

Why the Ḥizbiyyūn and Mumayyi‘ah Hate Imām al-Barbahārī’s Book Sharḥ al-Sunnah or Dislike That it is Taught to the Public



In Baghdād, **Imām al-Barbahārī** (d. 329H) was the shaykh of those upon the way of **Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal** (d. 241H). He had shown rejection against **Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī** (d. 324H) when he came to Baghdād and claimed attachment to the madhhab of **Imām Aḥmad**. The Ḥanbalīs in general had hatred of **al-Ash‘arī** and his doctrine which was rooted in the approach of **Ibn Kullāb** and **Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī** whom **Imām Aḥmad** had severely warned against. This trend among the followers of the creed of **Imām Aḥmad**, which is the creed of the **Salaf**, continued with **Abū Ḥāmid al-Isfarāyīnī** (d. 406H), and he was the shaykh of the **Shāfi‘is**. He would openly warn against **Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī** (d. 403H) who was teaching and spreading the **Ash‘arī** ideology. In fact, **al-Isfarāyīnī** would warn against **al-Bāqillānī** so openly and fiercely on account of his position on the **Speech of Allāh** that **al-Bāqillānī** could only leave his home for the public washrooms in secret, out of fear from **al-Isfarāyīnī**.¹ As a result of this, those who wanted to learn the madhhab **al-Bāqillānī** did do so in hiding. Fearing that when these people went back to their lands, that the people of **Sunnah** in those lands would think that they learned this doctrine from **al-Isfarāyīnī**, he would openly announce in front of the people that he is free and innocent of **al-Bāqillānī** and

¹ *Sharḥ al-‘Aqīdah al-Aṣḥāhāniyyah* (Maktabah al-Rushd, 1415H) pp. 74-75.

his doctrine regarding the Speech of Allāh and he would say, “Beware of this man for he is an innovator who calls people to misguidance.”²

However, the Ash‘arites found a group of Ḥanbalīs in Baghdād from whom they received friendship, hosting and some degree of agreement. This group were the **al-Tamīmī family** who had given shelter first to al-Ash‘arī when he was in Baghdād whilst the Ḥanbalīs had scorned him, and then they were also students and friends with al-Bāqillānī. In order shield himself, al-Bāqillānī would pretend to be a Ḥanbalī and refer to himself as “Muḥammad bin al-Ṭīb al-Ḥanbalī” and when with the Ash‘arīs he would refer to himself as “Muḥammad bin al-Ṭīb al-Ash‘arī”. The Shaykh of the Shāfi‘īs, Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī (d. 476H) would say: “The Ash‘arites were hypocritical in front of the people by their ascription to the Ḥanbalīs.”³

So these Ash‘arites would use attachment to the Sunnah by employing the label of “Ḥanbalīs” and they found shelter with the al-Timīmī family. They include: **Abī al-Ḥasan al-Tamīmī**, **Abū al-Faḍl al-Tamīmī** (d. 410H) and **Rizqullāh al-Tamīmī** (d.448H). This family ascribed to Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal but they were students of al-Bāqillānī and they tried to ascribe this speech of ‘ilm al-kalām, of bodies (ajsām) and a‘rāḍ (accidents) to Imām Aḥmad. Refer to our article: “*The Ḥanbalīs Who Strayed from the Way of Imām Aḥmad*” for more details on this matter.⁴

The intent here is to point out three groups of people in Baghdād:

a) Imām Aḥmad and after him al-Barbahārī and those upon the creed of Salaf, including the Shāfi‘ī Imāms such as al-Isfarāyīnī.

² See Dar’ al-Ta‘āruḍ of Ibn Taymiyyah (2/96-98).

³ Refer to Majmū al-Fatāwā (3/228).

⁴ <http://www.asharis.com/creed/?fsxrr>

b) Those whose roots lie with Ibn Kullāb, the innovator, who tried to merge the dīn of the Mu‘tazilah with the dīn of Ahl al-Sunnah with respect to the *af‘āl ikhtiyāriyyah* (Allāh’s chosen actions) which influenced his speech on the Allāh’s attribute of Speech, and they are the Ash‘arites, the people of innovation.

c) Those whom we can refer to as the Mumayyi‘ah in the middle, the al-Tamīmī family, who were friends and associates with al-Bāqillānī and the Ash‘arīs, took knowledge from them and they tried to ascribe their innovation and misguidance to Imām Aḥmad. They gave shelter and protection and friendship to the Ash‘arīs, the innovators, whilst claiming to be with Imām Aḥmad.

Once all of this becomes clear, you will now understand why today, the Mumayyi‘ah, discourage and dislike that al-Barbahārī’s book, *Sharḥ al-Sunnah*, is studied and taught. You have to understand the context of al-Barbahārī’s time in Baghdād and the emergent Ash‘arite doctrine. This doctrine relied for its survival and continuation the use of dissimulation and hypocritical attachment to Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal. Al-Barbahārī and the Salafī Imāms after him were aware of that. Today the Mumayyi‘ah ascribe to the Salafī Imāms whilst they are far and remote from their methodology. They claim to be with the Salafīs and their scholars, but in reality they are allies and friends with those who mock, revile and abuse the Salafī scholars. Some of these people mock Ahl al-Sunnah, they say that this book is “The Bible of the Salafīs” and this is mockery of the dīn of Allāh and it is inspired by Iblīs upon the tongue of the diseased of heart.

As for the excuses they use, they say that some scholars advise against this book. In reality, the issue is like this, as Shaykh Ṣāliḥ Āl al-Shaykh explains at the end of his sharḥ of al-Ṭahāwīyyah: That every scholar had with him some ijtihād in which he was not given tawfīq, and thus in many of the books of the Salaf you will find the odd one or two issues in which they made ijtihād and

erred or relied upon some weak narrations in affirming some aspect of belief. He explains that al-Ṭaḥāwī erred in the issue of īmān, following Abū Ḥanīfah and al-Barbahārī included some things into creed which were not from them on the basis of some narrations and that many of those who authored books on Allāh’s Throne (‘Arsh), brought many incorrect narrations and spoke on their basis. So whilst this may be the case, then these matters are overlooked and one sticks to the truth, and this is why the two Imāms, Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim, they did not take everything from the books of the Salaf, but overwhelmingly only that which the Salaf agreed upon. Hence, this is why we place a great emphasis upon the books of Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim because in them is taḥqīq of the madhhab of the Salaf in the various issues and we do not see every issue that every scholar from the Salaf may have spoken about and which was from his ijtihād in the books of Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim.

So the issue here is that some scholars may have pointed out some issues about al-Barbahārī’s book. Now if a person was to explain the book from himself, using its text alone, and he was a student of knowledge who did not know, then this would be problematic. But if the explanations of the scholars are used, like those of Shaykh al-Fawzān or Shaykh Rabī and others, then there is nothing in this at all but goodness. This book should be taught and studied using the speech of these scholars.

So in reality, there is nothing in this issue. These people, these Mumayyi‘ah, these haters with poisons and hatred in their hearts—which as every day goes by, they reveal more and more of it—then they dislike that the book of al-Barbahārī is taught because its treatment of Ahl al-Bid‘ah exposes them and makes known the reality of their affair wal-ḥamdulillāh

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