



The Beliefs of the Ash'arīs: In a Calm Dialogue with the Specious Arguments of their Opponents

Part 2: The Ash'aris in Relation to the Murji'ah & the Orientalists

Shaykh Ṣalāh Al-Dīn b. Aḥmad Al-Idlibī¹

Translated by Mahdi Lock
Released by www.marifah.net 1431 H

The researcher said:

[The Ash'arīs are the largest sect (*firqa*) of the excessive Murji'ah, and I will not rush with the results of my research. Rather, it suffices me to present this claim and leave it open to discussion. I accept, with all pleasure, anyone who shows their point of view regarding it].

I say:

1 - The researcher has done well by presenting his research as a claim, and then leaving it open to discussion, and he accepts, with all pleasure, anyone who shows their point of view regarding it.

However, he should be reproached because often he mentions a claim without bringing any proof. How can that be when The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's prayers and peace be upon him, said: **[Proof is required of the claimant and an oath is required of the one who denies the claim.]**²?

¹ Translated from: 'Aqā'id Al-Ashā'ira fī Ḥiwār Hadi' ma' Shubhāt Al-Munāwi'īn (The Beliefs of the Ash'arīs: In a Calm Dialogue with the Specious Arguments of their Opponents) by Ṣalāh Al-Dīn ibn Aḥmad Al-Idlibī, which is a refutation of the book *Minhāj Al-Ashā'ira fī Al-'Aqīda* (The Creedal Methodology of the Ash'arīs) by Dr. Safar Al-Ḥawālī, a leader and teacher of the Salafī cult.

² Ibn Ḥajar attributed it to Al-Bayhaqī with an authentic (*ṣahīh*) attribution (*isnād*), and Al-Nawawī declared it to be good (*ḥasan*). See: *Bulūgh Al-Marām* by Ibn Ḥajar, *Bāb Al-Da'āwā wa Al-Bayyināt* (The Chapter on Claims and Proofs) and *Al-Adhkār* by Al-Nawawī, *Al-Aḥādīth allatī 'alayhā madār Al-Islām* (The aḥādīth that Islam revolves around), ḥadīth #16 in the epilogue of the book.

2 - Here the researcher has fallen into a clear contradiction by saying: [The Ash‘arīs are the largest sect of the excessive Murji‘ah, and I will not rush with the results of my research...]

Isn’t he with his statement: [The Ash‘arīs are the largest sect of the excessive Murji‘ah] before starting research, rushing with the result?!

3 - Accusing the Ash‘arīs of being Murji‘ah, or indeed excessive Murji‘ah, is an astounding statement and an immense slander.

What do the Murji‘ah say? What is it that distinguishes them from the other sects? Ibn Abī Al-‘Izz said: [The Murji‘ah say that a sin never harms faith (*īmān*) just as an act of obedience never benefits disbelief (*kufr*).³]

Have you found, O researcher – may Allah pardon you and forgive you – the Ash‘arīs saying that a sin never harms faith?? Indeed, have you found this transmitted from any of the Ash‘arīs?! No Ash‘arī has ever said this.

Please be prepared to answer in the presence of the Most Just of Judges on **[the day mankind will stand before the Lord of all the worlds.]**⁴

The researcher said:

[It is an issue of an innovating (*bid‘ī*) school of thought having its massive presence in Islamic thought, such that it fills several books of tafsīr, ḥadīth commentary, books of linguistics and rhetoric (*balāgha*) and Uṣūl, let alone books of theology. Massive, persistent efforts have appeared in recent time towards overhauling it and modernizing it. Large, official organisations oversee these efforts and the orientalist sustain them with whatever they unearth from its heritage and whatever they extract from its manuscripts].

I say:

1 – The researcher’s statement about the Ash‘arī school of thought: [having its massive presence in Islamic thought] is true, but his statement: [innovating (*bid‘ī*) school of thought] requires proof. Have you presented your proofs – O researcher – after identifying the points of innovation in the Ash‘arī school of thought?! **[Say, ‘Produce your evidence if you are telling the truth.]**⁵

³ *Sharh Al-‘Aqīda Al-Ṭahāwiyyah* 2/434,444

⁴ Aya 6 from Sūrat Al-Muṭaffifin.

⁵ Sūrat Al-Baqara 2:111

2 – Regarding the researcher’s statement about the Ash‘arī school of thought: [Massive, persistent efforts have appeared in recent time towards overhauling it and modernizing it] I don’t know what he means by these massive efforts? Where are they? If only the researcher would mention them!

3 – As for his statement: [the orientalists sustain them], how far this is from the truth! Has the researcher charged that the orientalists participated in spreading it through the books of Islam’s heritage and did he find the orientalists concentrating on spreading the creed books of the Ash‘arīs?! I don’t think the researcher did this, and I don’t think he adopted a scientific method like this.

The orientalists are interested in all branches of knowledge, and they have published or participated in publishing several books from Islam’s heritage, and these include a section from Al-Wāqidī’s *Maghāzī* (battles) of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s prayers and peace be upon him, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā* of Ibn Sa‘d, *Al-Sīrah Al-Nabawiyyah* of Ibn Hishām, Ibn Al-Jawzī’s *Manāqib* (virtues) of ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul ‘Azīz, *Al-Kalim Al-Ṭayyib*, a collection of *adhkār* from the Prophet, may Allah’s prayers and peace be upon him, by Ibn Taymiyah, *Al-Mu‘jam Al-Mufahras lil Al-Fāz Al-Ḥadīth Al-Nabawī*, *Ṭabaqāt Al-Ḥifāz* by Al-Dhahabī, some of the books on the Qur’ān’s variant readings, *al-waqf wa al-ibtidā’*, how the Qur’ān is written down, *Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahā’*, lineages, ḥadīth terminology, *al-jarḥ wa al-ta’dīl* (authentication and classification), grammar, several books on philosophy, *al-taṣawwuf*, *‘ilm al-kalām* as well as the books of the Ash‘arīs.⁶ Under the supervision of the orientalists, twenty-four volumes of Al-Ṣafadī’s book *Al-Wāfi bi Al-Wafiyāt* have been printed up till now, and I don’t know if the researcher has forgotten that the orientalists printed *Al-Radd ‘alā Al-Jahmiyyah* (Refutation of the Jahmiyyah) by Al-Dārimī in Leiden. This is one of the books of creed that the researcher has praised, and compared it to the writings of Imams Aḥmad and Al-Bukhārī, and others, so reflect!

So, what is the link between the Ash‘arīs and the orientalists? What are its motives?! Who does it benefit?!

⁶ See *Ishāmāt Al-Mustashriqīn fī Nashr Al-Turāth Al-Islāmī* by Dr. ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm Al-Namla.