



Imān of a Muqallid ¹

Is it valid or not?

Imām `Abdul Rahīm ibn `Alī

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The majority of Hanafī scholars are of the opinion that the faith of the person who believes in the necessities of the religion by just following (*taqlid*) others, like the oneness of Allāh (*tawhīd*) and matters of Prophethood (*nubuwwa*) etc., is valid and correct. It has been reported from Imām al-`Azam Abū Hanīfa al-Nūmān and also well-known among his companions; this is also the opinion of Mālik, al-Shāfi`ī and Ahmad. This has been mentioned in *sharh `aqidah al-tahāwīyya* by Shaykh Abū Mahāsīn `Alī ibn Ismā`īl al-Qawnawī and the *`umda* of Imām Hāfizuddīn `Abdullāh ibn Ahmad an-Nasafī and its exegesis *al-ītimād*. It is also mentioned in the explanation of *bad`a al-amālī*. ²

The majority of Ash`arī scholars including Shaykh al-Ash`arī himself, and Qādī Abū Bakr al-Baqillānī, Ustaz Abū Ishāq al-Isfarāyīnī, Imām al-Haramayn `Abd al-Mālik al-Juwaynī are of the opinion that it is not sufficient to just be a follower in the matters of belief. This has been mentioned in *sharh al-jawhara* of Imām Burhānuddīn Ibrāhīm al-Laqqānī, *sharh umm al-barābīn* of Imām Muhammad ibn Yūsuf al-Sanūsī and the explanation of *bad`a al-`amālī* by Shaykh `Alī al-Qārī.

In the explanation of *al-`umda* of Imām Nasafī, it is reported that Imām al-Ash`arī said:

“The condition for the belief and faith of a person to be considered valid is that he should know every article of faith by its documentary proof.”

In the explanation of *umm al-barābīn*, Imām Sanūsī reports from *al-shāmil* of Imām al-Haramayn that,

“There is a difference of opinion in the validity of the faith of those who spent a long time [as Muslims] and could examine the proofs and they did not do so.”

In *al-musāyara* of Ibn al-Humām:

¹ The 26th article from the book: *naẓm al-farā`id wa jamūl fawā`id*, Imām `Abdul Rahīm ibn `Alī also known as Shaykh Zādah (d. 944AH / 1537AD).

² In my copy, the editor adds ‘by Shaykh `Alī al-Qārī named *daw al-ma`ālī*’ which looks like an anachronism because al-Qārī passed away in 1014 and Shaykh Zadah in 944 AH, *rahimahumallah*.

“The obvious meaning of Shaykh Abūl Hasan al-Ash`arī’s passage is that an affirmation is a form of internal speech [kalamun lil nafs] on the condition that one has understood it, which necessitates that if one has not understood it, such an affirmation is void [‘adamuh]. This statement might probably mean that an affirmation is the combination of both understanding the meaning and the internal speech itself; which would then mean both the two aspects are mandatory for [valid affirmation] of faith according to him [al-Ash`arī].”

And the Hanafī evidence is that the Prophet ﷺ and his companions and their followers accepted the faith [imān] of the bedouins [a`rāb] who did not reflect nor ask for proofs; neither did they spend time comprehending the evidences. If it was a condition for faith to be correct, they would not have been spared this exercise.

After all, it has been attested from the Hadīth, and the majority of the Ummah has agreed upon this unanimously - that the common folk of this nation [Ummah] are the filling of paradise [that is paradise is filled with them]; and there is no doubt that for many of them the opinion of al-Ash`arī suffices; if their faith would not be correct, then why would they be termed as the ‘filling of paradise’?

