

Haafidh Shaykhul-Islam Imaam Abu Isma'il al-Harawi al-Ansaaree al-Hanbali

Original Author: Abu Rumaysah

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Introduction

`Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn `Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn `Ali ibn Ja`far ibn Mansur ibn Matta al-Ansari al-Harawi Abu Isma`il (396-481H)

(يراصنأل ايورهل ليعامس! وبأ)

A descendent of the Companion, [Abu Ayyub Zayd ibn Khalid al-Ansari](#) (RA), he was born in Sha`ban of the year 396H^[1] in [Herat](#) (in present day Afghanistan) in the province of [Khurasan](#).

[Ibn Rajab](#) (RH) introduces him as, ‘The Jurist, faqih, the Exegete, mufassir, the Hadith Master, hafidh, the Sufi and exhorter, Shaykhu’l-Islam Abu Isma`il...’

al-Dhahabi (RH) introduces him as, ‘[Shayku’l-Islam](#), the Imam, the exemplar, qudwā, the great Hadith Master...the Shaykh of Khurasan...,’ and, ‘the Shaykh of Khurasan without any contention.’

al-Suyuti (RH) introduces him as, ‘Shaykhu’l-Islam, the Hadith Master, the [Gnostic](#), one of the descendents of [Abu Ayyub al-Ansari](#),’ and ‘Shaykhu’l-Islam, the Hadith Master, the Imam, the ascetic, ... he was an Imam, precise, firm in aiding the Sunnah and repudiating innovation...’

[Ibn `Imad](#) (RH) introduces him as, ‘Shaykhu’l-Islam, the Sufi, the exemplar, the Hadith Master, a Hanbali and one of the great figures of history...’

Ibn Hajr (RH) refers to him with the title Shaykhu’l-Islam^[2] and Ibn Abi Ya`la (RH) says about him, ‘He was the Imam of [Ahlu’l-Sunnah](#) in [Herat](#).’

His father, Abu Mansur, was a righteous man, a reciter of the [Qur’an](#), and desirous of seeking knowledge. From a young age, his father made sure Abu Isma`il attended the Mosque for congregational prayers and the gatherings of knowledge. He was highly intelligent and by the age of fourteen he was already known as a poet and writer.

He generally lived a simple and austere life, dressing simply, and eating simply. However when he delivered his circles and lectures he wore fine clothes and rode on an expensive animal saying, ‘I do so to raise the esteem and honour of this religion (*i`zazan li`l-din*) and to debase its enemies that they may see me and desire to accept Islam.’ He was generous and would distribute his wealth to the townspeople once or twice a year. He was humble, having a lofty character, and of fine conduct.

He was an expert in Qur’anic exegesis, a hadith master, a Jurist, an expert in the Arabic language, a skilled historian, an orator, and knowledgeable of genealogies.

His Studies

He studied under many scholars in his own town and travelled to study with others. His first journey in the pursuit of knowledge was at the age of twenty one to [Naysabur](#), in the year 417H. Then, in the year 423H, he travelled to [Mecca](#) to perform the [Hajj](#), but after having reached Baghdad, news came from [Basra](#) that there had been an outbreak of infection amongst the pilgrims; so after staying in Baghdad for a while, he and his travelling party turned back and returned home. While in [Baghdad](#) he benefited greatly from the Scholar of Hadith, [Abu Muhammad al-Khallal](#). While on the return journey he visited [Naysabur](#), [Tus](#), and [Bistam](#), hearing hadith from many scholars there. In the year 424H once again he left for Hajj and once again external factors prevented him from completing his goal; instead he went to [Kharqan](#), visiting there one of the Sufi Imams, [Abu'l-Hasan al-Kharqani](#), from here He went to [Rayy](#) and visited the Imam of Ahlu'l-Sunnah there, [Abu Hatim Khamush](#).

[al-Dhahabi](#) lists forty of his teachers by name and then concludes by saying, 'and many more.'

He heard hadith in Herat from [Yahya ibn `Ammar al-Sijzi](#) and from him he also learnt the Science of Exegesis; and from [Abu Mansur al-Azdi](#), [Abu'l-Fadl al-Jarudi](#) al-Hafidh from whom he learnt the Science of Hadith; [Shu`ayb al-Bushanji](#) and others.

In [Naysabur](#) he took hadith from [Abu Sa`id al-Sayrafi](#), [Abu Nasr](#) the Mufassir and Muqri', [Abu'l-Hasan al-Tirazi](#), and a group of the colleagues of [al-Asamm](#).

He saw [Qadi Abu Bakr al-Hiri](#), attended his gathering, but did not hear hadith from him. He would say, 'I abandoned him for the sake of Allah' after hearing him say things that opposed the Sunnah. [al-Dhahabi](#) states that the reason for his doing so was because of his [Ash`arism](#).^[3]

His works

He authored many works amongst which were:

1. *Kitab Dhamm al-Kalam* explaining therein the harm of [kalam](#), what kalam leads to, the obligation of following the Sunnah and judging by it, the prohibition of debating, and the Imam's censure of the followers of kalam. al-Suyuti wrote, 'Know that the Imams of Ahlu'l-Sunnah have persistently been writing works censuring [`Ilm al-Kalam](#) and censuring those who pursue it. The best work written concerning this is the book, *Dhamm al-Kalam wa Ahlihi*,' of Shaykhu'l-Islam Abu Isma`il al-Harawi...'^[4]

2. *al-Faruq fi'l-Sifat*, a work detailing the creed of Ahlu'l-Sunnah with regards the Attributes of Allah; however [al-Dhahabi](#) states, 'If only he had not sullied it with recording hadiths that were [batil](#), which were obligatory to state that they were so and to

disclose their state, may Allah forgive him by virtue of his good intention!’ He later states, ‘The generality of what he narrates therein is sahih and hasan and it contains a chapter affirming Allah’s rising upon the Throne, that He is above the seventh heaven, and distinct from His creation.’

3. *al-Arba`in fi Dala`il al-Tawhid*, an exposition of the creed of Ahlu`l-Sunnah with regards the Attributes of Allah. Examples of chapters contained in this work are, ‘The obligation to accept the Attributes of Allah, Exalted is He, by all of His creation’, ‘A repudiation of those who believe that the hadiths pertaining to the Attributes of Allah, Mighty and Magnificent, should be concealed’, ‘[Affirming] that He, Mighty and Magnificent, is upon the Throne’, ‘Affirming a face for Allah, Mighty and Magnificent’, ‘Affirming two eyes for Allah, Exalted is He,’ ‘Affirming two hands for Allah,’ ‘Affirming the foot for Allah,’ and ‘The prohibition of delving too deeply into the Attributes of Allah’.

4. *al-Arba`in fi`l-Sunnah*

5. *Manaqib al-Imam Ahmad*

6. *Manazil al-Sa`irin* in *tasawwuf* dividing it in ten chapters discussing one hundred stations, *maqam*. [Ibn Taymiyyah](#) said, ‘He mentions three rankings in each chapter. The first – the lowest in their view – conforms ostensibly to the Legal Law; the second sometime conforms with it and sometimes opposes it; the third, in the majority of cases, opposes it, especially in the subjects of *tawhid*, *fana`*, *raja`*, and the likes.’^[5] Some additional points concerning this work are discussed in the section entitled, ‘The Sufi’

7. *Sharh al-Ta`arruf li Madhab al-Tasawwuf* a commentary to the famous work by [al-Kilabadhi](#).

8. *Tabaqat al-Sufiyyah* in Persian.

9. *Ilal al-Maqamat*, a small work on *tasawwuf*, written towards the end of his life.

10. *Tafsir al-Qur`an* in Persian entitled, *Kashf al-Asrar*, a comprehensive work.

11. *Majalis al-Tadhkir* also in Persian

Praise of him

He was praised by his teachers and by his contemporaries amongst the Jurists, the Sufis, and the linguists. He was loved by the people of his town so much so that [al-Dhahabi](#) states, ‘They would venerate him, they went to extremes concerning him, they did their utmost to do what he asked of them, and they obeyed him more and held him in a higher esteem than they did the Sultan.’

Ibn Rajab said, ‘The author of al-Tarikh said, “Everyone I met of the people of [Herat](#) and of every land I travelled to, and those I heard from the judges, Imams, and nobles in the various lands, and those already mentioned, would all praise him highly and would not deny his excellence.”’

Ibn Rajab said, ‘He was a great master, a knowledgeable Imam and Gnostic; a worshipper and ascetic; possessor of states and stations; performer of miracles; and one who strove greatly in worship, he would pray a great deal by night. He was stringent in aiding the Sunnah, defending it, and repudiating those who opposed it because of which he was subjected to numerous grim trials. He was also stringent in championing the School of [Imam Ahmad](#), having great veneration for it.’

[Sa`d al-Zinjani](#) said, ‘Through him and [Ibn Mandah](#), Allah preserved Islam.’

‘Abdu’l-Awwal ibn ‘Isa said, ‘I entered upon al-Juwayni,’ i.e. Abu Muhammad ‘Abdullah .b Yusuf, ‘and he asked me about Shaykhu’l-Islam. I said, “I am his servant,” and he said, “May Allah be pleased with him!”’

‘Abdu’l-Ghafir said, ‘He was an Imam, having a comprehensive knowledge of exegesis, a good practice in [tasawwuf](#), possessing a complete knowledge of Arabic, hadith, history, and genealogy. He was firm in aiding the Sunnah and the religion without fawning or speaking diplomatically before the Sultan or any other. Because of this they tried to bring about his ruin on many occasions but Allah sufficed him from their evil.’

[al-Saji](#) said, ‘Oppressors and leaders would enter his presence and he would pay them no attention, yet he would see a stranger of the Ashabu’l-Hadith and he would honour him in such a way that would amaze the elite and the masses, may Allah have mercy upon him.’

Shaykh al-Islam [Ibn Taymiyyah](#) in al-Ajwiba al-Misriyya, said, ‘He is Shaykhu’l-Islam, famous, holding a great status with the people. He was an Imam in hadith, tasawwuf, and tafsir. In Jurisprudence he was upon the madhab of the [Ahlu’l-Hadith](#), he would attach great status to [al-Shafi`i](#) and [Ahmad](#), and his legal responses would sometimes agree with the verdict of the former and sometimes the latter. Generally he would follow hadith in the way of [Ibn al-Mubarak](#) and his likes.’

His Creed

He was a devout adherent of [Ahlu'l-Sunnah](#) and a very vocal opponent of all that opposed that school, especially the [Ash`ari school](#), in the words of [Abu Ya`la](#), 'He was severe against the Ash`aris.' [Ibn Taymiyyah](#) quotes him as stating that the Ash`aris were 'impotent Mu`tazila, *makhanith al-mu`tazila*'^[6] and later, 'He went to great lengths in censuring the [Jahmiyyah](#) for their negation of the Attributes and he has a treatise showing that they were disbelievers. He also went to great lengths in censuring the Ash`aris, even though they are the closest of these sects to the Sunnah, and sometimes he would even curse them.'^[7]

[al-Dhahabi](#) said, 'Shaykhu'l-Islam was a pure and committed [Athari](#) who would rebuke the [Mutakallimin](#),' and, 'He was a drawn sword against the Mutakallimin'

In affirming the Names and Attributes of Allah, he generally followed the creed of Ahlu'l-Sunnah: affirming them as they come in the texts, without likening to creation, without delving into their quiddity, [kayfiyyah](#), and without delving into the figurative distortions, [ta`wil](#), practised by others. His works on creed mentioned above are a testimony to this.

This creed was articulated by Imam [Ibn `Abdu'l-Barr](#) (RH) who said, 'Ahlu'l-Sunnah are agreed upon affirming all the Attributes that occur in the Book and Sunnah, having faith in them, and taking them literally not metaphorically, except that they did not inquire into the quiddity ([kayfiyyah](#)) of any of them. However the People of Innovation, the [Jahmiyyah](#), all the [Mu`tazila](#), and the [Khawarij](#), all deny them and do not take them literally claiming that whosoever affirms them has made [tashbih](#). However, in the view of those who affirm them, they end up in negation of the One who is worshipped. The truth lies with those who adhere to what the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger has spoken on and they are the Imams of the Jama`ah.'^[8]

In the year 430H, [Mahmud b. Sabuktagin](#) visited [Herat](#) and asked Abu Isma`il, 'Do you say that Allah, Mighty and Magnificent, will place His foot in the Fire?' He replied, 'Allah, Mighty and Magnificent, is not harmed by the Fire and neither can the Fire harm Him. The Messenger of Allah does not lie against Him, and the scholars of this nation do not interpolate in what they narrate from him and attach to him.' This was an answer which pleased him greatly.

He states in his book al-Faruq, 'There are many texts showing that Allah is above(*fi*) the seventh heaven, upon His Throne with His self, watching what you do. His knowledge, power, hearing, sight, and mercy are everywhere.'

Ibn Hajr described him as, 'of those who went too far in affirmation, *mubalighin fi'l-*

ithbat^[9] as did [al-Dhahabi](#) in his *al-Uluw*, a comment which the latter does not repeat in any of his other biographical notices. [Ibn Taymiyyah](#) mentioned, ‘He has been described as someone who went to excesses in affirming the Attributes.’^[10] It is well possible that the reason for this is his insistence on using certain terminologies not used by the Salaf such as his insistence on stating that Allah has a “hadd”, i.e. descriptions that are unique to Him, as opposed to set boundaries and limits. The discussion on this term and other terms like it is beyond the scope of this article.

In the area of divine decree, *qadr*, Ibn Taymiyyah stated that he took a position that agreed with the view of the [Jahmiyyah](#) and went further than the Ash`aris: He did not affirm wisdom behind the deeds of Allah nor the existence of causes, and that the station of *fana* did not allow the Gnostic to see anything but the will of Allah such that he can no longer view good to be good or evil to be evil, or that he has any action or ability left.^[11]

He greatly stressed the need of following the Prophet (SAW) in his *Dhamm al-Kalam*, and, in the words of [al-Dhahabi](#), ‘He did a fine job.’

Once, when the Sultan, [Alp Arslan](#), visited [Herat](#) with his vizier, Abu `Ali al-Hasan ibn `Ali ibn Ishaq ([Nidham al-Mulk](#)), the scholars of the Shafi`is and Hanafis went to them to complain about Abu Isma`il and to open a debate with him. He was summoned and the governor said, ‘These people have gathered here to debate you: if the truth lies with you they will accept your madhab, and if the truth lies with them you will accept theirs or silence your tongue against them.’ He replied, ‘I will only debate with them based on what is in my sleeves.’ He was asked what was in them to which he said, ‘The Book of Allah,’ pointing to his right sleeve, ‘and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (SAW),’ pointing to his left sleeve which contained Bukhari and Muslim. He looked at the people but not one wished to argue with him in this way.

The Exegete

[Ibn Rajab](#) and [al-Dhahabi](#) mention that he was a sign, ayah, in exegesis. He explained the Qur’an in his gatherings in the year 436H, and in 437H he commenced explaining it a second time. When he reached the verse, **“But those who believe are stronger in love for Allah”** (2:165) he devoted a lengthy period of time in explaining it, encompassing many gatherings. Likewise he took three hundred and sixty gatherings to explain, **“Indeed, those for whom the Best has preceded from Us,”** (21:101). In the year 473H when he reached the verse, **“The flash of its lightning almost takes away their sight”** (24:43) he lost his eyesight. When he reached, **“No soul knows what has been hidden for them of comfort for the eyes”** (32:17) he stated that every Name of Allah, Exalted is He, contains a secret meaning, and he commenced explaining the subtleties of the Names

of Allah until he reached al-Mumit, at which time he was ejected from his land when undergoing the last trial he faced.

When he returned in the year 480H, he resumed his exegesis, covering a lot more verses in each gathering, fearing that he would pass away before he could complete the Qur'an. His hope was unfulfilled and he passed away after having explained, **“Say, ‘It is great news, from which you turn away.’”** (38: 67-68)

Ibn Tahir records that Abu Isma`il said, ‘When I mention exegesis I do so relying on one hundred and seven books of exegesis.’

He was once asked about the exegesis to a verse and he replied by quoting four hundred couplets of pre-Islamic poetry, each couplet proving the usage of language contained in that verse.

The Hadith Master

[al-Mu'taman](#) reports from him, ‘This affair is an affair for one who has no affair but this affair,’ i.e. studying hadith.

In his gatherings he would quote hadiths with their isnads and would not allow anyone to narrate hadiths from him in [ta`liq](#) form and he would also point out whether what he narrated was authentic or weak.

Ibn Tahir records that Abu Isma`il said, ‘I have memorised twelve thousand hadiths that I can quote from memory, consecutively.’

Concerning the famous hadith of intention, the hadith of `Umar, he said, ‘I have recorded this hadith from seven hundred colleagues of Yahya ibn Sa`id.’^[12]

Ibn Tahir records that Abu Isma`il said, ‘In my view [al-Tirmidhi](#) is of more benefit than [al-Bukhari](#) and [Muslim](#),’ when he asked him why, he replied, ‘With regards to Bukhari and Muslim, only one who has complete knowledge (of hadith and its sciences) will benefit from them, as for this book, the author has explained the hadiths and as such everyone can benefit from it: the Jurists, the Hadith Scholars, and others.’

He would say, ‘None has more excellence than [al-Bukhari](#).’

The Sufi

He practiced [tasawwuf](#) and accompanied the Shaykhs and took on board their conduct and manners.

Ibn Rajab said, 'He has precise and subtle discussions concerning [Sufism](#) and [suluk](#),' while al-Dhahabi remarked, 'In his *Manazil al-Sa'irin*, he had a strange style (nafas) which does not resemble the style of the Imams of the Salaf. The work contains things that are moving and affecting and some things that are problematic and unclear, and whoever considers it carefully will realise this....'

Many wrote commentaries on his work *Manazil al-Sa'irin*, amongst the most famous of which was [Ibn al-Qayyim](#)'s, *Madarij al-Salikin*. Frequently we find the author discussing the concept of [fana](#)' in words that led some to believe that he was an adherent to the doctrine of incarnationism, [hulul](#), and mergence, [ittihad](#). Ibn al-Qayyim repeatedly shows the fallacy of this in the aforementioned work^[13] as mentioned by [Ibn Rajab](#).

[al-Dhahabi](#), after stating that some of the Sufis who believed in [ittihad](#) used his words on [fana](#)' in *Manazil* to justify their stance said, 'Never! Rather he is an [Athari](#), stringently affirming the texts dealing with the Attributes, fervently averse to [Kalam](#) and its people... if only he had not written it for how sweet is the [tasawwuf](#) of the Companions and the Successor! Never did they delve into these delicate matters and whisperings, *al-khatarat wa'l-wasawis*, rather they worshipped Allah, humbled themselves before Him and placed their reliance in Him. They were apprehensive out of fear of Him, undertook [Jihad](#) against His enemies, rushed to obey Him, and turned away from idle speech. Allah guides whom He wills to a Straight Path.'

[Ibn Taymiyyah](#) presents a different view and accuses Abu Isma`il of falling into incarnationism with respect to a specific group of people, *hulul khas*: the Gnostic who has reached, in his words, the Maqam of Tawhid.^[14]

His View on the Hanbali School

[Ibn al-Sama`ani](#) narrates from him, 'The School of Ahmad is the most praiseworthy of all schools.'

After having visiting the Sufi, [Abu'l-Hasan al-Kharkani](#), Abu Isma`il decided to travel to [Rayy](#) to visit [Abu Hatim Ibn Khamush](#), the vanguard of Ahlu'l-Sunnah in that land. Sultan [Mahmud b. Sabuktagin](#) had killed all the [Batiniyyah](#) who lived there and

prohibited anyone of any sect from speaking on the pulpit save [Abu Hatim](#). Whoever entered [Rayy](#) would espouse his creed to Abu Hatim and whoever he found acceptance with was allowed to speak, otherwise he was not. On his way to [Rayy](#) he was accompanied by a man of Rayy who asked him what madhab he was to which he replied, 'I am Hanbali.' The man said, 'This is a madhab I have never heard of, it is a bid`ah!' He grabbed me by my thawb and said, 'I will not leave you until we have gone to Shaykh Abu Hatim,' the very place that Abu Isma`il wished to go to. They went to his house and on that day there so happened to be a large gathering and when informed of his madhab, Abu Hatim said, 'Let him be for whoever is not a Hanbali is not a Muslim.' Abu Isma`il, impressed with him, accompanied him for some days and then left.

[Ibn Rajab](#) comments, 'Abu Hatim only meant by his words the doctrine (*usul*).'

Amongst the lines of poetry that Abu Isma`il composed were,

Our God is seen, upon the Throne having risen

His words are eternal and His Prophet is an Arab

Whoever says other than this is an Ash`ari

Our madhab is the Hanbali madhab

al-Hafidh ibn Tahir mentioned that he heard him say on the pulpit, when addressing his gathering in Hira:

I am Hanbali so long as I live, and when I die

My legacy to the people is to become Hanbalis

He also authored a lengthy ode in which he espoused the principles, *usul*, of the Sunnah and praised Ahmad and his colleagues.

His Trials

He repeatedly faced trials from his opponents and was ejected from his town on numerous occasions.

Ibn Tahir narrates that Abu Isma`il said, 'I was threatened with the sword five times. They did not ask me to recant my madhab but they asked me to remain silent in the face of those who opposed me, but I said, "I will not be silent!"'

His companions once urged him to go out to the governor Abu `Ali al-Tusi ([Nidham al-Mulk](#)). His opponents, knowing that he was coming, conspired to ask him about [Abu'l-Hasan al-Ash`ari](#), knowing that if he replied he would lose esteem in the eyes of the governor and if he did not reply, he would lose esteem in the eyes of his followers. Upon being asked why he cursed al-Ash`ari, he remained silent until prodded by the governor to reply, then he said, 'I do not know al-Ash`ari; I only curse one who does not believe that Allah, Mighty and Magnificent, is in the heaven, and that the Qur'an is in the *mushaf*, and that the Prophet is still a prophet today.' He then stood and left, not a single person being able to utter a word out of awe of him.

Once, when the Sultan, [Alp Arslan](#), visited [Herat](#), the opponents of Abu Isma`il came to him to encourage him to go to greet the Sultan. They had secretly brought an idol with them which they placed under his prayer mat. They all went to the Sultan and raised a hue and cry that Abu Isma`il was an anthropomorphist and that he had left an idol in his *mihrab* and believed that Allah was of the same form as that idol. The Sultan, shocked at this, sent an envoy to the mihrab, and they returned with the idol. Enraged, he called Abu Isma`il to his presence and asked him, 'What is this,' showing him the idol. Abu Isma`il described it to him and the Sultan said, 'This is not what I am asking!' 'What are you asking then?' he inquired. He said, 'These people claim that you worship this idol and believe that Allah is of the same form as it!' Upon hearing this Abu Isma`il roared, 'SubhanAllah! This is a grievous slander!' The Sultan, believing him, sent him home, and soon uncovered the deception of his opponents.

Another time a group of Sufis went on a rampage, causing much mischief, objecting to certain affairs, and claimed that Abu Isma`il encouraged them to do so, although he had nothing to do with it nor did he approve of it. As a result of this he was ejected from his land.

Ibn al-Subki and Abu Isma`il

With his well known zeal for the Ash`ari school, his defending it and defaming all those who would criticise it, it is not surprising to find [Ibn al-Subki](#) (RH) casting aspersions on Abu Isma`il.

i) He began by asserting that Abu Isma`il was undeserving of the title 'Shaykhul-Islam'

and that he was only called so for sectarian reasons by his admirers in simulation of the true (and presumably only) Shaykhu'l-Islam of Khurasan at that time, Shaykhu'l-Islam [Abu `Uthman al-Sabuni](#) (RH). In stating so, his zeal has made him oppose almost every biographer of Abu Isma`il before him, and most after him, who all agreed that he was Shaykhu'l-Islam, without necessarily denying the same status for al-Sabuni.

ii) He accused him of anthropomorphism, *tajsim*: a common device used by the Ash`aris to label those who affirm the Attributes of Allah just as they occur in the texts of the Book and Sunnah. He stated that a group ruled him a disbeliever because of this. He further asserts that this creed is espoused in his *Kitab Dhamm al-Kalam*, *Kitab al-Arba`in fi'l-Tawhid* (the name of which he gets wrong!), and *Kitab al-Faruq*, and also states that his ode on creed contains enormities in the same vein. A discussion of these books has preceded and it has already been seen that they are far removed from *tashbih* and *tajsim* as understood by Ahlu'l-Sunnah, i.e. the likening of Allah to his creation, not by the mere affirmation of the Attribute as befits the majesty of Allah, but by believing that His Attributes resemble those of creation.

[Nu`aym ibn Hammad](#) (d.229H) said, 'Whoever likens Allah to His creation has disbelieved, and whoever denies whatever Allah described himself with has disbelieved. Whatever Allah has described Himself with, or whatever His Messenger (SAW) has described Him with, contains no tashbih at all.'^[15]

[Ishaq ibn Rahawayh](#) (d.238H) said, '*Tashbih* can only occur if one says, "Hand like my hand," or, "Hearing like my hearing;" this is tashbih. As for when he says hand, hearing and sight as Allah said, without saying how or saying like; this cannot be tashbih.'^[16]

[Abu Hatim al-Razi](#) (d.277H) said, 'A sign of the [Jahmiyyah](#) is that they call Ahlu'l-Sunnah anthropomorphists.'^[17]

A detailed exposition of this issue is outside the scope of this article. Moreover, the lengths that his detractors went to in order to prove his so-called anthropomorphism have already been seen above.

iii) He accused him of having a staunch partisanship to Hanbalism, but, although he championed this school, it has already been shown that he sometimes gave verdicts which went against the Hanbali school and conformed to the Shafi`i school. It was in terms of the usul and creed that this school promoted, the creed of Ahlu'l-Sunnah, that he was staunch and unyielding in.

His death

He passed away on Jumu'ah, 12th of Dhu'l-Hijjah, after the `Asr prayer in the year 481H. He was buried the next day in the graveyard of Kaziyarika, near [Herat](#), may Allah have mercy upon him.

[al-Ruhawi](#) stated that he saw the chair of Shaykh al-Islam in the [zawiya](#) of the Jami` Mosque in Herat, and people would seek blessings from it, although it is not known whether he himself ever encouraged such a practise.

Notes

1. ↑ The date which Ibn Rajab, Dhayl, vol. 1, pg. 34, declares to be the most authentic and the only date that al-Dhahabi, Siyar, vol. 18, pg. 503 mentions. It is the date that al-Ruhawi mentions from Shaykh al-Islam himself in his *Madih wa'l-Mamduh*, a work on the manaqib of Abu Isma'il. Ibn al-Jawzi, Muntadham, vol. , pg. states that he was born in Dhu'l-Hijjah of 395H.
2. ↑ Ibn Hajr, Fath al-Bari, vol. 13, pg. 572, #7494
3. ↑ adding in Siyar, vol 18, pg. 350 that Imam Yahya ibn Mandah also left narrating from him for the same reason.
4. ↑ Suyuti, Sawan al-Mantiq, pg. 33
5. ↑ Majmu` Fatawa, vol. 13, pg. 229
6. ↑ Majmu` vol. 8, pg. 227 and he proceeds to state that some people further said that the Mu`tazila were impotent philosophers, makhanith al-falasifa
7. ↑ Ibid.
8. ↑ al-Tamhid, vol. 3, pg. 351 under the hadith of Nuzul. See also al-`Uluw, vol. 2, pg. 1326, #531
9. ↑ Ibn Hajr, Fath al-Bari, vol. 13, pg. 572, #7494
10. ↑ Ibn Taymiyyah, Minhaj al-Sunnah, vol. 5, pg. 358
11. ↑ Majmu` vol. 8, pp. 230-231, 339; Minhaj al-Sunnah, vol. 5, pg. 358
12. ↑ Ibn Hajr, Talkhis al-Habir, vol. 1, pg. 92 #53 who then proceeds to comment, 'I followed up this hadith in the books and ajza' until I had reviewed more than three thousand ajza' and I was not able to reach eighty chains.'
13. ↑ For example Madarij al-Salikin, vol. 1, pp. 126-129
14. ↑ Majmu` Fatawa, vol. 5, pp. 126, 230, 485; Minhaj al-Sunnah, vol. 5, pg. 370
15. ↑ al-Dhahabi, al-`Uluww, vol. 2, pg. 1093 #429; al-Lalika'i, vol. 3, pg. 587, #936
16. ↑ ...
17. ↑ al-Lalika'i, vol. 2, pg. 201, #321, vol. 2, pg. 204, #323, vol. 3, pg. 588, #939;

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