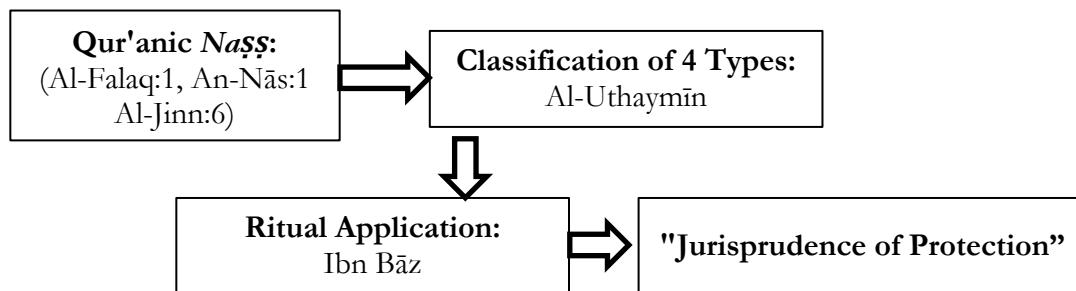




The flowchart demonstrates that *isti'adhab* directed directly to Allah or through His Attributes remains within the shariah corridor, whereas seeking protection from creatures is permitted only within the limited realm of physical causes (*asbāb al-ḥābirīyyah*) without heart-dependency. Requests for protection from jinn, the deceased, or other entities believed to possess intrinsic protective power fall into the *syirkāyyah* and deviant categories. Accordingly, this legal classification forms an operational decision flow that facilitates the assessment of contemporary religious protective practices, including the recitation of *ta'awwudh* in *ṣalāt*, valid *tawassul*, permissible physical protections, and *ruqyah* or protection requests with potential *syirkāyyah* elements.

Diagram: The Framework of "Jurisprudence of Protection"

Before presenting the diagram, it is important to provide a descriptive introduction that contextualizes its content. The following diagram illustrates the overall framework of the "Jurisprudence of Protection," synthesizing the methodological differences and complementary approaches of Ibn Bāz and al-'Uthaymīn. It visually represents how their respective practical-ritual and conceptual-classification emphases converge to form a systematic tool for evaluating *isti'adhab* practices within the boundaries of *tawḥīd*. This introduction ensures that readers understand the purpose and logic of the diagram before engaging with the detailed visual representation.



The methodological differences between Ibn Bāz and al-‘Uthaymīn complemented each other and provided the foundation for the emergence of the "Jurisprudence of Protection" framework. Following the diagram, this framework serves as both a theoretical and operational tool to assess the practice of *isti‘ādhah* within the corridors of *tawḥīd*.

It integrates Ibn Bāz’s focus on practical and ritual dimensions with al-‘Uthaymīn’s conceptual classification, enabling a systematic distinction between *shar‘iyyah*, *ja‘izah*, and *shirkīyyah* *isti‘ādhah*. Consequently, this framework offers not only conceptual mapping but also an analytical tool for evaluating protective practices more effectively in contemporary religious contexts.

DISCUSSION

The Jurisprudence of Protection as a Theological-Legal Framework

The Jurisprudence of Protection serves as a theological-legal framework designed to classify and evaluate the practice of *isti‘ādhah* (seeking protection) within Islamic law and theology. Rooted in the foundational principle of *tawḥīd al-ulūhiyyah* (the oneness of Allah), this framework provides a structured way to understand how *isti‘ādhah* is both a ritual act of worship and a legal concern within Islamic jurisprudence (al-Qushayri, 2017; ibn Bāz, 2007).

At its core, the Jurisprudence of Protection emphasizes that *isti‘ādhah* must be directed solely to Allah as an act of devotion, and this framework helps differentiate between permissible forms of spiritual protection and those that deviate into polytheism (*shirk*). The concept of *isti‘ādhah* is not merely a ritual practice but a deeply theological issue that aligns with the broader Islamic doctrine of monotheism, whereby protection sought through other than Allah is considered *shirk*.

This framework is the product of a comparative synthesis of the fatwas of Ibn Bāz and al-‘Uthaymīn, two prominent scholars whose methodologies provide complementary insights into *isti‘ādhah*. Ibn Bāz adopts a deductive-practical approach, focusing on the ritual aspects of *isti‘ādhah* in its religious context, emphasizing its alignment with *tawḥīd* and its expression through Islamic acts of worship, such as *du‘ā’* and *ṣalāt* (ibn Bāz, 2007). On the other hand, al-‘Uthaymīn presents a systematic-theological approach, categorizing *isti‘ādhah* into distinct forms and emphasizing theological purity in distinguishing valid from invalid practices (al-‘Uthaymīn, 2010).

The Jurisprudence of Protection thus integrates these two methodologies by providing a comprehensive legal classification of *isti‘ādhah*, dividing it into three categories: *shar‘iyyah* (prescribed), *ja‘izah* (permissible), and *shirkīyyah* (polytheistic). This classification system does not merely serve as a conceptual tool but as a normative guide to help fatwa authorities and Muslim communities assess

contemporary spiritual practices, ensuring that they remain within the boundaries of Islamic monotheism.

The Jurisprudence of Protection operates not only as a legal classification tool but also as a theological guide for the faithful. For example, *shar'īyyah isti'ādhah* refers to practices that are explicitly prescribed by Islamic law, such as seeking protection through prayers and recitations directed solely to Allah. Conversely, *shirkīyyah isti'ādhah* involves seeking protection through entities or beings other than Allah, which clearly violates the principle of *tawhīd*. The third category, *ja'izah*, includes practices that are conditionally permissible but must be carefully monitored to avoid crossing into shirk.

This framework is not merely academic but is directly applicable to fatwa-making and theological guidance. It offers a clear theological navigation for assessing the legitimacy and limits of spiritual practices, addressing contemporary issues such as *ruqyah*, *tawassul*, and other forms of spiritual healing. By defining what is acceptable and what deviates from Islamic monotheism, the Jurisprudence of Protection helps safeguard the integrity of *tawhīd* in contemporary Muslim societies.

In sum, the Jurisprudence of Protection offers a novel conceptual framework that integrates both theological concerns and legal considerations to address the complexities of spiritual protection practices in Islam. It does not merely describe two scholars' views on *isti'ādhah* but reconstructs them into a comprehensive framework that provides clear legal and theological boundaries for the faithful.

Cross-Reference with Secondary Literature

Having established the theological-legal framework of the Jurisprudence of Protection, it is essential to situate this framework within the broader discourse of Islamic legal theory and *aqidah* studies. By cross-referencing the views of Ibn Bāz and al-'Uthaymīn with secondary literature, this section examines how their insights align with, and diverge from, existing scholarly interpretations of *isti'ādhah*. This comparative analysis enriches the framework by grounding it within the broader context of Islamic jurisprudence and theological thought.

The analysis of primary sources revealed that the thoughts of Ibn Bāz and al-'Uthaymīn regarding *isti'ādhah* demonstrated solid consistency and aligned with relevant secondary literature. For Ibn Bāz, *isti'ādhah* was asserted as a form of worship entirely bound to *tawhīd al-ulūhiyyah*; thus, it was not permissible to be diverted to other than Allah (ibn Bāz, 2017). This explanation was not limited to the normative level but was also directed toward the field of ritual practice, particularly the procedures for reciting *isti'ādhah* in *ṣalāt* (ibn Bāz, 2007). This approach reflected a reliance on the power of naṣṣ (scriptural texts) and a practical orientation, as also expressed in the studies by Alzahrani and Sulaiman (Adua, 2015; Alzahrani, 2013).

In contrast to Ibn Bāz, al-‘Uthaymīn presented a more systematic and conceptual elaboration. In his work, *isti‘ādhah* was not only explained as a worship of protection directed to Allah but was also classified into several forms with more detailed legal boundaries, encompassing *syar‘iyyah* (prescribed), *ja‘izah* (permissible), and *syirkīyyah* (polytheistic) *isti‘ādhah* (al-‘Uthaymīn, 2010; M. bin S. Al-‘Utsaimin, 2017; M. ibn S. Al-‘Utsaimin, 2003). His explanation regarding Surah al-Jinn verse 6, the concept of *rabaqan* (error), and the issue of *tawassul* through the Attributes of Allah demonstrated a profound attention to theological clarification and legal categorization. This pattern aligned with the analysis by Ghazali, who described al-‘Uthaymīn’s fatwa methodology as evidence-based (*dalīl*-based), tending toward a literal interpretation of *naṣṣ*, and strongly influenced by the Hanbali *fiqh* tradition (Ghazali, 2018).

Thus, the secondary literature further strengthened this research. Recent studies demonstrated that the variation in *fatwa* outcomes generally arose from differences in *istinbāt* patterns, the prioritization of *dalīl* (scriptural evidence) selection, and the approaches taken in establishing the validity of legal arguments (Asman, 2024; Jalili et al., 2023). Concurrently, studies on contemporary *fatwas* also affirmed that the authority of a *fatwa* was determined not only by its legal content but also by the systematization of its methodology, the legitimacy of its arguments, the media of transmission, and the level of public trust in the explanations provided (Suaedy et al., 2023; Wahid et al., 2025; Whyte, 2023). Based on the analysis above, Ibn Bāz was more prominent in the operationalization of *dalīl* into ritual practice, whereas al-‘Uthaymīn was more superior in constructing conceptual classifications and detailed theological explanations.

Legal Implications: Classification of *Syar‘iyyah*, *Ja‘izah*, *Syirkīyyah* *Isti‘ādhah*

The comparative synthesis produced a sharper legal classification. Ibn Bāz provided a binary approach: namely, *syar‘iyyah isti‘ādhah* as a valid form of worship and seeking protection from other than Allah as a form of deviation that implicitly leads to *shirk* (ibn Bāz, 2007). Conversely, al-‘Uthaymīn developed a more tiered classification—encompassing *syar‘iyyah*, *ja‘izah*, and *syirkīyyah*—accompanied by additional details regarding the use of Allah’s Attributes and the limits of dependency on creatures. In this perspective, the classifications of *syar‘iyyah*, *ja‘izah*, and *syirkīyyah* functioned not only as conceptual mapping but also as a typology of legal certainty within *aqidah* (al-‘Uthaymīn, 2010; M. bin S. Al-‘Utsaimin, 2017). For the lay Muslim, boundaries such as "alive, present, and capable" provided a firmer line between permissible causes and dependencies that lead to *shirk* (al-‘Uthaymīn, 2010). Consequently, the Jurisprudence of Protection operated not merely as a classification tool but also as a means of clarifying legal boundaries at the level of religious praxis. Within this framework,

legal classification did not only map the status of protective practices but also served as a theological and moral fence guarding the integrity of faith amidst the emergence of spiritualism that blurs the ontological relationship between the Creator (*Khāliq*) and the created (*makhlūq*) (Juniarta et al., 2025)

CONCLUSION

This study successfully demonstrated that Ibn Bāz and al-‘Uthaymīn both positioned *isti‘ādbah* as an integral part of *tawḥīd al-ulūbiyyah*, which must be directed exclusively toward Allah. Both ‘*ulama* relied on the same normative foundations—specifically Surah *al-Falaq*, Surah *an-Nās*, and Surah *al-Jinn*: 6—and maintained a consistent theological orientation: preserving the purity of *aqidah* and preventing deviations in the practice of seeking protection. Consequently, the point of intersection between these two ‘*ulama* lay not only in their selection of *dalīl* but also in their shared commitment to protecting *tawḥīd* from various forms of displaced dependency on other than Allah.

This study also found that the differences between the two lay in their *istinbāṭ* patterns and argumentative orientations. Ibn Bāz tended to utilize a deductive-practical approach that emphasized the operationalization of *naṣṣ* directly into worship guidance, whereas al-‘Uthaymīn presented an inductive-systematic approach that was more detailed in legal classification, the boundaries of causality, and theological clarification. These differences did not indicate substantive contradiction but rather variations in strategies for preserving *aqidah*. On this basis, this research successfully reconstructed the Jurisprudence of Protection as an original synthesis of the thoughts of both scholars—a theoretical and operational framework to systematically distinguish between *syar‘iyyah*, *ja‘izah*, and *syirkīyyah isti‘ādbah* within contemporary religious contexts.

Nevertheless, this study is still limited to the analysis of two figures within the contemporary Salafi tradition, and thus does not yet encompass comparisons with scholars from other schools of thought (*madhāhib*) or theological orientations. Therefore, future research could expand upon this study by comparing the Jurisprudence of Protection framework with the views of ‘*ulama* from diverse traditions or by testing it against spiritual protection issues emerging in contemporary Muslim societies.

In conclusion, the Jurisprudence of Protection framework derived from this comparative study serves as a systematic theological navigation—firm yet adaptive—in distinguishing between *syar‘iyyah*, *ja‘izah*, and *syirkīyyah isti‘ādbah* amidst the evolving practices of contemporary spiritual protection. This framework provides significant contributions to *aqidah* studies by offering a clear conceptual boundary between acceptable and unacceptable spiritual practices. Furthermore, it impacts

fatwa methodology by guiding contemporary Islamic *'ulama* in evaluating spiritual protection practices according to *tawhīd*. Lastly, the framework has practical implications for contemporary spiritual protection practices, offering a robust tool for Muslims to safeguard their faith against unauthorized or un-Islamic spiritual interventions.

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