



From the Legal Rulings on the Islamic Creed:

Concerning the Ruling on the One Who Undermines the Imāms of Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamā'a, the Ash'arīs

Compiled by Shaykh al-Azhari¹

Translated by Bin Magdy

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The text of the question ²:

What do the esteemed masters, Imāms, and jurists, may Allah increase them in success and be pleased with them, say regarding a group that has concurred upon cursing the group of al-Ash'arī³ and charging them with

¹ <http://cb.rayaheen.net/showthread.php?threadid=10946>

² See “al-Tabyīn” by the Ḥāfiẓ ibn ‘Asākir p.322 and “Ṭabaqat al-Shafi’iyya al-Kubra” by the Imām Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī 2/260.

³ He is the shaykh of Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamā'a, Abu al-Ḥasan ‘Ali ibn Isma‘il ibn Abu Bishr ibn Ishāq ibn Sālim ibn Isma‘il ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn Mūsa ibn Bilāl ibn Abu Burda ibn Abu Mūsa al-Ash'arī al-Yamānī al-Basrī, the companion of the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace). His birth was in the year 260 A.H. and his death was in the year 324 A.H. His biography can be reviewed in: “Tabyīn Kadhib al-Muftarī ‘alā al-Imām Abu Ḥasan al-Ash'arī” by the Ḥāfiẓ, Ibn ‘Asākir, where he established him as

unbelief? What do their words entail? Please give us an answer regarding this and may you be rewarded, if Allah wills.

The response and with Allah is divine success:

Indeed, the one who puts himself forward to curse a group of the Muslims and charge them with unbelief has innovated and committed that which is impermissible. What is required of the overseer of the affairs [the ruler] (may Allah strengthen his supporters) is to rebuke and discipline such a person and his likes so as to deter them from such actions.

–Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Dāmaghānī

The response and with Allah is divine success:

Indeed, the Ash‘arīs are quintessential representatives of the Sunna, and the supporters of the Sacred Law; standing firm in their response to the innovators among the Qādariyya, Rāfidia and others. Whoever defames them has defamed Ahl al-Sunna. If the matter of such a person is brought to the attention of the ruler who oversees the affairs of the Muslims, then it is incumbent upon him to discipline him in such a way that will serve as a deterrent.

-Ibrahīm ibn ‘Alī al-Fayrūzabādī

“My response is the same.”

peerless in his biography; “Tārīkh Baghdād” (11/346); al-Ansāb (1/273); Wafiyāt al-A‘yān (3/284); Ṭabaqāt al-Subkī (3/347); al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya (11/187); and Siyār A‘lām al-Nubalā’ (15/85); and elsewhere.

-Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Shāshī⁴



Another question from Morocco:

‘Alī ibn Yūsuf ibn Tashfīn, Commander of the Believers in Marrakesh, and second King of the state of al-Murabitun, who died in the year 537 AH, asked the peerless Qāḍī ibn Rushd al-Jadd [the grandfather] al-Qurṭubī al-Mālikī, may Allah have mercy on him, who was nicknamed by the Malikis as ‘Shaykh al-Madhhab regarding the opinion of the Malikis with regards to the esteemed Ash‘arīs, and the ruling upon the one who opposes them.

This is the text of the question and the response⁵:

What does the Erudite Scholar, the Judge, the esteemed, the peerless, Abu al-Walīd (may Allah give him success and guidance,) say concerning the

⁴ These three Imāms are the greatest among the scholars of their time. As for the first, he is the eminent one of the Ḥanafīs. As for the latter two, they are the Imāms of the Shafī‘īs. The Ḥafīz ibn ‘Asākir said in *al-Tabayīn* (pg. 332):

“So these are the replies of these Imāms who were during their time the scholars of the Muslim community. As for the Chief Judge Abu Ḥanīfa Abu ‘Abdullāh al-Ḥanafī al-Dāmaghānī, he used to be called in his time ‘Abu Ḥanīfa the Second’. As for the Shaykh, the Imām, Abu Iṣḥāq, the mention of his virtue pervaded the horizons. As for the Shaykh, the Imām, Abu Bakr al-Shāshī, his strength in knowledge is known to accomplished masters and beginners alike. So one who Allah has given divine success for levelheadedness and protected him from dissension and stubbornness has reached [the conclusions] of what they mentioned and has found sufficient that which they have informed about. May Allah protect us from speaking falsehood and defamation, and forgive us and our brethren that preceded us in faith, and make us of their successors with excellence, and gather us with them in the compartments of paradise.”

⁵ From his legal rulings (2/802) 1st ed. Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, Beirut, 1407 A.H.

Shaykh Abu al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, Abu Ishāq al-Isfarāyini⁶, Abu Bakr al-Bāqillānī⁷, Abu Bakr ibn Furāk⁸, Abu al-Ma'ālī⁹, and Abu al-Walīd al-Bājī¹⁰ and their peers amongst those who adopt the science of Kalām and speak about the principles of the religious denominations and make compilations in response to the sects of heretic tendencies? Are they Imāms of forthrightness and guidance, or are they leaders of perplexity and folly? And what do you say regarding a people that insult and undermine them [the people of Kalām], as well as insulting everyone who ascribes to the Ash'arī discipline; attributing them with disbelief and disavowing them; deviating by distancing their nearness to them, having conviction that they are upon misguidance and plunging in ignorance? What is to be said to them and done with them? Are they to be left upon their desires or not, or are their fanatics to be restrained? And is this a disparagement in their religion, including their faith? And is the ritual prayer permitted behind [i.e. following] them or not? Clarify for us the status of the aforementioned Imāms and their place in the religion, and express distinctly regarding the state of the one who undermines them, as well as the state of the one who

⁶ He is the erudite Imām, the peerless, the teacher, Abu Ishāq Ibrahīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrahīm ibn Mihrān al-Isfarayini, who died in the year 418 A.H. His biography is in “Tabyīn Kadhib al-Muftarī” pg. 243, “Wafayāt al-A'yān” (1/28), “Ṭabaqāt al-Shaf'iyya” by al-Subkī (4/256) and elsewhere.

⁷ He is the Imām, the erudite, the peerless, Abu Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Tayyib ibn Muḥammad ibn Ja'far ibn Qāsim al-Basrī al-Baghdādī al-Baqillānī, Shaykh of the Malikis, author of compilations, and exemplary of examples in understanding and intelligence. He died in the year 403 A.H. His biography is in “Tabyīn Kadhib al-Muftarī” pg. 217, “Tarikh Baghdad” (5/379), “al-Ansāb” (2/51), “Wafayāt al-A'yān” (4/269), “Tartīb al-Madārik” (4/585), and many more.

⁸ He is the Imām, the great debater, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Furāk, who died in the year 406 A.H. His biography is in “Ṭabaqāt al-Subkī” (4/127), “al-Tabyīn” pg. 232, “Wafayāt al-A'yān” (4/272), and elsewhere.

⁹ He is the great Imām, the Shaykh of the Shaf'iīs, Imām of the Two Sanctuaries, 'Abdul Malik ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Yūsuf al-Juwaynī, born in the year 419 A.H. and died in the year 478 A.H. His biography is in “Ṭabaqāt al-Subkī” (5/165), and more elsewhere.

¹⁰ The Imām, the Ḥāfiẓ, the Judge, the peerless, Sulaymān ibn Khalaf al-Bājī al-Andalūsi al-Mālikī, born in the year 403 A.H. and died in the year 474 A.H. His biography is in “Tartīb al-Madārik” (4/802), “Wafayāt al-A'yān” (2/408), and more elsewhere.

closely associates with them and who loves them, both generally and in detail. May you be rewarded, if Allah Wills.

Ibn Rushd (Allah have mercy upon him) responded:

I have analyzed (Allah safeguard us and you) this question of yours, and have pondered upon it. Those that you have mentioned of the scholars are Imāms of goodness and guidance, and are of those who must be followed. For they have undertaken giving victory to the Sacred Law, invalidating the dubiousness of the people of deviation and misguidance. They have made that which is problematic clear as well as those creedal matters which must be held as part of the religion. So they, with their understanding of the principles of religion, are the scholars in reality due to their knowledge of Allah (Mighty and Majestic) and what is obligatory for him, what is permissible for him, and what is negated for him. For the branches are not known except after the principles are known. Thus it is incumbent to recognize their virtues, affirming them in their precedents, as it is they who are meant by the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) in his saying, “The equitable from each succession will carry this knowledge, negating from it the distortion of the fanatics, the assumptions of the prattlers, and the interpretation of the ignorant.

Thus none should have the conviction that they [the people of Kalām] are upon misguidance and ignorance except a foolish ignoramus or a deviating innovator veering from the truth. None shall insult them and ascribe to them the contrary of what they are upon except a sinner, and Allah (Mighty and Majestic) has said, “and those who abuse the believing men and believing women without their having done anything [wrong], they shall bear the burden of slander and a manifest sin” (33:58).

It is imperative that the ignorant of them have their perception corrected, and the sinner be disciplined, and the innovator deviating from the truth be asked to repent should he be lax in his innovation. He will repent, or else he will be hit continually until he repents as ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb did (Allah be pleased with him) with Sabigh ¹¹, the accused in his creed from his hitting him until he said, “O Commander of the Believers! If you desire my cure then it has reached the site of the illness, and if you want to kill me then hasten with it.” Consequently, he [‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb] let him go. And I ask Allah for protection and success through His mercy.



Another question - posed to the Imām, the Faqīh, Shaykh al-Islām Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī al-Makkī al-Shafī’ī ¹²:

Some people have cast an aspersion upon Abu al-Ḥasan and Abu Ishāq the Ash’arites, as well as al-Bāqillānī, ibn Furāk, Abu al-Ma’ālī – Imām of the Two Sanctuaries, al-Bājī, and others who spoke concerning the principles and refuted the sect of heretic tendencies. Nay, it is possible that some of the heretics exaggerated so much so as to declare their unbelief. Are they as this defamer claims or not?

He responded:

They are not as that extraordinary, reckless renegade, the deviant radical, the inclining ignoramus claims. Nay, they are the imāms of the religion and

¹¹ He is Sabigh ibn ‘Isl, a successor who asked ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb about the ambiguities (*al-mutashābihāt*) so ‘Umar (Allah be pleased with him) punished him. See “al-Iṣāba” by the Ḥafīz ibn Ḥajar, letter Ṣād, third section (3/258), published by al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya.

¹² Al-Fatāwa al-Ḥadīthiyya, 1st ed. pg. 272, Ihyā’ al-Turāth, Beirut

the luminaries of the scholars of the Muslims. As such, taking them as leaders is imperative due to their rising in support of the Sacred Law, their clarifying of problems, and refuting the doubts of the folk of deviancy, and what is obligatory of creedal matters and faiths, for their knowledge of Allah and what is obligatory for Him and what is impossible for Him and what is possible in His right. Arriving [at this knowledge] cannot be realized except after realizing its principles. What is imperative is the acknowledgement of the virtue of the aforementioned Imāms and their predecessors, and that they are from the generality of those intended with his words (Allah bless him and give him peace), “the just of every succession shall carry this knowledge, repudiating the distortion of the radicals, the assumption of the prattlers, and the interpretation of the ignorant.

As such, none shall have the conviction of their deviancy except a foolish ignoramus, or an innovator straying from the truth, and none will insult them except a transgressor. Thus, it is incumbent for the ignoramus to have his perception corrected, the transgressor to be disciplined, and the innovator be asked to repent. For otherwise, some of the Maliki scholars said he is hit until he dies, as our master ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb did with the notorious, the accused, Sabigh. It was mentioned that when his hitting had increased, he said, “If you desire my cure then it has reached the site of the illness, and if you want to kill me then hasten with it.” Consequently, he [‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb] let him go.

