

IMAM AL-MIZZI, HIS BRIEF
INCARCERATION AND THE
KHALQ AF'AL AL-IBAD OF
IMAM AL-BUKHARI



Shaykh Dr. Abul Hasan Hussain Ahmed



IMAM AL-MIZZI, HIS BRIEF INCARCERATION AND THE KHALQ AF'AL AL-IBAD OF IMAM AL-BUKHARI

Praise be to Allah that is due from all grateful believers, a fullness of praise for all his favours: a praise that is abundantly sincere and blessed. May the blessings of Allah be upon our beloved Master Muhammad, the chosen one, the Apostle of mercy and the seal of all Prophets (peace and blessings of Allah be upon them all); and upon his descendants who are upright and pure: a blessing lasting to the Day of Judgment, like the blessing bestowed upon the Prophet Ibrahim (alaihi salam) and his descendants. May Allah be pleased with all of the Prophetic Companions (Ashab al-Kiram). Indeed, Allah is most worthy of praise and supreme glorification!

In this updated article the following issues have been addressed in confutation of the claims circulated by certain individuals who are noted to be self-declared contemporary “Salafis” in creed (Aqida):

House of Verification

- i) That al-Hafiz Jamalud-Din al-Mizzi (d. 742 AH) was incarcerated for apparently levelling takfir (excommunication of a Muslim) at some of his fellow Shafi'i jurists (fuqaha), and not because he specifically read from the book known as Khalq af'al al-Ibad by Imam al-Bukhari
- ii) The Khalq af'al al-Ibad was also transmitted via chains of transmission by Sunni scholars of the Ash'arite school of Aqida like al-Hafiz Abu Dharr al-Harawi, al-Hafiz al-Bayhaqi and Shah Waliullah al-Dehlawi

- iii) That al-Mizzi attested to being an Ash'ari when taking up the Professorship of Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya in Damascus from 718 AH till his death in 742 AH
- iv) Imam ibn Kathir (d. 774 AH) also attested to being an Ash'ari
- v) Famous Ash'arites of that era like Imam Taqiud-Din al-Subki (d. 756 AH) and his son Shaykh Tajud-Din al-Subki (d. 771 AH) also had cordial relationships with al-Hafiz al-Mizzi and al-Hafiz Shamsud-Din al-Dhahabi (d. 748 AH)
- vi) A full reply to two claimants of the self-styled "Salafi" creed who attempted to portray their claims in order to fit their own narrative with regard to some of the above points especially connected to al-Mizzi
- vii) The admission by three contemporary "Salafi" scholars that al-Mizzi was an Ash'ari. They being Dr. Abdul Aziz ibn Abdul Fattah al-Qari', Dr. Muhammad ibn Nasir al-Suhaibani and Dr. Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Ghunayman

I received the following question from a brother based in America:

Assalamualeykum wr wb

I was reading on this salafi blog that Al-Mizzi was imprisoned by Ash'aris because he was reading from a book by Al Bukhari, and supposedly the Ash'aris taught that Al-Mizzi was refuting them here is the link

<http://saheefah.org/2010/05/27/imam-al-mizzi-imprisoned-by-the-Ash'aris-for-reading-out-imam-bukharis-book/>

House of Verification

Just trying to verify if this is correct or not

JazakaAllahukhairan

Reply:


Wa alaikum salam

The material from the blog is not new but one may observe it also from the following thread started by a person using the pseudonym **Harris Hammam**, and his actual name is Ismail Ibrahim Patel (from Dewsbury, England):

<http://forums.islamicawakening.com/f15/imam-al-mizzi-imprisoned-Ash'aris-reading-out-imam-al-bukharis-book-24751/>

The above link was no longer working when attempting to retrieve it in August 2016. Here is what was saved from that link back in 2010:

16th May 2009
#1



Harris Hammam
Student of Knowledge
Muslim Male

Join Date	Sep 2008
Location	Palmyra, NJ
Age	26
Posts	2,416
Rep Power	21

Imam al-Mizzi - IMPRISONED by the Ash'aris for Reading Out Imam al-Bukhari's Book

Ibn Kathir said in al-Bidayah:
 وكان الشيخ تقي الدين بن الفداء جادة يحسنه كشمه من الدولة وكان له الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر وشأنه الفخر له ومحبته له وكثرة أتباعه وقه في الحق وعلمه وجمعه من دمشق خطا كثير وتشويهت سمع فيه نائب السلطنة وطلب القاضي بدمشق من أصحاب الشيخ وعز بعضهم حتى أن الشيخ ممل الدين الحلبي الملقب بالملك المظفر أصاب بأمر على الجمعية من كتاب العدل الجاهلي تحت قبالة الوزير بعد وفاة جده الجاهلي بسبب الانتفاء فكتب بعض القضاة الجاهليين وشكوا في القاضي الشافعي ابن عسمرى وكان عن الشيخ حسن الذي يقع الشيخ تقي الدين في ذلك ويذهب إلى الصن فأنه منه بصفه يروح إلى مصر فوجد القاضي الملك فقرر لا يسمع الشيخ ممل الدين الذي لم يلف ابن عسمرى إلا أن يوجه إلى السجن ولا أن يرحل عنه ففر نائب السلطنة طلب القاضي لجمعه منه في القوسية ليعاين لملكه ولما قدم نائب السلطنة ذكر له الشيخ تقي الدين ما جرى في حقه من الصلابة في حبه فقام نائب السلطنة وقال في الله أن لا يكلم أحد في الخط من عاد إلى الله جل جلاله ومنه روت أبو يعقوب بن أسعد الأندلسي
 "Some jurists were jealous of Ibn Taymiyyah because he had contacts in the Government, and because he single-handedly took care of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, and because people listened to what he had to say, and because they loved him, and because of the great number of his followers, and because he stood for the truth, and because of his knowledge and action.

In Damascus, a lot of tension arose due to the absence of the vice Head of State [who was in Egypt at the time]. The [Ash'ari] judge in Damascus ordered for some disciples of Ibn Taymiyyah to be punished.

In the same period, it so happened that al-Mizzi read a chapter refuting the Jahmiyyah from al-Bukhari's Khalq Afaal al-Ibaad under the Nasr Dome [in the Umayyad Mosque]... Some [Ash'ari] jurists who were present there became angry and complained to the Shafi'i [Ash'ari] judge, Ibn Sasraa [ابن عسمرى] who was an enemy of his. Al-Mizzi was therefore jailed.

News reached Ibn Taymiyyah and he was saddened. He went to jail and had him taken out. He then went to the palace and found the judge there. They argued over al-Mizzi, so Ibn Sasraa took an oath that he would return al-Mizzi to jail or else he would step down as judge. [News reached Egypt], and the deputy Head of State had him re-imprisoned to keep the [Ash'ari] judge happy, but had al-Mizzi jailed nearby him in the city of Cusae [Asyut, Egypt]. Then the Deputy Head released him.

When the Deputy Head returned, Ibn Taymiyyah told him what had happened to him and his disciples in his absence. The Deputy Head was deeply saddened and announced in Damascus that nobody should debate in theology, and whoever does so would have his wealth seized, his blood shed and his house and shop razed to the ground. The situation therefore cooled down..."

Ibn Hajar said in al-Durar al-Kaaminah:
 في كتابي شرح روضة القاري فصل من كتاب العدل الجاهلي في الجاهلية فكتب بعض الصحابة والقضاة من المصنفين بما رواهوا إلى القاضي الشافعي لفرجه فبلغ ابن تيمية فوجه إلى القاضي لفرجه يديه
 "In Rajab 712 A.H., al-Mizzi read a chapter from al-Bukhari's Khalq Afaal al-Ibaad in the Umayyad Mosque. Some Shafi'is [i.e. Ash'aris] heard him and became vexed. They remarked: "We are the ones being targeted by this". They took him to court by a Shafi'i [Ash'ari] judge and he ordered for him to be jailed. News reached Ibn Taymiyyah, so he proceeded to the prison and had him released with his own hands..."

شرح القاضي ياقوت كتاب العدل الجاهلي وهو أصل في الرد على الجمعية فكتب بعض رؤساء المصنفين بما بلغه القاضي الشافعي يومئذ من جهة قومه أن يئيبه ولجعه من السجن فكتب القاضي ياقوت في ترجمته
 "Al-Mizzi started to read out al-Bukhari's Khalq Afaal al-Ibaad, in which there is a chapter in refutation of the Jahmis. Some people [Ash'aris] became angry and remarked: "We are the ones being targeted here". News reached the Shafi'i [Ash'ari] judge that very day and he ordered for him to be incarcerated. Ibn Taymiyyah went to get him released, but the deputy Head of State had him returned to prison. Later on, al-Mizzi was released..."

Al-Sakhawi said in al-Daw' al-Laami:
 وأما من سبب قرائته على العدل الجاهلي
 "... al-Mizzi was tested due to his reading out of al-Bukhari's Khalq Afaal al-Ibaad..."

(Apologies for the spiced translation, but y'all get the point I hope...)
 Last edited by Harris Hammam; 16th May 2009 at 04:53 PM.

Let us fully quote Harris Hammam from the initial post on the last link, whereby he claimed on May 16th 2009:

Imam al-Mizzi - IMPRISONED by the Ash'aris for Reading Out Imam al-Bukhari's Book

Ibn Kathir said in al-Bidayah:

وكان للشيخ تقي الدين من الفقهاء جماعة يجسدونه لتقدمه عند الدولة وانفراده بالأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر وطاعة الناس له ومحبتهم له وكثرة أتباعه وقيامه في الحق وعلمه وعمله ثم وقع بدمشق خبط كثير وتشويش

بسبب غيبة نائب السلطنة وطلب القاضي جماعة من أصحاب الشيخ وعزر بعضهم ثم اتفق ان الشيخ جمال الدين المزي الحافظ قرأ فصلا بالرد على الجهمية من كتاب أفعال العباد للبخاري تحت قبة النسر بعد قراءة ميعاد البخاري بسبب الاستسقاء فغضب بعض الفقهاء الحاضرين وشكاه إلى القاضي الشافعي ابن صصرى وكان عدو الشيخ فسجن المزي فبلغ الشيخ تقي الدين فتألم لذلك وذهب إلى السجن فأخرجه منه بنفسه وراح إلى القصر فوجد القاضي هنالك فتقاولا بسبب الشيخ جمال الدين المزي فحلف ابن صصرى لا بد أن يعيده إلى السجن وإلا عزل نفسه فأمر النائب باعادته تطيبيا لقلب القاضي فحبسه عنده في القوصية أياما ثم أطلقه ولما قدم نائب السلطنة ذكر له الشيخ تقي الدين ما جرى في حقه وحق اصحابه في غيبته فتألم النائب لذلك ونادى في البلد أن لا يتكلم احد في العقائد ومن عاد إلى تلك حل ماله ودمه ورتبت داره وحانوته فسكنت الامور

"Some jurists were jealous of Ibn Taymiyyah because he had contacts in the Government, and because he single-handedly took care of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, and because people listened to what he had to say, and because they loved him, and because of the great number of his followers,¹ and because he stood for the truth, and because of his knowledge and action. In Damascus, a lot of tension arose due to the absence of the vice Head of State [who was in Egypt at the time]. The [Ash'ari] judge in Damascus ordered for some disciples of Ibn Taymiyyah to be punished.

¹ This was not always the case as another close disciple (al-Dhahabi) of Ibn Taymiyya's affirmed. Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 AH) mentioned that Ibn Taymiyya's followers weakened after the year 712 AH, and that he was forbidden from issuing fatawa (legal verdicts) due to his views on talaq:

"When the Sultan set off to ward off the enemy from Rahba, the shaykh arrived in Damascus, in the year 712. After that, he was subject to trials and tribulations between ups [fol. 74r] and downs. **His followers weakened** and he involved himself in weighty questions that neither the intellects of his contemporaries nor their learning could bear, such as: the question of the expiation of the oath of repudiation (*talaq*), the opinion that repudiation (*talaq*) uttered three times is valid only once, and the opinion that repudiation (*talaq*) during menstruation is not valid. He composed writings about these topics in the order of some forty quires. Because of this, he was forbidden to issue legal opinions (*fatawa*). He controlled himself in a strange way and held firm to his own opinion."

[See al-Dhahabi's *Nubdha* as translated by C. Bori in , "A New Source for the biography of Ibn Taymiyya", 336, (Arabic Text) – 345-346 (English Translation)]. Bori mentioned the following about the origin of this biography as follows: "The text is part of a miscellany (Majmu' 3128 'Am) preserved in the National Library of Damascus (Maktabat al-Asad) and was once part of the Zahiriyya collection. According to the catalogue, the Majmu' comes from the Hanbali madrasa al-'Umariyya and consists of seven rasai'il dealing with various topics. Of these, five are attributed to Ibn Taymiyya and one, entitled al-Tibb al-ruhani, to Muhammad ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597/1201). The catalogue, by al-Sawwas, provides a brief and approximate description of the contents of each risala; it mentions the authors, the copyists-when known-the number of folios, the width and length of the pages (14 x 17 cm) and the number of lines (16 to 23), but it fails to offer any other useful information to date the texts."

In the same period, it so happened that al-Mizzi read a chapter refuting the Jahmiyyah from al-Bukhari's Khalq Af'aal al-Ibaad under the Nasr Dome [in the Umayyad Mosque]²... Some [Ash'ari] jurists who were present there became angry and complained to the Shafi'i [Ash'ari] judge, Ibn Sasraa (ابن صصري) who was an enemy of his. Al-Mizzi was therefore jailed.

News reached Ibn Taymiyyah and he was saddened. He went to jail and had him taken out. He then went to the palace and found the judge there. They argued over al-Mizzi, so Ibn Sasraa took an oath that he would return al-Mizzi to jail or else he would step down as judge. [News reached Egypt], and the deputy Head of State had him re-imprisoned to keep the [Ash'ari] judge happy, but had al-Mizzi jailed nearby him in the city of Cusae [Asyut, Egypt]. Then the Deputy Head released him.

When the Deputy Head returned, Ibn Taymiyyah told him what had happened to him and his disciples in his absence. The Deputy Head was deeply saddened and announced in Damascus that nobody should debate in theology, and whoever does so would have his wealth seized, his blood shed and his house and shop razed to the ground. The situation therefore cooled down..."

Ibn Hajar said in al-Durar al-Kaaminah:

² The late Nasirud-Din al-Albani (d. 1999) held the stance that praying in the Umayyad masjid in Damascus was impermissible due to the assertion that there is a grave within it. It is said by some that the head of the Prophet Yahya (alaihis salam) is buried within the confines of this masjid. Emad Hamdeh in his article entitled, 'The Formative Years of an Iconoclastic Salafi Scholar' (The Muslim World, Volume 106, July 2016, pp. 422-423), from the transcribed audio interview carried out by Abu Ishaq al-Huwayni of Egypt with al-Albani mentioned this issue as follows:

"Albani: Then I looked at the story of Prophet Yahya's burial place peace be upon him. According to Ibn Asakir it is supposed to be located in the Umayyad Mosque. What is important here is that my research led me to conclude that it is not permitted to pray in the Umayyad mosque.

[It appears that a third person now does something respectful to Albani which leads Albani to make a joke.] Look at this Sufi Salafi! [Huwayni and Albani laugh]

Huwayni: And he has the right to be (Wa huqqa lahu).

Albani: [laughs] This does not exist, how can they be combined in one person? He respects his shaykh according to the way of the Sufis, but he is a Salafi [Albani laughs]

What I mean is that prayer in this mosque is not correct. I did not reach that conclusion immediately; rather, it dawned on me gradually and slowly because it was a repetitive conclusion in my research..."

The culmination here is that al-Mizzi and most likely others connected to the associates of Ibn Taymiyya didn't seem to have an issue with praying or teaching within the Umayyad masjid, but al-Albani held an opposing position based on his own research and readings of certain evidences.

في ثاني عشر رجب قرأ المزني فصلا من كتاب أفعال العباد للبخاري في الجامع فسمعه بعض الشافعية فغضب وقالوا نحن المقصودون بهذا ورفعوه إلى القاضي الشافعي فأمر بحبسه فبلغ ابن تيمية فتوجه إلى الحبس فأخرجه

بيده

"In Rajab 712 A.H., al-Mizzi read a chapter from al-Bukhari's Khalq Af'aal al-Ibaad in the Umayyad Mosque. Some Shafi'is [i.e. Ash'aris] heard him and became vexed. They remarked: "We are the ones being targeted by this". They took him to court by a Shafi'i [Ash'ari] judge and he ordered for him to be jailed. News reached Ibn Taymiyyah, so he proceeded to the prison and had him released with his own hands... "

شرح المزني يقرأ كتاب خلق أفعال العباد للبخاري وفيه فصل في الرد على الجهمية فغضب بعض وقالوا نحن المقصودون بهذا فبلغ ذلك القاضي الشافعي يومئذ فأمر بسجنه فتوجه ابن تيمية وأخرجه من السجن فغضب النائب فأعيد ثم أفرج عنه

"Al-Mizzi started to read out al-Bukhari's Khalq Af'aal al-Ibaad, in which there is a chapter in refutation of the Jahmis. Some people [Ash'aris] became angry and remarked: "We are the ones being targeted here". News reached the Shafi'i [Ash'ari] judge that very day and he ordered for him to be incarcerated. Ibn Taymiyyah went to get him released, but the deputy Head of State had him returned to prison. Later on, al-Mizzi was released..."

Al-Sakhawi said in al-Daw' al-Laami':

وامتحن بسبب قراءته خلق أفعال العباد للبخاري

"... al-Mizzi was tested due to his reading out of al-Bukhari's Khalq Af'aal al-Ibaad..."

(Apologies for the spiced translation, but y'all get the point I hope...)

Last edited by Harris Hammam; 16th May 2009 at 04:53 PM.

If one reads the above translations carefully one may notice that he has claimed in brackets that the Shafi'is who were vexed by al-Mizzi - were apparently – all ASH'ARIS. The reader may be able to see that nowhere in the Arabic quotes does it state that those who opposed al-Mizzi were all Ash'aris from the Shafi'i Madhhab. Having said that, it is most likely though that the Shafi'i fuqaha (jurists) present in the Umayyad masjid were Ash'aris, though this is not the crux of the matter. Rather, one needs to clarify why al-Mizzi evoked the wrath of those fuqaha against him leading to his subsequent imprisonment for a brief spell of time.

The main question is:

What proof is there that Imam al-Mizzi hated the Ash'aris in his city of Damascus?

Further natural questions that arise are –

Why did al-Mizzi read out Khalq af'al al-Ibad of Imam al-Bukhari in public in the Umayyad masjid on that occasion? Has Harris looked into all the versions of this piece of history? Do all Ash'aris reject Khalq af'al al Ibad of al-Imam Bukhari?!

Was al-Mizzi anti-Ash'ari or was he one of them?

According to Imam Tajud-Din al-Subki (d. 771 AH),³ Imam Jamalud-Din al-Mizzi was born in the year 654 AH and died in the famous Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya (an Ash'ari institute) in the year 742 AH, and he was buried in the Sufi graveyard. He was a colleague of the infamous Ibn Taymiyya (b. 661 AH – d. 728 AH). The former was influenced by the latter in some matters.

In this regard, Imam Tajud-Din al-Subki said in his Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyya al-Kubra⁴ in critique of Ibn Taymiyya and his associates:

“The group comprised of al-Mizzzi, al-Dhahabi, al-Birzali, and many of their followers were clearly harmed by Abul Abbas ibn Taymiyya, who led them to gross acts of no little consequence and drew them to things that they should have avoided.”

Before the anti-Ash'aris vex their pens against Ibn al-Subki, the wise reader should take into consideration that he was also a direct student of al-Mizzi and al-Dhahabi and heard Hadith from both of them.

Ibn al-Subki also said in his Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyya al-Kubra:⁵

“Our time was graced with four hadith masters: al-Mizzzi, al-Birzali, al-Dhahabi, and my father the Shaykh and Imam [Taqi al-Din al-Subki].- As for our Shaykh Abu `Abd Allah,⁶ he is an ocean without peer, a treasure and refuge in time of difficulty, the imam of the living on record, the gold of our time in spirit and letter, the Shaykh of narrator-discreditation and narrator-commendation (al-jarh wa

³ See his Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyyatul Kubra (6/254). In this monograph Tajud-Din will also be addressed as Ibn al-Subki due to his father being al-Imam Taqiud-Din al-Subki (d. 756 AH)

⁴ 6/254

⁵ 9/100-101

⁶ Meaning, his Shaykh - al-Dhahabi

*al-ta`dil)... and the one who trained us in this science and brought us out into the scholarly throng - may Allah reward him greatly!"*⁷

Tajud-Din al-Subki listed the scholars he studied under or heard hadiths from in a work published under the title *Mu'jam Shuyukh al-Taj al-Subki*. Within it he has listed al-Mizzi⁸ under biography no. 163 and al-Dhahabi⁹ under no. 110. For more on the relationship between Tajud-Din al-Subki, his son Tajud-Din, al-Dhahabi and al-Mizzi, please refer to the later section in reply to Muhammad Moin.

On the very forum that Harris Hammam posted his initial piece, his colleague known as Abuz Zubair Saleem Beg¹⁰ mentioned the following quotation regarding al-Mizzi's affiliation to the Ash'ari school:

Under post no. 36:

The historian **Al-Fasi** (d. 832) writes in his Ta'rif Dhawil `Ula in biography of al-Dhahabi: "It has reached me that al-Dhahabi refused to take up the teaching position at Dar al-Hadeeth al-Ashrafiyya in Damascus because he was not an Ash'ari. This is when the position was vacated due to the death of the previous teacher al-Hafidh Jamal al-Din al-Mizzi. **Al-Mizzi himself did not attain the position until he testified for himself that he is an Ash'ari**, for that was the stipulated condition for the teacher therein. This indicates the richness of al-Dhahabi's religiosity and piety, for it was also possible for him to testify for himself that he is an Ash'ari and take up the position, and that wouldn't have affected him, in that he does not have Ash'ari beliefs." (page 50)¹¹

No matter how the likes of Abuz Zubair and his cohorts hope to explain away this quotation that al-Mizzi was not an Ash'arite in the strictest sense, the question still remains that al-Mizzi did testify by his own pen that he was an Ash'ari, and that was the pre-requisite to attain the Professorship in Hadith at Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya in Damascus. Ibn Kathir has also mentioned that al-Mizzi was a Professor at the Ash'ari based Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya in his *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyya*.¹²

⁷ See here: http://www.sunnah.org/history/Scholars/al_dhahabi.htm

⁸ See *Mu'jam Shuyukh al-Taj al-Subki* (2/628, no. 163) for al-Mizzi

⁹ See *Mu'jam Shuyukh al-Taj al-Subki* (2/500, no. 110) for al-Dhahabi

¹⁰ See the following attack on him by another band of anti-Ash'arites under the caption heading:

Extremist Qutbi Abu Zubair Saleem Beg and Intellectual Fraud Against the Scholars:

<http://www.salafitalk.net/st/viewmessages.cfm?Forum=31&Topic=10478>

¹¹ See here: <http://forums.islamicawakening.com/f15/tafwid-ibn-kathir-2013/index4.html#post11711>

¹² 2/814, no. 901

The same was mentioned in the introduction to al-Dhahabi's *Siyar a'lam an-Nubala*¹³ by the contemporary Iraqi Historian, Dr. Bashhar Awwad Ma'ruf:

ليس فيهم. وقد أؤذي المزني بسبب ذلك (1)، وحرم الذهبي بسبب آرائه من تولي أكبر دار للحديث بدمشق، هي دار الحديث الأشرفية (2) التي شغرت مشيختها بعد وفاة رفيقه المزني سنة 742 هـ، فأشار قاضي القضاة علي بن عبد الكافي السبكي أن يعين الذهبي لها، فتكلم الشافعية بأن الذهبي ليس بأشعري، وأن المزني ما وليها إلا بعد أن كتب بخطه، وأشهد على نفسه بأنه أشعري، واتسع النقاش بينهم، ورفض الشافعية أن يتولاها الذهبي بعد أن جمعهم نائب الشام أطنبغا بالرغم من إلحاح السبكي، ولم يحسم الأمر إلا بتولية السبكي نفسه

Indeed, the above claim that al-Mizzi testified in writing that he was an Ash'arite in creed was mentioned by none other than his direct student, Ibn al-Subki, in his *Tabaqat al-Shafiyya al-Kubra*:¹⁴

ولما شغرت مشيخة دار الحديث الأشرفية بوفاة الحافظ المزني عين هو الذهبي لها فوقع السعي فيها للشيخ شمس الدين ابن النقيب وتكلم في حق الذهبي بأنه ليس بأشعري **وأن المزني** ما وليها إذ وليها إلا بعد أن **كتب خطه** وأشهد على نفسه بأنه أشعري العقيدة

Meaning:

“And when the Professorship at Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya remained vacant at the death of al-Hafiz al-Mizzi, the designated quest fell upon al-Dhahabi, in which Shaykh Shamsud-Din ibn al-Naqib spoke the truth about al-Dhahabi that he is not an Ash'ari, **and al-Mizzi got the guardianship as head (of al-Ashrafiyya) only after he wrote in his own handwriting and testified upon himself that he is an Ash'ari in creed (Aqida).**”

Thus, al-Mizzi was accepted to be from the ranks of the Ash'aris by some, well after the incident of the recital from Imam al-Bukhari's *Khalq a'fal al-Ibad*, and there appears no doubt in the mind of Ibn al-Subki that his Shaykh, al-Mizzi was affiliated to the Ash'arite tradition in some manner, even if others denied him that rank and ascription in time.

The year of al-Mizzi's imprisonment was 705 AH as will be clarified below, and according to the leading expert on al-Mizzi mentioned above, viz. Dr. Bashhar Awwad

¹³ 1/39

¹⁴ 10/200

Ma'ruf; al-Mizzi became the Head of Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya in the year 718 AH, as mentioned in the introduction to al-Mizzi's magnum opus, Tahdhib al-Kamal.¹⁵ Indeed, al-Dhahabi mentioned this date of 718 AH for al-Mizzi's appointment to Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya in his Dhayl Tarikh al-Islam,¹⁶ as did al-Mizzi's student known as Salahud-Din al Safadi (d. 764 AH) in his A'yan al-Asr.¹⁷

The reader is also advised to see another quote from al-Dhahabi on the fact that al-Mizzi was asked questions about his Aqida by the authorities who permitted him to be the lead teacher at Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya, after he had put down in writing his Aqida, later on when replying to another individual known as Muhammad Moin. This latter significant quote from al-Dhahabi demonstrates the fact that al-Mizzi affirmed the Ash'arite creed after being questioned by some influential figures.

Now, let us look at Harris Hammam's translation carefully from Ibn Kathir's al-Bidaya wa'l Nihaya:

In the same period, it so happened that al-Mizzi read a chapter refuting the Jahmiyyah from al-Bukhari's Khalq Af'aal al-Ibaad under the Nasr Dome [in the Umayyad Mosque]... Some [Ash'ari] jurists who were present there became angry and complained to the Shafi'i [Ash'ari] who was an enemy of his. Al-Mizzi was therefore jailed. (ابن صری) judge, Ibn Sasraa

The above was based on Ibn Kathir's *al-Bidaya wa'l Nihaya*, and what is noticeable is that Ibn Kathir has not expanded on why the Fuqaha were vexed, nor has he quoted any of their actual verbatim responses.

The next quote from Ibn Hajar's al-Durar al-Kamina was translated by Harris Hammam as follows with a verbatim quote explaining why the Fuqaha were vexed:

"In **Rajab 712 A.H.**, al-Mizzi read a chapter from al-Bukhari's Khalq Af'aal al-Ibaad in the Umayyad Mosque. Some Shafi'is [i.e. Ash'aris] heard him and became vexed. They remarked: **"We are the ones being targeted by this"**. They took him to court by a Shafi'i [Ash'ari] judge and he ordered for him to be jailed. News reached Ibn Taymiyyah, so he proceeded to the prison and had him released with his own hands... "

¹⁵ 1/22

¹⁶ 53/489, Dar al-Mughni edition, edited by Mazin Ba Wazir

¹⁷ 5/648

Imam ibn Kathir was born in the year 701 AH, thus he was not an eye witness to the actual events which took place in the year 705 AH, but may have recorded the event from his two teachers, al-Mizzi and al-Dhahabi, at a later date. Thus, it may be possible to surmise that Ibn Kathir may not have heard the counter arguments of why the Shafi'i fuqaha were vexed by al-Mizzi's act, since he was not only a pupil of ibn Taymiyya and al-Mizzi's, he only wrote what he could decipher from his side of the fence.

Harris Hammam has also mistakenly claimed that al-Hafiz ibn Hajar claimed that this event occurred in Rajab 712 AH! Ibn Hajar was quoted as saying in his al-Durar al-Kamina: **في ثاني عشر رجب**

Which means that it occurred on the 12th day of Rajab and not that it meant in the year 712 AH as Harris claimed. This blunder also went unchecked by Harris and his supporters!

Indeed, the Ash'ari Imam they quoted, namely, al-Hafiz ibn Hajar al-Asqalani¹⁸ has mentioned in another place that this event regarding al-Mizzi occurred in the year 705 AH -

Al-Durar al-Kamina¹⁹ of Ibn Hajar al Asqalani:

وأوذي مرة في سنة 705 بسبب ابن تيمية لأنه لما وقعت المناظرة له مع الشافعية وبحث مع الصفي الهندي ثم ابن الزملكاني بالقصر الأبلق شرع **المزي** يقرأ كتاب **خلق أفعال العباد** للبخاري وفيه فصل في الرد على الجهمية فغضب بعض وقالوا **نحن المقصودون** بهذا فبلغ ذلك القاضي الشافعي يومئذ فأمر بسجنه فتوجه ابن تيمية وأخرجه من السجن فغضب النائب فأعيد ثم أفرج عنه وأمر النائب

Harris Hammam has also posted a lengthy quote from his colleague "Abu Abdallah" under the same thread, post no. 7 – where the latter has mentioned correctly that the incident with al-Mizzi and the fuqaha occurred in the year 705 AH.

¹⁸ Proof that al-Hafiz ibn Hajar was an Ash'ari has been demonstrated here:
<http://ahlussunnah.boards.net/thread/501/proof-imam-hajar-asqalani-Ash'ari>

¹⁹ 6/230

What caused the Shafi'i fuqaha to become Enraged with Imam al-Mizzi?

Indeed, to know what caused vexation amongst the Shafi'ites of the Umayyad masjid one needs to attempt to collate all the various accounts from authoritative historians regarding this incident.

What can be settled from Ibn Kathir and Ibn Hajar's briefer account is that no where did they state or suggest that the Shafi'ites were at odds with the Khalq a'fal al-Ibad of Imam al-Bukhari, or that these Shafi'is despised its total contents, let alone suggest that this work should be disposed of or hidden from public gaze before or after the event with Imam al-Mizzi.

Hence, Harris Hammam's opening lines:

“Imam al-Mizzi - IMPRISONED by the Ash'aris for Reading Out Imam al-Bukhari's Book”

Then, this is not convincingly proven from the historical sources utilized by the anti-Ash'arites of this age. If the sole reason for al-Mizzi's imprisonment was due to the selective reading from the Khalq a'fal al Ibad of Imam al-Bukhari in public, one may ask what is the evidence for this specific point alone? If the Shafi'ite Ash'arites of Damascus had problems with the Khalq alone, then what could have stopped them or the likes of the Qadi Ibn Sasra to have banned its communal circulation and recital?! Especially, since they had the upper hand in Damascus and elsewhere.

To know what may have vexed the Shafi'i scholars, one may look at the account given by another recognized Historian and Muhaddith, namely, [Imam Badrud-Din al-Ayni](#) (d. 855 AH). Indeed, this incident was recorded in his *Iqd al-Juman fi Tarikh Ablul Zaman*²⁰ as follows:

House of Verification

ومنها: أن في شهر رجب قرأ الشيخ جمال الدين المزي فصلاً في الرد على الجهمية من كتاب أفعال البخاري تحت قبة النسر، فغضب بعض الفقهاء الحاضرين وقالوا: نحن المقصودون بهذا التكفير، وسعوا به إلى قاضي القضاة ابن صصري، فأحضره إلي بين يديه ورسم بحبسه، فبلغ ذلك الشيخ ابن تيمية فقام حافياً وأصحابه خلفه إلى الحبس فأخرجه منه، وطلع القاضي إلى النائب، وطلع الشيخ تقي الدين، التقوا عند النائب، وتخاصما، فأسقط

²⁰ 1/477

تقي الدين على القاضي، وذكر نائبه جلال الدين، وأنه آذى أصحابه بسبب غيبة ملك الأمراء، فأمر ملك الأمراء أن يُنادى في المدينة: من تكلم في العقائد حلّ قتله، ونهبت داره. وكان قصد الأمراء تسكين الفتنة

The underlined portion states that the angered Fuqaha said:

نحن المقصودون بهذا التكفير

This portion was mentioned by Ibn Hajar in his al-Durar al-Kamina as follows:

نحن المقصودون بهذا

Which Harris Hammam translated as follows:

"We are the ones being targeted by this"

Thus, the key phrase that was mentioned at the end of this response by the fuqaha as mentioned by al-Ayni was: التكفير (al-Takfir) – Meaning the expulsion of a Muslim from the fold of al-Islam!

Hence, the complete response from the fuqaha who heard al-Mizzi's discourse would be: **"We are the ones being targeted by this Takfir"**

It is therefore possible to suggest now that since al-Mizzi was reading from the Khalq af'al al-Ibad and specifically from the section on the Jahmiyya as Ibn Kathir said, the fuqaha present there were vexed that al-Mizzi was specifically reading from that section in order to refute the views of the Jahmiyya, and they deciphered it to mean that al-Mizzi was possibly equating the Jahmiyya with some of the fuqaha who were present in the masjid, to the extent that they felt al-Mizzi was hinting at Takfir of a group that heard the Khalq af'al al-Ibad in the masjid.

It is most likely for this reason that the fuqaha complained to the Shafi'i Qadi – Ibn Sasra, who had al-Mizzi jailed as we have come to know. Nowhere in the accounts does it state categorically or imply in any manner that these fuqaha were:

- i) Truly 'Jahmi' leaning Ash'aris
- ii) Against the Khalq af'al al Ibad of al-Bukhari

- iii) Or that al-Mizzi was totally anti-Ash'arite per se
- iv) Or that al-Mizzi was out to humiliate the Ash'arite fuqaha in the Umayyad masjid since his colleague, Ibn Taymiyya, was himself undergoing a series of trials regarding his own creed at that time in history

Indeed, a more exhaustive account of Ibn Taymiyya's trials and the incident regarding al-Mizzi has been mentioned by the historian, **Abu Bakr al-Dawadāri**²¹ in his *Kanz al-Durar wa Jami al Ghurar*²² as follows under the year 705 AH:

ثم لما كان يوم الاثنين ثاني وعشرين الشهر قرأ الجمال المزيّ
 ١٢ المحدث فصلاً في الردّ على الجهميّة من كتاب « أفعال العباد » تصنيف
 البخاريّ رضي الله عنه ، قرأ ذلك في مجلس العامّ تحت النسر . فغضب
 بعض الفقهاء الحاضرين وقالوا : ما قرئ هذا الفصل إلاّ ونحن المقصودون
 ١٥ بهذا التكفير . - قال : فحملوه إلى قاضي القضاة الشافعيّ ، فرسم بحبسه .
 فبلغ الشيخ تقيّ الدين ذلك ، فقام حافياً في جماعةٍ من أصحابه ، وأخرج المذكور
 من الاعتقال . فعند ذلك اجتمع القاضي بملك الأمرا ، وكذلك الشيخ
 ١٨ تقيّ الدين والنقبا عند ملك الأمرا ، واشتطّ تقيّ الدين على القاضي ، وذكر
 نايبه جلال الدين وأته آذى أصحابه بسبب غيبة نايب السلطان في الصيد .
 فلما حضر نايب السلطان رسم بطلب كلّ من أكثر كلامه من الطائفتين ، وأمر

In addition to the quote from Imam al-Ayni and al-Dawadāri regarding the fuqaha stating that apparently Takfir was intended by al-Mizzi, the same has been mentioned by **Shihabud-Din al-Nuwayri** (d. 733 AH) in his *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*²³:

وقال نحن قصدنا بهذا التكفير

²¹ He died sometime after 736AH according to Khayrud-Din Zirikli in his *al-A 'lām: qāmūs tarājīm li-ash 'har al-rijāl wa al-nisā' min al- 'Arab wa al-musta 'ribīn wa al-mustashrifīn* (2/66)

²² 9/134

²³ 32/112

Al-Nuwayri and al-Dawadāri were contemporaries to al-Mizzi and so their versions are authoritative in terms of their complete wording on this matter.

Thus, the actual reason why the Shafi'ite fuqaha were angered was not due to the book being read, or that they despised the actual work by Imam al-Bukhari, but that they interpreted the implications of the narrations read out in the Umayyad masjid to be an indirect Takfir on some of those fuqaha present amongst the general congregation.

If the anti-Ash'arites hold an opposing view(s) to what has been suggested above, then they are requested to bring forth additional reasoning based on verifiable historical quotations.

PROOF THAT THE KHALQ AF'AL AL-IBAD OF AL-BUKHARI WAS TRANSMITTED BY SOME ASH'ARI SCHOLARS

Harris Hammam has also made the claim on the first page of the thread that he opened under post no. 10 that the Khalq af'al al-Ibad of Imam al-Bukhari has never been taught in any Ash'ari or Maturidi seminaries by saying:

"a book that has never been taught in an Ash'ari or Maturidi seminary that I know of"

Harris also claimed under the following link:

<http://forums.islamicawakening.com/f15/imam-al-mizzi-imprisoned-Ash'aris-reading-out-imam-al-bukharis-book-24751/index11.html>

Post no: 106:

"3. Yes it is the 'Wahhabis' who propogate this book, not the Ash'aris, and this is for reasons obvious."

The response to these haughty claims would be that indeed some of the major Ash'aris have themselves transmitted the Khalq af'al al-Ibad of Imam al-Bukhari with a chain of transmission(s) or quoted matters from it without warning against or rejecting the book outright as the likes of Harris have surmised with their clouded shortsightedness.

Not so long ago the Khalq was printed in two volumes with editing by one of those from the same “Salafi” school of creed like Harris et al. It was published by Dar Atlas al-Khadra (2005 CE) in Saudi Arabia, with the editing of Fahd ibn Sulayman. The latter used some original manuscripts which also mentioned the chains of transmission via which the Khalq af'al al-Ibad has been transmitted through the ages.

The third manuscript that the editor used was from Turkey and one of the famous narrators mentioned in the chain of transmission back to Imam al-Bukhari was the following Muhaddith and Maliki scholar: **Abu Dharr al-Harawi** (d. 434 AH). This is what Fahd ibn Sulayman mentioned on p. 95 about him:

وفيما يلي تراجم هؤلاء الرواة الذين ذكروا في الإسناد المثبت على هذه النسخة:

١ - الحافظ الإمام المجدد العلامة شيخ الحرم، أبو ذر: عبْدُ بن أحمد بن محمد ابن عبد الله بن غفير بن محمد المعروف ببلده بابن السماك، الأنصاري الخراساني الهروي المالكي، صاحب التصانيف، وراوي الصحيح، ولد سنة (٣٥٥ هـ) أو (٣٥٦ هـ)، وقد تأثر بأهل الكلام المذموم، وبسببه انتشر المذهب الأشعري في بعض الجهات، وعنه أخذ أبو الوليد الباجي وغيره علم الكلام، وتوفي سنة (٤٣٤ هـ) (١).

Thus, as the editor has indicated, al-Harawi was not only one of the famous transmitters of Sahih al-Bukhari, as well as the Khalq, but he was one of those who was linked to the Ash'ari school, and one of his pupils was the famous Maliki scholar, Abul Walid al-Baji who took the knowledge of Kalam (speculative theology) from al-Harawi. His Ash'arite and Malikite affiliation was also mentioned by Imam al-Dhahabi in his *Siyar a'lam an-Nubala*²⁴:

وقال الأمين ابن الأکفاني : حدثني أبو علي الحسين بن أبي حريصة قال : بلغني أن أبا ذر مات سنة أربع بمكة ، وكان على مذهب مالك ومذهب الأشعري (٣) .

²⁴ 17/55

The famous Maliki biographer, Qadi Iyad, has also acknowledged that Abu Dharr al-Harawi took his knowledge of Ash'arite creed from the likes of Abu Bakr al-Baqillani and Abu Bakr ibn Furak in his *Tartib al-Madarik*²⁵:

وأخذ عن أبي بكر الباقلاني، وأبي بكر بن فورك من متكلمي أهل السنة خطأً من علم الاعتقاد

His Ash'arite linkage was also mentioned by the famous Ash'ari Muhaddith of Syria, al-Hafiz Ibn Asakir (d. 571 AH) in his *Tabyin Kadhib al-Muftari*.²⁶

Note also that Fahd ibn Sulayman also mentioned (on p. 92) based on the first manuscript from Hyderabad that one of the transmitters in the chain was:

Abu Bakr Wajih ibn Tahir al-Shahhami (b. 455 AH – d. 541 AH). Though it is not conclusive to suggest that al-Shahhami was an Ash'arite, what is of notable interest is that he heard the work known as al-Risala directly from the famous Ash'ari Imam, Abul Qasim al-Qushayri (d. 465 AH), and the leading Ash'ari Muhaddith, Ibn Asakir took from al-Shahhami.²⁷

The famous Shafi'i Muhaddith, Imam al-Bayhaqi (d. 458 AH) was also an Ash'ari:

Ibn Taymiyya al-Harrani described Imam al-Bayhaqi and al-Baqillani to be from the virtuous Ash'aris in his *Majmu al-Fatawa*:²⁸

وأما التميميون، كأبي الحسن وابن أبي الفضل، وابن رزق الله، فهم أبعد عن الإثبات، وأقرب إلى موافقة غيرهم، وألين لهم؛ ولهذا تتبعهم الصوفية ويميل إليهم فضلاء الأشعرية، كالباقلائي والبيهقي، فإن عقيدة أحمد التي كتبها أبو الفضل هي التي اعتمدها البيهقي، مع أن القوم ماشون على السنة.

An example from Imam al-Bayhaqi's *Kitab al-I'tiqad*²⁹ where he quoted with his sanad (chain of transmission) a near verbatim quote from al-Bukhari which is found in the current edition of *Khalq al-Ibad* is as follows:

²⁵ 7/231

²⁶ P. 255

²⁷ See the *Siyar a'lam an-Nubala* of al-Dhahabi (20/109-110)

²⁸ 6/53

²⁹ pp. 109-110

أخبرنا أبو عبد الله الحافظ في التاريخ ثنا أبو بكر محمد بن
أبي الهيثم المطوعي ببخارى ثنا محمد بن يوسف الفربري قال سمعت أبا عبد الله محمد بن إسماعيل البخاري يقول
سمعت عبد الله بن سعيد يعني أبا قدامة يقول سمعت يحيى بن سعيد يعني القطان يقول ما زلت أسمع أصحابنا
يقولون أفعال العباد مخلوقة

قال أبو عبد الله البخاري حركاتهم وأصواتهم واكتسابهم وكتابتهم مخلوقة فأما القرآن المتلو المبين المثبت في
المصاحف المسطور المكتوب الموعى في القلوب فهو كلام الله ليس بمخلوق قال الله عز وجل بل هو آيات بينات
في صدور الذين أوتوا العلم

Khalq (p. 26):

قال أبو عبد الله بن محمد إسماعيل سمعت عبد الله بن سعيد يقول سمعت يحيى بن سعيد يقول ما زلت أسمع من
أصحابنا يقولون إن أفعال العباد مخلوقة قال أبو عبد الله حركاتهم وأصواتهم واكتسابهم وكتابتهم مخلوقة فأما
القرآن المتلو المبين المثبت في المصاحف المسطور المكتوب الموعى في القلوب فهو كلام الله ليس بخلق قال الله بل
هو آيات بينات في صدور الذين أوتوا العلم

This last quote was translated by Dr GF Haddad³⁰ as:

“Their motions (*harakât*), voices (*aswât*), earning (*iktisâb*), and writing (*kitâba*) are created. As for the Qur’an that is declaimed (*matluw*), established (*muthbat*) in the volumes, inscribed (*mastûr*), written (*maktûb*), contained (*mû‘a*) in the hearts: that is Allah’s speech, uncreated. Allah said: ‘*But it is clear revelations in the hearts of those who have been given knowledge.*’

In Imam al-Bayhaqi’s *Kitab al-Asma wal Sifat* (no. 570) there is also a near verbatim quote from Imam al-Bukhari, which once again is found in the Khalq af’al al-Ibad of al-Bukhari:

³⁰ In his abridgement of al-Bayhaqi’s *Kitab al-Asma wa al-Sifat* published under the title Allah's Names and Attributes (p. 62)

– أَخْبَرَنَا أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْحَافِظُ ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ أَبِي الْهَيْثَمِ الْمُطَوِّعِيُّ ، بِبُخَارَى ، حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يُوسُفَ الْقُرْبَرِيِّ ، قَالَ : سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدَ بْنَ إِسْمَاعِيلَ الْبُخَارِيَّ ، يَقُولُ : أَمَّا أَفْعَالُ الْعِبَادِ مَخْلُوقَةٌ ، فَقَدْ حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ، حَدَّثَنَا مَرْوَانُ بْنُ مُعَاوِيَةَ ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو مَالِكٍ ، عَنْ رَبِيعِ بْنِ حِرَاشٍ ، عَنْ حُدَيْفَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ ، قَالَ : قَالَ النَّبِيُّ

صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يَصْنَعُ كُلَّ صَانِعٍ وَصَنَعَتُهُ وَتَلَا بَعْضُهُمْ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ : وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
قال أبو عبد الله البخاري : وسمعت عبيد الله بن سعيد يقول : سمعت يحيى بن سعيد يقول : ما زلت أسمع أصحابنا يقولون : أفعال العباد مخلوقة.

قال البخاري : حركاتهم وأصواتهم وأكسابهم وكتابتهم مخلوقة ، فأما القرآن المتلو المبين المثبت في المصاحف المسطور المكتوب ، الموعى في القلوب ، فهو كلام الله تعالى ليس بخلق.
قال الله عز وجل : {بل هو آيات بينات في صدور الذين أوتوا العلم}.
قال البخاري : وقال إسحاق بن إبراهيم : فأما الأوعية فمن يشك في خلقها ؟ قال الله عز وجل : {وكتاب مسطور في رق منشور}.

وقال تعالى : {بل هو قرآن مجيد ، في لوح محفوظ} فذكر أنه يحفظ ويسطر قال : {وما يسطرون}
قال محمد بن إسماعيل : حَدَّثَنَا رُوحُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْمُؤْمِنِ ، حَدَّثَنَا يَزِيدُ بْنُ زُرَيْعٍ ، حَدَّثَنَا سَعِيدُ بْنُ قَتَادَةَ : {والطور وكتاب مسطور} قال : المسطور المكتوب { في رق منشور } ، وهو الكتاب
قال محمد بن إسماعيل : ثنا آدم ، ثنا ورقاء عن ابن أبي نجيح عن مجاهد : (وكتاب مسطور) صحف مكتوبة (في رق منشور) في صحف

Some of the above quote is in the Khalq (p. 26) as follows:

House of Verification

قال أبو عبد الله بن محمد إسماعيل سمعت عبد الله بن سعيد يقول سمعت يحيى بن سعيد يقول ما زلت أسمع من أصحابنا يقولون إن أفعال العباد مخلوقة قال أبو عبد الله حركاتهم وأصواتهم وكتابتهم مخلوقة فأما القرآن المتلو المبين المثبت في المصاحف المسطور المكتوب الموعى في القلوب فهو كلام الله ليس بخلق قال الله بل هو آيات بينات في صدور الذين أوتوا العلم وقال إسحاق بن إبراهيم فأما الأوعية فمن يشك في خلقها قال الله تعالى { وكتاب مسطور في رق منشور } وقال { بل هو قرآن مجيد في لوح محفوظ } فذكر أنه يحفظ ويسطر قال وما يسطرون

حدثنا روح بن عبد المؤمن حدثنا يزيد بن زريع سعيد عن قتادة والطور وكتاب مسطور فقال المسطور المكتوب في رق منشور وهو الكتاب حدثنا آدم حدثنا ورقاء عن بن نجيح عن مجاهد وكتاب مسطور وصحف مكتوب في رق منشور في مصحف

The latter day Salafi claimants and their chains for Khalq af'al al-Ibad actually run through Shah Waliullah (d. 1176 AH) the Ash'ari scholar

Numerous contemporary Ash'ari and Maturidi scholars have chains of transmission going back to the pivotal transmitter of the Hadith books in India in his time. This being the well-known Hanafi scholar, and Sufi adept, Shah Waliullah of Delhi. In a work known as Thabat al-Kuwait by Muhammad Ziyad al-Tukla (a Syrian claimant to Salafism) he listed his chains of transmission via his Salafi teachers and when certain books were heard in some gatherings with these teachers of his between the years 1426 to 1430 AH. In this Thabat³¹ he has provided some chains of transmission (asanid) from his teachers for the Khalq af'al al-Ibad. This being as follows:

خلق أفعال العباد للبخاري (ت256)

قريء على المشايخ الثلاثة: ثناء الله، ومحمد إسرائيل، وعبد الوكيل، وذلك في مجلسين، ضحوتي الأحد وتاليه الاثنين 1428/11/23.

* قال الشيخ ثناء الله: أخبرنا الحافظ عبد الله الروبري قراءة عليه، عن عبد الجبار الغزنوي (سماعاً لحديث منه إن لم يكن أكثر)، عن نذير حسين كذلك، عن الشاه محمد إسحاق كذلك، عن الشاه عبد العزيز كذلك، عن أبيه **الشاه ولي الله الدهلوي** كذلك، عن أبي أبو طاهر الكوراني كذلك، عن أبيه إبراهيم كذلك، عن النجم الغزي، عن البدر الغزي، عن أبي الفتح المزري، عن عائشة بنت عبد الهادي، عن الحجار، عن جعفر الهمداني، عن أبي طاهر السلفي، عن عيسى بن أبي ذر الهروي، عن أبيه، حدثنا إبراهيم بن أحمد المستملي البلخي (سنة 374)، أخبرنا محمد بن يوسف الفريزي (سنة 314). (ح)

وبه إلى أبي الفتح محمد المزري، عن أحمد بن عثمان الكلوتاتي، عن عبد الرحمن بن أحمد الغزي (إجازة إن لم يكن سماعاً)، عن محمد بن أحمد بن إبراهيم بن القماح، عن النجيب الحراني، عن الحافظ أبي الفرج ابن الجوزي (إجازة إن لم

³¹ P. 67

يكن سماعاً)، قرأت على الشيخ الإمام الحافظ أبو بكر محمد بن عبد الله بن أحمد بن حبيب العامري البغدادي، أنا وجيه بن طاهر الشحامي (سماعاً). قال ابن الجوزي: وأخبرني الشيخ العالم الزكي أبو بكر وجيه بن طاهر بن محمد الشحامي (كتابة من نيسابور). (ح)

ويروي أبو الفتح المزي عالياً عن عائشة بنت عبد الهادي، عن زينب بنت الكمال، عن عبد الخالق بن أنجب المارديني، عن وجيه الشحامي، أخبرني الحافظ أبي الفتح محمد بن أحمد سمكويه إذناً، أخبرنا أبو سهل أحمد بن علي الأبيوردي، ثنا إسماعيل بن محمد بن أحمد بن حاجب الكشاني، ثنا محمد بن يوسف الفربري، حدثنا البخاري (سنة 256).

* وقال الشيخ عبد الوكيل: أخبرنا به الوالد سماعاً، عن أبي سعيد البتالوي وجمع، عن نذير حسين، به.

* وقال الشيخ محمد إسرائيل: أنبأنا الشيخ عبد الحكيم الجيوري إجازة، عن نذير حسين عالياً، به.

Hence, the above chains that were transmitted by some contemporary claimants to the way of the Salaf linked themselves up to Shah Waliullah, and then onwards back to al-Bukhari's work. There are also other scholars in the above chains who are known to be Ash'aris also. To get to the point, it is incumbent to show that Shah Waliullah was an Ash'ari in creedal matters and hence this serves as another example of an Ash'ari Muhaddith transmitting the Khalq af'al al-Ibad.

This matter has been demonstrated by this writer in the past as may be seen in the following link:³²

[Shah Waliullah – transmitter of an Ashari Musalsal chain](http://www.darultahqiq.com/shah-waliullah-transmitter-of-an-ashari-musalsal-chain/)

Quote:

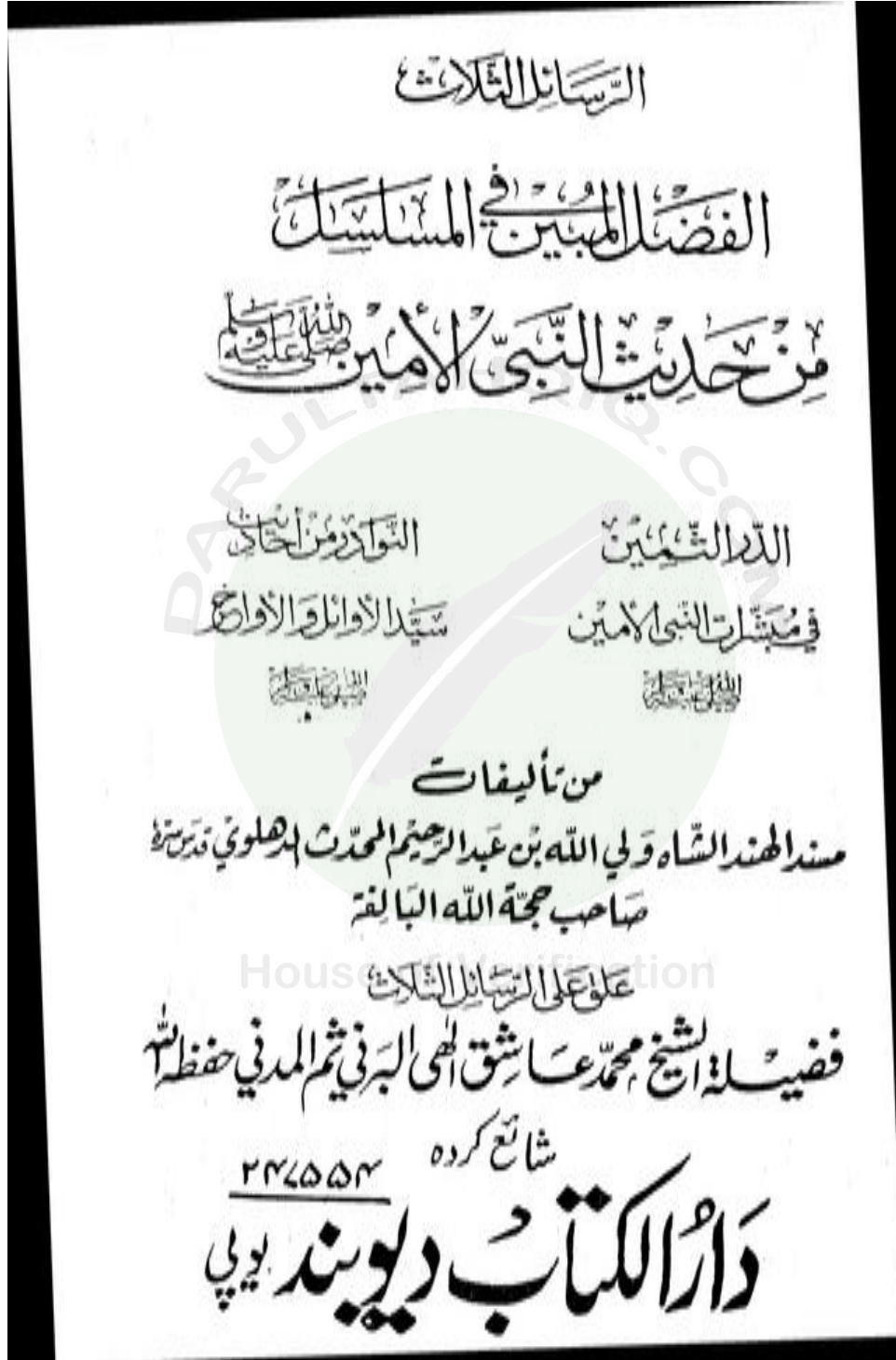
The following is a scan from one of the Athbat (a book listing his chains of transmission via his teachers) of the Imam al-Hind, Shah Waliullah Muhaddith al-Dehlawi (d. 1176 AH), and his transmission of a unique musalsal sanad (patterned chain of transmission) which contains some famous Ash'arite Imams within its sanad (chain of transmission). The name of al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d. 852 AH) has also appeared in this sanad. All of this is clear and concrete proof that al-Hafiz ibn Hajar al-Asqalani was an Ashari in Aqida and this sanad indicates that Shah Waliullah's own Shaykh in Hadith (Allama Abu Tahir) was also an Ashari as was Shah Waliullah himself.

Many of the pseudo-Salafis in the Indian subcontinent who have received asanid in ahadith have chains running back to Shah Waliullah, but they oppose him in many respects like being anti-

³² <http://www.darultahqiq.com/shah-waliullah-transmitter-of-an-ashari-musalsal-chain/>

Hanafi, anti-Sufi and prominently these days, they are anti-Ashari. These are more added proofs of how the pseudo-Salafiyya are truly at odds with the actual methodology of Shah Saheb, (rahimahullah).

Scans from his al-Fadlul Mubin:



(١١) حديث مسلسل بالأشاعره

قال الفقير ولي الله عفي عنه - ومختاره في العقيدة مذهب المتقدمين من الأشاعرة - عن أبي طاهر الشافعي الأشعري ، عن أبيه الشيخ إبراهيم الكردي الأشعري ، عن الشيخ أحمد القشاشي " الأشعري ، عن الشيخ أحمد الشناوي " الأشعري ، عن أبيه الشيخ علي الأشعري ، عن الشمس الرملي الأشعري ، عن شيخ الإسلام الزين زكريا الأشعري ، عن الحافظ ابن حجر الأشعري ، عن أبي الحسن علي بن أبي المجدل المشقي الأشعري ، عن أبي النضر محمد بن الشيراز الأشعري ، عن جده أبي نصر محمد بن هبة الله الشيرازي الأشعري ، عن الحافظ أبي القاسم علي بن الحسن بن هبة الله بن عساكر الدمشقي الأشعري ، إنه قال في كتابه «تبيين كذب المفتري» حدثني الثقة من أصحابنا، أخبرني الحافظ القاضي أبو إسحاق بن علي بن الحسين الشيباني الطبري ثم المكي من لفظه ببغداد ، أنا الحافظ أبو نعيم عبيدالله بن الحسن بن أحمد بن أحمد الحسين بإصبهان ، حدثنا أبو إبراهيم بن سعد بن مسعود العتبي ببشاور ، أنا الأستاذ أبو منصور عبد القادر بن طاهر

- (٢) نسة إلى القشاشة (بضم القاف وتكرار الشين بينهما ألف) وهي سقط المتاع التي تسترحص من أي نوع كان من نعال وخرق وغير ذلك ، سب إليها أحمد بن يونس المقدسي ، كان يبيع القشاشة بالمدينة المنورة فسب إليها (٢) بالشين المعجمة المفتوحة وتشديد النون ، نسة إلى شوقرة الغريسة من مصر

Another clear cut proof from the pen of Shah Waliullah himself has been preserved in a warrant of authorisation (Ijaza) that he presented to one of his students. The original manuscript is located in the Khuda Baksh library in Patna (Bihar state, India). Here are the images from one of the catalogues³³ of the said library:

Good Nasta'liq.
Dated A.H. 1159.

fol. 375^b-379^a. A sanad or licence for narrating Hadīṣ dated A.H. 1159 granted by Shāh Waliullāh to his pupil the present scribe:—

الصد لله الذي بنعمته تتم الصالحات — و علي فضله المعول
في جميع الحالات — و اشهد ان لا اله الا الله و اشهد ان محمدا
عبده و رسوله صلى الله عليه و علي. اله و صحبه و سلم اما بعد
فان اخانا في الله عز و جل الفاضل الصالح الشيخ محمد بن
شيخ يبر بن الشيخ ابي الفتح العمري نسباً — البلكرامي اصلاً
و الاله آبادي مولداً و منشأً قرأ علي الجامع الصحيح المسند تصنيف
الامام العجة امير المؤمنين في الحديث ابي عبد الله محمد بن
اسماعيل البخاري رحمه الله تعالى جميعه الا فوتاً و هو من كتاب
المواقيع التي باب كيف يقبض العبد المتاع من كتاب الهبة فانه
سمع علي بقرأة خواجه محمد امين — و قرأ علي ايضاً اطرافاً من
مائر الكتب الستة و من موطأ الامام مالك بن انس و من مسند
العافظ ابي محمد عبد الله بن عبد الرحمن الدارمي و من مشكوة
المصابيح — فاجزى له ان يروي عني هذه الكتب كلها و كذلك
اجزى له ان يروي عني كل ما صح عنده انه من مروياتي
بشرط الرواية المعتبرة عند اهل هذا الشأن و قد اجازنا بصحيح
البخاري جميعه شيخنا ابو طاهر محمد بن ابراهيم الكردي المدني
الح. . . كتبه بيده الفقير الي رحمة الله الكريم الودود ولي الله
احمد بن عبد الرحيم بن وجيه الدين بن معظم بن منصور بن احمد
بن محمود عفي الله عنه و عنهم اجمعين و الصقة و اياهم باسلافه
الصالحين العمري نسباً — الد هلوي و طنا — الاشعري عقيدة
و الصوفي طريقة — الصفي عملاً — و الصفي و الشافعي تدريساً

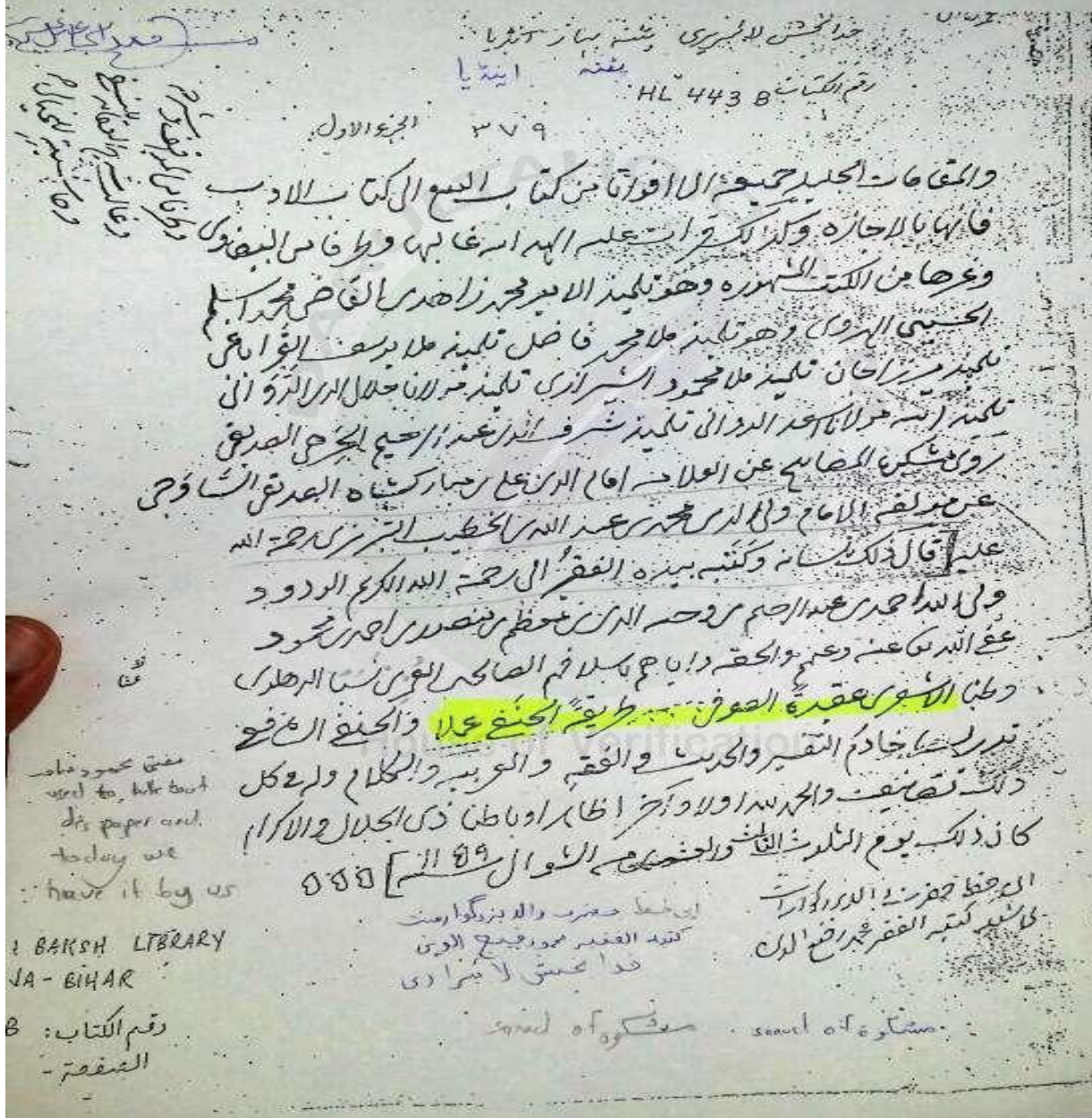
³³ Arabic catalogue, vol. 5/pp. 22-23

خادم التفسير و الصديق - و الفقه و العربية و الكلام الصمد لله
اولا و اخرها و باطنا ذي الجلال و الاكرام و كان ذلك يوم الثلاثاء
الثالث و العشرين من الشوال ١١٥٩ سنة

The handwriting of the above is thus verified by Shāh Waliyallāh's son :-

ابن خط والد بزرگوار امسح بي شبه
كتبه الصغير محمد رفيع الدين

The following is the actual digital image of the Ijaza:



The above text of the Ijaza was presented in English³⁴ as follows:

“To proceed, our brother in Allah (عز وجل) the pious and righteous, Sheikh Muhammad the son of Sheikh Pir Muhammad, the son of Sheikh Abul Fath, al-Umari by way of lineage, al-Bilgrami by origin, al-Ilahabadi by birth and upbringing, read to me all of al-Jami al-Sahih al-Musnad authored by the Imam, the proof, the commander of the Faithful in hadith, Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Ismaeel al-Bukhari. He heard it from me with the reading of Khwaja Muhammad Amin, he also read to me portions from all of the six books, and from the Muwatta Imam Malik bin Anas, the Musnad of al-Hafidh Abu Muhammad Abdullah bin Abd al-Rahman al-Darimi and the Mishkat al-Masabih.

I have given him permission to narrate from me all of these books, and likewise I have given him permission to narrate from me all that he correctly transmits from my narrations, with the condition of narrating which is relied upon according people of this science. And we were narrated (akhbarana) the whole of Sahih al-Bukhari by our Sheikh Abu al-Tahir Muhammad bin Ibrahim al-Kurdi al-Madani...”.

He then finally said:

“And he wrote it with his hand, the one needy of the mercy of Allah the Generous and Most Loving, [Waliullah Ahmad bin Abd al-Rahim bin Wajih al-Din bin Muadham bin Mansur bin Ahmad bin Mahmud](#), Allah forgive him and them, and join him and them with their righteous ancestors. Al-Umari by way of lineage, al-Dehlawi by way of homeplace, [al-Ashari in aqida, al-Sufi in Tariqah, al-Hanafi by way of practice](#), al-Hanafi and al-Shafi in terms of teaching. The servant of Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh, Arabic, Kalam, and he has in all of these works. And all praise due to Allah in the beginning and end, outwardly and inwardly, the possessor of Majesty and Generosity.

And this was on Tuesday, the 23rd of Shawwal in the year 1159 Hijri.”

Confirmation Of The Accuracy of The Above

Below this writing is the statement of Shah Rafi al-Din al-Dehlawi whose meaning is:

“There is no doubt that this is the handwriting of my respected father- written by the needy one Muhammad Rafi al-Din.”

³⁴ See here - <http://www.daralhadith.org.uk/?p=358>

Other points from the Khalq af'al al-Ibad Of Imam al-Bukhari:

Imam ibn Hajar al-Asqalani quoted the following from the manuscript of the Khalq he had in his Fath al-Bari (Hadith no. 7013):

فتح الباري، شرح صحيح البخاري - للإمام ابن حجر العسقلاني
المجلد الثالث عشر << كِتَابُ التَّوْحِيدِ >> بَابُ مَا جَاءَ فِي تَخْلِيْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَغَيْرِهَا مِنْ الْخَلَائِقِ

ثم وجدت بيان مراده في كتابه الذي أفرده في خلق أفعال العباد فقال:

اختلف الناس في الفاعل والفعل والمفعول فقالت القدرية الأفاعيل كلها من البشر.

وقالت الجبرية الأفاعيل كلها من الله.

وقالت الجهمية الفعل والمفعول واحد ولذلك قالوا كن مخلوق.

وقال السلف: التخليق فعل الله وأفاعيلنا مخلوقة، ففعل الله صفة الله والمفعول من سواه من المخلوقات انتهى.

In the printed edition of the Khalq³⁵ the above quote is slightly different:

قال أبو عبد الله واختلف الناس في الفاعل والمفعول والفعل فقالت القدرية الأفاعيل كلها من البشر ليست من
الله

وقالت الجبرية الأفاعيل كلها من الله

وقالت الجهمية الفعل والمفعول واحد لذلك قالوا لكن مخلوق

وقال أهل العلم التخليق فعل الله وأفاعيلنا مخلوقة لقوله تعالى ﴿ وأسروا قولكم أو اجهروا به إنه عليم بذات

الصدور ألا يعلم من خلق ﴾ يعني السر والجهر من القول ففعل الله صفة الله والمفعول غيره من الخلق

If one compares both quotes one can see that Ibn Hajar did not mention the Qur'anic verse from the edition of the Khalq in his possession while the printed edition does; also Ibn Hajar mentioned the final position being that of al-Salaf in his edition, while in the printed edition it stated “Ahlul-Ilm” in its place. This also serves to show that there

³⁵ p. 112, Mu'assasa al Risala edn.

are conflicts between the manuscript from Ibn Hajar's time and the one used by those who printed the Khalq in this time.

In the printed edition of the Khalq it mentioned the following point:

حدثنا محمد أنا عبد الله أنا محمد بن بشار عن قتادة عن صفوان بن محرز عن بن عمرو رضى الله تعالى عنهما قال بينما أنا أمشي معه إذ جاءه رجل فقال يا بن عمر كيف سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يذكر في النجوى قال سمعته يقول يدنو المؤمن من ربه حتى يضع عليه كنفه خ قال فذكر صحيفة فيقره بذنوبه هل تعرف فيقول رب أعرف حتى يبلغ به ما شاء أن يبلغ فيقول إني سترتها عليك في الدنيا وأنا أغفرها لك اليوم فيعطى كتاب حسناته وأما الكافر فينادي على رؤوس الأشهاد قال الله { ويقول الأشهاد هؤلاء الذين كذبوا على ربهم ألا لعنة الله على الظالمين } قال بن المبارك كنفه يعني ستره

One wonders if the likes of Harris Hammam would accept this Ta'wil (figurative interpretation) attributed to Imam Ibn al-Mubarak as highlighted in red?!

Imam al-Bukhari mentioned two factions of Hanbalites during his time in his Khalq af'al al-Ibad (p. 28):

فأما ما احتج به الفريقان لمذهب أحمد ويدعيه كل لنفسه فليس بثابت كثير من أخبارهم وربما لم يفهموا دقة مذهبه بل المعروف عن أحمد وأهل العلم أن كلام الله غير مخلوق وما سواه مخلوق وأنهم كرهوا البحث والتنقيب عن الأشياء الغامضة وتجنبوا أهل الكلام والخوض والتنازع إلا فيما جاء فيه العلم وبينه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

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This was translated by GF Haddad³⁶ as:

“As for what the two parties from the school of Ahmad have claimed as proof, each for his own position: Much of what they relate is not established as authentic. It is probably they did not comprehend the subtleness of his position. What is known from Ahmad and the people of knowledge is that Allah's speech is uncreated and all else is created. But they hated to discuss and explore obscure matters, avoiding

³⁶ In his abridgement of al-Bayhaqi's *Kitab al-Asma wa al-Sifat* published under the title *Allah's Names and Attributes* (p. 60)

dialectic theologians and their queries and disputations, except in what was a matter of knowledge and which the Prophet Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam clarified.”

To conclude:

Imam al-Mizzi (d. 742 AH) was a self-confessed Ash'arite by his own hand written testimony. He was associated with Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728 AH) though it is not conclusive that he remained fully in line with the latter after his death. It is recorded historically that al-Mizzi took on the mantle of Professor of Hadith in the Ash'arite institute of Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya in 718 AH and remained so till his death. His pupils included well acknowledged Ash'arites like Tajud Din al-Subki.

As for his imprisonment, then the reasons for it have been propounded already, and there is no conclusive proof to suggest that the Ash'arites of Damascus were totally against the Khalq af'al al-Ibad. On the contrary, the famous Ash'arite Mutakallim Imam, Abu Dharr al-Harawi transmitted not just the Khalq but also the Sahih of al-Bukhari. Other Ash'aris who narrated things from the Khalq without opposition to the work include the likes of al-Bayhaqi and Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani.

As for the propaganda of those like Harris Hammam and his entourage, then it is a mere myth of insignificant relevance that proves nought for their case. Whoever wishes to read the thread he created without bias may observe his shallow lack of proof and sustainable argumentation. On the contrary, we saw mere belligerence and hostility in his attitude against the Ash'aris, some of whom he has reliance upon when in his hour of need, like al-Bayhaqi or ibn Hajar.

Wassalam

Abul Hasan

London

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REPLY TO THE OBJECTIONS OF MUHAMMAD MOIN

After the above reply was posted, a person named Muhammad Moin wrote a short article entitled “Aqeedah of al-Mizzi” (dated 2-8-10), as a response to the initial findings. His article was not a complete reply to all the points raised above but more so to a few of the points raised initially. He instigated his hostile article using inelegant English by saying:

Few days back, Abul Hasan of Marifah forum published a pdf article in which he tried to portray as though Al-Mizzi was Ash’ari. The main argument was that he himself testified in written that he was an Ash’ari and that was the pre-requisite for the professorship at Daaru Hadith Ashrafiyya.

This issue can easily be divided into two parts..

1. What was the aqeeda of Al-Mizzi
2. Why did Al-Mizzi confessed to be an Asha'ari

Aqeeda of Al-Mizzi

Imam Dhahabi said in Tadhkirat Al-Huffaz (no.1176)³⁷:

وكان يقرر طريقة السلف في السنة ويعضد ذلك بمباحث نظرية وقواعد كلامية

rough transl. **"And he used to hold the way of Salaf in 'Sunnah' and supported it with knowledgeable statements and rules of Kalam"**

Now all of us know, Imam Dhahabi was NOT an Asha'ari, and his views, in major issues of Sifat, were similar to Ibn Taymiyya, and that he was rejected as a teacher in the Daar Al-Hadith where being an Asha'ari was must to get hold to the job.

Therefore, him saying someone to be 'on Aqeedah of Salaf' that means "aqeeda of salaf, according to Dhahabi's understanding of salaf's aqeeda" not like what Asha'aris consider to be the 'aqeeda of salaf'. In short, Al-Mizzi was of the same view as Dhahabi on the issues of Sifat and other major issues related to belief.

³⁷ (1176/7/21) Daar Ihya At-Turath Al-Arabi (Footnote by Muhammad Moin)

Reply:

Firstly, it is known that al-Dhahabi was not one who declared himself to be an Ash'ari in creed and for this reason he was overlooked from holding the Professorship at Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya in Damascus, which held the pre-requisite that only those who testified to being Ash'ari in creedal matters could take up the responsibility of holding a teaching position there. Secondly, Muhammad Moin quoted al-Dhahabi as saying from his Tadhkiratul Huffaz the following point about al-Mizzi:

"And he used to hold the way of Salaf in 'Sunnah' and supported it with knowledgeable statements and rules of Kalam"

Moin tried to explain the above point by saying:

Therefore, him saying someone to be 'on Aqeedah of Salaf' that means "aqeeda of salaf, according to Dhahabi's understanding of salaf's aqeeda" not like what Asha'aris consider to be the 'aqeeda of salaf'. In short, Al-Mizzi was of the same view as Dhahabi on the issues of Sifat and other major issues related to belief.

Here, Moin has merely surmised what he thinks al-Dhahabi's creed was without providing any direct proof to show that al-Dhahabi and al-Mizzi both held the same precise understanding of the Sifat (attributes of Allah). The very statement he quoted from al-Dhahabi clearly mentioned that apparently al-Mizzi adhered to the way of the Salaf in Sunna (meaning Aqida related matters) and supported it with not only knowledge based statements but most surprisingly using the 'rules of Kalam'!

What Moin totally failed to admit here is that the Science of Kalam (speculative theology) was not the realm of most of the Sunni Imams of the Salaf, but it was utilised more so post the Salaf period when the need arose - especially by a group of Imams from the Ash'ari and Maturidi schools of creed to refute innovators. The Mu'tazilites and others had their own variation of Kalam which was not in sync with that used by the Sunni scholars linked to the two named creedal schools in certain respects.

The fact that al-Dhahabi said that al-Mizzi utilised Ilm al-Kalam to defend the creed and way of the Salaf is an evidence that al-Mizzi was also aligned with the Ash'arite way. Moin and his affiliates from modern day Salafism are not proactive advocates of Ilm al-Kalam, and many of them condemn it as a tool used by deviant sects, so one wonders why Moin did not pick up on this point from al-Dhahabi saying that al-Mizzi would utilise knowledge of the rational sciences, which is formally known as Ilm al-Kalam.

To demonstrate what was mentioned above let us reveal the stance of Imam Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali (d. 795 AH) who said in his *al-Radd ala man ittiba'a ghayr al-madhahib al arba'a*:³⁸

“Imam Ahmad and the leaders of the Ahl al-Hadith detested refuting the innovators (ahl al-bida) by partaking in their opponents’ discourse (bi-jins kalamihim), that is the use of analogy in matters of theology (al-aqyisa al-kalamiyya) and rational proofs (adillat al-‘uqul). They deemed refutation appropriate only by the texts of the Qur’an, of the Sunna and by the words of the Pious Ancestors (salaf), if such were to be found. Otherwise they believed reticence (al-sukut) to be safer.”

Al-Dhahabi, al-Mizzi and Ibn Kathir were all associates of Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728 AH), but academic studies into the methodologies of al-Dhahabi and Ibn Kathir in comparison to that of Ibn Taymiyya have steered some to the conclusion that they did not always have commonality and agreement on all theological issues, and how to approach and tackle them in terms of methodology. The main disciple of Ibn Taymiyya’s who was most loyal and faithful to his methodology on the Attributes of Allah was Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751 AH). Hence, although the first three named were all associates of Ibn Taymiyya in some way they themselves did not always hold the same theological positions on some matters as Ibn Taymiyya.

An example that may be raised is the fact that Ibn Taymiyya’s last position on the issue of the Hell fire is that it is not eternal and it will come to an end, thus leading to the false notion of universal salvation for all of its inhabitants no matter what religion or type of atheism they originated from. This was discussed by Ibn Taymiyya in his *Radd ala man qala bi fana al Janna wa’l Naar*, and a number of studies have examined this work and come to realise what was just mentioned, as well as some mentioning that the named composition was his final work, and last stance with regard to the Hell-fire. This deviant position on the alleged non-eternality of the Hell-fire was not embraced by al-Dhahabi, al-Mizzi or Ibn Kathir for that matter. See the following link for this issue:

[Ibn Taymiyya's Belief That Hell \(Jahannam\) Will End](#)³⁹

Al-Dhahabi was not similar to Ibn Taymiyya on how to understand the Attributes of Allah. Ibn Taymiyya and his followers today reject what is known as Tafwid al-Ma’na (committal of the meaning of the Sifat to Allah alone). Ibn Taymiyya said about this type of Tafwid:

³⁸ Printed as an introduction to Ibn Hubayra al-Baghdadi al-Hanbali (d. 560 AH), *al-Fiqh ala madhahib al a’imma al arba’a*, eds. I. I, al-Qadi and I. al-Mursi (Cairo: Dar al-Haramayn, 2000), 88. The quote was translated by C. Bori in ‘Ibn Taymiyya wa-Jamā’atu-hu: Authority, Conflict and Consensus in Ibn Taymiyya’s Circle’ in *Ibn Taymiyya and his Times*, 36.

³⁹ <http://ahlussunnah.boards.net/thread/169/ibn-taymiyyas-belief-jahannam-end>

"This is amongst the most evil of the sayings of the People of Innovation (*Ahlul-Bid'a*) and heresy (*ilhad*)."⁴⁰

Here are some examples of the methodology of al-Dhahabi which were at odds with that of Ibn Taymiyya:

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 AH) on Tafwid al-Ma'na:

He mentioned in his *Siyar a'lam an-Nubala*:⁴¹

فقلونا في ذلك وبابه: الإقرار، والإمرار، وتفويض معناه إلى قائله الصادق المعصوم

"Our saying in this and what falls under it is: Submission to the text, passing it on as it came and consigning the knowledge of its meaning (*tafwid ma'nahu*) to its Sacrosanct and Truthful Sayer."

He also said in his *Siyar a'lam an-Nubala*:⁴²

وَأَمَّا السَّلَفُ، فَمَا خَاضُوا فِي التَّأْوِيلِ، بَلْ آمَنُوا وَكَفُّوا، وَفَوَّضُوا عِلْمَ ذَلِكَ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ

"As for the *Salaf* (three earliest Muslim generations), then they did not delve into interpretation (of the Attributes), but rather they believed, refrained, and consigned the knowledge of that to Allah and His Messenger (*sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*)."

Al-Dhahabi also said in his *Mizan al I'tidal*:⁴³

أما معنى حديث الصورة فنرد علمه إلى الله ورسوله ونسكت كما سكت السلف مع الجزم بأن الله ليس كمثلته شيء

"As for the meaning of the hadith which mentions image (*sura*), then we surrender its knowledge to

⁴⁰ See his *Dar ta'arud al-aql wan naql* (1/205)

⁴¹ 8/105

⁴² 14/376

⁴³ 2/420, Bijawi edn.

Allah and His Messenger and we remain silent, just as the Salaf remained silent, along with firm conviction on the fact that there is nothing whatsoever like Allah."

For more on the differences between al-Dhahabi and Ibn Taymiyya one may read the following link:

[Contrasting Imām al-Dhahabis Creed With Hāfidh Ibn Taymiyyah's](#)⁴⁴

Al-Dhahabi was also one who wore the Sufi khirqa (cloak) as he mentioned in his Siyar a'lam an-Nubala:⁴⁵

أَلْبَسَنِي خِرْقَ التَّصَوُّفِ شَيْخُنَا الْمُحَدِّثُ الرَّاهِدُ ضِيَاءُ الدِّينِ عَيْسَى بْنُ يَحْيَى الْأَنْصَارِيُّ بِالْقَاهِرَةِ، وَقَالَ: أَلْبَسَنِيهَا
الشَّيْخُ شَهَابُ الدِّينِ السُّهْرَوَرْدِيُّ بِمَكَّةَ عَنْ عَمِّهِ أَبِي النَّجِيبِ

"Our Shaykh the ascetic Muhaddith Diya' al-Din `Isa ibn Yahya al-Ansari vested me with the Sufi cloak in Cairo saying, 'Shaykh Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi vested me with it in Makka from his uncle Abu al-Najib."

Al-Dhahabi also gave a warning to those who attack the genuine Sufis without justification in his manual on Hadith terminology known as al-Muqiza:⁴⁶

إِذِ الْقَادِحُ فِي مُحِقِّ الصُّوفِيَّةِ دَاخِلٌ فِي حَدِيثٍ: (مَنْ عَادَى لِي وَلِيًّا، فَقَدْ بَارَزَنِي بِالْمُحَارَبَةِ) . وَالتَّارِكُ لِإِنْكَارِ الْبَاطِلِ

Meaning:

"The critic of a genuine Sufi (*muhiqq al-sufiyya*) becomes a target of the hadith: 'Whosoever shows enmity to a single one of My Friends, I have declared war on him.' While one that abandons all condemnation for what is clearly wrong in what he hears from some of them, abandons the commanding of good and the forbidding of evil."⁴⁷

The contemporary pseudo-Salafis do not accept any forms of Tasawwuf (Sufi path) and would find the above practice of wearing the Sufi cloak to be a form of innovation (bid'a), although the likes of Muhammad Moin consider al-Dhahabi to be some type of "Salafi" in the manner they have become accustomed to in this era.

⁴⁴ <http://ahlussunnah.boards.net/thread/444/contrasting-dhahabis-creed-fidh-taymiyyah>

⁴⁵ 22/377, Arna'ut edn.

⁴⁶ p. 89, edited by Abdul Fattah Abu Ghudda

⁴⁷ The last two translations are from the following link which demonstrated other scholars and their links to Sufis: http://livingislam.org/o/spsr_e.html - The reader may also see the link of Ibn Taymiyya to the Qadiri tariqa being mentioned there as well.

Let us recall that Moin said:

In short, Al-Mizzi was of the same view as Dhahabi on the issues of Sifat and other major issues related to belief.

Hence, by default after showing the methodology of al-Dhahabi in contradistinction to that of Ibn Taymiyya; Muhammad Moin has affirmed that al-Mizzi was in line with al-Dhahabi on the Sifat and other major issues related to belief.

This leads to the conclusion that it is not possible to say that al-Mizzi was precisely the same as Ibn Taymiyya on all matters pertaining to the Sifat of Allah, let alone agreeing with him that Hell fire will come to an end! On the contrary, al-Mizzi was examined by scholars on what exactly was his Aqida (creed) and it was accepted as being in line with that held by the Ash'ari scholars of Damascus in his time as shall become crystal clear towards the end of this monograph.

It should also be mentioned that contemporary Salafi scholars do not all agree on what constitutes an Attribute of Allah, as well as having other variant positions on Aqida matters. The following link has a full work by a person from within Salafism demonstrating these deep divisions and disparities from the writings of Ibn Baz, al-Albani and Ibn Uthaymin:

[Differences between al-Albani, Ibn Uthaymin and Ibn Baz – In Fiqh and Aqida](#)

Muhammad Moin then said:

Some bigot Asharis, like Abul Hasan of Marifa, can reject Dhahabi's view. So let us go back to Tajud-Deen Ibn As-Subki,

Taaj As-Subki said :

وله مشاركة في الفقه ويخوض في شيء من مسائل الصفات في أصول الديانات ليته برئ منها

Look at the statement of Allama Ibn Subki, he is saying that Al-Mizzi involved in some issues of Sifat, and he wished he wouldn't have involved in those issues.

So why Ibn Subki disliked him having opinions in Sifat, when Al-Mizzi was an Asha'ari. The points derived from above statement are,

1. Mizzi had only few comments in the matters of Sifat.
2. That too were disliked by Ibn Subki who was among staunchest Asha'ari of his time.

Abul Hasan in his pdf article states on page.7 :

"He [Al-Mizzi] was the colleague of the infamous Ibn Taymiyya (b. 661 AH - d. 728 AH). The former was influenced by the later in some matters".

Look how Abul Hasan is trying to fool the people. Who told him that Al-Mizzi was influenced by Ibn Taymiyya in only "some matters". Can he suggest us one statement from trustworthy sources of history which indicates his contradiction with Ibn Taymiyya (except his confession to be an Asha'ari which we'll see soon) in major issues of Sifaat??

At least Ibn Subki was sincere enough to admit that these three (Al-Mizzi, Dhahabi, Barzali) great scholars were 'harmed' by Ibn Taymiyya in serious issues.

Ibn Subki said :

واعلم أن هذه الرفقة أعني المزي والذهبي والبرزالي وكثيرا ما أتباعهم أضربهم أبو العباس ابن تيمية إضرارا بينا وحملهم على عظام الأمور أمرا ليس هينا وجرهم إلى ما كان التباعد عنه أولى بهم وأوقفهم في دكاك من نار المرجو من الله أن يتجاوزها لهم ولأصحابهم

[Translation of Abul Hasan] "The group comprised of Al-Mizzi, Al-Dhahabi, Al-Birzali and many of their followers were clearly harmed by Abul Abbas Ibn Taymiyya, who led them to gross acts of no little consequence and drew them to things that they should have avoided."

Abul Hasan tried to dilute the "gross acts of no little consequences" with "some matters".

Reply:

There is no major bigotry on our part, but rather a biased rewriting of history is seen in the pseudo-Salafi sect on some aspects to do with creed and adherence to the four Sunni Madhhabs, as well as some of them deriding and scoffing at the transmission of the Islamic sciences via the Ijaza system.

As for Moin stating:

Taaaj As-Subki said :

وله مشاركة في الفقه ويخوض في شيء من مسائل الصفات في أصول الديانات لئنه برئ منها

Look at the statement of Allama Ibn Subki, he is saying that Al-Mizzi involved in some issues of Sifat, and he wished he wouldn't have involved in those issues.

So why Ibn Subki disliked him having opinions in Sifat, when Al-Mizzi was an Asha'ari. The points derived from above statement are,

1. Mizzi had only few comments in the matters of Sifat.
2. That too were disliked by Ibn Subki who was among staunchest Asha'ari of his time.

At this juncture everything needs to be contextualized and put into an accurate and systematic chronological order. What Ibn al-Subki was most likely referring to, when saying the above regarding his teacher al-Mizzi, was the incident involving his reading of Imam al-Bukhari's Khalq af'al al-Ibad in the Umayyad masjid during the year 705 AH. The following points were mentioned earlier on:

Indeed, the above claim that al-Mizzi testified in writing that he was an Ash'arite in creed was mentioned by none other than his direct student, Ibn al-Subki, in his Tabaqat al-Shafiyya al-Kubra:⁴⁸

ولما شغرت مشيخة دار الحديث الأشرفية بوفاة الحافظ المزني عين هو الذهبي لها فوقع السعي فيها للشيخ شمس الدين ابن النقيب وتكلم في حق الذهبي بأنه ليس بأشعري **وأن المزني ما وليها إذ وليها إلا بعد أن كتب خطه** وأشهد على نفسه بأنه أشعري العقيدة

Meaning:

*“And when the Professorship at Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya remained vacant at the death of al-Hafiz al-Mizzi, the designated quest fell upon al-Dhahabi, in which Shaykh Shamsud-Din ibn al-Naqib spoke the truth about al-Dhahabi that he is not an Ash'ari, **and al-Mizzi got the guardianship as head (of al-Ashrafiyya) only after he wrote in his own handwriting and testified upon himself that he is an Ash'ari in creed (Aqida).**”*

Thus, al-Mizzi was accepted to be from the ranks of the Ash'aris by some, well after the incident of the recital from Imam al-Bukhari's Khalq af'al al-Ibad, and there appears no doubt in the mind of Ibn al-Subki that his Shaykh, al-Mizzi was affiliated to the Ash'arite tradition in some manner, even if others denied him that rank and ascription in time.

⁴⁸ 10/200

The year of al-Mizzi's imprisonment was 705 AH as will be clarified below, and according to the leading expert on al-Mizzi mentioned above, viz. Dr. Bashhar Awwad Ma'ruf; al-Mizzi became the Head of Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya in the year 718 AH, as mentioned in the introduction to al-Mizzi's magnum opus, Tahdhib al-Kamal (1/22). Indeed, al-Dhahabi mentioned this date of 718 AH for al-Mizzi's appointment to Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya in his Dhayl Tarikh al-Islam⁴⁹

Indeed, the Ash'ari Imam they quoted, namely, al-Hafiz ibn Hajar al-Asqalani⁵⁰ has mentioned in another place that this event regarding al-Mizzi occurred in the year 705 AH -

Al-Durar al-Kamina⁵¹ of Ibn Hajar al Asqalani:

وأوذي مرة في سنة 705 بسبب ابن تيمية لأنه لما وقعت المناظرة له مع الشافعية وبحث مع الصفي الهندي ثم ابن الزملكاني بالقصر الأبلق شرع **المزي** يقرأ كتاب **خلق أفعال العباد** للبخاري وفيه فصل في الرد على الجهمية فغضب بعض وقالوا **نحن المقصودون** بهذا فبلغ ذلك القاضي الشافعي يومئذ فأمر بسجنه فتوجه ابن تيمية وأخرجه من السجن فغضب النائب فأعيد ثم أفرج عنه وأمر النائب

Hence, Muhammad Moin failed to realise the context behind Ibn al-Subki's point about al-Mizzi. Ibn al-Subki was referring to the time when Ibn Taymiyya had influence over al-Mizzi and others on matters related to creed, and this can be pinpointed to be well before the time al-Mizzi was appointed as Shaykhul Hadith in Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya in the year 718 AH.⁵²

Therefore, around 13 years before his appointment to al-Ashrafiyya in the year 705 AH, al-Mizzi came into the public spotlight and was jailed for the modus operandi of reading a section of the Khalq af'al al-Ibad in the presence of some Shafi'i fuqaha in the Umayyad masjid in Damascus. The above report from Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani has also mentioned how Ibn Taymiyya brazenly went out of his way to release al-Mizzi directly from the prison without due recourse to the protocols of jurisdiction, thereby upsetting some of the authorities. It was such actions that lead to Ibn al-Subki commenting in such a fashion about his own teacher al-Mizzi and others.

⁴⁹ 53/489, Dar al-Mughni edition, edited by Mazin Ba Wazir

⁵⁰ Proof that al-Hafiz ibn Hajar was an Ash'ari has been demonstrated here: <http://ahlussunnah.boards.net/thread/501/proof-imam-hajar-asqalani-Ash'ari>

⁵¹ 6/230

⁵² Al-Dhahabi mentioned this date of 718 AH for al-Mizzi's appointment to Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya in his Dhayl Tarikh al-Islam (53/489, Dar al-Mughni edition, edited by Mazin Ba Wazir)

These are the reasons why it was so as mentioned earlier on:

In this regard, Imam Tajud-Din al-Subki said in his *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyya al-Kubra*⁵³ in critique of Ibn Taymiyya and his associates:

“The group comprised of al-Mizẓī, al-Dhababī, al-Birzālī, and many of their followers were clearly harmed by Abul Abbas ibn Taymiyya, who led them to gross acts of no little consequence and drew them to things that they should have avoided.”

The above translation from Ibn al-Subki was originally mentioned by D.P. Little in his article entitled: *Did Ibn Taymiyya Have a Screw Loose?*⁵⁴ The edition of Ibn al-Subki's *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyya al-Kubra* that was used by Little was the first ever published edition from the year 1324 AH in six volumes.

A fuller contextual translation of the original Arabic words from al-Subki was provided by Dr. Younus Mirza in his doctoral dissertation completed at George Town University entitled: *Ibn Kathir (d. 774/1373): His Intellectual Circle, Major Works and Qur'anic Exegesis.*⁵⁵

The words of Ibn al-Subki from his *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyya al-Kubra*⁵⁶ being:

وَاعْلَمَ أَنَّ هَذِهِ الرَّفْقَةَ أَعْنَى الْمَزْيِ وَالذَّهَبِيِّ وَالْبِرْزَالِيِّ وَكَثِيرًا مَّا أَتْبَاعَهُمْ أَضَرَّ بِهِمْ أَبُو الْعَبَّاسِ ابْنَ تَيْمِيَّةٍ إِضْرَارًا بَيْنَا
وَحَمَلَهُمْ عَلَى عِظَائِمِ الْأُمُورِ أَمْرًا لَيْسَ هَيْبِنَا وَجَرَّهُمْ إِلَى مَا كَانَ التَّبَاعِدَ عَنْهُ أَوْلَى بِهِمْ وَأَوْقَفَهُمْ فِي دَكَادِكِ مِنْ نَارِ
الْمَرْجُو مِنَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يَنْجَاوِزَهَا هُمْ وَلِأَصْحَابِهِمْ

Translation:

“There was closeness (rifqa) between al-Mizẓī, al-Dhababī, al-Birzālī, and many of their followers who were clearly negatively affected by Abū Abbās Ibn Taymiyya. He carried them to the worst of matters that were not suitable. He pulled them down when it would have been better for them to distance themselves from him. He stopped them at the pits of hellfire, [so] it is hoped that God will save them (al-Mizẓī, al-Dhababī, al-Birzālī) from the hell fire and their Companions.”

⁵³ 6/254

⁵⁴ See *Studia Islamica* No. 41 (1975), p. 104

⁵⁵ See p. 88

⁵⁶ 10/400 (edited by Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Ṭanāhī and ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad al-Ḥilw. 10 vols. Gīza: Hajr, 1992.)

Hence, Ibn al-Subki was blaming Ibn Taymiyya alone for causing the named scholars to be affected in a deleterious manner. The assessment of Ibn al-Subki was not a mere personal judgement but supported by the writings of his father, Taqiud-Din al-Subki, against Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, as well as the outcomes of several judicial trials that Ibn Taymiyya endured at the hands of the judges of all four Sunni Madhhabs. Tajud-Din al-Subki also included, in full, the refutation of the Shafi'i Mufti, Ibn Jahbal al-Kilabi (d. 733 AH), against Ibn Taymiyya in his Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyya al-Kubra.⁵⁷

Nowhere in the above statement from Ibn al-Subki is there a specific identification and disclosure about the personal Aqida of al-Mizzi and al-Dhahabi, and more so if they fell short on being accepted as scholars of Ahlus Sunna wa al-Jama'a. The fact that Ibn al-Subki studied under al-Mizzi and al-Dhahabi with the blessings of his famous father (Taqiud-Din) is a signal that the Subki's did not consider al-Mizzi and al-Dhahabi to be from the People of heretical Innovation (Ahlul Bid'a); especially after the death of Ibn Taymiyya in 728 AH. This is in contradistinction to the way that Taqiud-Din al-Subki dealt with Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751 AH) by repudiating them in some written ripostes.

Note also that al-Dhahabi wrote a short poem just two or three days before his death praising Taqiud-Din al-Subki that was recorded by Tajud-Din al-Subki in his Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyya al-Kubra⁵⁸, as well as praising him in his al-Mu'jam al-Mukhtass bil-Muhaddithin,⁵⁹ where he gave the following titles to Taqiud-Din al-Subki:

القاضي الإمام العلامة الفقيه المحدث الحافظ فخر العلماء

Meaning:

"The judge, the Imam, the greatly learned, the jurist, the hadith scholar, the preserver (Hafiz of Hadith), pride of the scholars."

House of Verification

As for Moin's diatribe when he said:

Look how Abul Hasan is trying to fool the people. Who told him that Al-Mizzi was influenced by Ibn Taymiyya in only "some matters". Can he suggest us one statement from trustworthy sources of history which indicates his contradiction with Ibn Taymiyya (except his confession to be an Asha'ari which we'll see soon) in major issues of Sifaat??

⁵⁷ 9/35-91

⁵⁸ 9/106

⁵⁹ p. 166

At least Ibn Subki was sincere enough to admit that these three (Al-Mizzi, Dhahabi, Barzali) great scholars were 'harmed' by Ibn Taymiyya in serious issues.

Rather, the onus is on Muhammad Moin and his fraternity to show how al-Mizzi was **always** in line with Ibn Taymiyya in all creedal matters, and especially on the issue of the Sifat of Allah. It has been shown above how even al-Dhahabi was not in line with Ibn Taymiyya on such matters, and Moin himself said:

In short, Al-Mizzi was of the same view as Dhahabi on the issues of Sifat and other major issues related to belief.

Moin has attempted to make out that we tried to fool the people, but he has utterly failed to show his claims that al-Mizzi was the same as al-Dhahabi on the Sifat, let alone being in line with Ibn Taymiyya who ended up espousing the outrageous belief that Hell fire is not eternal in his last days! Had he read the biography of al-Mizzi more carefully and without prejudice he would have realized that Ibn al-Subki had a cordial relationship with al-Dhahabi and al-Mizzi, and he too praised them as well as mentioning points where he was disparate with them for scholastic reasons.

Dr. Mirza described these last points as follows in his thesis:⁶⁰

Tāj al-Dīn then transitions to provide valuable information on his personal interactions with al-Mizzī and al-Dhahabī. Tāj al-Dīn relates that he used to study with al-Dhahabī twice a day, once in the morning and then in the afternoon, but for al-Mizzī he only studied with him twice a week.¹²² Tāj al-Dīn was more inclined to al-Dhahabī since he “**was exceedingly nice and loving towards me. Whoever knew my relationship with him [knew] that [al-Dhahabī] did not love anyone like he loved me.**”¹²³ Tāj al-Dīn was less than 15 at this time which meant, “I was a boy (*shābb*) and that [his love] meant a tremendous amount to me.”¹²⁴ As for al-Mizzī, “he was gloomy (*‘abūs*) and intimidating (*muḥīb*),”¹²⁵ characteristics that were not appealing to a young student. Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī wanted things to be the other way around: “**My father wished that the situation was reversed, I mean that I would accompany and study (*lāzama*) with al-Mizzī more than al-Dhahabī, because of the tremendous [respect] that he had for [al-Mizzī].**”¹²⁶ Tāj al-Dīn unfortunately does not go into why his father preferred al-Mizzī over al-Dhahabī but al-Mizzī was definitely the more senior scholar and he may have been less controversial than al-Dhahabī who was a known critic of Ash‘arism.

Tāj al-Dīn recounts that he used to review his daily lessons with his father: “Usually, when I came back from [my studies] with a shaykh he would say ‘tell me (*hāti*), what did you

⁶⁰ pp. 86-88

learn, what did you read, what did you hear?”¹²⁷ Taqī al-Dīn was curious to know what the other scholars were teaching and what his son took away from his lessons. Tāj al-Dīn explains then, “I would narrate to him my lesson with [the *Shaykh*]...whenever I came from al-Dhahabī he would say ‘You came from your *Shaykh*.’” When Tāj al-Dīn mentioned that he came from al-Mizzī, he would say “you came from *the Shaykh*.”¹²⁸ Tāj al-Dīn even recalls how his father said the word: “He would enunciate (*yafṣah*) the word ‘*al-Shaykh*’ and raise his voice. I am certain that he used to do that to fix in my heart [al-Mizzī’s] tremendous stature (*‘aẓamatuhu*) and encourage me to study with him (*mulāzamatuhu*).”¹²⁹

Tāj al-Dīn’s studies progressed to the point that when a teaching position opened up at the Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ashrafiyya, his father nominated him for the post. Being less than fifteen at the time, Tāj al-Dīn was surprised by the move since he had never held a teaching position of the sorts, only being a teaching assistant with his father, and his father never put his children forward for a position until he felt that they were ready. When Tāj al-Dīn asked his father why he nominated him, he responded, “It is said that you are a jurist in the presence of al-Mizzī.”¹³⁰ When these words reached al-Mizzī, he ordered to have Tāj al-Dīn’s name written as one of the advanced teachers. When al-Subkī heard the news he felt uneasy and retorted, “No by God, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (Tāj al-Dīn) is a boy (*shābb*) and he does not deserve this level right now. Write his name with the beginner [teachers].” Al-Dhahabī responded to al-Subkī, “By God, he is higher than that level; he is a good ḥadīth scholar.” Tāj al-Dīn takes pride in this statement inserting into the story, “These are words of al-Dhahabī.” Al-Subkī found the entire discussion amusing: “[My] father laughed and said: ‘maybe he is among the intermediate [teachers].’”¹³¹ The anecdote highlights the collegial relationship between al-Subkī, al-Mizzī, and al-Dhahabī.¹³²

Footnotes:

122 Studying with al-Mizzī twice a week nevertheless allowed him to finish the ḥadīth collection al-Tirmidhī with him; Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *al-Mu‘jam*, 511.

123 Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 10:398.

124 Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 10:398.

125 The fact that Tāj al-Dīn highlights that he studied with both al-Mizzī and al-Dhahabī demonstrates that his reading audience would be familiar with the great ḥadīth scholars.

126 Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 10:398.

127 This verb *sami‘a* could also be referring to studying ḥadīth. For more on how the word *sami‘a* is used in the science of ḥadīth see Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bā‘ith al-ḥathīth: sharḥ ikhtisār ‘ulūm al-ḥadīth*, ed. ‘Alī Ḥasan ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, 2 vols. (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Ma‘ārif li’l-Nashr wa’l-Tawzī‘, 1996), 1:228-46.

128 Bori calls al-Subkī a “rival” to al-Mizzī. Al-Subkī and al-Mizzī could have vied over similar posts but I am inclined to view them as colleagues based on these statements in the *Ṭabaqāt* and other biographical dictionaries; Bori, *Ibn Taymiyya wa-Jamā‘atuhu*, 39.

129 The verb *lāzama* does not only connote studying but also accompanying. Bori translates *lāzama* as “constant physical intimacy that carried with it close intellectual affiliation”; Bori, *Ibn Taymiyya wa-Jamā‘atuhu*, 31. For more on relationship between teacher and student in medieval Islam see Jonathan

Berkey's *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: a Social History of Islamic Education* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992).

130 Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 10:399. Al-Mizzī was said to have only studied jurisprudence for a short time; Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 53:383.

131 Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 10:399.

132 The collegial relationship between al-Subkī and al-Mizzī is further evident in that [al-Mizzī visited al-Subkī's house](#); Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 10:204.

All of the above points demonstrate the clear cut proclamation that Tajud-Din al-Subki and his father had cordiality and veneration for al-Mizzi and al-Dhahabi, and the fact that the latter two scholars held both of the Subki's in an acquiescent and esteemed light also in an inclusive manner.

Muhammad Moin then said:

As for Ibn Subki's praise for Dhahabi and Al-Mizzi then it was regarding Jarh and Ta'deel and Hadith related issues, but in matters of Usul they both were ignorant and nobody according to Ibn Subki⁶¹. Ibn Subki mentioned⁶² a discussion happened between Dhahabi and Al-Mizzi on some issue of belief (without mentioning the actual issue), after mentioning this Ibn Subki insulted them by saying that they both were nobody in this field to discuss the matter (see, footnote 4). He also criticised Dhahabi for saying that Al-Mizzi had knowledge of logic.

After knowing the that Al-Mizzi had the aqeeda of salaf according to Dhahabi (the Salafi), and Al-Mizzi had serious aqeeda issues according Ibn Subki (Al-Asha'ari), let us go back to other part of Al-Mizzi Issue...

⁶¹See pg. 399,400. For ex.

وَأَمَّا الْمَعْقُولَاتُ فَلَمْ يَكُنْ يَدْرِيهَا ، وَلَعَلَّ الذَّهَبِيَّ خَطَرَ لَهُ أَنَّ ذَلِكَ الْقَدْرَ الَّذِي كَانَ

OR

وَلَيْسَ الْمِزِّيُّ وَالذَّهَبِيُّ عِنْدَنَا فِي هَذَا الْمَقَامِ ، وَالْحَقُّ أَحَقُّ مَا قَبِلَ ، وَلَيْتَ الذَّهَبِيَّ فَعِهِمْ مَدْلُولَ هَذِهِ الْكَلِمَاتِ ، فَإِنَّ قَوْلَهُ : « جَرَى بَيْنَنَا مُعَارَضَاتٌ فِي ذَلِكَ » بَعْدَ قَوْلِهِ : « كَانَ يَعْضُدُ السُّنَّةَ » كَلَامٌ (٤) مَعْنَاهُ أَنِّي عَارَضْتُهُ فِي نُصْرَةِ السُّنَّةِ ، فَانظُرْ لِهَذِهِ الْعَظِيمَةِ الَّتِي لَوْ تَفَطَّنَ شَيْخُنَا لِقَاتِلَهَا ، لَا يَمُدُّ عَنْهَا .

⁶² By quoting from Dhahabi's Tadhkirah Al-Huffaz. Dhahabi didn't mention the actual matter on which they discussed. (These last two footnotes are from Muhammad Moin)

Reply:

The above points made by Moin are not only non-academic in nature but a tangled garble that makes little sense due to weak grammar. He opened his lines by saying:

As for Ibn Subki's praise for Dhahabi and Al-Mizzi then it was regarding Jarh and Ta'deel and Hadith related issues, but in matters of Usul they both were ignorant and nobody according to Ibn Subki

Moin has not been able to demonstrate his claim that Ibn al-Subki praised his two teachers only regarding Jarh and Ta'dil (praise and dispraise of Hadith narrators), and hadith related issues alone. Indeed, Ibn al-Subki himself said that he studied what cannot be counted, meaning, a vast amount and an array of subjects under al-Dhahabi (see below for the quote).

As for Moin's point when he said:

Ibn Subki mentioned⁶³ a discussion happened between Dhahabi and Al-Mizzi on some issue of belief (without mentioning the actual issue), after mentioning this Ibn Subki insulted them by saying that they both were nobody in this field to discuss the matter (see, footnote 4). He also criticised Dhahabi for saying that Al-Mizzi had knowledge of logic

Then since the precise topic of discussion was not fully disclosed one needs to examine the claim that Ibn al-Subki apparently insulted them! Ibn al-Subki praised them for their scholarly proficiency but he felt that they were not skilled in the rational sciences (ilm al ma'qulat). The rational sciences are also formally known as Ilm al-Kalam (knowledge of speculative theology), while logic is known as Mantiq.

What Ibn al-Subki seems to have been alluding to is that both al-Dhahabi and al-Mizzi were not full-fledged specialists of Ilm al-Kalam or Mantiq. The question that Moin has failed to grasp and mention is if al-Dhahabi and al-Mizzi are "Salafi" in the preconceived manner that today's "Salafis" consider themselves to be, and why on earth would al-Dhahabi and al-Mizzi study and master such sciences in depth if such sciences are frowned upon today by the "Salafis", as it is a speciality and remit found amongst sections of the Ash'arite scholars of the past.

⁶³ By quoting from Dhahabi's Tadhkirah Al-Huffaz. Dhahabi didn't mention the actual matter on which they discussed. (This footnote is by Moin)

Ibn al-Subki was recorded by al-Sakhawi (d. 902 AH) saying the following about al-Dhahabi and al-Mizzi with regard to the rational sciences in his al-I'lan bi'l-Tawbikh li-man Dhamma al-Tarikh:⁶⁴

*“He also was right in considering as one of the required qualifications ‘learning and knowledge of the exact meaning of the (technical phrases).’ Ignorance caused many to express unnecessary negative criticism. In fact, the books of the ancient authors contain such criticism of Ahmed b. Salih al-Misri, Abu Hatim ar-Razi, and others for (their occupation with) philosophy, because it was thought that theology (‘ilm al-kalam) was philosophy. The critics were refuted by a reference to their lack of knowledge of both disciplines. **Something similar applies to al-Dhahabi’s statement that al-Mizzi knew the intricacies of the speculative sciences. None of them knew anything about it.”***

This quote from Ibn al-Subki must have been surmised through his studies with both al-Dhahabi and al-Mizzi. Al-Dhahabi has mentioned that al-Mizzi had knowledge of the rational sciences also in his Dhayl Tarikh al-Islam,⁶⁵ as well as in the following quote shown by Moin from al-Dhahabi’s Tadhkiratul Huffaz:

"And he used to hold the way of Salaf in 'Sunnah' and supported it with knowledgeable statements and rules of Kalam"

To harmonise what al-Dhahabi said in affirmation of al-Mizzi’s apparent absorption of the rational sciences and Ibn al-Subki’s negation of it for al-Mizzi, one may proffer the position that al-Mizzi had some form of rudimentary knowledge of it but not to the level as that observed in specialists of Kalam (speculative theology) or Mantiq (logic). See also below for what Ibn al-Subki said about al-Mizzi and his supposed knowledge of the rational sciences in his Tabaqat al-Shafi’iyya al-Kubra.

Some pseudo-Salafis in this age have also endeavoured to demean Ibn al-Subki and his status due to his staunch pro-Ash’arite stances. It is worth mentioning what al-Dhahabi thought of his pupil, Ibn al-Subki, and vice versa, as well as what the latter thought of al-Mizzi; as well as this issue about the rational sciences which lead to Muhammad Moin claiming that Ibn al-Subki had apparently “insulted them”!

⁶⁴ Translated by F. Rosenthal under the title: A History of Muslim Historiography (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 2nd edition, 1968, p. 374)

⁶⁵ 53/486, Dar al-Mughni edition, edited by Mazin Ba Wazir

Dr. Younus Mirza mentioned the following points in his thesis:⁶⁶

Al-Dhahabī had an intense liking for his student Tāj al-Dīn, preferring him over others and treating him like a son. Tāj al-Dīn quotes a statement from al-Dhahabī regarding his will, “I have relinquished to my son ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (Tāj al-Dīn) my directorship of al-Zāhiriyya and I know that he is deserving of it, but [his] young age prevented me from completing the transfer to him.”¹⁰¹ There were more senior scholars who would not have appreciated Tāj al-Dīn, who was a mere twenty-one at the time,¹⁰² receiving the appointment over them. The quote is valuable because it demonstrates that al-Dhahabī saw Tāj al-Dīn as one his successors despite him being the son of the Shāfi‘ī Ash‘arī Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī and being a strident Ash‘arī himself.

In his *Mu‘jam al-shayūkh*,¹⁰³ Tāj al-Dīn details that he studied with al-Dhahabī more than anybody else.¹⁰⁴ His studies with al-Dhahabī included many of his historical works such as al-Dhahabī’s *al-Mu‘jam al-muktaṣṣ* (which in no doubt influenced the writing of his own), large parts of al-Dhahabī’s *Siyar a‘lām al-nubalā’*, and even received a license to transmit his *Tārīkh al-Islām*. He also read large parts of ḥadīth collections such as the *Musnad* of Shāfi‘ī, *Sunan* of Ibn Mājah and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.¹⁰⁵

In the *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi‘iyya al-kubrā*, Tāj al-Dīn begins his entry on al-Dhahabī by praising him as one of his teachers (*shaykhunā*), the ḥadīth scholar of the age, one who had no peer, and one who was the “gold of the age, figuratively and literally.”¹⁰⁶ Al-Dhahabī had a phenomenal ability in *rijāl* criticism, “As if the *umma* was gathered in one plain, he looked at them and then they began to report on who was present.”¹⁰⁷ Tāj al-Dīn explains that it was al-Dhahabī who trained him and brought him up on the path of scholarship. Tāj al-Dīn was taken aback with al-Dhahabī’s intense teaching and prolific writings, “the day and night tired, but his tongue and pen did not tire. The name [*shams*] was given to him, for he was similar to the sun except that he did not fade if it rained and did not recede if it became night.”¹⁰⁸ Yet, Tāj al-Dīn could not help from pointing out al-Dhahabī’s flaws in “that he leaned strongly toward the Ḥanbalīs.”¹⁰⁹ Tāj al-Dīn believed that al-Dhahabī did not treat the Ash‘arīs fairly in his biographies leading him to state that al-Dhahabī “*finished Tārīkh al-Islām even though there was bias (ta‘aṣṣub) in it.*”¹¹⁰

But it is in the biography of al-Mizzī, which is towards the end of the dictionary, that we hear the most about Tāj al-Dīn’s views of the Shāfi‘ī traditionalists and Ibn Taymiyya. Tāj al-Dīn begins the entry praising al-Mizzī profusely calling him the “ḥadīth scholar of the time,” “one of kind in his age by consensus”¹¹¹ and stating that “there was no one¹¹² like him after Ibn ‘Asākir.”¹¹³ Tāj al-Dīn then quotes several statements of al-Dhahabī from *Tadhkirāt al-ḥuffāz* and *al-Mu‘jam al-muktaṣṣ* discussing al-Mizzī’s knowledge of Arabic,

⁶⁶ Ibn Kathir (d. 774/1373): His Intellectual Circle, Major Works and Qur’anic Exegesis (pp. 82-84)

fiqh, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, the rational sciences and his expertise in narrators. Tāj al-Dīn takes issue with al-Dhahabī's view that al-Mizzī understood the rational sciences, in particular, his statement that al-Mizzī was aware of “the shortcomings of the rational sciences.”¹¹⁴ Tāj al-Dīn responds by saying, **“I do not think that our Shaykh al-Mizzī knew the rational sciences (ma‘qūlāt), let alone understood its shortcomings, so may God forgive our teacher al-Dhahabī.”**¹¹⁵ For Tāj al-Dīn, al-Mizzī and al-Dhahabī were great ḥadīth scholars but their knowledge did not extend to *kalām* and philosophy.

Footnotes:

102 Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī also viewed Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī as a prodigy exclaiming that he wrote in *fiqh*, *uṣūl al-fiqh* and the Arabic sciences while he was just a youth; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, 2:259.

103 Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Mu‘jam al-shuyūkh*, eds. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā Maqdisī, Bashshār ‘Awwād Ma‘rūf, Ra‘īd Yūsuf ‘Anbakī, and Muṣṭafā Ismā‘īl ‘Azamī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2004).

104 Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Mu‘jam*, 355. Or as al-Subkī states, he studied “what cannot be counted (*yuhṣā*),” with al-Dhahabī.

105 Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Mu‘jam*, 355. All of these studies took place before the age of 21, since al-Dhahabī passed away in 748/1348. For more on the age that scholars would start their studies in Medieval Islam see Richard Bulliet, “The Age Structure of Medieval Islamic Education,” *Studia Islamica* 57, no. 1 (1983):105-117.

106 Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:101.

107 Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:101.

108 Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:103.

109 Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:103.

110 Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:104. Nevertheless, Tāj al-Dīn wrote a poem eulogizing al-Dhahabī. In the poem, Tāj al-Dīn praises al-Dhahabī's ḥadīth scholarship such as his knowledge of narrators, outstanding memory, ability to critique traditions, general reliability, and absolute trustworthiness; Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:109. Al-Dhahabī unfortunately does not have an entry on Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, most likely because Tāj al-Dīn was only 21 when al-Dhahabī passed away.

111 Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 10:396.

112 Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī is probably meaning that there was no ḥadīth scholar after Ibn ‘Asākir like al-Mizzī.

113 Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 10:396.

114 Al-Dhahabī also mentions in *Tārīkh al-Islām* that al-Mizzī had some knowledge of the rational sciences; Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 53:383.

115 Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 10:396.

Note that al-Dhahabī also included an entry on Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī in his *al-Mu‘jam al-Mukhtass bil-Muhaddithin*⁶⁷ by writing some encouraging words about him as follows:

عَبْدُ الْوَهَّابِ ابْنُ شَيْخِ الْإِسْلَامِ تَقِيَّ الدِّينِ عَلِيُّ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْكَافِي الْوَلَدُ.
الْقَاضِي تَاجُ الدِّينِ أَبُو نَصْرِ السُّبْكِيُّ الشَّافِعِيُّ.
وُلِدَ فِي سَنَةِ ثَمَانٍ وَعِشْرِينَ وَسَعِ مِائَةٍ.

⁶⁷ P. 152, no. 184

وَأَجَازَ لَهُ الْحَجَّارُ وَطَائِفَةٌ، وَأَسْمَعَهُ أَبُوهُ مِنْ جَمَاعَةٍ.
كَتَبَ عَنِّي أَجْزَاءً وَنَسَخَهَا.
وَأَرْجُو أَنْ يَتَمَيَّزَ فِي الْعِلْمِ ثُمَّ دَرَسَ وَأَفْتَى.

Meaning:

“Abdul Wahhab ibn Shaykhul-Islam Taqiud-Din Ali ibn Abdil-Kafi, the son, al-Qadi Tajud-Din Abu Nasr al-Subki al-Shafi’i. He was born in the year 728 AH.⁶⁸ Al-Hajjar and a group gave him warrants of authorization (ijaza). His father gave him (the opportunity) to listen to a group (of scholars). He wrote from me some fascicles and made copies of them. I hope he will be distinguished in knowledge, teach it and give jurisprudential verdicts (fatwas).”

Muhammad Moin then said:

Why did Al-Mizzi confessed to be an Asha'ari?

The answer to this is: he simply considered himself on the aqeeda of Imam Al-Asha'ari based on his Al-Ibana, which was even discussed by his close friend Ibn Taymiyya. His confession was similar to Ibn Katheer's confession of being an Asha'ari. People of their time were aware of the fact that it was only ta'weel to get the job.

Although Al-Mizzi confessed that he was an Asha'ari, on a written paper, but his contemporaries were aware of the fact that it was just a Ta'weel⁶⁹, and some even tried to sack him from his position because of his aqeeda.

Reply:

Moin has not provided a single shred of proof that al-Mizzi had mentioned that he was an Ash'ari grounded on al-Ibana of Abul Hasan al-Ash'ari (d. 324 AH), or that he professed the Ash'ari creed by using some form of duplicitous stratagem in order to attain the Professorship at Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya! Moin said in the footnote that al-Mizzi used ‘Tawriyah’ to obtain his position in al-Ashrafiyya. Let us determine what tawriyah is - **تورية**

⁶⁸ This date appears to be a scribal error since Tajud-Din was born in 727 AH

⁶⁹ Or in more clear term, it was ‘Tawriyyah’. [These are the words of Muhammad Moin]

The respected *Hans Wehr Arabic-English Dictionary* (p. 1063) defines tawriyah as, "hiding, concealment; dissemblance, dissimulation, hypocrisy; equivocation, ambiguity, double-entendre, allusion."

Once again, Moin had also failed to provide confirmation of al-Mizzi making use of tawriyah! Al-Dhahabi was also offered the Professorship at Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya after al-Mizzi passed away as the earlier quote from al-Fasi mentioned, but he declined it due to not being a committed Ash'arite. If he wanted to employ the subterfuge of tawriyah as Moin has declared for al-Mizzi, then he too could have done that, but he acted scrupulously and continued to flourish in the world of academia. Here is that pertinent quote again as it deconstructs Moin's unsubstantiated claim of tawriyyah:

The historian Al-Fasi (d. 832) writes in his Ta'rif Dhawil 'Ula in biography of al-Dhahabi:

["It has reached me that al-Dhahabi refused to take up the teaching position at Dar al-Hadeeth al-Ashrafiyya in Damascus because he was not an Ash'ari.](#) This is when the position was vacated due to the death of the previous teacher al-Hafidh Jamal al-Din al-Mizzi. Al-Mizzi himself did not attain the position until he testified for himself that he is an Ash'ari, for that was the stipulated condition for the teacher therein. [This indicates the richness of al-Dhahabi's religiosity and piety, for it was also possible for him to testify for himself that he is an Ash'ari and take up the position, and that wouldn't have affected him, in that he does not have Ash'ari beliefs.](#)" (page 50).

Let us recall that Muhammad Moin was already quoted above as saying:

Now all of us know, Imam Dhahabi was NOT an Asha'ari, and his views, in major issues of Sifat, were similar to Ibn Taymiyya, [and that he was rejected as a teacher in the Daar Al-Hadith where being an Asha'ari was must to get hold to the job.](#)

The underlined portion from the pen of Moin was unsubstantiated from any references and al-Fasi was quoted above as saying: ["It has reached me that al-Dhahabi refused to take up the teaching position at Dar al-Hadeeth al-Ashrafiyya in Damascus because he was not an Ash'ari."](#)

This means that al-Dhahabi declined to take up teaching at al-Ashrafiyya for his non-committal to the stipulation of being Ash'ari, and not because he was rejected from the outset. This becomes clearer when one reads what al-Dhahabi himself said in his Dhayl Tarikh al-Islam (see the end of this riposte). Contrary to this, al-Mizzi took up the post after meeting the main condition of professing the Ash'arite doctrine.

As for Ibn Kathir being an Ash'ari then he did profess this verbally and was also given the Professorship at the Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya, and no one is known to have accused al-Mizzi or his son in law, Ibn Kathir, of using tawriyah to obtain the post of the said Darul hadith in their time. Nor did Ibn Kathir say he was an Ash'ari based on the adoption of the edition of al-Ibana floating around in his time.

Proof of Ibn Kathir being an Ash'ari in creed (Aqida):

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani (d. 852 AH) reported in *ad-Durar al-Kamina*⁷⁰ that a dispute between Ibn Kathir and the son of Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya broke out.

Ibn Kathir said to him: *“You do not like me because I am an Ash'ari.”*

The son of Ibn al-Qayyim replied: “Even if you had hair from head to feet, people would not believe that you are an Ash'ari as your Shaykh is Ibn Taymiyya!”

In Arabic from the above source:

وَقَعَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ عِمَادِ الدِّينِ ابْنِ كَثِيرٍ مُنَازَعَةٌ فِي تَدْرِيسِ النَّاسِ فَقَالَ لَهُ ابْنُ كَثِيرٍ أَنْتَ تَكْرَهُنِي لِأَنِّي أَشْعَرِي فَقَالَ لَهُ لَوْ كَانَ مِنْ رَأْسِكَ إِلَى قَدَمِكَ شَعْرٌ مَا صَدَقَكَ النَّاسُ فِي قَوْلِكَ أَنَّكَ أَشْعَرِي وَشَيْخُكَ ابْنُ تَيْمِيَّةٍ

Ibn Kathir took up the post of Professor of Hadith in al-Ashrafiyya in the year 772 AH. This is a clear proof that in his later days, Ibn Kathir, was not like Ibn Taymiyya in terms of some aspects of creed. This is also evident by examining his views as expounded in his well-known Tafsir and elsewhere. A whole book was written by Dr. Muhammad Adil Aziza al-Kayyali entitled *Aqida al-Imam al-Hafiz ibn Kathir min a'immatus Salaf al Salib fi Ayat al-Sifat* in providing proof of Ibn Kathir's Ash'arite views, as well as a rebuttal of the late convert to Salafism, Muhammad Jamil Zinu (d. 2010).

After Moin said the following he brought up an incident from Tajud-Din ibn al-Subki:

Although Al-Mizzi confessed that he was an Asha'ari, on a written paper, but his contemporaries were aware of the fact that it was just a Ta'weel⁷¹, and some even tried to sack him from his position because of his aqeeda

Moin said:

Ibn Subki said⁷²:

⁷⁰ 1/65, no. 155, under the entry on Ibrahim ibn Muhammad

⁷¹ Or in more clear term, it was 'Tawriyyah'. [These are the words of Muhammad Moin]

⁷² See, Tabaqaat Ash-Shafa'iyyah (10/397-398) –[This footnote was provided by Muhammad Moin]

ولقد حكى لي فيما كان يحكيه من تسكين فتن أهل الشام أنه عقب دخوله دمشق بليلة واحدة حضر إليه الشيخ صدر الدين سليمان بن عبد الحكم المالكي وكان الشيخ الإمام يحبه قال دخل إلي وقت العشاء الآخرة وقال أموراً يريد بها تعريفي بأهل دمشق قال فذكر لي البرزالي وملازمته لي ثم انتهى إلى المزي فقال وينبغي لك عزله من مشيخة دار الحديث الأشرفية قال الشيخ الإمام فاقشعر جلدي وغاب فكري وقلت في نفسي هذا إمام المحدثين والله لو عاش الدارقطني استحيي أن يدرس مكانه قال وسكت ثم منعت الناس من الدخول علي ليلاً وقلت هذه بلدة كبيرة الفتن فقلت أنا للشيخ الإمام إن صدر الدين المالكي لا ينكر رتبة المزي في الحديث ولكن كأنه لاحظ ما هو شرط واقفها من أن شيخها لا بد وأن يكون أشعري العقيدة والمزي وإن كان حين ولي كتب بخطه بأنه أشعري إلا أن الناس لا يصدقونه في ذلك فقال أعرف أن هذا هو الذي لاحظته صدر الدين ولكن من ذا الذي يتجاسر أن يقول المزي ما يصلح لدار الحديث والله ركني ما يحمل هذا الكلام

(rough translation in brief): "and he (my father) told me a story.....He (Taqi As-Subki) was with Shaykh Sadrud-Deen Al-Maliki, and Ash-Shaykh Al-Imam used to love him..... Taqi Subki said, "then he (Al-Maliki) mentioned Al-Birzali and his service to me, then he talked about Al-Mizzi and said that I should remove him from the position of teacher in Daarul Hadith Al-Ashrafiyyah".....(on that Taqi as-Subki became angry, and mentioned some virtues of Mizzi in hadith field)..... On hearing that incident, I (Subki the son) said to Shaykh Imam (Taqi Subki): Indeed Shaykh Sadrud-Deen Al-Maliki was not denying the status of Al-Mizzi in the field of Hadith but it was like he knew the condition that it was necessary to be an Ashari to become teacher (in Daaru Hadith). And Al-Mizzi even though he wrote, when he was given hold to the position of teacher, with his handwriting that he was an Ashari, but people do not trust him on his claim. To that he (Taqi Subki) said: I knew that was the intend of Sadrud-deen, but how one can have guts to claim that Al-Mizzi was not suitable for Daar Ul-Hadith." ---End Qoute---

House of Verification

So here we have some famous scholars who acknowledged that even though Al-Mizzi wrote that he was an Asha'ari but his aqeeda was not in line with what was famous as "Asha'ari aqeeda". Following are those scholars:

1. Sadrud-Deen Al-Maliki, 2. Taqi As-Subki, 3. Taaj As-Subki.

None of them in the qoute defended Al-Mizzi for his writing. Taqiud-Deen only supported him because of his status in Hadith and there wasn't anyone like him in field of Rijal. He could have contradicted Al-Miliki or Ibn Subki by saying that Al-Mizzi was consistent in his claim and he was a good Asha'ari but he never said so.

Reply:

Indeed, Sadrud-Din al-Maliki wanted al-Mizzi to be substituted from his appointment from Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya even though he knew al-Mizzi's status as being a Master Muhaddith. Al-Maliki was of the opinion that al-Mizzi was not an-Ash'arite even if he testified so in writing. As for Moin's suggestion that besides al-Maliki, the two Subki's were also sceptical that al-Mizzi was not a true Ash'arite, but that he only warranted to be the Professor at Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya due to his mastery of Hadith alone, then nowhere in the above quotation is there a conclusive denial from the Subkis that al-Mizzi was never a true Ash'arite once he earned the Chair at the said institute of Hadith.

On the contrary, one may provide some evidential basis that validates the assertion that Tajud-Din al-Subki held al-Mizzi and al-Dhahabi in high esteem not only for their superiority in the Hadith sciences, but also respected their Aqida to be in line with Ahlus-Sunna wa al-Jama'a, unlike that of Ibn Taymiyya and others from his followers. The reader should also bear in mind that Tajud-Din al-Subki was born in 727AH, which was a year before Ibn Taymiyya's death in 728AH. Thus, Ibn al-Subki knew his teachers, al-Dhahabi and al-Mizzi, in the last part of their lives when they had attained full maturity in age and knowledge.

- i) Tajud-Din al-Subki introduced the biography of al-Mizzi with the following opening lines in his Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyya al-Kubra:⁷³

يُوسُفُ بْنُ الزَّكِيِّ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ يُوسُفَ بْنِ عَلِيِّ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْمَلِكِ ابْنِ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي الزَّهْرِ الْكَلْبِيِّ الْقُضَاعِيِّ الدِّمَشْقِيِّ
 شَيْخَنَا وَأَسْتَاذَنَا وَقِدْوَتَنَا
 الشَّيْخُ جَمَالُ الدِّينِ أَبُو الْحَجَّاجِ الْمِزِّي
 حَافِظُ زَمَانِنَا حَامِلُ رَايَةِ السُّنَّةِ وَالْجَمَاعَةِ

Meaning:

“Yusuf ibn al-Zaki Abdir Rahman ibn Yusuf ibn Ali ibn Abdil Malik ibn Ali ibn Abi al-Zuhr al-Kalbi al-Quda'ie al-Dimashqi.

Our Shaykh, our teacher, our exemplar. Al-Shaykh, Jamalud-Din Abul Hajjaj al-Mizzi. The Hafiz of our age (in Hadith preservation), the carrier of the flag of the Sunna and the Jama'a (community of Muslims on the right guidance)…”

⁷³ 10/395

The Shafi'i biographer known as Ibn Qadi Shuhba (d. 851 AH) has recorded the following in his *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyya*⁷⁴ from Tajud-Din al-Subki who praised al-Dhahabi as follows:

قَالَ السُّبُكِيُّ مُحَدِّثَ الْعَصْرِ وَخَاتِمَ الْحِفَاظِ الْقَائِمِ بِأَعْبَاءِ هَذِهِ الصَّنَاعَةِ وَحَامِلَ رَايَةِ أَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ وَالْجَمَاعَةِ إِمَامَ أَهْلِ
عَصْرِهِ حَفِظًا وَإِتْقَانًا وَفَرْدَ الدَّهْرِ

Meaning:

"Al-Subki said: 'The Muhaddith of the age, the seal of the preservers (of hadith), staunch in taking up burdens in this skill (of hadith), the carrier of the flag of Ahlus Sunna wa al-Jama'a, Imam of the people of his age in memorisation and exactitude, unique in his time...'"

Ibn Qadi Shuhba did not give the name of the work by Tajud-Din al-Subki that had this precise quote, but nevertheless, this writer has seen the above praise by Ibn al-Subki in a manuscript copy of his *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyya al-Wusta*,⁷⁵ which does not seem to have been published as of yet.

The fact that Ibn al-Subki described his teacher al-Mizzi as being: "*The carrier of the flag of the Sunna and the Jama'a*" – is a potent proof that he considered al-Mizzi to be one of the leading lights of Sunni Islam (Ahlus-Sunna wa al-Jama'a) in his age, and such a rank could not be attainable in the eyes of a staunch Ash'arite like Ibn al-Subki had he not been induced into believing that al-Mizzi was an acceptable type of Ash'arite Imam. This point was not mentioned or discussed by Muhammad Moin despite his quoting from the same section of Ibn al-Subki's *Tabaqat* what he thought would suit his predisposed and prejudiced agenda.

Ibn al-Subki has also left a resolute definition on what constitutes Ahlus Sunna wa al-Jama'a in his time and prior to it, and the quotation that follows would rule out those who were adherents principally to the creed determined by Ibn Taymiyya in the name of the pious predecessors (Salafus-salihin). Ibn Taymiyya being the leading anti-Ash'arite in his time in Syria as well as being scorned by Taqiud-Din al-Subki and his loyal son, Tajud-Din, who both considered Ibn Taymiyya to be a deviant (see below).

⁷⁴ 3/74

⁷⁵ It was seen in the al-Azhar university manuscript (122/4557, folio 53 a)

- ii) Al-Hafiz Murtada al-Zabidi (d. 1205 AH) mentioned the following definition of Ahlus Sunna wa al-Jama'a in his Ithaf al Sada al-Muttaqin,⁷⁶ by quoting from Ibn al-Subki's commentary on the Aqida of Ibn al-Hajib (d. 646 AH):

قال ابن السبكي في شرح عقيدة ابن الحاجب اعلم أن أهل السنة والجماعة كلهم قد اتفقوا علي معتقد واحد فيما يجب ويجوز ويستحيل وان اختلفوا في الطرق والمبادئ الموصلة لذلك أو في لمية ما هنالك وبالجملة فهم بالاستقرار ثلاث طوائف الأول أهل الحديث ومعتمد مبادئهم الأدلة السمعية أعني الكتاب والسنة والإجماع الثانية أهل النظر العقلي والصناعة الفكرية وهم الأشعرية والحنفية وشيخ الأشعرية أبو الحسن الأشعري وشيخ الحنفية أبو منصور الماتريدي وهم متفقون في المبادئ العقلية في كل مطالب يتوقف السمع عليه وفي المبادئ السمعية فيما يدرك العقل جوازه فقط والعقلية السمعية في غيرها واتفقوا في جميع المطالب الاعتقادية الا في مسألة التكوين ومسألة التقليد الثالثة أهل الوجدان والكشف وهم أهل الصوفية ومبادئهم مبادئ أهل النظر والحديث في البدايه والكشف والالهام في النهايه اهـ

Translation:

“Ibn al-Subki said in his commentary (Sharh) to Aqida Ibn al-Hajib: ‘Know that the Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama'a all concur on a united belief in relation to what is possible and impossible (in ascribing to God), even though they may differ in their methods and principles qualifying thereof. In summary, after examination (istiqra) [of the matter], they consist of three groups:

- 1) The traditionists (Ahl al-Hadith), whose reliance is on the principles of the transmitted evidences from the Book, the Sunna and scholarly consensus (ijma')⁷⁷;
- 2) The people of rational argumentation (Ahl al-Nazr al-'Aqli). These are the Ash'aris and the Hanafis. The Shaykh of the Ash'aris is Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari (d. 324 AH) and the Shaykh of the Hanafis is Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (d. 333 AH). They are in agreement over the rational principles in every tenet of faith that revelation depends on, and in the scriptural principles in those matters that the intellect conceives as being merely possible, and in those that are both rational and scriptural in addition to the above. They have also agreed on all [central] tenets of faith, whilst only disagreeing on a few [secondary] issues
- 3) And the people of experiential states and unveilings (Ahl al-Wujdan wa al-Kashf), who are the Sufis. In their beginning stage, their principles are the same as those of the people of rational

⁷⁶ 2/5-6

⁷⁷ Ibn Taymiyya is known to have violated some 60 types of ijma as mentioned by al-Hafiz Waliud-Din al-Iraqi (d. 826 AH) in his al-Ajwiba al-Mardiyya (p. 93). Al-Iraqi also mentioned (p. 99) with praise Taqiud-Din al-Subki's refutation of Ibn Taymiyya on the issue of Talaq and Ziyara to the blessed grave of Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)

argumentation and tradition, and in the final stage [their state is that of] spiritual unveilings and inspiration (ilham).”

Ibn al-Subki has also mentioned in his *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyya al-Kubra*⁷⁸ an example of where Ash'aris of the past can be from any of the three categories, namely, a Muhaddith (Hadith scholar), a Mutakallim (expert on the rational sciences) or a pious Sufi. Quote from Ibn al-Subki:

مُحَدِّثٌ وَمَتَكَلِّمٌ وَصُوفِيٌّ وَهُمْ الْبَيْهَقِيُّ وَالْأَسْتَاذُ أَبُو مَنْصُورِ الْبَغْدَادِيِّ وَأَبُو الْقَاسِمِ الْقَشِيرِيُّ وَهَؤُلَاءِ مِنْ عَمَدِ
الْأَشَاعِرَةِ

Meaning: “A scholar of Hadith, an expert on the rational sciences and a Sufi, and they are (respectively), al-Bayhaqi (d. 458 AH), al-Ustadh Abu Mansur al-Baghdadi (d. 429 AH) and Abul Qasim al-Qushayri (d. 465 AH), these are supporting Ash'aris.”

A prime example of an Ash'ari that was declared by Ibn al-Subki to be an all-rounder and could be categorised as a culmination of all the above three categories of Ahlus-Sunna, was Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Isma'il al-Qaffal al-Shashi⁷⁹ (d. 365 AH)

Ibn al-Subki said about him in his *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyya al-Kubra*:⁸⁰

كَانَ إِمَامًا فِي التَّفْسِيرِ إِمَامًا فِي الْحَدِيثِ إِمَامًا فِي الْكَلَامِ إِمَامًا فِي الْأَصُولِ إِمَامًا فِي الْفُرُوعِ إِمَامًا فِي الزَّهْدِ وَالْوَرَعِ
إِمَامًا فِي اللُّغَةِ وَالشَّعْرِ

“He was an Imam in Qur'anic commentary (Tafsir), an Imam in Hadith, an Imam in the rational sciences (Kalam), an Imam in the fundamentals of creed (Usul), an Imam in subsidiary matters pertaining to jurisprudence (furu), an Imam in abstinence from this world (zuhd) and god-fearingness (wara), an Imam in Arabic language and poetry.”

- iii) When al-Mizzi passed away the foremost Ash'arite Imam of Damascus lead his funeral prayer in the Umayyad masjid in Damascus. This being none other than Taqiud-Din al-Subki, the father of Tajud-Din al-Subki. This point was mentioned by Younus Mirza in his *Ibn Kathir* (d. 774/1373): *His Intellectual Circle, Major Works and Qur'anic Exegesis*, by referring back to al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya of Ibn Kathir (see below). The latter was also a direct student and son-

⁷⁸ 1/133

⁷⁹ He was listed as an Ash'ari scholar by al-Hafiz ibn Asakir (d. 571 AH) in his *Tabyin kadhīb al-muftari* (p. 183)

⁸⁰ 3/200

in-law of al-Mizzī, as well as being an Ash'arite as mentioned above, despite also being attached to Ibn Taymiyya in his younger years.

Mirza said:⁸¹

Al-Subkī then hones in on the modern leader of the Ḥashwiyya⁸²: “Then came in the end of the 7th [13th] century a man who was intelligent and well-read (*ittlā'*) but who did not find a teacher (*shaykh*) to guide him and he follows their (Ḥashwiyya) *madhhab*.”⁴⁹ Here al-Subkī is referring to Ibn Taymiyya. For al-Subkī, Ibn Taymiyya might have been smart and exposed to many ideas, but he did not have a teacher to explain to him his errors and keep him on the correct path. Al-Subkī goes on to discuss the various aspects of Ibn Taymiyya's unorthodox thought such as his views on divorce oaths and that visiting the grave of the Prophet Muḥammad was “a sin” (*ma'ṣiyā*).⁵⁰ For al-Subkī, Ibn Taymiyya's imprisonment was a good thing “**which was agreed upon by the scholars**” because he represented a danger to the community. However, even after his death, his heresies continued with his students (*aṣḥābihi*). Al-Subkī is referring to ***Ibn al-Qayyim*** who he accuses of spreading harm to the people by teaching his heretical creed. Al-Subkī spends the rest of the treatise refuting Ibn al-Qayyim's theological poem *al-Kāfiya al-shāfiyya fī intiṣār al-firqa al-nājiyya*.

What is evident from the refutation is that al-Subkī felt that Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim represented a dangerous sect which needed to be systematically refuted. They did not simply pose a theological threat but a social one as their appeal extended to the masses, state, and even members of al-Subkī's own Shāfi'ī *madhhab*. Yet, it is important to emphasize that al-Subkī's critique was not only directed towards Ibn Taymiyya but his student Ibn al-Qayyim. Al-Subkī wrote the treatise twenty years after Ibn Taymiyya had died and ***the traditionalist threat continued primarily with Ibn al-Qayyim, not any of the Shāfi'ī traditionalists***. While al-Subkī does mention some aberrant Shāfi'īs he is primarily targeting what he sees as the root of the problem, Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim.

Yet, despite al-Subkī's animosity towards Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim, he was skillfully able to maintain positive relations with the Shāfi'ī traditionalists.⁵¹ Al-Subkī's son, Tāj al-Dīn, recounts that his father always asked him at the end of the day who he studied with.⁵² ***It was only when Tāj al-Dīn mentioned al-Mizzī that he nodded his head in approval and said “yes, he is the Shaykh.”***⁵³ ***It was Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī who led the funeral prayer of al-Mizzī and succeeded him at his teaching post at the Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ashrafiyya.***⁵⁴

Footnotes:

⁸¹ Ibn Kathir (d. 774/1373): His Intellectual Circle, Major Works and Qur'anic Exegesis (pp. 72-73)

⁸² Which is a non-Sunni sect

49 Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī, *al-Rasā'il al-subkiyya*, 85.

50 This was a common polemic against Ibn Taymiyya in that he believed that visiting the grave of the Prophet Muḥammad was a sin (*ma'siyya*). I speak more in detail about Ibn Taymiyya's views on grave visitation in Chapter One.

51 Another example of the camaraderie between Shāfi'ī traditionalists and Shāfi'ī Ash'arīs is the Shāfi'ī Ibn Rāfi's continuation of al-Birzālī's biographical dictionary. Throughout his biographical dictionary, he says that al-Mizzī and al-Dhahabī were his teachers (*shaykunā*). For one particular example where he mentions both of them as his teachers see Muḥammad b. Rāfi' Sallāmī, *al-Wafayāt: Dhayl 'alā wafayāt al-Birzālī*, ed. 'Abd al-Jabbār Zakkār, 2 vols. (Damascus: al-Jumhuriyya al-'Arabiyya al-Sūriyya, 1985), 1:165. The fact that Ibn Rāfi', who was a student of Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī, wrote a sequel to al-Birzālī's biographical dictionary demonstrates that there was congeniality between the two theological camps within the Shāfi'ī school.

52 Similar to the question "what did you do in school today." Tāj al-Dīn was 15 when al-Mizzī died demonstrating that students started their studies at a young age.

53 Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 10:399.

54 *Ibn Kathīr*, *al-Bidāya*, 14:191. Unfortunately, al-Mizzī did not leave behind a biographical dictionary of his contemporaries and much of al-Birzālī's history is still in manuscript form so we do not have direct statements of their views of al-Subkī.

Had al-Mizzi been on the precise Aqida of Ibn Taymiyya while teaching in Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya for some 24 years from the year 718 AH until his death in 742 AH, then one would not naturally expect an Ash'arite scholar who was vehemently against Ibn Taymiyya to lead the funeral prayer of al-Mizzi. Since al-Subki lead al-Mizzi's funeral prayer and not others from the surviving students of Ibn Taymiyya who were in line with his teachings pertaining to Aqida, then this serves as another affirmative proof that al-Mizzi was accepted by the Subki's to be from the ranks of the Ash'arite scholars in terms of creedal affiliation.

- iv) A late orientalist by the name of George Makdisi (d. 2002) endeavoured to demean the Ash'arites as being on the wane and lacking influence in the time of the Subkis in his article entitled *Ash'ari and the Ash'arites in Islamic Religious History (I)*. Ibn al-Subki mentioned the following points in his *Ṭabaqat al-Shafi'iyya al-Kubra*:⁸³

اعلم أن أبا الحسن لم يبدع رأيا ولم ينش مذهباً وإنما هو مُقرر لمذاهب السلف مناضل عما كانت عليه صحابة رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فالانتساب إليه إنما هو باعتبار أنه عقد على طريق السلف نطقاً وتمسك به وأقام الحجج والبراهين عليه فصار المقتدى به في ذلك السالك سبيله في الدلائل يُسمى أشعرياً ولقد قلت مرة للشَّيخ الإمام رحمه الله أنا أعجب من الحافظ ابن عساكر في عدّة طوائف من أتباع الشَّيخ ولم يذكر إلا نزراً يسيراً وعدداً قليلاً ولو وفي الاستيعاب حقه لاستوعب غالب علماء المذاهب الأربعة فإنهم برأى أبي الحسن يدينون

⁸³ 3/365-366

اللَّهِ تَعَالَى فَقَالَ إِنَّمَا ذَكَرَ مِنْ اِشْتَهَرَ بِالْمُنَاضِلَةِ عَنِ أَبِي الْحَسَنِ وَإِلَّا فَالْأَمْرُ عَلَيَّ مَا ذَكَرْتَ مِنْ أَنَّ غَالِبَ عُلَمَاءِ
الْمَذَاهِبِ مَعَهُ

After mentioning some points from al-Izz ibn Abdīs Salam on the Sunni Madhhabs and their affiliation to the Ash'ari creed, Ibn al-Subki also said:

قَالَ الشَّيْخُ الْإِمَامُ فِيْمَا يَحْكِيهِ لَنَا وَلَقَدْ وَقَفْتُ لِبَعْضِ الْمُعْتَزِلَةِ عَلَى كِتَابِ سَمَاءُ طَبَقَاتِ الْمُعْتَزِلَةِ وَافْتَتَحَ بِذِكْرِ عَبْدِ
اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ ظَنَّا مِنْهُ أَنَّهُ بَرَأَهُ اللَّهُ مِنْهُمْ
عَلَى عَقِيدَتِهِمْ قَالَ وَهَذَا نَهْيَا فِي التَّعَصُّبِ فَإِنَّمَا يَنْسَبُ إِلَى الْمَرْءِ مِنْ مَشَى عَلَى مَنَوَالِهِ
قُلْتُ أَنَا لِلشَّيْخِ الْإِمَامِ وَلَوْ تَمَّ هَذَا لَهُمْ لَكَانَ لِلْأَشَاعِرَةِ أَنْ يَعِدُوا أَبَا بَكْرٍ وَعَمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا فِي جُمْلَتِهِمْ لِأَنَّهُمْ
عَنْ عَقِيدَتِهِمَا وَعَقِيدَةَ غَيْرِهِمَا مِنَ الصَّحَابَةِ فِيْمَا يَدْعُونَ يَنَاضِلُونَ وَإِيَّاهَا يَنْصُرُونَ وَعَلَى حِمَاهَا يَجُومُونَ فَتَبَسَّمَ وَقَالَ
أَتَبَاعُ الْمَرْءِ مِنْ دَانَ بِمَذْهَبِهِ وَقَالَ بِقَوْلِهِ عَلَى سَبِيلِ الْمُتَابَعَةِ وَالِاقْتِفَاءِ الَّذِي هُوَ أَخْصٌ مِنَ الْمُؤَافَقَةِ فَبَيْنَ الْمُتَابَعَةِ
وَالْمُؤَافَقَةِ بُونَ عَظِيمٍ

The above points were analysed and summarised by Makdisi as follows in the above named article:⁸⁴

“It is easy for Subki to include under the denomination of "Ash'arite" those who were strictly traditionalist, followers of the Salaf, the pious ancestors. *For he explains that Ash'ari did not really found a new school of thought; he merely took up the beliefs of the Salaf and defended them with reasoned arguments. Whoever imitated Ash'ari in the use of proofs, upholding the beliefs of the Salaf, became an Ash'arite.* (Tabaqat, II, 254-255). *An Ash'arite is thus by definition: a follower of Ash'ari, a follower of the Salaf; he is also a user of kalam as a method.*

Proceeding further (op. cit., II, 255), we find Subki asking his father ("ash-Shaikh al-Imam", d. 756) why Ibn 'Asakir, in listing the various generations of Ash'arites (in his Tabyin), named so few of them.⁸⁵ *His father told him that Ibn 'Asakir limited himself to those who were known to have fought in his defense; otherwise, his father continued, it is true that the majority of the learned men of the various schools of law are in agreement with Ash'ari* (...ghaliba 'ulama'i'l-madhdhibi ma'ahu). Subki's father then tells him that he once came across a work by a Mu'tazilite entitled Tabaqat al-Mu'tazila, the first biographical notice of which was devoted to 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (famous Companion of the Prophet; for his collected traditions see Ahmad b. Hanbal, Musnad (6 vols.; Cairo: Maimaniya Press, 1313/1895) I, 374 (line 14)-466; died 32 or 33/653 or 651; sec

⁸⁴ Ash'arī and the Ash'arites in Islamic Religious History (I), Studia Islamica, No. 17 (1962), pp. 62-63, footnote 2

⁸⁵ There are at least 75 scholars listed as being Ash'arites in the Tabyin of Ibn Asakir

Encyclopedia of Islam, s. v.). Subki told his father: if the Mu'tazilites could do this, the Ash'arites could claim Abu Bakr and 'Umar (first two Caliphs, died, respectively, in the year 13/634, and 23/644). *Subki's father then tells him that "a man's followers are those who follow him in his body of tenets and profess his doctrines by way of following and imitating, which is more intimate than being in agreement; for there is a great difference between following and being in agreement"* ("atba'u'l-mar'i man dana bi-madh-habihi wa-qala bi-qaulihi 'ala sabili'l-mutaba'ati wa-li'qtifa'i 'lladhi huwa akhassu mina'l-muwafaqa; fa-baina'l-mutaba'ati wa'l-muwafaqati bunun 'azim." Op. cit., II, 255, lines 14-15).”

From the above significant points it is decipherable and plausible to state unequivocally that the two Subki's would have had no serious issue in including al-Mizzi as a type of acceptable Ash'arite since he also professed his Ash'arite affiliation in writing, and there does not seem to be any proof to suggest that al-Mizzi had opposed the fundamental tenets of doctrine held by Abul Hasan al-Ash'ari. See below for the quote from Ibn al-Subki and al-Dhahabi for positive proof that al-Mizzi was an Ash'arite.

Note also what the status quo was in the world of Sunni scholarship at that time and prior to it for several centuries according to Taqiud-Din al-Subki. He mentioned the following historical reality in his refutation of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya known as al-Sayf al-Saqil:⁸⁶

والفرقة الأشعرية هم المتوسطون في ذلك وهم الغالبون من الشافعية والمالكية والحنفية وفضلاء الحنابلة وسائر الناس

‘The Ash‘arī group are the moderates in that and they are the majority of Shāfi‘īs, Mālikīs, Ḥanafīs and the virtuous one’s (fudalā’) of the Ḥanbalīs, and the rest of the (general) people.’

The Ash'aris were continually dominant and not a minority as claimed by the somewhat prejudiced orientalist George Makdisi, and his futile opinion was spread by some anti-Ash'aris in our time. Here is an answer to Makdisi by a former Professor of Arabic at Oxford University by the name of Wilfred Madelung (b. 1930), who said in his “The Spread of Maturidism”:⁸⁷

“Considering the Islamic world as a whole, it is evident that Ash'arism spread rapidly and was firmly established before the end of the Seljuq age. In all of the east the widespread Hanbalite and other traditionist groups after the time of the geographer al-Maqdisi (writing about 378/988) were gradually absorbed by Shafi'ism. Abul Yusr al Bazdawi (usul al-din, ed. H. Linss, p. 242), writing before the year 486/1093, can state that the mass ('amma) of the Shafi'ites were Ash'arites, evidently in regard to the situation in Transoxania and Khurasan. The Shi'ite Abd al-Jalil al-Razi

⁸⁶ P. 20

⁸⁷ The Spread of Maturidism and the Turks, Madelung, W. Biblos (Coimbra) 46 (Jan 1, 1970): 110.

writing about 565/1170, refers to the Shafi'ite mosque in al-Rayy as that of the Ash'arites (K. al-Naqd, ed. Jalal al-din Husayni Urmawi, p. 598).

In Egypt the Shafi'ite Ayyubid Salah al-Din at the time of the restoration of Sunnism in the late Seljuq age propagated an Ash'arite creed as the official doctrine of orthodoxy. Since that time, al-Maqrizi (d. 845 AH) states nearly three centuries later, anyone differing from al-Ash'ari in Egypt would be accused of infidelity (cf. al-Maqrizi, al-Khitat, 2, 273, 358).

In the far west, the Almohad (Muwahhidun) movement with its militant espousal of Ash'arite Kalam, though of its own brand, swept the Maghrib and Spain in the middle of the 6th/12th century (cf. Madelung, Der Imam al-Qasim b. Ibrahim, p. 213 with n. 407). In the light of these developments, Makdisi's far reaching conclusion that Ash'arism was regarded by the majority of the Shafi'ites 'as a parasite' and was rejected by Sunnite consensus (SI, XVIII, 37) is untenable.

Even as far as Baghdad and Damascus are concerned, the picture drawn by Makdisi of Ash'arism trying to infiltrate the ranks of the Shafi'ites and ultimately being rejected, does hardly justice to the situation. The very frequency with which Ibn al-Jawzi mentions clashes between Ash'arites and their opponents in Baghdad throughout the Seljuq age indicates the attractiveness and spread of Ash'arism. In Damascus Ash'arism was broadly established at least since the time of Ibn Asakir (d. 571 AH), despite the prominence of some of its opponents, who, moreover, had to be rather cautious in their criticism of al-Ash'ari in order to avoid trouble with the Mamluk government generally favouring Ash'arism." End of quote

If anyone reads al-Khitat of al-Maqrizi one can also see him admitting the dominance of the Ash'aris for well over 400 years, that is from 380 AH onwards it moved from Iraq to Syria and then to other Muslim lands, and al-Maqrizi died in 845 AH. This state of dominance continued and is still the case in our time. One only needs to list all of the famous Islamic institutes of knowledge to see where the global Sunni scholarship is linked to in terms of Sunni-creedal affiliation for well over 1000 years.

Finally, Muhammad Moin finished off his claims by saying:

Abul Hasan then tried to misrepresent the statement of Al-Fasi. He quotes brother Abuz Zubair's post where he translated a statement of Taqiyud-Deen Al-Faasi from his "Ta'reef dhawil 'Ula"⁸⁸. Following is what he quoted,

The historian **Al-Fasi** (d. 832) writes in his Ta'rif Dhawil 'Ula in biography of al-Dhahabi:

"It has reached me that al-Dhahabi refused to take up the teaching position at Dar al-Hadeeth al-Ashrafiyya in Damascus because he was not an Ash'ari. This is when the position was vacated due to the death of the previous teacher al-Hafidh Jamal al-Din al-Mizzi. Al-Mizzi himself did not attain the position until he testified for himself that he is an Ash'ari, for that was the stipulated condition for the teacher therein. This indicates the richness of al-Dhahabi's religiosity

⁸⁸ "Ta'reef Dhawil 'Ula bi man lam yadhkurahu Adh-Dhahabi fi An-Nubla" (pg.50) Daar Sader, Beirut (Footnote by Moin)

and piety, for it was also possible for him to testify for himself that he is an Ash'ari and take up the position, and that wouldn't have affected him, in that he does not have Ash'ari beliefs." (page 50)

Regarding this Abul Hasan states,

"No matter how the likes of Abuz Zubair and his cohorts hope to explain away this quotation that Al-Mizzi was not an Ash'arite in the strictest sense, the question still remains that Al-Mizzi did testify by his own pen that he was an Ash'ari and that was the pre-requisite to attain the Professorship in Hadith at Darul Hadith Al-Ashrafiyya in Damascus."

But he totally failed to understand the quotation from Al-Faasi. The reason that Al-Faasi compared Dhahabi's case with Al-Mizzi's one, was because of their identical Salafi belief. Let me explain it one by one:

1. Dhahabi and Al-Mizzi both had salafi belief.
2. Dhahabi and Al-Mizzi both were invited for the professorship of Daarul Hadith.
3. Dhahabi denied to call himself Ash'ari while Al-Mizzi wrote that he was an Ash'ari⁸⁹ to fulfill the condition of Professorship at Daar Al-Hadith.
4. By that, Al-Faasi said that Dhahabi could also have testified just like Al-Mizzi and that would not have affected the Salafism of his just as it did not affect the Salafism of Al-Mizzi.

Actually all those who mention Al-Mizzi while speaking about Dhahabi was because of similarity in both of them with regards to aqeedah. Wallahu A'alam

Reply:

If the vigilant reader has read this monograph from the beginning to this point then one may have realised that it was Muhammad Moin who has disastrously failed to realise what al-Fasi's quotation implied. Firstly, al-Fasi did not mention his source for his information but it is likely to be from Ibn al-Subki's *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyya al-Kubra* as he mentioned him on that page. Al-Fasi was born in 775 AH and died in 832 AH and his *Ta'rif dhawi al-'ula bi man lam yadhkurahum al-Dhahabi fi al-Nubala* is an addendum (dhayl) to al-Dhahabi's *Siyar a'lam an-Nubala*. The points adduced by al-Fasi were mentioned earlier on in this reply from Ibn al-Subki.

Ibn al-Subki said in his *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyya al-Kubra*:⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Ash'ari of Al-Ibana, whom Hasan As-Saqqaf consider Mujassim and said that today's Ash'aris follow Al-Ghazali not Al-Ash'ari. (This footnote was by Moin)

⁹⁰ 10/200

ولما شغرت مشيخة دار الحديث الأشرفية ب وفاة الحافظ المزي عين هو الذهبي لها فوق السعي فيها للشيخ شمس الدين ابن النقيب وتكلم في حق الذهبي بأنه ليس بأشعري **وأن المزي** ما وليها إذ وليها إلا بعد أن **كتب خطه** وأشهد على نفسه بأنه أشعري العقيدة

Meaning:

*“And when the Professorship at Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya remained vacant at the death of al-Hafiz al-Mizzi, the designated quest fell upon al-Dhahabi, in which Shaykh Shamsud-Din ibn al-Naqib spoke the truth about al-Dhahabi that he is not an Ash'ari, **and al-Mizzi got the guardianship as head (of al-Ashrafiyya) only after he wrote in his own handwriting and testified upon himself that he is an Ash'ari in creed (Aqida).**”*

As for Moin’s point no. 1 – then he has not been able to prove that al-Mizzi had the so called “Salafi” belief that Moin personally adheres to in this age, and attempted to superimpose it onto al-Mizzi or al-Dhahabi for that matter. It has been shown above that al-Dhahabi was not even in line with Ibn Taymiyya on some creedal matters.

Moin has already been shown to have accused al-Mizzi of adopting tawriyah to attain the post at Darul Hadith al-Ashrafiyya, despite not providing a smidgeon of proof. The quote from al-Fasi proves towards the end that al-Mizzi did testify that he was an Ash’arite while al-Dhahabi was not, and did not wish to take up the post at al-Ashrafiyya even if there were stratagems like tawriyah that could have been employed as Moin has unbecomingly stated for al-Mizzi!

To conclude this treatise it is quite apt and befitting to seal this matter by quoting from a source that is not essentially Ash’arite in nature, nor totally in line with the ways of Ibn Taymiyya. The source being none other than al-Dhahabi who wrote a biography of al-Mizzi. Al-Dhahabi said in no uncertain terms in his work known as Dhayl Tarikh al-Islam:⁹¹

وَالشَّيْخُ هُوَ الَّذِي سَعَى لِّلْمِزِيِّ فِي تَوَلِيَّتِهِ دَارَ الْحَدِيثِ وَلِي فِي تَوَلِيَّةِ التَّرْبَةِ الصَّالِحِيَّةِ وَجَرَتْ فِي ذَلِكَ أُمُورٌ وَنَكَدَ مِنْ أَضْدَادِ الشَّيْخِ وَسَلْنَا عَنِ الْعَقِيدَةِ فَكُتِبَ لَهُمُ الْمِزِيُّ بِجَمَلٍ وَأَعْفِيَتْ أَنَا مِنَ الْكِتَابَةِ

⁹¹ See 53/489, Dar al-Mughni edition, edited by Mazin Ba Wazir. The section on al-Mizzi from the Dhayl Tarikh al-Islam was also published by Muhammad ibn Nasir al-Ajmi under the title – Thalatha tarajim nafisa (Dar Ibn al-Athir, Kuwait, 1995, p. 56)

Meaning:

“The Shaykh (Ibn Taymiyya) is the one who strove for (the assignment of) the direction of the Dar al-Hadith al-Ashrafiyya to al-Mizzi and that of the Turba al-Salihiyya to me. And on that occasion some events occurred, the Shaykh was molested by his opponents and **we were interrogated about our creed (Aqida). As a result, al-Mizzi wrote for them a number of statements while I was exempted from writing.**”⁹²

This quote serves to demonstrate that al-Mizzi was examined by the authorities linked to al-Ashrafiyya and he wrote his creedal declarations which were in line with that expected by the contemporary Ash’aris of the age, or else he would not have been allowed to take up the post which was appropriated to those who testified themselves to be Ash’ari in creed as mentioned earlier on. Al-Dhahabi was not required to put his creed in writing as he was not concerned in taking up the vacancy at al-Ashrafiyya or a self confessed Ash’arite.

Before concluding it is worth demonstrating to the noble reader who has reached this point of the monograph how a group of contemporary ‘Salafi’ scholars also admitted that al-Mizzi was an Ash’ari, as were other named major scholars, with confirmation that Asharis and Maturidis are from Ahlus Sunna wa al-Jama’a. Note, the answer provided by them is on the whole sound and some points are not acknowledged by this writer.

The fatwa in question was uploaded on the following ‘Salafi’ based site:

<http://www.islamtoday.net/fatawa/quesshow-60-109797.htm>

Quote in Arabic:

House of Verification
الفتاوى
موقع الإسلام اليوم

الأشاعرة والماتريدية من أهل السنة والجماعة
جمع من العلماء

العنوان
المجيب

⁹² This quote was translated by C. Bori from the cited reference in the article entitled ‘Ibn Taymiyya wa-Jamā’atu-hu: Authority, Conflict and Consensus in Ibn Taymiyya’s Circle’ in *Ibn Taymiyya and his Times* (p. 39)

109797

رقم السؤال

الثلاثاء 29 جمادى الآخرة 1427 الموافق 25 يوليو 2006

التاريخ

السؤال

ما حكم التعامل مع المخالف لعقيدة السلف الصالح كالأشاعرة والماتريديّة ومن نحا نحوهم والتعاون معهم على البر والتقوى والأمور العامة وهل يحرم العمل معهم سواء كانت الإدارة لنا وهم يعملون تحتنا أو العمل تحت إشرافهم؟ وهل هم من الفرق الضالة الاثنتين والسبعين؟ وهل التعامل معهم يعد من باب تولي غير المؤمنين؟.

الجواب

الحمد لله، والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله وبعد:
فجواباً على ذلك نقول: الأشاعرة والماتريديّة قد خالفوا الصواب حين أولوا بعض صفات الله سبحانه. لكنهم من أهل السنة والجماعة، وليسوا من الفرق الضالة الاثنتين والسبعين إلا من غلا منهم في التعطيل، ووافق الجهمية فحكمه حكم الجهمية. أما سائر الأشاعرة والماتريديّة فليسوا كذلك وهم معذورون في اجتهادهم وإن أخطأوا الحق .
ويجوز التعامل والتعاون معهم على البر والإحسان والتقوى، وهذا شيخ الإسلام ابن تيمية رحمه الله قد تتلمذ على كثير من العلماء الأشاعرة، بل قد قاتل تحت راية أمراء المماليك حكام ذلك الزمان وعامتهم أشاعرة، بل كان القائد المجاهد البطل نور الدين زنكي الشهيد، وكذا صلاح الدين الأيوبي من الأشاعرة كما نص عليه الذهبي في سير أعلام النبلاء، وغيرهما كثير من العلماء والقواد والمصلحين، بل إن كثيراً من علماء المسلمين وأئمتهم أشاعرة وماتريديّة، كأمثال البيهقي والنووي وابن الصلاح والمزي وابن حجر العسقلاني والعراقي والسخاوي والزيلعي والسيوطي، بل جميع شراح البخاري هم أشاعرة وغيرهم كثير، ومع ذلك استفاد الناس من عملهم، وأقروا لهم بالفضل والإمامة في الدين، مع اعتقاد كونهم معذورين فيما اجتهدوا فيه وأخطأوا، والله يعفو عنهم ويغفر لهم. والخليفة المأمون كان جهمياً معتزلياً وكذلك المعتصم والوائق كانوا جهمياً ضللاً. ومع ذلك لم يفت أحد من أئمة الإسلام بعدم جواز الاقتداء بهم في الصلوات والقتال تحت رايتهم في الجهاد، فلم يفت أحد مثلاً بتحريم القتال مع المعتصم يوم عمورية، مع توافر الأئمة في ذلك الزمان كأمثال أحمد والبخاري ومسلم والترمذي وأبي داود وعلي بن المديني ويحيى بن معين وأضرابهم من كبار أئمة القرن الهجري الثالث. ولم نسمع أن أحداً منهم حرم التعامل مع أولئك القوم، أو منع الاقتداء بهم، أو القتال تحت رايتهم. فيجب أن تتأدب بأدب السلف مع المخالف.
والله أعلم وصلى الله على محمد وعلى آله وصحبه وسلم.

د. عبد

العزيب بن

عبد الفتاح

القارئ

عميد كلية القرآن في الجامعة الإسلامية سابقاً

د. محمد
بن ناصر المدرس بالمسجد النبوي
السحبياتي

د. عبد الله
بن محمد رئيس قسم الدراسات العليا بالجامعة الإسلامية سابقا
الغنيمان

الذي علق على الفتوى قائلًا :

" هذا جواب شديد صحيح ولا يسع المسلمين إلا ذلك، ولم يزل
الخلاف يقع في صفوف العلماء، ولم يكن ذلك مسبباً لاختلاف
القلوب والتفرق، وقصة الصحابة لما ذهبوا إلى بني قريظة
معروفة مشهورة وغيرها، قاله عبد الله بن محمد الغنيمان.
تحريراً في 1427/4/22 هـ

Translation:

Question: What is the ruling on working with the opponents to the creed of Salaf as-Salih, such as the Ash'aris and Maturidis and those who follow their way, and cooperating with them in matters of goodness and piety and general affairs? Is it forbidden to work with them no matter if the administration was in our control and they work under our auspices, or if it was under their control? Are they from seventy-two misguided sects, and is working with them considered from the realm of allegiance with other than the believers?

Answer: All praise is for Allah, and may the Salah and Salam be upon the Messenger of Allah. In response to this we say: The Ash'aris and Maturidis have opposed what is correct when they performed Ta'wil of the Divine Attributes of Allah the Exalted,⁹³ however, they are from Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah and not from the seventy-two misguided sects except those who go into extremes among them in denial and agree with the Jahmiyah- where his ruling would then be like those of the Jahmiyah. As for the remainder of the Ash'aris and Maturidis, then they are not like that, and they are excused for their Ijtihad even if they erred in the truth. It is permissible to work and cooperate with them in piety, righteousness and goodness. Take Ibn Taymiyah, who studied under many of the scholars of the Ash'aris, nay, he even fought under the banner of the Mamlukes- the rulers of that time-and the generality of them were Ash'aris, nay, the military leader of that

⁹³ This point is controvertible and one needs to examine it independently

time, the brave Nuruddin al-Zanki the martyr as well as Salahuddin al-Ayubi were both Ash'aris, as has been stated by Imam adh-Dhahabi in his Siyar 'Alam an-Nubala. And there were many besides them from the scholars, military leaders and people of rectification. Many of the scholars and Imams of the Muslims were Ash'aris and Maturidis such as; al-Bayhaqi, al-Nawawi, Ibn al-Salah, al-Mizzi, Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, al-Iraqi, al-Sakhawi, al-Zayla'i, al-Suyuti, and indeed, all of the explainers of (Sahih) al-Bukhari were Ash'aris and many besides them. So with this, the people benefited from their knowledge and admitted their virtue and leadership in the Deen while believing them to be excused for what they made Ijtihad in and erred. May Allah forgive them and pardon them. The Khalifah al-Ma'mun was a Jahmi Mu'tazili, as well as Mu'tasim and al-Wathiq, they were misguided Jahmis, however, none of the Imams of Islam delivered Islamic legal verdicts to the effect that it was not allowed to follow them in prayers and fighting under their banner in Jihad. So no one, for example, gave a legal verdict stating that it was not allowed to fight with al-Mu'tasim on the day of al-Amuriyah, despite the large numbers of Imams in those times such as: Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, Ali ibn al-Madini, Yahya ibn Ma'in and their likes from the major Imams in the third generation of the Hijrah. We have not heard any of them forbidding working with these people or preventing (others) from following them or fighting under their banners. So, it is an obligation that we observe the manner of the Salaf as-Salih with the opponent, and Allah knows best. May Allah send Salah and Salam upon Muhammad and his family and Companions

Signed:

Dr. Abdul Aziz ibn Abdul Fattah al-Qari' (former head of the faculty of the Qur'an at the Islamic University)

Dr. Muhammad ibn Nasir al-Suhaibani (teacher at the Prophets Masjid)

Dr. Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Ghunayman (former head of the department of higher studies at the Islamic University who added to this fatwa the following:

“This is a correct and upright answer that a Muslim cannot take but it. The differences have not ceased taking place among the ranks of the scholars, yet that was not a cause for separation and the hearts differing. And the story of the companions when they went to Banu Quraydhah is well known and famous as well as others.” 22/4/1427AH

In conclusion, al-Mizzi was a type of Ash'ari in terms of creed, and there is no conclusive proof to proffer the claim that he was an imitator of the creed extracted and propounded in the name of the Salafus-Salihin by the likes of Ibn Taymiyya.

Peace and blessings upon our Prophet Muhammad

Abul Hasan

London

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