

Sisters' Class – Lessons from the Great Imaams – Lesson Notes

Introduction

Unfortunately, there were no slides for this lesson. However the lesson was read from two main texts, with a few additions. In order that some kind of class notes exist, I have provided both texts here, which should be quite easy to read inshaa Allah.

Sufyaan Ath-Thawree & His Advice

A brief biography of Sufyaan Ath-Thawree (may Allah have mercy on him)

He is Aboo 'Abdullaah Sufyaan Ibn Sa'eed Ibn Masrooq ath-Thawree (d.161H). The appellation referring to Thawr Ibn 'Abd-Manaat; and not Thawr of Hamdaan. One of the stores of knowledge and mountains of retention - and when the '*Ulamaa'* (Scholars) are mentioned, then Sufyaan is a dazzling star. His biography is famous and fills the books of *Jarh wat-Ta'deel* (validating and invalidating the narrators), history and *fiqh*; and his life-story is well known. **From the Editors:** What follows is a very brief biography of Sufyaan ath-Thawree, taken from *Siyar A'laamun-Nubalaa'* of adh-Dhahabee and *Tahdheebut-Tahdheeb* of al-Haafidh Ibn Hajar al-Asqalaanee.

His Shaykhs include: Aboo Ishaq as-Sabee'ee, al-A'mash, Sulaymaan at-Taymee, Ibraaheem Ibn Maysarah, Ibn 'Awn, Zayd Ibn Aslam, 'Amr Ibn Deenaar, Ibn 'Ajlaan, Ibnul-Munkadir, Abuz-Zubayr, Yahyaa Ibn Sa'eed al-Ansaaree ...

His Students include: Shu'bah, al-Awzaa'ee, Maalik, 'Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Mahdee, Yahyaa Ibn Sa'eed al-Qattaan, Ibnul-Mubaarak, Hafs Ibn Ghiyaath, 'Abdullaah Ibn Wahb, 'Abdur-Razzaaq, Fudayl Ibn 'Iyaad, al-Waleed Ibn Muslim, Wakee' Ibnul-Jarraah, Yazeed Ibn Haaron, Aboo Nu'aym and 'Alee Ibnul-Ja'd - who was the last reliable narrator to report from him.

Shu'bah, Ibn 'Uyaynah, Aboo 'Aasim, Ibn Ma'een and others said, "Sufyaan is the chief of the Believers in *Hadeeth*."

Ibnul-Mubaarak said, "I wrote from one thousand one hundred Shaykhs and I did not write from anyone better than Sufyaan," so a man said to him: O Abaa 'Abdullaah, you saw Sa'eed Ibn Jubayr and others, he said, "That was before. I did not say that I did not see anyone better than Sufyaan."

Ibn Mahdee said, "Wahb used to give precedence to Sufyaan's memory over that of Maalik."

Ad-Duwaree said, "I saw Yahyaa Ibn Ma'een and he did not prefer anyone to Sufyaan in his time - neither in *fiqh*, *hadeeth*, *Zuhd* or anything else."

Ahmad Ibn Hanbal said, "No one takes precedence over him in my heart."

An-Nisaa'ee said, "He is greater than for it to have to be said that he is reliable, and he is one of the Imaams whom I hope is one of those whom Allaah has made an Imaam for the pious."

Ibn Abee Dhi'b said, "I have not seen anyone more like the *Taabi'een* than Sufyaan."

Ibn Hibbaan said, "He was one of the foremost of the people in *fiqh*, *wara'* (piety) and precision."

Ibn 'Uyaynah said, "I have not seen a man knowing the lawful and prohibited better than Sufyaan."

Ishaaq Ibn Raahawayh said, 'I heard 'Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Mahdee mention Sufyaan, Shu'bah, Maalik and Ibnul-Mubâarak and say, 'The most knowledgeable of them was Sufyaan.'

Muhammad Ibn Zunboor said, 'I heard Fudayl say, 'By Allaah! Sufyaan was more knowledgeable than Aboo Haneefah.'

Bishr al-Haafee said, "Ath-Thawree, to us, is the *Imaam* of the people."

Qabeesah said, "I have not sat in a sitting along with Sufyaan except that I remembered death. I have not seen anyone who remembered death more than him."

It was said to Sufyaan ath-Thawree, 'For how long will you continue to seek *Hadeeth*?' He said, "And what is better than *Hadeeth* that I should prefer it? *Hadeeth* is the best of the knowledge of the world."

'Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Mahdee related, 'I heard Sufyaan say, 'Never has a *hadeeth* reached me from Allaah's Messenger (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), except that I would act upon it even a single time.' Here ends the Editor's Inclusion.

His biography can be found in *Tahdheebul-Kamaal* (11/54), *at-Tabaqaatul-Kubraa* (6/371), *Taareekh Baghdaad* (9/151) and *Siyar A'laamun-Nubalaa'* (7/229). Aboo Nu'aym al-Asbahaanee has written a delightful and complete biography of him in *Hilyatul-Awliyaa'* (6/356 - 7/144) - the likes of which I have not seen.

The advice of Sufyaan Ath-Thawree

THE ADVICE:

Sufyaan ath-Thawree - rahimahullaah - wrote to 'Abbaad Ibn 'Abbaad al-Khawwaas al-Arsoofee - rahimahullaah - saying,

"To proceed: You are in a time which the Companions of the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) used to seek refuge from reaching, and they had the knowledge that we do not have, and they had precedence which we do not. So how is it for us, when we reach that, having little knowledge, little patience, few helpers upon what is good, corruption of the people and pollution of this world?! So take to the original state of affairs and cling to it. I advise you to remain unknown, since this is the age for remaining anonymous (*khumool*). And remain aloof and mix little with the people, since before, when the people met, they would benefit from each other. But today that has gone and your safety - in our view - lies in abandoning them.

Beware of the Rulers. Beware of coming near to them and of mixing with them in any of the affairs. Beware of being deceived, so that it said to you: Intercede [for me], so that you help one oppressed, or repel an act of oppression - because that is from the deception of Iblees, which the wicked reciters have taken as a means to attain a favorable position. It used to be said: Beware of the fitnah (trial) of the ignorant worshipper and the wicked scholar, because the trial of these two is indeed a trial for everyone put to trial.

If you find questions and need for fatwaa, then take advantage of it - but do not compete desirously for it. And beware of being like the one who loves that his saying is acted upon, or that his saying is publicized or listened to, and if that is abandoned, the effects of that are seen upon him.

And beware of the love of leadership, since leadership may be more beloved to a man than gold and silver - but it is something difficult and obscure; and this will not be understood except by wise Scholars. So seek after your lost soul and work with correct intention and know that there has come near to the people a matter which a person would be desirous of death.

Was-salaam.

Source: From the advice of the salaf by Shaykh Saleem Al-Hilaalee (taken from an online reproduction by Troid)

The life & trials of Imaam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him)

Source: Foundations of the Sunnah (Translated by Salafi Publications)

This is what the Scholars in all the horizons have agreed and united upon.

End of the Treatise

CHAPTER ONE

THE LIFE AND TRIALS OF IMAAM AHMAD

He was Shaikhul-Islaam Aboo 'Abdullaah, Ahmad ibn [i.e. Muhammad ibn Hanbal, adh-Dhuhlee, ash-Shaybaanee al-Marzee, al-Baghdaadee He was born in the year 164 after the Prophetic hijrah and began seeking knowledge at the age of 15.

The scholars he himself narrated from include:

Ibraaheem ibn Sa'd, Hushaym ibn Basheer, 'Abbaad ibn 'Abbaad al-Muhallabee, Mu'tamir ibn Sulaymaan at-Taymee, Sufyaan ibn 'Uyaynah al-Hilaalee, 'Umar ibn 'Ubayd at-Tanaafisee, Yoosuf ibn al-Maajishoon, Jareer ibn 'Abdul-Hameed, Bishr ibn al-Mufaddal, Aboo Bakr ibn 'Ayyaash, 'Abdah ibn Sulaymaan, Aboo Khaalid al-Ahmar, Aboo Mu'aawiyah ad-Dareer, Marwaan ibn Mu'aawiyah, Ghundar, Ibn 'Ulayyah, Hafs ibn Ghiyaath, al-Waleed ibn Muslim, Yahyaa ibn Sulaym, Yazeed ibn Haaron, 'Alee ibn 'Aasim, Wakee' ibn al-Jarraah, Yahyaa al-Qattaan, 'Abdul-A'laa as-Saamee, 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Mahdee, 'Abdullaah ibn Numayr, Zayd ibn al-Hubaab, Muhammad ibn Idrees ash-Shaafi'ee, Aboo 'Aasim, 'Abdur-Razzaaq, Aboo Nu'aym, 'Affaan, Yahyaa ibn Aadam, Aboo 'Abdur-Rahmaan al-Muqri, Hajjaaj ibn Muhammad, 'Abdus-Samad ibn 'Abdul-Waarith, Rawh ibn 'Ubaadah and Wahb ibn Jareer.

Those who narrated from him include:

Al-Bukhaaree (a single hadeeth), Muslim, Aboo Daawood, his son Saalih ibn Ahmad, his son 'Abdullaah ibn Ahmad, his paternal cousin Hanbal ibn Ishaq, and his teachers 'Abdur-Razzaaq, al-Hasan ibn Moosaa al-Ashyab, and Aboo 'Abdullaah ash-Shaafi'ee. Also, 'Alee ibn al-Madeenee, Yahyaa ibn Ma'een,

Duhaym, Muhammad ibn Yahyaa adh-Dhuhlee, Ahmad ibn al-Furaat, Ahmad

Ibn Ibraaheem ad-Dawraquee, 'Abbaas ad-Dooree, Aboo Zur'ahi, Aboo Haatim, Ishaq al-Kawsaj, Aboo Bakr al-Athram, Ibraaheem al-Harbee, Aboo Bakr al-Marroodhee, Aboo Zur'ah ad-Dimashqee, Baqiyy ibn Makhlad, Muhammad ibn 'Abdullaah Mutayyan, Ibraaheem ibn Haani an-Neesaahooree and Muhannaa ibn Yahyaa ash-Shaamee.

Below is a list of what scholars from the Pious Predecessors said about Imaam Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

Ibraaheem al-Harbee said, "I saw Aboo 'Abdullaah and it was as if Allaah had gathered for him the knowledge of the earlier and later people together."

Ibn Raahawaih said, "I used to sit with Ahmad and Ibn Ma'een and we would revise ahaadeeth. I would say, 'What is the Fiqh of it? What is its explanation?' And they would be silent - except Ahmad."

Wakee' and Hafs ibn Ghiyaath said, "None has come to Koofah the like of that youth," meaning Ahmad ibn Hanbal. Yahyaa ibn Aadam said, "Ahmad ibn Hanbal is our Imaam."

Yahyaa al-Qattaan said, "No one has come to us the like of these two, Ahmad and Yahyaa ibn Ma'een. And no one has come to me from Baghdaad more beloved to me than Ahmad ibn Hanbal."

'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Mahdee mentioned the companions of Hadeeth and said, "The most knowledgeable of them regarding the ahaadeeth of ath-Thawree is Ahmad ibn Hanbal." Then Ahmad entered and Ibn Mahdee said, "Whoever wishes to see (the knowledge) that was held between the shoulders of ath-Thawree, then let him look at this man."

Ibn Mahdee said, "I have not looked at Ahmad except that he caused me to remember Sufyaan."

Nooh ibn Habeeb al-Qoomasee said, "I greeted Ahmad ibn Hanbal in the year 198H in al-Khayf mosque, and he was giving extensive religious verdicts."

Ahmad ibn Sinaan al-Qattaan said, "I have not seen Yazeed (ibn Haaroon) having greater respect for anyone than he had for Ahmad ibn Hanbal, nor did he behave more generously and graciously than he did with him. He would sit him at his side, give him respect, and he would not joke with him."

'Abdur-Razzaaq said, "I have not seen anyone having better knowledge and understanding, nor more piety than Ahmad ibn Hanbal." Adh-Dhahabee adds, "He said this having seen the like of ath-Thawree, Maalik and Ibn Jurayj."

Qutaybah ibn Sa'eed said, "The best of the people of our time is 'Abdullaah ibn al-Mubaarak, and then this young man (meaning Ahmad ibn Hanbal) - and if you see a man who loves Ahmad, then know that he is a person of the Sunnah. If he had reached the time of ath-Thawree, al-Awzaa'ee and al-Layth, he would have been the one having precedence amongst them." So it was said to Qutaybah, "You would mention Ahmad along with the Taabi'een?" So he said, "With the greater Taabi'een."

Qutaybah said, "If it were not for ath-Thawree, piety would die out, and if it were not for Ahmad they would innovate in the Religion. Ahmad is the Imaam of the world."

Hurmulah said "I heard ash-Shaafi'ee say, 'I left Baghdaad and I did not leave behind in it a man more excellent, nor more knowledgeable, nor better in Fiqh, nor having more taqwaa than Ahmad ibn Hanbal."

Muhammad ibn Ishaq ibn Raahawaih said, "My father narrated to me, saying, 'Ahmad ibn Hanbal said to me, 'Come with me

and let me show you someone the like of whom is not to be seen.' So he took me to ash-Shaafi'ee,' My father said, "And ash-Shaafi'ee did not see the like of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and were it not for Ahmad and how he sacrificed himself, meaning on the day of the trial concerning the Qur'aan, then Islaam would have departed.""

'Alee ibn al-Madeenee said, "In my view Ahmad is more excellent than Sa'eed ibn Jubayr in his time, since Sa'eed had equals."

'Alee ibn al-Madeenee also said, "Allaah honoured and strengthened this Religion with as-Siddeeq on the day of Apostasy, and with Ahmad on the day of the trial (al-Mihnah)."

Ibn Ma'een said, "I have not seen the like of Ahmad," and he also said, "They wanted that I should be like Ahmad, by Allaah I will never be like him." Aboo Thawr said, "Ahmad is more knowledgeable in Fiqh than ath-Thawree."

Hajjaaj ibn ash-Shaa'ir said, "I have not seen anyone more excellent than Ahmad. I would love that I should have been killed fighting in Allaah's cause if it meant that I should miss having prayed the Funeral Prayer for Ahmad. By Allaah he reached a position as Imaam greater than that of Sufyaan and Maalik."

'Amr an-Naaqid said, "If Ahmad ibn Hanbal agrees with me about a hadeeth then I do not care about those who disagree with me."

Aboo Haatim was asked who was the greater memoriser, 'Alee ibn al-Madeenee or Ahmad ibn Hanbal, so he said, "They were close to each other in memorisation, and Ahmad had better comprehension. If you see someone loving Ahmad, then know that he is a person of the Sunnah."

Abou Zur'ah said, "Ahmad ibn Hanhal was greater than, and had better comprehension than Ishaaq. I have never seen anyone more complete than Ahmad."

Abou `Umayr an-Nuhaas ar-Ramlee mentioned Ahmad and said, "May Allaah have mercy upon him. None had more patience than him in resisting this world; none more closely resembled those of the past than him; none was more fitting to be in the company of the righteous than him. This world was presented to him and he refused it, and innovations were presented before him so he refuted them."

Ibn Waarah said, "Ahmad was a person of fiqh, a person of memorisation, a person of knowledge."

An-Nasaa'ee said, "Ahmad ibn Hanbal gathered knowledge of Hadeeth, fiqh, piety, abstemiousness (zuhd) and patient forbearance (sabr)."

Abou Daawood said, "The gatherings of Ahmad were gatherings of the Hereafter. Nothing of the affairs of this world would be mentioned — and I never saw him mention this world."

Saalih ibn Muhammad Jazarah said, "The person who best understood ahaadeeth, from those whom I met, was Ahmad ibn Hanbal."

`Alee ibn Khalaf said, "I heard al-Humaydee say, 'As long as I remain in the Hijaz, and Ahmad in `Iraq, and Ibn Raahawaih in Khuraasaan, nobody will overcome us.'"

Ibn Waarah said!, "Ahmad ibn Hanbal in Baghdaad, Ahmad ibn Saalih in Egypt, Abou Ja'far an-Nufaylee in Harraan and Ibn Numayr in Koofah — they are the supports of the Religion."

Abou Yahyaa an-Naaqid said, "We were with Ibraaheem ibn `Ar'arah and they mentioned Ya'laa ibn `Aasim, so a man said, 'Ahmad ibn Hanbal declares him weak.' So a man said, 'And

how will that affect him if he is reliable?' So Ibn 'Ar'arah said, 'By Allaah, if Ahmad were to speak about 'Alqamah and al-Aswad (i.e., two of the greater taabi'een) it would affect them.'"

Ibraaheem al-Harbee said, "The scholar of his time was Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyib; Sufyaan ath-Thawree in his time and Ahmad ibn Hanbal in his time."

Al-Husayn al-Karaabeesee said, "The example of those who speak against Ahmad ibn Hanbal is like the example of a people who come up to the mountain of Aboo Qubays intending to demolish it with their shoes."

Saalih ibn Ahmad said, "I said to my father (i.e., Ahmad ibn Hanbal), 'Ahmad ad-Dawraquee has been given a thousand deenaars,' so he said, 'O my son: **"But the provision of your Lord is better and more lasting."**¹⁰⁰

'Abdullaah ibn Ahmad said, "I heard my father say concerning this world, 'A little of it suffices, and a great deal of it does not suffice."

Al-Marroodhee said, "I entered a Christian upon Aboo 'Abdullaah and the Christian said to him, 'I have wished to see you for some years. Your presence is not just beneficial for Islaam alone, but rather for all creation, and there is no one from our companions except that he is pleased with you.' So I said to Aboo 'Abdullaah, 'I hope that supplication is made for you in all towns.' So he said, 'O Aboo Bakr, when a man knows his own self, speech of the people is of no benefit to him.'"

'Abbaas ad-Dooree said, "'Alee ibn Fazaarah, our neighbour, narrated to us, saying, 'My mother had been unable to walk for about twenty years, then one day she said to me, 'Go to Ahmad ibn Hanbal and ask him to supplicate for me.' So I went to him

¹⁰⁰ Soorah Taa-Haa (20):131.

and knocked his door and he was in his entrance hall. So he said, 'Who is there?' I said, 'A man whose mother has asked him to ask you to supplicate for her — she is crippled.' So I heard him reply as if he was angry, 'We have more need that she should supplicate for us.' So I left and then an old woman came out and said, 'You have left him and he (Imaam Ahmad) is supplicating for her.' So when I came to our house, and knocked the door my mother came out to me walking." Adh-Dhahabee said, "This event is reported from 'Abbaas by two reliable narrators,

Al-Marroodhee said, "Ahmad said to me, 'I have not written a hadeeth except that I have acted upon it, to the point that when it came to me that the Prophet (swallallahu alaihi wasallam) got himself cupped and gave Aboo Taybah a deenaar¹⁰¹ - I gave the blood-letter a deenaar when he cupped me.

'Abdullaah ibn Ahmad said, "I heard my father say, 'Ash-Shaafi'ee said, 'O Aboo 'Abdullaah, if a hadeeth is authentic with you then inform me of it so that I may return and act upon it. You are more knowledgeable of the authentic narrations than us. So if a narration is authentic, then inform me so that I can accept it, whether it is narrated from Koofah, Basrah, or Shaam.

Ibn Raahawaih said, "When Ahmad travelled to 'Ahdur-Razzaaq his money ran out. So he hired himself out to work for some camel-drivers until he reached San'aa. His companions offered him monetary assistance but he refused to accept it.

Yahyaa ibn Ma'een said, "I have not seen the like of Ahmad, we have accompanied him for fifty years, and he never boasted about anything from the good which he was characterised with."

¹⁰¹ Reported by al-Bukhaaree and Muslim.

'Abdullaah ibn Ahmad said, "My father used to recite a seventh of the Qur'aan every day and he would sleep briefly after 'Ishaa. Then he would arise and pray and supplicate until dawn."

Ahmad ad-Dawraquee said, "When Ahmad ibn Hanbal returned from 'Abdur-Razzaaq, I saw him looking very weak in Makkah and he was clearly tired out and exhausted. I spoke to him so he said, 'It is insignificant compared to the benefit we have taken from 'Abdur-Razzaaq'"

Al-Marroodhee said, "When Aboo 'Abdullaah remembered death, remembrance of it would take hold of him severely, and he would say, 'Fear prevents me from food and drink, and when I remember death all the affairs of this world become insignificant. It is just a matter of a small amount of food, sufficient clothing and a few limited days. I do not hold anything equal to poverty, and if I was able, I would go off so that people would not mention me.' And he said, 'I wish I could live unknown in the mountain-passes of Makkah. I have been tested with fame. indeed I wish for death day and night."

Ahmad said, "One who takes up theological rhetoric (kalaam) will not Prosper, and will not be free from becoming Jahmiyy."

Al-Marroodhee said, "I have not seen the poor honoured more highly than in the gathering of Ahmad. He would favour them, and be less inclined to the worldly people. He displayed gentleness forbearance and was not a hasty person. He was a person of great modesty and characterised by calmness and dignified bearing. When he sat in a gathering to deliver verdicts after 'Asr he would not speak until he was asked a question, and when he went out to his mosque he would not put himself in front of the people."

Aboo Bakr al-Marroodhee said, "Aboo 'Abdullaah would not behave ignorantly and if anyone treated him ignorantly then he would have patience and overlook it, and say, 'Allaah suffices.'

He was not a person who bore grudges and was not hasty.' He was very modest and of good character. He would always have a cheerful countenance and was gentle and affable, not coarse and harsh. He would love for Allaah's sake and hate for Allaah's sake. If something pertained to the Religion he would become very angry, and he would put up with the harm caused by neighbours."

Saalih ibn Ahmad said, "I often heard my father recite Sooratul-Kahf, and I often heard him say, 'O Allaah keep us safe, keep us safe.'"

Al-Marroodhee said, "I saw Aboo 'Abdullaah standing in Prayer with his due portion of recitation for about half of the night, until close to dawn, and I saw him praying in the time between Maghrib and 'Ishaa."

Ar-Ramaadee said, "I heard 'Abdur-Razzaaq, and when Ahmad was mentioned his eyes shed tears and he said, 'He came and it reached me that he had run out of money, so I took ten deenaars and offered them to him, so he smiled and said, 'O Aboo Bakr, if I accepted anything from the people I would accept from you.' But he would not accept anything from me."

Ahmad ibn Shihaah al-Isfaraayeneee said, "I heard Ahmad, when he was asked about whom we should hear and write narrations from on our way, say, 'Take from Hannaad and Sufyaan ibn Wakee', and in Makkah from Ibn Abee 'Umar. And beware of writing anything at all from anyone from the companions of innovated sects. Take from the companions of the narrations and sunnah,"

Concerning the Trial with Regards to the Qur'aan ¹⁰²

¹⁰² The saying that the Qur'aan is created was innovated by Bishr al-Mareeseee, and due to this innovation the Khaleefah ar-Rasheed swore that if he caught Bishr, he would kill him. However the Khaleefah al-Ma'moon studied theological rhetoric (kalaam) and was attended by

Saalih ibn Ahmad said, "I heard my father say, 'When we entered upon Ishaq ibn Ibraaheem to bhe tried he read to us the proclamation of the one who had gone to Tarus...' meaning al-Ma'moon, '...and from what he read out to us was: **"There is nothing like unto Him"**"¹⁰³

"He, the Creator of all things."¹⁰⁴

So I said: **"And He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer."**¹⁰⁵

Saalih said, "Then the people were tried, and those who refused to consent were threatened that they would be imprisoned. So all of the people consented except for four: my father, Muhammad ibn Nooh, al-Qawaareeree and al-Hasan ibn Hamaad Sajjaadah. Then these last two consented and my father and Muhammad remained in prison for some days. Then the order came from Tarus that they were to be brought in chains together."

'Abbaas ad-Dooree said: I heard Ja'far al-Anbaaree say, "When Ahmad was taken off to al-Ma'moon I heard of it, so I crossed the Euphrates and came to him, and found him sitting in a small room. I greeted him with salaam and he said, 'O Aboo Ja'far, you have troubled yourself.' So I said, 'Today you are a head whom the people follow, So, by Allaah, if you consent to the saying that the Qur'aan is created, then the rest of the people will consent to it. But if you refuse, then many people will refuse, and even if the man does not kill you then you will still die, and death is certain. So fear Allaah and do not consent.' So Ahmad began to weep, and say, just as Allaah

some of the heads of the Mutazilah who made this saying alluring to him, until he adopted it, called the people to it, and set up the trial (al-Mihnah) for it.

¹⁰³ Soorah ash-Shoorah (42): 11.

¹⁰⁴ Soorah al-An'aam (6):102

¹⁰⁵ Soorah ash-Shooraa (42): 11

wills.' Then he said, 'O Aboo Ja'far, repeat it to me.' So I repeated it to him, and he was saying, 'Just as Allaah wills

Al-Fadl ibn Ziyaad said, "I heard Ahmad ibn Hanbal - on the first day that Ishaq tried him, after he (i.e., Ishaq) left, and that was in Jumaadal-Aakhirah of the year 218H. He sat at his place of Prayer, and a group of people asked him who had consented. It was as if this was a severe burden upon him so he said, 'Not one of our companions consented, and all praise is for Allaah.' Then he mentioned those who consented and those who agreed to most of what they wanted, and those who said, 'It is something done, and new.' 'He tried them each once, and he would try me twice. He said to me, 'What do you say about the Qur'aan?' So I said, 'The Speech of Allaah, not created.' So he made me sit at the side and then questioned the others. Then he brought me forward again and questioned me again and sought to use texts whose meanings were not directly manifest, so I said: **"There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer."**¹⁰⁶

So he said to me, 'What is as-Samee'al-Baseer?' So I said, 'That is what He, the Most High, said.'

Muhammad ibn Ibraaheem al-Booshanee said, "In ar-Raqqah they began to remind Aboo 'Abdullaah about the allowance of verbally affirming to save oneself, and the reports about that. So he replied, 'What will you do with the hadeeth of Khabbaab, 'Amongst those who came before you a man would be sawn in half, but that would not cause him to abandon his Religion.'¹⁰⁷ So we gave up hope regarding him.' And he said, 'I do not mind about imprisonment, since, it and my house are the same, nor about being beheaded, but rather I fear the trial of the whip.' So a fellow prisoner heard him and said, 'Don't be concerned, O Aboo 'Abdullaah, for it will only take two lashes, then after that

¹⁰⁶ Soorah ash-Shooraa (42): 11

¹⁰⁷ Reported by Ahmad, al-Bukhaaree and Aboo Daawood.

you won't notice the rest of them strike you.' So it was as if he felt at peace because of this."

Saalih ibn Ahmad said, "My father and Muhammad ibn Nooh were taken from Baghdaad in chains. So we went out with them to al-Anbaar. Then Aboo Bakr al-Ahwal asked my father, 'O Aboo 'Abdullaah, if you are threatened with the sword will you consent?' He replied, 'No.' Then they were taken, and I heard my father say, 'We came to ar-Rahbah, and we left there in the middle of the night, and a man came up to us and said, 'Which of you is Ahmad ibn Hanbal?' So it was said to him, 'This one.' So he said to the camel drivers, 'Steady on,' then he said, 'O you, how will it harm you if you are killed here and you enter into Paradise?' Then he said, 'I entrust you to Allaah's safe keeping,' and he departed. So I asked about him and it was said to me, 'He is a bedouin Arab from the tribe of Rabee'ah who makes clothes of fur in the desert. He is called Jaabir ibn 'Aamir, and is said to be a good person.'"

Ibraaheem ibn 'Abdullaah said, "Ahmad ibn Hanbal said, 'I did not hear a word since I fell into this affair stronger than the saying of the bedouin who spoke to me at Rahbah Tawq. He said, 'O Ahmad, if you die for the truth then you will die a martyr, and if you live, you will live in a praiseworthy state,' so that strengthened my heart.'"

The Death of al-Ma'moon who was Succeeded by al-Mu'tasim

Saalih ibn Ahmad said, "My father said, 'Then we proceeded to Adhana and left in the middle of the night. So when the town gate was opened a man declared, 'Good news! The man has died,' meaning al-Ma'moon. My father said, 'And I had supplicated to Allaah that I should not see him.'"

Saalih said, "So when my father and Muhammad ibn Nooh came to Tarsus, they were then sent back to ar-Raqqah, and were placed on board a boat. So when they reached 'Aanah,

Muhammad died, and his chains were removed and my father prayed over him.”

Hanbal said, “Aboo ‘Abdullaah said, ‘I did not see anyone, along with his young age and knowledge, who better stood firm for Allaah’s sake than Muhammad ibn Nooh. I hope that his actions were sealed with good. One day he said to me, ‘O Aboo ‘Abdullaah — for Allaah, for Allaah. you are not the same as me, you are a man who is followed. The people stretch their necks towards you to see what you will do. So fear Allaah, and be firm for Allaah’s sake,’ or the like of it. Then he died, and I prayed over him and buried him,’ I think he said, ‘In ‘Aanah

Saalih said, “And my father was taken to Baghdaad in chains and remained a few days in Yaasiriyyah. Then he was imprisoned in a house hired by the house of ‘Umaarah. Then he was moved to the general prison in Mawsiliyyah street, and he said, ‘I used to lead the prisoners in the Prayer and I was chained. Then in Ramadaan of the year 219H ...’ - I say, ‘that was after the death of al-Ma’mooti by fourteen months’ - ‘... I was moved to the house of Ishaq ibn Ibraaheem, i.e., the deputy of Baghdaad.

As for Hanbal, he said, “Aboo ‘Abdullaah was imprisoned in the house of ‘Umaarah in Baghdaad in the stable of the Amir Muhammad ibn Ibraaheem, the brother of Ishaq ibn Ibraaheem, and he was severely restricted in his imprisonment and fell ill in Ramadaan. Then after a short while he was moved to the general prison. He remained in prison for about thirty months. We used to come to him and he read the book al-Irjaa to me and other books while in the prison. I saw him lead them in the Prayer in chains. He would take his foot out of the main manacle at the times of Prayer and sleep.”

Saalih ibn Ahmad said, “My father said, ‘Each day two men would come to me, one called Ahmad ibn Ahmad ibn Rabaah and the other Aboo Shu’ayb at-Hajjaam. They would not cease debating with me, and when they finished they would call for

another shackle to be added to those already upon me, so that there were four upon my legs. Then on the third day he entered and debated with me, so I said, 'What do you say about Allaah's knowledge?' So he said, 'Created.' So I said, 'You have disbelieved in Allaah.' So the messenger who used to attend sent by Ishaaq ibn Ibraaheem said, 'This is a man sent by the AmeerulMu'mineen.' So I said, 'He has committed Unbelief.' Then on the fourth night al-Mu'tasim commanded Ishaaq to convey me to him, so I was entered upon Ishaaq. He said, 'O Ahmad, by Allaah, it is your life that you are to lose. He will not kill you with the sword. He desires, if you do not consent and agree with him, to lash you continually, and then to kill you in a place where you will see neither sun nor moon. Is it not the case that Allaah, the Most High, said:

"We verily have made it a Qur'aan in Arabic." ¹⁰⁸

Can something which is made, be anything but created?' So I said, 'Then Allaah, the Most High, said:

"And made them like an empty field of stalks (of which the corn has been eaten up by the cattle)."¹⁰⁹

Did he create them (like that)?' So he remained silent. Then when we came to the place known as 'The Gate of the Garden' I was taken out and placed upon a riding beast in my chains. There was nobody there to hold me, so more than once I nearly fell off upon my face due to the weight of the chains. So I was brought to the home of al-Mu'tasim and entered into a room. Then I was entered into a separate house, and the door was locked upon me, it was the middle of the night and there was no candle. I wanted to make wudoo, so I held out my hands and found a container of water and a basin. I made wudoo and prayed. Then in the morning I took out the draw-string of my trousers and tied my chains with it so that I could carry them, and I secured my trousers. Then the messenger of al-Mu'tasim

¹⁰⁸ Soorah az-Zukhruf (43):3.

¹⁰⁹ Soorah al-Feel (105):5

came and said, 'Respond to his call,' so he took my hand and entered me upon him and I was holding the draw-string in my hand, carrying the chains.

I came to him and he was sitting, and Ahmad ibn Abee Duwaad was present and had gathered a large number of his companions. So al-Mu'tasim said to me, 'Come close, come close,' and continued until I was near to him, then he said, 'Sit,' so I sat and the chains had become heavy for me. I remained for a while, and then I said, 'Do you permit me to speak?' So he said, 'Speak.' I said, 'What did Allaah and His Messenger call to?' So he remained silent for a short while, then said, 'To the testification that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah.' So I said, 'Then I testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah.' Then I said, 'Your grandfather Ibn 'Abbaas said, 'When the deputation of Abul-Qays came to Allaah's Messenger (swallallahu alaihi wasallam) they asked him about Eemaan, so he said, 'Do you know what Eemaan is?' So they said, 'Allaah and His Messenger know best.' He said, 'The testification that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah it, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allaah, and to establish the Prayer, and to give the Zakaat, and to give the fifth due from war-booty.'" ¹¹⁰ So he, i.e., al-Mu'tasim, said, 'If I had not found you held by the one who came before me I would not have taken you.' Then he said, 'O 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Ishaq did I not order you to cease the trial?' So I said, 'Allaah is greater! That would be a great relief for the Muslims.' Then he said to them, 'Debate with him, and speak to him, O 'Abdur-Rahrnaan, speak to him.' So he said, 'What do you say about the Qur'aan?' So I said, 'What do you say about Allaah's Knowledge?' So he remained silent. So one of them said to me, 'Has not Allaah, the Most High, said:

"Allaah is the Creator of all things." ¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Reported by al-Bukhaaree and Muslim

¹¹¹ Soorah ar-Ra'd (13):16

And is not the Qur'aan a thing?' So I said, 'Allaah says:

"Destroying everything." ¹¹²

So it destroyed everything except what Allaah willed (should not be destroyed).' So one of them said:

"Comes not unto them an admonition from their Lord as a recent revelation." ¹¹³

Can something come newly except that which is created?'

So I said: Saad. **By the Qur'aan full of reminding.** ¹¹⁴

So the adh-Dhikr is the Qur'aan, whereas that one has no al (i.e. is indefinite).' One of them then mentioned the hadeeth of 'Imraan ibn Husayn, 'Allaah created. the Dhikr ..., ¹¹⁵ so I said, 'This is a mistake, more than one person has narrated to us, 'Allaah wrote the Dhikr' And they sought to use the hadeeth of Ibn Mas'ood, 'Allaah did not create anything neither Paradise, nor Fire, nor heaven, Nor earth, greater than Aayatul-Kursce. ' So I said, 'The creation refers to the Paradise, the Fire, the heaven and the earth, and. not the Qur'aan.' So one of them said, 'The hadeeth of Khabbaah, 'O so and so, draw near to Allaah with whatever you are able to, and you ill not draw closer to Him with anything more beloved to Him than His Speech.' So I said, 'That is how it is.'

Saalih said, 'And Ibn Abee Duwaad was looking angrily at my father, and my father said, 'One would speak and I would rebut him, and another would speak and I would rebut him. Then when one of them was cut off, Ibn Abee Duwaad would butt in and say, O Ameerul-Mu'mineen, he is, by Allaah, astray, leading

¹¹² Soorah al-Ahqaaf (46):25

¹¹³ Soorah al-Anbiyaa (21):2

¹¹⁴ Soorah Saad (38):1

¹¹⁵ Reported by Bukharee

others astray, an innovator!' So he would say, 'Speak with him, debate' with him.' So one would speak to me and I would rebut him, and another would speak to me and I would rebut him. Then when they came to a standstill al-Mu'tasim would say, 'Woe to you, O Ahrnad, what are you saying?' So I would say, 'O AmeerulMu'mineen, give me something from the Book of Allaah, or the Sunnah of Allaah's Messenger (swallallahu alaihi wasallam), so that I may speak accordingly.' So Ahmad ibn Abee Duwaad said, 'You only say what is in the Book and the Sunnaah?' So I said to him, 'You are twisting my words and you know best about that, I have not said anything for which I should be imprisoned or chained.'

Hanbal said: Aboo 'Abdullaah said, 'They sought to say such evil things as a proof against me that my heart cannot retain them, nor can my tongue be brought to say them. They rejected the narrations, and I did not think they were upon this until I heard it, and they raised their voices, saying, 'The opponent says such and such. So I used the Qur'aan as a proof against their saying, with His Saying:

"O my father! Why do you worship that which hears not and sees not?"¹¹⁶

'Do you deny this?' So they said, 'He has made resemblance, O Ameerul-Mu'mineen, he has made resemblance.'

Muhammad ibn Ibraaheem al-Booshanee said, 'Some of our companions narrated to me that Ahmad ibn Abee Duwaad turned to Ahmad to speak to him, but he did not turn to him, so al-Mu'tasim said, 'O Ahmad, will you not speak to Aboo 'Abdullaah?' So I said, 'I do not know him to be from the people of knowledge so that I should speak to him.' Saalih said, 'Then al-Mu'tasim said, 'O Ahmad, by Allaah I wish well for you, and I am concerned for you just like my concern for my son Haaron.

¹¹⁶ Soorah Maryam (19):42.

So what do you say?' I said, 'Give me something from the Book of Allaah and the Sunnah of His Messenger.'

So when the meeting became very prolonged he became exasperated and ordered everyone to leave. He kept me back with 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Ishaq to speak to me, and he said, 'Woe to you! Respond to me!' And he said, 'Woe to you, had you not used to come to us?' So 'Abdur-Rahmaan said to him, 'O Ameerul-Mu'mineen, I have known him for thirty years, he holds obedience to you and Hajj and Jihaad along with you.' So he said, 'By Allaah! he is a person of knowledge, a scholar of understanding and it would not displease me for him to be along with me rebutting the false religions for me.' Then he said, 'Hadn't you used to know Saalih ar-Rasheedee?' I said, 'I have heard of him He said, 'He was my educator, and was sitting over there,' and he pointed to a corner of the house, 'but he asked me about the Qur'aan and disagreed with me, so I ordered that he be trampled on and dragged away! O Ahmad, give me some response that will contain the slightest relaxation — so that I may free you with my own hands.' I said, 'Give me something from the Book of Allaah and the Sunnah of His Messenger.' So the sitting became prolonged (and) so I was sent back again.

Then when it was after Maghrib two men from the companions of Ibn Abee Duwaad were sent to me to spend the night with me, and to debate and stay with me. So at the time for breaking the fast food was sent, they tried hard to persuade me to eat it, but I would not, and it was Ramadaan. Then in the night al-Mu'tasim sent Ibn Abee Duwaad to me and he said, 'The Ameerul-Mu'mineen says to you, 'What do you say?' So I gave the same answer as I had been giving previously. Thus Ibn Abee Duwaad said, 'By Allaah, your name was written down amongst the seven ¹¹⁷ but I erased it, and it grieved me that

¹¹⁷ i.e., Yahyaa ibn Ma'een, Ahoor Khaythamah, Ahmad ad-Dawraquee, al-Qawaareere, Sa'dawaih, Ahmad ibn Hanbal and it is said, Khalaf al-Makhzomee. Manaawibul-Imaam Ahmad of Ibnul-Jawzee.

they seized you. Then he said, 'The Ameerul-Mu'mineen has sworn that he will lash you again and again, and cast you into a place where you will not see the sun, and he said, 'If he responds to me, I will free him with my own hands.' Then he left. In the morning his messenger came and took me by the hand and lead me to him, and he said to them, 'Debate with him and speak to him.' So they debated with me and I rebutted them, and when they came with some innovated rhetoric not in the Book or the Sunnah I said, 'I do not know what this is.' So they said, 'O chief of the Believers, when he finds a proof against us he stays firm, and when we say anything to him he says, 'I do not know what this is.' He said, 'Then debate with him.' So a man said, 'O Ahmad, I see that you mention the ahaadeeth and take that as your position.' So I said, 'Then what do you say about His Saying:

"Allaah commands you as regards your children's (inheritance). To the male, a portion equal to that of two females." ¹¹⁸

He said, 'Allaah has particularised it to the Believers.' I said, 'What do you say if he is the killer or a slave?' So he was silent, and I used this as a proof against them since they used the apparent meaning of the Qur'aan as a proof, so when he said to me, 'I see that you take the ahaadeeth as your position' I used the Qur'aan as a proof, meaning the Sunnah particularised and made exception with regard to the murderer and the slave, and it took them out of the general ruling.' So this continued until close to midday. Then when he became exasperated he said that everyone should leave. Then he remained behind with me and with 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Ishaq, and continued speaking to me. Then he stood and entered his apartments and I was sent back.

On the third night it seemed as if something was going to be done with me on the next day, so I asked the guard to bring me a cord. He did so, and I tied my chains together with it and

¹¹⁸ Soorah an.Nisaa (4):11

returned the draw-string to my trousers for fear that something should happen which would cause me to become naked. Then on the next morning I was entered into the house, and it was full of people. So I was moved from place to place, and saw some men with swords and others with whips and other things. Hardly any of them had been present in the previous two days. When I reached him he said, 'Sit.' Then he said, 'Debate with him, speak with him.' So they debated with me. One would speak and I would rebut him, and my voice began to rise above their voices, so someone standing by me indicated to me with his hand. When the meeting became prolonged he called me to one side and spoke to me in private, and he said to me, 'Woe to you, O Ahmad! Respond to me so that I may free you with my own hands,' so I replied to him as before, so he said, 'Upon you be...' and he mentioned a curse, 'Seize him, drag him off and strip off his outer garment. So I was dragged off and my outer garment was removed. I had a hair from the hair of the Prophet (swallallahu alaihi wasallam) in the sleeve of my shirt, so Ishaq ibn Ibraaheem turned to me and said, 'What is this small pouch?' I said, 'A hair from the hair of Allaah's Messenger (swallallahu alaihi wasallam),' some of them rushed to tear the shirt away from me, (but) al-Mu'tasim said, 'Do not tear it.' So it was taken off and I think that the shirt was not ripped off because of the hair. Then al-Mu'tasim sat upon his seat and he said, 'Bring the flogging posts and the whips.' So the flogging posts were brought forward and my arms were stretched, and someone behind me said, 'Seize the two pommels of the frame and hold them tightly,' but I didn't understand what he said, so my arms became dislocated.'

Muhammad ibn Ibraaheem al-Booshanjee said, 'They mention that when al-Mu'tasim saw them tie Ahmad to the flogging posts, and he saw how he remained firm and resolute he felt like relenting, until Ahmad ibn Abee Duwaad incited him and said, 'O Ameerul-Mu'mineen, if you leave him it will be said, 'He has renounced the view of al-Ma'moon,' and he caused him to become angry, so that provoked him to continue with the lashing.'

Saalih said, "My father said, 'When they brought the whips al-Mu'tasim examined them and said, 'Bring me different ones.' Then he said to those who were to perform the lashing, 'Come forward.' Each of them would come forward and lash me twice, and he would say to him, 'Strike him with severity, may Allaah cut off you hand!' Then he would move aside and another would step forward and lash me twice, and every time he would say, 'Strike him with severity, may Allaah cut off your hand!' Then after they had given me seventeen lashes al-Mu'tasim came up to me, and said, 'O Ahmad, why are you killing yourself? By Allaah, I feel sympathy for you,' and 'Ujayf was prodding me with the hilt of his sword, saying, 'Do you wish to get the better of all these people?' Others said, 'Woe to you! Your ruler is standing at your head,' and others said, 'O Ameerul-Mu'mineen, I will take the responsibility of his blood, kill him,' and they said, 'O Chief of the Believers, you are fasting and you are standing in the sun!'

He said to me, 'Woe to you Ahmad, what do you have to say?' So I said, 'Give me something from the Book of Allaah or the Sunnah of Allaah's Messenger, so that I should speak accordingly.' Thus he returned and sat down and said to those with the whips, 'Come forward, and cause severe pain, may Allaah cut off your hand.' Then he stood up again and said, 'Woe to you Ahmad, respond to me. So they turned to me and said, 'O Ahmad, your ruler is standing before you!' And 'Abdur-Rahmaan said, 'Who from your companions has done as you have done regarding this matter?'

And al-Mu'tasim was saying, 'Give me even the slightest agreement so that I may set you free with my own hands.' Then he went back and said to those with the whips, 'Come forward.' So each would come forward and lash me twice and then move away and each time he would say, 'With force, may Allaah cut off your hand,' eventually I lost consciousness. Then I came around and the chains had been removed from me. A man who had been present said, "We threw you down upon

your face, and threw a mat upon your back and trampled upon you,' and I was not aware of that. Then they brought me gruel and said, 'Drink it and vomit. So I said, 'I will not break my fast.' I was taken to the house of Ishaq ibn Ibraaheem and it became time for the Zuhr Prayer, so Ibn Samaa'ah went forward and led the Prayer. When he completed the Prayer he said to me, 'You prayed when blood was flowing upon your clothes? So I said, "Umar prayed and his wound was pouring blood forth."¹¹⁹

Saalih said, 'Then he was left alone and allowed to return home. He had remained in prison from the time he was taken until he was lashed and released for twenty-eight months. One of the two men who was along with him said, 'O son of my brother, may Allaah have mercy upon Aboo 'Abdullaah. By Allaah, I have never seen anyone like him. I kept saying to him at the time food was brought to us, 'O Aboo 'Abdullaah you are fasting in a place where you have excuse,' and he was very thirsty, so he said to the person in charge of drinking water, 'Give me some.' So he gave him a bowl containing water and ice, he took it and looked into it, but then returned it without drinking. I was amazed at his patience in putting up with hunger and thirst in that frightful condition.'

Saalih said, 'So I used to try by various means to get food through to him, or at least some bread, during those days — but I was unable. A man who was present with him informed me that he had no food during those three days when they debated with him, but he didn't make a slip with regard to a single word. He said, 'And I didn't think that anyone could have the courage and strength of heart that he did.'

Hanbal said, "I heard Aboo 'Abdullaah say, 'I became unconscious a number of times, and when the lashing stopped I came around. When I became limp and dropped, the lashing was halted and this happened a number of times, and I saw

¹¹⁹ Reported in al-Muwatta of Imaam Maalik

him, (meaning al-Mu'tasim), sitting in the sun without shade and I heard him say to Aboo Duwaad, when I came around, 'I have earned a great sin for what I have done to this man.' So he replied, 'O Ameerul-Mu'mineen, he is, by Allaah, an Unbeliever, a Mushrik. He has committed shirk in more than one way.' He continued speaking with him until he dissuaded him from what he wanted to do, and he had wanted to release me without lashing me, but he (Ibn Abee Duwaad) and Ishaaq ibn Ibraaheem would not leave it at that."

Hanbal said, "And it reached me that at-Mu'tasim said to Ibn Abee Duwaad after Aboo 'Abdullaah was lashed, 'How many lashes did he receive?' So he said, 'Thirty four or so.

Abul-Fadl Saalih said, "He was released and allowed home and was taken to the cellar. One who specialised in wounds and their treatment was brought in, and he said, 'I have seen men who have received a thousand lashes, but I have never seen a case as bad as this...' and he would come to treat him. His face had been struck more than once, and he remained flat upon his face for as long as Allaah willed. Then the man said to him, 'There is some flesh here which I must cut,' so he brought an iron tool and would hold the flesh with it and cut it with a knife, and Ahmad bore all of this, only raising his voice with praise of Allaah, and he was cured. However he continued to feel pain in some places, and the marks of the lashing were clearly visible on his hack until he died."

At-Tufaawee said, 'O Aboo 'Abdullaah, the common people hold you in esteem. So he said, I praise and thank Allaah for my Religion, indeed this is the just Religion. If I had said what they wanted, I would have committed Unbelief.' So at-Tufaawee said, 'Inform me about what they did to you. So he said, 'When they lashed me, I started to remember the saying of the bedouin Arab. Then the one with the very long heard, meaning 'Ujayf, came and struck rue with the hilt of his sword. Then when that came about I said, 'Relief has come, he is about to behead me, and so I may be at peace.' And Ibn Samaa'ah said,

'O Ameerul-Mu'mineen, strike his neck, and I will take responsibility for the shedding of his blood.'

So Ibn Abee Duwaad said, 'Do not do that, since if he is killed or (lies in your home the people will say that he stayed patient until death, so the people will take him as one to be followed, and they will remain upon what they are upon. Rather release him now, so that if he dies outside your house the people will be unsure of what occurred, some will say, 'He responded' and some will say, 'He did not respond.' So at-Tufaawee said, 'How could it have harmed you if you had said it?' Aboo 'Abdullaah said, 'if I had said it I would have been guilty of Unbelief.'

Aboo Zur'ah said, 'Al-Mu'tasim called for the paternal uncle of Ahmad and then said to the people, 'Do you recongnise him?' They said, 'Yes, he is Ahmad ibn Hanbal.' He said, 'Then look at him, is he not sound and healthy in his body?' So they said, 'Yes.' If he had not done this I would have feared that something very serious [i.e., revolt] would have occurred for him. So when he said, 'Then I am handing him over sound and healthy in his body,' the people became calm and settled down.'

Hanbal said, 'And I heard him [i.e., Ahmad] say, 'Everyone who spoke against me, then I have pardoned him except for an innovator, and I have pardoned Aboo Ishaaq, meaning, al-Mu'tasim, since I see that Allaah says:

"Let them pardon and forgive. Do you not love that Allaah should forgive you?"¹²⁰

and the Prophet (swallallahu alaihi wasallam) ordered Aboo Bakr to pardon in the case of Mistah - and how would it benefit you that Allaah should punish your Muslim brother because of you?'

¹²⁰ Soorah an-Noor (24):22

Ibn Abee Ya'laa reports in his *Tabaqaatul-Hanaabilah* ¹²¹, 1/163-167, from Sulaymaan ibn 'Abdullaah as-Sijzee (who said), "I came to the door of al-Mu'tasim and saw that the people had crowded together at his door, as if it was the day of 'Eed. I entered the place and saw a spread out carpet and a chair that had been thrown on the floor. I stood facing the chair and whilst I was standing, al-Mu'tasim approached and sat on the chair. He removed his shoes from his feet and placed one foot on top of the other. Then he said, 'Let Imaam Ahmad be present,' so he was brought out in his presence. After Imaam Ahmad had stood in front of him and greeted him he (al-Mu'tasim) said, 'O Ahmad, speak and do not be afraid.' So Imaam Ahmad said, "By Allaah, O AmeerubMu'mineen, I have just entered upon you and there is not a seed's weight of anxiety in my heart."

Al-Mu'tasim said to him, 'What do you say about the Qur'aan?'

He said, "The speech of Allaah, eternal, not created. Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, said: **"And if anyone of the Mushrikeen seeks your protection, then grant him protection, so that he may hear the Word of Allaah (the Qur'aan)."** ¹²²

So he said, 'Do you have a proof other than this?'

Imaam Ahmad replied, "Yes, O Ameerul-Mu'mineen, the saying of Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic:

"Ar-Rahmaan. He taught you (mankind) the Qur'aan." ¹²³

And He did not say: 'Ar-Rahmaan. He created the Qur'aan.' And His saying, the Mighty and Majestic:

¹²¹ With the verification and checking of Fawwaaz Ahmad Zumarlee

¹²² Soorah at-Tawbah (9):6

¹²³ Soorah ar-Rahmaan (55):1-2

“Yaa seen. By the Qur’aan, full of wisdom” ¹²⁴

And He did not say: ‘Yaa Seen. By the Qur’aan (that is) created.’

So al-Mu’tasim said, ‘Imprison him.’ So he was imprisoned and the people dispersed. When I arose (the next morning) I made my way to the door (of al-Mu’tasim) and the people were entering, so I entered along with them. Al-Mu’tasim approached and sat on his chair and said, ‘Bring Ahmad ibn Hanbal,’ and so he was brought. When he stood in front of him, al-Mu’tasim said to him, ‘How were you in your cell yesterday, O Ahmad?’

Imaam Ahmad said, “In goodness, and all praises are due to Allaah, except that in my cell, O Ameerul-Mu’mineen, I saw something amazing.”

He said to him, ‘And what did you see?’ So he replied, “I arose in the middle of the night, performed ablution for the prayer and prayed two rak’ahs. In one rak’ah I recited: ‘Al.Hamdulillaah ...’ and ‘QulA’oodhu bi-Rabbin.Naas,’ and in the second rak’ah: ‘Alhamdulillaah ...’ and ‘Qul.A’oodhu bi-Rabbil-Falaq.’ Then I sat down, read the tashahhud and gave salutation (to my right and left). Then I stood (again), made the takbeer and recited: ‘Alhamdulillaah ...’ and then I desired to read: ‘Qul-Huwallaahu-Ahad,’ and I was not able. I tried hard to read something else from the Qur’aan and I was not able. . Then I stretched my eyes to the corner of the prison and (behold) I saw the Qur’aan laid out (on the floor), dead. So I washed it and shrouded it, then prayed over it and buried it.”

So al-Mu’tasim said, ‘Woe be to you, O Ahmad, and does the Qur’aan die!?’ So Ahmad said to him, “Well, that is what you say — that it is created. And everything that is created dies.” Al-Mu’tasim said, ‘Ahmad has subdued us, Ahmad has subdued us.’

¹²⁴ Soorah Yaa Seen (36): 1-2

Then Ibn Abee Duwaad and Bishr al-Mareesee said, 'Kill him, so that we can rest (in his absence).' Al-Mu'tasim said, 'I have pledged to Allaah that I will not kill him with a sword and that I will not order for him to be killed with a sword.' Ibn Abee Duwaad said to him, '(Then) lash him with a whip.' So al-Mu'tasim said, 'Yes,' and then said, 'Bring the executioners,' and so they were brought.

Al-Mu'tasim said to one of them, 'With how many lashes will you kill him?' He said, 'With ten, O Ameerul-Mu'mineen.' Then he replied, 'Take him to yourself (beat him).'

Sulaymaan as-Sijzee continued, 'So Imaam Ahmad was undressed and made to wear a garment of wool around his waist. Two new ropes were drawn tight around his hands. The man took the whip in his hand and said, 'Shall I strike him, O Ameerul-Mu'mineen?'

Al-Mu'tasim said, 'Strike him,' and he struck him with one lash. Imaam Ahmad said, "All praise is due to Allaah" Then he lashed him a second time and Imaam Ahmad said, "Whatever Allaah will occurs." Then he struck him a third time and Imaam Ahmad said, "There is no movement nor power save that of Allaah, the Most High, the Mighty."

When the man desired to strike him a fourth time I looked at the garment around his waist and it had become loose. He wished that he should fall to the ground, so he raised his head towards the sky and moved his lips — and suddenly the earth shook and two hands came out of it, and supported his weight, by the power of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic.

When al-Mu'tasim saw that he said, 'Leave him,' then Ibn Abee Duwaad came to him and said, 'O Ahmad, say in my ear: 'The Qur'aan is created,' So that I may save you from the hand of the khaleefah.' So Imaam Ahmad said to him, "O Ibn Abee Duwaad, say in my ear: 'The Qur'aan is the Speech of Allah, it

is not created,' so that I save you from the punishment of Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic." Al-Mu'tasim then said, 'Place him into the prison.'

Sulaymaan said, 'He was then carried to the prison and the people departed, so I departed with them. Then when the next day arrived the people came (to the door of al-Mu'tasim) so I came with them and stood in front of the chair. Then al-Mu'tasim appeared and sat on the chair and said, 'Bring Ahmad ibn Hanbal.' So he was brought and when he stood in front of him al-Mu'tasim said to him, 'How were you in your cell during the night, O son of Hanbal?'

He said, "In goodness, and all praises are due to Allaah." Al-Mu'tasim said, 'O Ahmad, I saw a dream yesterday.' He said, "And what did you see, O Ameerul-Mu'mineen?" He said, 'I saw in my dream as if there were two lions approaching me and they desired to tear me apart. And then two angels appeared and repelled them from me. They gave me a hook and said to me, 'This written (piece) is the dream that Ahmad ibn Hanbal saw in his cell.' So what is it that you saw, O son of Hanbal?'

So Ahmad faced al-Mu'tasim and said, "O Ameerul-Mu'mineen, is the book with you?" He said, "Yes, and when I awoke, I read what was in it.

So Ahmad said to him, "O Ameerul-Mu'mineen, I saw as if the Day of Judgement had been established, and as if Allaah had gathered the first and the last (of people) in a single plain and He was calling them to account. Whilst I was standing, I was called for, so I proceeded until I stood in front of Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, and He said to me, 'O Ahmad, for what were you beaten?' I said, "On account of the Qur'aan." He said, "And what is the Qur'aan?" I said, "Your words, O Allaah, belonging to You." He said, 'From where do you (derive and) say this?' I said, "O Lord, 'Abdur-Razzaaq narrated to me." So 'AbdurRazzaaq was called for and he was brought, until he was made to stand in front of Allaah, the Mighty and Magnificent,

and He said to him, 'What do you say about the Qur'aan, O 'Abdur-Razzaaq?'

He said, 'Your words, O Allaah, belonging to You,' so Allaah said, 'From where do you (derive and) say this?' He said, 'Ma'mar narrated to me.' So Ma'mar was called for and he was brought, until he was made to stand in front of Allaah, the Mighty and Magnificent, and He said to him, 'What do you say about the Qur'aan, O Ma'mar?'

He said, 'Your words, O Allaah, belonging to You,' so Allaah said, 'From where do you (derive and) say this?' He said, 'Az-Zuhree narrated to me.' So az-Zuhree was called for and he was Brought, until he was made to stand in front of Allaah, the Mighty and Magnificent, and He said to him, 'What do you say about the Qur'aan, O Zuhree?'

He said, 'Your words, O Allaah, belonging to You,' So Allaah said, 'From where do you (derive and) say this?' He said, 'Urwah narrated to me.' So 'Urwah was brought, and He said to him, 'What do you say about the Qur'aan?' He said, 'Your Words, O Allaah, belonging to You,' so Allaah said, 'O 'Urwah, from where do you (derive and) say this?' He said, 'Aa'ishah, the daughter of Aboo Bakr as-Siddeeq, narrated to me.'

So 'Aa'ishah was called for and she was brought, until she was made to stand in front of Allaah, the Mighty and Magnificent, and He said to her, 'What do you say about the Qur'aan, O 'Aa'ishah?' She said, 'Your words, O Allaah, belonging to You,' so Allaah said, 'From where do you (derive and) say this?' She said, 'Your Prophet Muhammad (swallallahu alaihi wasallam) narrated to me.'

He said, 'So Muhammad (swallallahu alaihi wasallam) was called for and he was brought, until he was made to stand in front of Allaah, the Mighty and Magnificent, and He said to him, 'What do you say about the Qur'aan, O Muhammad?' He said, 'Your words, O Allaah, belonging to You,' so Allaah said, 'From

where has this come to you?' So the Prophet (swallallahu alaihi wasallam) said, 'Jibreel narrated to me.'

So Jibreel was called for and he was brought, until he was made to stand in front of Allaah, the Mighty and Magnificent, and He said to him, 'What do you say about the Qur'aan, O Jibreel?' He said, 'Your words, O Allaah belonging to You,' so Allaah said, 'From where has this come to you?' He said, 'Such did Israafeel narrate to me.'

So Israafeel was called for and he was brought, until he was made to stand in front of Allaah, the Mighty and Magnificent, and Allaah, the Sublime, said to him, 'What do you say about the Qur'aan, O Israafeel?' He said, 'Your words, O Allaah, belonging to You,' so Allaah said, 'From where has this come to you?' He said, 'I saw that in the Lawhul-Mahfooz (the Preserved Tablet).'

So the Preserved Tablet was brought and stood in front of Allaah, the Mighty and Magnificent, and He said, 'O Lawh, what do you say about the Qur'aan?' And it said, 'Your words, O Allaah, belonging to You.' Then Allaah, the Exalted said, 'From where has this come to you?' And the Lawh said, 'Such did the Qalam (the Pen) inscribe upon me.'

Then the Pen was brought until it stood in front of Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, so Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, said to it, 'O Qalam, what do you say about the Qur'aan?' The Qalam said, 'Your words, O Allaah, belonging to You.' So Allaah said, 'From where has this come to you?'

The Qalam said — 'You dictated and I wrote.'

Then Allaah, the Mighty and Magnificent, said, 'The Qalam has spoken the truth. The Lawh has spoken the truth. Israafeel has spoken the truth. Jibreel has spoken the truth. Muhammad has spoken the truth. 'Aa'ishah has spoken the truth. 'Urwah has spoken the truth. Az-Zuhree has spoken the truth. Ma'mar has

spoken the truth. 'Abdur-Razzaq has spoken the truth. Ahmad ibn Hanbal has spoken the truth. The Qur'aan is My Speech, it is not created.'

Sulaymaan as-Sijzee said, 'Al-Mu'tasim leapt upon hearing that and said, 'You have spoken the truth, O son of Hanbal.' Then al-Mu'tasim repented, ordered the necks of Bishr al-Mareesee and Ibn Abee Duwaad to be beaten and revered Ahmad ibn Hanbal and bestowed upon him, but (Ahmad) refrained from that. He was then ordered to be taken to his house and was taken.'

The Trial of Waathiq

Hanbal said, 'After Aboo 'Abdullaah recovered from the lashing he would attend the Jumu'ah and Congregational Prayers. We would narrate ahaadeeth and deliver verdicts until al-Mu'tasim died and his son al-Waathiq became the ruler. He then manifested the trial with regard to the Qur'aan and his attachment to Ahmad ibn Abee Duwaad and his companions. So when the affair became severe for the people of Baghdaad, and the judges tried people regarding the Qur'aan and Anmaatee was forcibly separated from his wife because of it, likewise with regard to Aboo Saalih and his wife. Then Aboo 'Abdullaah would be present for the Jumu'ah, but would repeat the Prayer when he returned home, and say, 'The people should go to the Jumu'ah for its excellence, but the Prayer is to be repeated when said behind one who holds this saying (i.e., that the Qur'aan is created).'

A group of people came to Aboo 'Abdullaah and said, 'This matter has grown widespread and very serious, and we fear that he will bring worse. They mentioned Ibn Abee Duwaad, and he is about to order the teachers to teach to the children in the schools, 'The Qur'aan is so and so ...,' so we are opposed to him continuing as the ruler. So Ahmad forbade them from that and debated with them, and he made clear what was necessary, and he ordered them to have patience.

Then in the days of al-Waathiq, Ya'qoob came during the night with a message from the Emir Ishaq ibn Ibraaheem to Aboo 'Abdullaah, 'The Emir says to you, 'The Ameerul-Mu'mineen has made a mention of you, so no one should be seen to meet with you, and nor should you live in a land or town which I am in, so go wherever you wish upon Allaah's earth. So Aboo 'Abdullaah went into a state of hiding for the rest of the life of al-Waathiq, and that tribulation occurred, and the killing of Ahmad ibn Nasr al-Khuzaa'ee. So Aboo 'Abdullaah remained in hiding in a house and would not go out for the Prayer or for other reasons until al-Waathiq died.'

Ibraaheem ibn Haani said, 'Aboo 'Abdullaah remained in hiding with me for three days, and then said, 'Find me another place.' So I said, 'I do not feel safe for you.' He said, 'Do so, since I release you from any blame.' I found somewhere else for him, so when he left he said, 'Allaah's Messenger (swallallahu alaihi wasallam) remained in hiding in the cave for three days, and then he moved on, and it is not fitting that we should follow the Sunnah of Allaah's Messenger (swallallahu alaihi wasallam) in times of ease, and abandon it in times of hardship.'

The Condition of Imaam Ahmad during the Rule of Al-Mutawakki

Hanbal said, 'Then al-Mutawakkil Ja'far assumed power, Allaah made the Sunnah manifest, and relieved the people. Aboo 'Abdullaah narrated to us, and narrated to his companions during the time of al-Mutawakkil, and he said, 'The people were never in greater need of the hadeeth and knowledge than they are in our time.'

Saalih ibn Ahmad said, 'My father said to me, 'Ishaq ibn Ibraaheem said to me, 'Forgive me for being present at your hashing,' so I said, 'I have already forgiven all of those present.' He said to me, 'From where have you said that it is not created?'

So I said, 'Allaah said: **"Surely, His is the Creation and Commandment."**¹²⁵

So He distinguished between creation and command.' Ishaaq said, 'The command is created.' So he said, 'O how free is Allaah from all imperfections! Something created which itself creates creation?!' I said (meaning), 'The created things were created through His command, which is His Saying:

Be!¹²⁶

He said, 'Then he said to me, 'Who do you report the saying that it is not created from?' So I said, 'From Ja'far ibn Muhammad who said, 'It is neither a creator, nor is it created.

Ahoo Daawood said, "I heard Ahmad ibn Hanbal say, Eemaan is speech and action, it increases and decreases. All of good is from Eemaan, and sins reduce Eemaan."

Ismaa'eel ibn al-Hasan as-Siraaj said, "I asked Ahmad about one who says that the Qur'aan is created,' so he said, 'He is an Unbeliever,' and about one who says, 'My recital of the Qur'aan is created,' so he said, 'He is a Jahmee.'

Adh-Dhahabee said, "The matter as it was established is that Aboo 'Abdullaah used to say, 'Whoever says that my recital of the Qur'aan is not created is an innovator,' and he used to say, 'Whoever says that my recital of the Qur'aan is created, then he is a Jahmee.'

So he (rahimahumullah) did not say either of the two. Sometimes he would clarify that by saying, 'Whoever says, 'My recital of the Qur'aan is created,' meaning by that the Qur'aan, then he is a Jahmee."

¹²⁵ Soorah al-A'raaf (7):54.

¹²⁶ Soorah al-An'aam (6):73

Ahmad ibn Zanjawaih said, "I heard Ahmad say, 'The Lafziyyah (i.e., those who say, 'My recital of the Qur'aan is created) are worse than the Jahmiyyah.

Saalih said, "I heard my father say, 'The Jahmiyyah are three sects: A sect who say that 'the Qur'aan is created,' and a sect who say, 'It is the speech of Allaah and then remain silent,' and a sect who say, 'Our recital of it is created.' Then he said, 'One should not (even) pray behind those who withhold and remain silent, nor those who say that their recital is created.

Al-Marroodhee said, "I informed Aboo 'Abdullaah that Aboo Shu'ay as-Soosee ar-Raqqee separated between his daughter and her husband when he withheld with regard to the Qur'aan, so he said, 'He did well, may Allaah protect and keep him well,' and he started to supplicate for him."

Al-Marroodhee said, "When Ya'qoob ibn Shaybah manifested withholding from making a clear statement regarding the Qur'aan (al-waqf] Aboo 'Abdullaah warned the people against him and ordered that he should be cut off from. There are many narrations from Aboo 'Abdullaah about the question of the persons recital. So the first one who manifested the question of a persons recital was Husayn ibn 'Alee al-Karaabeesee, who was a storehouse of knowledge, and he wrote a book about the Mudalliseen, attacking a group of people in it, and saying that Ibn az-Zubayr was one of the Khawaarij. It contains narrations, which the Raafidah use to support themselves. Ahmad was informed of him, so he warned against him. This reached al-Karaabeesee so he became furious and said, 'I will say something so that Ibn Hanbal will say the opposite and become an Unbeliever,' thus he said, 'My recital of the Qur'aan is created.' And al-Marroodhee mentions in the book, al-Qasas, 'So I mentioned to Aboo 'Abdullaah that al-Karaabeesee said, 'My recital of the Qur'aan is created,' and that he said, 'I say that the Qur'aan is uncreated in all aspects, except that my recital of it is created, and whoever does not

say, 'My recital of the Qur'aan is created' is an Unbeliever' So Aboo 'Abdullaah said, 'Rather he is the unbeliever, may Allaah kill him. What is the saying of the Jahmiyyah except this? How can it benefit him, when the last part of his saying contradicts the first part?!' Then he said, 'What is the news from Aboo Tlrawr, has he agreed with him "upon this?' So I said, 'He has deserted him.' So he said, 'He has done well, the people of theological rhetoric (kalaam) will never Prosper.'"

Ahmad ad-Dawraquee said, "I said to Abinad ibn Hanhal, What do you say about those who say, 'My recital of the Qur'aan is created? So I saw that he sat up and said, 'This is more evil than the saying of the Jahmiyyah. Whoever claims this has claimed that Jibreel spoke with that which is created, and came to the Prophet (swallallahu alaihi wasallam) with that which is created.

Hanbal said, "I heard Aboo 'Abdullaah say, 'Whoever loves rhetoric (kalaam) will not prosper. Since their affair leads only to total confusion. Stick to the Sunnah and the hadeeth, and beware of delving into disputation and argumentation. We reached the people and they did not know this rhetoric. In its result it does not lead to good.

Al-Mayrnoon said, "Ahmad said to me, 'O Abul-Hasan, beware of speaking about a matter for which you have no one Preceding you in it. Al-Marroodhee said, "I said to Aboo 'Abdullaah, 'One who dies upon Islaam and the Sunnah, dies upon good?' So he said, 'Be quiet — rather he dies upon all good."

Al-Fadl ibn Ziyaad said, "I heard Ahmad ibn Hanbal say, 'Whoever rejects the hadeeth of Allaah's Messenger (swallallahu alaihi wasallam) is on the brink of destruction

Aboo Muzaahim al-Khaaqaanee said, "My paternal uncle, 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Yahyaa ibn Khaaqaan said to me, 'Al--Mutawakkil ordered that Ahmad should be asked about those

who should he appointed as judges, so I asked my uncle to obtain and to send his reply to me, so he sent me his letter:

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy. I showed the original letter to Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Hanbal, after asking him, so he replied to me with what I have written. I asked about Ahmad ibn Rabaah, so he said about him, "A well-know Jahmee, if he is put in charge of any of the affairs of the Muslims he will cause great harm.' And I asked him about al-Khalanje, so he said about him, 'Likewise.' And I asked him about Shu'ayb ibn Sahl, so he said, "A Jahmee, well-known for that.' I asked him about 'Ubaydulaah ibn Ahmad, so he said, 'Likewise.' And I asked him about the one well-known as Aboo Shu'ayb, so he said, 'Likewise.' I asked him about Muhammad ibn Mansoor, the judge of al-Ahwaaz, so he said, 'He was with Ibn Abee Duwaad, along with him and his works, except that he was one of the better ones of then..." And I asked him about 'Alee ibn Ja'a'd, so he said, 'He used to be well-known for being a Jahmee, then it reached me that he left that.' And I asked him about al-Fath ibn Sahl, so he said, "A Jahmee, from the companions of al-Mareesee.' I asked him about ath-Thaljee, so he said, "An innovator, a follower of desires.' I asked him about Ibraaheem ibn 'Attaab, so he said, 'I do not know him except that he was from the companions of Bishr al Mareesee. And in general with regard to the people innovation and sects and desires, then it is not correct that we should seek their help in any of the affair of the Muslims — along with the view of the Ameerul-Mu'mineen, may Allaah lengthen his presence, along with adherence to the Sunnah and opposition to the people of innovation.' Ahmad Ibn Muhammad ibn Hanbal says, "Ahdur-Rahmaan Ibn Yahyaa has asked me about everything in this letter and I have answered him with what he has written, and I have illness in my eyes and weakness in my body, so I was notable to write with my own hands so this signature at the foot of the page is that of Abdullah's son, as ordered by me and in front of me.

'Abdul-Maalik al-Maymoonee said, "I never saw the turban of Aboo 'Abdullaah except wrapped beneath his throat, and I saw that he hated other than that."

Saalih ibn Ahmad said, "I went along with my father to the congregational mosque on the day of Jumu'ah, and we found that the people were leaving. So he entered the mosque, and Ibraaheem ibn Haani was with us, so my father went forward and lead us in the Zuhr Prayer with four rak'ahs. And he said, 'Ibn Mas'ood did this with 'Alqamah and al-Aswad.' And when my father entered a graveyard he would take off his shoes and carry them in his hand."

Muhammad ibn Ismaa'eel at-Tirnidhee said, "I and Ahmad ibn al-Hasan at-Tirmidhee were with Ahmad ibn Hanbal. So Ahmad said to him, 'O Aboo 'Ahdullaah, they mentioned the companions of hadeeth to Aboo Qutaylah in Makkah, so he said, 'The people of hadeeth are an evil people.' So Ahmad stood up shaking his robe and saying, 'An evil heretic, an evil heretic,' and he entered his house."

'Uthmaan ibn Sa'eed ad-Daarimee said, "I saw that Ahmad ibn Hanbal used to hold that it was hated for anyone to use the kunyah of Abul-Qaasim."

Hanbal ibn Ishaq said, "I asked Aboo 'Abdullaah about the ahaadeeth which are reported from the Prophet (swallallahu alaihi wasallam), 'Allaah descends to the lowest heaven...' so he said, 'We have eemaan in them and attest to the truth of them, and we do not reject anything from them if they are reported with authentic chains of narration. We do not reject the saying of Allaah's Messenger (swallallahu alaihi wasallam) and we know that what he brought was the truth.'"

Al-Muhtadee Billaah Muhammad ibn al-Waathiq said, "When my father (the khaleefah al-Waathiq) wanted to execute someone he would bring us out to be present. So he brought out a shaikh, whose beard was dyed and who was chained (i.e.,

Ahmad ibn Hanbal). Then my father said, 'Give permission for Aboo 'Abdullaah, meaning Ibn Abee Duwaad, and his companions to enter.' So the shaikh (i.e., Ahmad) was entered and said, 'As-Salaamu 'Alaikum, O Ameerul-Mu'mineen.' So he said, 'May Allaah not send blessings of peace upon you. So he said, 'O Ameerul-Mu'mineen, your teacher has indeed taught bad manners to you, Allaah, the Most High, says:

"When you are greeted with a greeting, greet in return with what is better than it, or (at least) return it equally."¹²⁷

So Ibn Abee Duwaad said, 'The man is a person of rhetoric.' He said, 'Speak with him,' so he said, 'O shaikh, what do you say about the Qur'aan?' So he said, 'You are not being fair with me, since I myself have a question.' He said, 'Ask.' He said, 'What do you say about the Qur'aan?' He said, 'It is created.' The shaikh said, 'Is this something which was known to the Prophet (swallallahu alaihi wasallam), and Aboo Bakr, and 'Umar and the rightly-guided khulafaa, or something which they did not know?' He said, 'It is something which they did not know.' So he said, 'How free is Allaah from all imperfections! Something which was not known by the Prophet (swallallahu alaihi wasallam), yet you have come to know it?' So he became ashamed and said, 'Bear with me a moment.' He said, 'Then the question stands.' So he said, 'Yes, they knew it.' So he said, 'They knew it and yet they did not call the people to it?' He said, 'Yes.' He said, 'Then does not what they sufficed with suffice you?' He said, 'So my father (i.e., al-Waathiq) stood up and entered a place of sitting and lay down and repeated, 'Something which the Prophet (swallallahu alaihi wasallam), Aboo Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmaan and 'Alee and the rightly-guided khulafaa did not know, and you have come to know it! How free is Allaah from all imperfections! Something which they knew, yet they did not call the people to it, then does not what sufficed them suffice you?!' Then he ordered that his chains be released, and that he be given four hundred deenaars, and be

¹²⁷ Soorah an-Nisaa (4):86

given permission to return, and Ibn Abee Duwaad fell down in his estimation, and after that he did not try anyone else.”

Humayd ibn `Abdur-Rahmaan ar-Ru'aasee said, “It is said that there was no one from amongst the Companions having closer resemblance in behavior and manners to the Prophet (swallallahu alaihi wasallam) than Ibn Mas'ood. And the person most resembling him was `Alqamah, and the person most resembling `Alqamah was Ibraaheem (i.e., an-Nakha'ee), and the person most resembling Ibraaheem was Mansoor ibn aI-Mu'tamir, and the person most resembling him was Sufyaan ath-Thawree, and the person most resembling him was Wakee', and the person most resembling him, according to what Muhammad Ibn Yoonus aI-Jammaal said, is Ahmad ibn Hanbal.”

Al-Maymoonee said, “I did not see anyone having a cleaner or a whiter garment than Ahmad.”

Ibn `Aqeel said, “One of the most surprising things that I have heard from the young and ignorant folk is their saying that Ahmad is not a scholar of Fiqh, but a scholar of hadeeth. And this is the limit of ignorance, since he had preferred sayings which he based upon ahaadeeth and are not known by most people, and he had things that were extra to that which the greater scholars had.”

Adh-Dhahabee said, “I say: I think they thought that he was just a muhaddith. Indeed they delude themselves by thinking that he was like the muhaddith of our time. By Allaah, in fiqh in

particular he reached the level of al-Layth, Maalik, ash-Shaafi'ee and Aboo Yoosuf. In zuhd and piety he reached the level of alFudayl and Ibraaheem ibn Adham and in memorization the level of Shu'bah, Yahyaa al-Qattaan and Ibn al-Madeenee. However the ignorant person does not know his own level, so how can he judge the level of others?"

Al-Maymoonee said, "The house of Aboo `Abdullaah was small and narrow, and when it was hot he would sleep in its lower part.

Al-Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn al-Haarith said, "I entered the house of Ahmad and found in the front room a worn out mat and a cushion, and his books spread about, and some earthenware pots, and it is said that his door consisted of a sack-cloth."

His Wives and Family

Zuhayr ibn Saalih ibn Ahmad said, "My grandfather married the mother of my father `Abbaasah, and had no children from her except for my father, then she died. Then after her he married Rayhaanah, a woman of the Arabs, and she bore him only my uncle `Abdullaah."

Al-Khallaal said, "I heard al-Marroodhee say, 'I heard Aboo `Abdullaah mention his wife, and supplicate for Allaah's mercy upon her, and he said, 'We remained together for twenty years and we didn't argue about a single thing, ' and we do not know Ahmad to have married a third wife."

Ya'qooh ibn Bukhtaan said, "Aboo 'Abdullaah asked us to buy a slave-girl for him, so I and Fawraan went off, and Aboo 'Abdullaah followed us and said, 'O Abo Yoosuf, she should be fleshy."

Zuhayr said, "When Umm 'Ahdullaah died my grandfather bought Husna, who bore him Umm 'Alee Zaynab and al-Hasan and aI-Husayn, twin brothers who both died shortly after birth. Then she gave birth to al-Hasan and Muhammad who both lived for about forty days, after them she gave birth to Sa'eed."

Al-Khallaal said: Muhammad ibn 'Alee ibn Bahr narrated to us saying: I heard Husna, the mother of the child of Aboo 'Abdullaah say, I said to my owner (i.e., Ahmad), 'Sell one of my anklets.' So he said, 'Would that be agreeable to you?' So I said, 'Yes.' So it was sold for eight and a half deenaars, and he spent that during my pregnancy. When I gave birth to Hasan my mistress gave a dirham as a gift, so he said, 'Buy a head (of cattle) with it, so she brought it and we ate, Then he said, 'O Husna, I do not possess anything besides this dirharn. ' She said, 'And when he had nothing at all he would be happy that day."

Adh-Dlahabee said, "The eldest of the sons of Ahmad ibn Hanbal was Saalih, who became the judge of Isbahaan, where he died in the year 265H at the age of sixty odd. He narrated from Abul Waleed at-Tayaalisee and senior scholars. And he (i.e. Saalih) left behind two sons: Zuhayr ibn Saalih, a reliable narrator of hadeeth, who died in the year 303H, and Ahmad Ibn Saalih, I do not know when he died; and his son Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Saalih narrated from him, and Muhammad died whilst middle aged in the year 330H. As for the second sort, then he was al-Haafiz Aboo 'Abdur-Rahmaan 'Abdullaah ibn Ahmad, the narrator from his father, one of the greater scholars. He died in the year 290H, at the age of 77 and I have written a separate biography for him. The third son was Sa'eed ibn Ahmad. He was born fifty days before the death of Ahmad,

so he grew up and attained knowledge, and died before his brother 'Abdullaah As for Hasan, Muhammad and Zaynah, then we do not know anything about them, and the descendants of Aboo 'Abdullaah came to an end as far as we know."

'Abdullaah said, "I heard my father say, 'I have completed seventy seven years and entered upon the seventy eighth,' and he began with a fever that night and died on the tenth day."

Saalih said, 'At the start of Rabee'ul Awwal of the year 241H my father suffered a fever on the night of Wednesday. He stayed in the house with the fever and his breathing was laboured and heavy. I was aware when he was weak and used to look after him when he became ill. So I said to him, 'O my father what did you break your fast upon last night?' So he said, 'Upon bean soup.' Then he wished to get up, so he said, 'Take my arms,' so I took his arm, but when he reached the toilet he was very weak and had to support himself by leaning upon me. More than one physician used to visit him, all of them Muslims. One physician prescribed that pumpkin should be boiled for him and he should be given the water to drink, this was on the day of Tuesday, and he died on the clay of Jumu'ah. He said, 'O Saalih,' I said, 'At your service,' he said, 'Do not boil it in your hours or in the house of your brother.' Then al-Fath ibn Sahl came to the door to visit him but I prevented him. Also Ibn 'Alee Ibn al-Ja'd came, but I prevented him, and many people came. He said, 'What do you think?' I said, 'That you should permit them to enter, so that they may supplicate for you.' He said, 'I will seek Allaah's guidance by Istikhaarah.' So they entered upon him in crowds, until the house was full. They would question him and supplicate for him, and leave, and another crowd would enter. The number of people became very large and the street was filled, and we closed the gate of the alley. A neighbour of ours came, having dyed his heard, and my father said, 'I see a man who has revived something of the sunnah, and it gives me joy.

Saalih said, "... he suffered various aches and pains, but his mind remained sound. Then on the day of Jumu'ah, the twelfth of Rabeel-Awwal, after two hours of the morning had passed, he died."

AI-Khallaal 'Ismah ibn 'Isaam related to me: Hanbal narrated to us, saying, "One of the sons of al-Fadl ibn ar-Rabee' gave three hairs to Aboo 'Abdullaah whilst he was in prison, and said, 'These are from the hairs of the Prophet (swallallahu alaihi wasallam).' So Aboo 'Abdullaah instructed at the point of death that a hair should be placed upon each of his eyes, and one upon his tongue. So that was done when he died."

Al-Marroodhee said, "His funeral was brought after the people had finished the Jumu'ah Prayer."

'Abdullaah said, "The Prayer over my father was lead by Aboo Muhammad 'Abdullaah ibn Taahir — he overcame us in leading the Prayer over him, but we had already prayed over him along with the (hundred or so) men of Banoo Haashirn within the house."

'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Abee Haatim said, "I heard Aboo Zur'ah say, 'It reached me that al-Mutawakkil ordered that the area covered by those who prayed the Funeral Prayer over Ahmad should be measured, and it was calculated that the number of those who prayed there was one and a half million."

Aboo Hammaam as-Sakoonee said, "I was present at the funeral of Shareek, and the funeral of Aboo Bakr ibn 'Ayyaash, and I saw how many people were present. But I have never seen a gathering as large as this," i.e., the funeral of Aboo 'Abdullaah Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

As-Sulamee said, "I was present at the funeral of Abul-Fath al-Qawwaas along with ad-Daaraqutnee. So when he saw the number of those gathered he said, 'I heard Aboo Saalih ibn Ziyaad say: I heard 'Abdullaah ibn Ahmad say: I heard my

father say, 'Say to the people of innovation: 'Between us and you is the day of the Funerals.'" ¹²⁸ ¹²⁹

The Imaam Aboo 'Abdullaah Ahmad ibn Hanbal died on the day of Jumu'ah, the 12th of Rabee 'ul-Awwal in the year 241H. ¹³⁰

CHAPTER TWO

ON THE MEANING OF EEMAAN - A REFUTATION OF THE MU'TAZILAH OF TODAY

Al-Haafidh Ibn Hajar (d. 853H) said, "Eemaan in the language means 'tasdeeq' (attesting to the truth of something). In the Sharee'ah it means 'tasdeeq' (attesting to the truth) of what the Messenger (swallallahu alaihi wasallam) brought from his Lord, and this much is agreed upon. Then there is a difference. Is anything else a condition on top of that? Such as stating this eemaan upon the tongue, as well as it being in the heart, or action upon what is attested to by doing what is ordered and leaving what is forbidden?" Up until where al-Haafidh said, "So

¹²⁸ Ibn Katheer said in Al-Bidaayah wan-Nihaayah (10/342), "Allaah confirmed this saying of Ahmad, since he was the Imaam of the Sunnah in his time. As for the head of those who were his opponents, Ahmad ibn Ahee Duwaad, who was the judge of all the judges in the world — then nobody marked or gave attention to his death. When he died no one accompanied his funeral but a small number of the ruler's helpers. Likewise al-Haarith ibn Asad al-Muhaasibee, despite his abstemiousness and piety, no one prayed over him except three or four people. Likewise Bishr ibn Ghiyaath al-Mareesee, only a very small group of people prayed over him. So Allaah it is who is in command of the affairs, before and after."

¹²⁹ Taken from Siyar A'laamin-Nubataa, vol. II, pp. 177-358.

¹³⁰ The whole of this biography was translated by Aboo Talhah Daawood ibn Ronald Burbank, except for the narration of Sulaymaan as-Sijzee, which was translated by Amjad ibn Muhammad Rafiq.