

of immense fear and panic thinking that they are going to be involved and accused of abetting in this and before anything further could happen, the Masjid was empty of musallis.

There is no doubt that Mamun Al Rashid was also a strange ruler. On one side, he was a great patron of the arts and the Arabic language, and on the other side, he was a free thinking ruler who allowed all types of knowledge and thoughts to be displayed in his kingdom. When there was no one at that to embrace the Kufr and Ilhad which was coming from Persian and Greek thinkers, he warmly embraced all of these ideas.

One of the greatest fitnah to rear its ugly head in his time was the issue of whether the Qur'an was a creation or not. This evil idea had been created in his period. It became one of the divisive points in the Muslim Ummah.

The view of the Ahle Sunnah Wa Jamaah was that the Qur'an contains two parts. One which is recited by humans and this is indeed creation or can be considered as Hadith and the other is the actual essence of the Qur'an which has come from Allah and is considered as the Divine Words of Allah Almighty and hence not creation.

The Mu'tazilah did not accept this as being part of the Divine Attributes of Allah Almighty and therefore, they firstly did not believe in the two parts of the Qur'an and also considered it as nothing but a creation.

Mamun Rashid warmly accepted the view and beliefs of Mu'tazilah and not only did he accept this Kufr view, but he also made sure that his sword and military power also forces others both ordinary people and the 'Ulama to accept this belief. In 212 A.H., he had made an official statement that the Qur'an is indeed a creation. In 218 A.H. he made this as law upon the Muslims and anyone who did not believe this was going against the law. In the same year, he also sent an official notice to all his Governors that this is a part of the law of the country and all the 'Ulama should be informed about this. Those who accepted it should be left alone and those who opposed it, he should be informed about them.

He also sent a message that if the both Chief Justice, namely Basheer bin Waleed Kandi and Ebrahim bin Mehdi refute this law, they should be killed and if others refuse, they should be jailed. Both of these people could not resist and finally agreed to accept this

belief and saved their lives. When Mamun Rashid could have his own brother Ameen Al Rashid killed in jail, who could stop him from doing anything to the ordinary masses?

However, in spite of this power and might, there were still 'Ulama in the country who could not be shaken and swayed in the least. Among the leaders of these brave 'Ulama was Hadrat Sayyiduna Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal - *may Allah be pleased with him*. He accepted being whipped in public but did not turn away from the true beliefs of the Ahle Sunnah Wa Jamaah.

Where are those idiots who claim that the 'Ulama supported the tyrant rulers? If this is the case then eminent Imams such as Hadrat Sayyiduna Imam A'zam, Hadrat Sayyiduna Imam Malik and Hadrat Sayyiduna Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal - *may Allah be pleased with them* - would not have objected to these Kufr beliefs and with the result, they would not have endured such tyranny at the hands of these tyrants. Even Hadrat Sayyiduna Imam Shafi - *may Allah be pleased with him* - was threatened with death for standing up to the government of the day.

The largest Masjid in Baghdad at the time was Jamia Rusaafah and many 'Ulama of the day gave lectures and held classes in the main court yard. However, Mamun had given strict instructions that besides the leaders of the Mu'tazilah, no one was allowed to carry out any activities in this Masjid. If there was anyone who was found guilty of opposing these people, they were to be arrested and jailed. Whatever these heretics claimed and taught, it was to be immediately followed and obeyed. With the result many 'Ulama kept silent because of government pressure. Some of them left the country and some of them went into complete seclusion on their homes. In fact, some of them could not even perform their daily Salaah in congregation or even their Jumu'ah.

A Muhaddith of his era, Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Yahya Kinaani - *may Allah be pleased with him*, was one of the famous scholar in Mecca Shareef. When he heard about this fitnah taking place, his Imaan could not allow him to remain silent. He decided to fight against this fitnah even it meant that he would have to die in this process. He then decided to travel alone only with his son to Baghdad and see for himself.

When he reached there, he noticed the situation was even worse than what he had initially thought. One of his intentions was to appear in the court of Mamun but no one

was could point him in this direction. Hence, he decided to adopt the strategy mentioned at the beginning by questioning his son in public. As we have said, the Masjid quickly became empty and the police arrested the Sheikh.

In this dangerous environment, to go against the ruler was indeed a great Jihad. At that period also, it became necessary upon every Muslim to stand up for the truth. This was the call of true Tauheed. This Fard Kifaayah was upheld by Sheikh Muhaddith Kinaani - *may Allah be pleased with him*. At the time, the commissioner in Baghdad was Amar bin Mas'adah. The Sheikh was then presented in his court and was asked about what he had done and why had chosen this path.

The Sheikh replied without any fear that his intention was to speak the truth and nothing else and also be able to reach the court of Mamun so that he could debate with those who had opposed the Ahle Sunnah Wa Jamaah.

At first, the Commissioner was not ready to accept this view, but when he saw that this was indeed the case. He went to the court of Mamun and informed him about the request from Mecca. He then returned to his court and informed Sheikh Kinaani - *may Allah be pleased with him*, "I have informed the Khalifah about your request and he has nominated Monday as the day on which this debate is going to take place in his court. At the same time, Mumun himself will be present at this debate."

By virtue of the fact that a Sunni scholar had travelled all the way from Mecca Shareef to Baghdad to debate on this issue was a clear sign that this was indeed a true scholar of the Sunnis. On the other side, Mamun also gave instruction that the entire court or palace be decorated. He also instructed that the Sheikh be kept at the gate or at the entrance so that he could see for himself the immense power being displayed by Mamun. The intention of Mamun was to create fear in the Sheikh and also give him a taste of the environment in which he was going to debate in.

The first group of royal people to enter was the members of the Bani Hashim with their great turbans and royal regalia. After them, came the "Ulama" and the other religious heads of the state. They were also accompanied by their servants and slaves. Among the "religious" leaders, the first person to enter was Basheer who was the leader of the Mu'tazilah sect and after him various other "religious" leaders. After them, came various

other leaders and heads of various government organs. Finally, certain Generals and heads of army appeared with their own personal troops. All of them were openly displaying their weapons as they marched forward.

It seemed like all of this was done merely to subdue one single scholar. At the same time, if one looks on the other side of the picture it seems that Mamun, who was considered as the most powerful leader of his period, had actually become afraid of one single scholar and this is the reason that he had to go to all of these lengths to impress him and frighten him.

He might have been also fearful that perchance his subjects might lose respect for him. Here was someone who was so powerful that other mighty forces of the world were terrified of but he is putting forward this show of power for one single scholar. There is no doubt that it was the government of the day and its supporters who were actually afraid.

Finally, when everyone had gathered, a call was made to bring forward Sheikh Abdul Aziz Kinaani - *may Allah be pleased with him*. They also made him climb one level after another until he finally arrived in the court of the Khalifah. Every level was decorated with weapons and signs of power and might. Prior to arriving at this part of the palace, Sheikh Abdul Aziz Kinaani - *may Allah be pleased with him* - was also informed that if he wanted to perform two rak'ah of Nafil Salaah, he was allowed to do so as time would be given to him.

The Sheikh performed the two rak'ah of Salaah. One can imagine in what state this Salaah was performed. There is no doubt that he must have made immense Du'a to Allah Almighty that most of creation are against him and that he is alone in this hostile environment.

A curtain was suddenly raised and before him sat the most powerful leader in the Muslim world. When he saw all of these weapons and royal regalia being displayed, there is no doubt that Sheikh Abdul Aziz Kinaani - *may Allah be pleased with him* - must have also been impressed and shocked. Here was a simple and poor person who had arrived from Mecca Shareef and he was standing in front of the superpower of its day.

There was no respect accorded to Sheikh Abdul Aziz Kinaani - *may Allah be pleased with him*. Some people were grabbing his hands, some were dragging him by his shoulders and pushing him towards the ruler. When Mamun finally ordered them to stop doing this, they moved away from Sheikh Abdul Aziz Kinaani - *may Allah be pleased with him*.

Mamun then called him forward and asked him about his name, his family and his tribe. He then said, "By virtue of you coming all the way from Mecca and standing in the Masjid and completing negating my orders about the Qur'an being a creation and also demanding to debate on this issue. All of these have been brought to my attention. This is the reason that today I have brought the 'Ulama forward so that this matter can be debated."

Sheikh Abdul Aziz - *may Allah be pleased with him* - admits, "There is no doubt that at the beginning, I was certainly affected by this show of pomp and power. However, the moment that Mamun accused me of adding something else in the Divine Attributes which was not supposed to be there, all my fear and apprehension disappeared. I then became firm in standing up for the truth no matter what happens to me."

It is reported that even before Mamun could stop, the voice of Sheikh Abdul Aziz Kinaani - *may Allah be pleased with him* - was heard around the court like a bolt of lightning had hit the court. He displayed no fear for anyone. After praising Allah Almighty, he started to address Mumun and those who sat around him. In fact, he spoke in such a manner as if he was talking to an ordinary person.

He declared, "O Ameerul Mo'mineen, I am an ordinary person who is still a seeker of knowledge. I live around the Ka'ba and I have heard about the tyranny of the Ameerul Mo'mineen. I came to the conclusion that indeed truth is now being oppressed. The light of the Sunnah is being diminished. The evil of Bid'ah is everywhere to be seen. It has become a crime to speak the truth and evil and false beliefs is being supported and praised. That which has not been said to the Ummah by Allah Almighty. That which has not been supported by the Sunnah or His messengers. That which was not taught by the Khulafah Raashideen whose rule and leadership was according to the teachings of the Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*. That which was

never mentioned by one single blessed companion. This is something which one ordinary human is making it Fard upon others.

“This person is someone who was born to the household of Harun Rashid. He is the son of someone who was a guide to all of us and yet this is someone who had not met any of the blessed Ashaab or even any member of Taaba’een. He is someone who had not attained any Barakah from being in the time of the Holy Prophet - *may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him* -and yet, he claims to understand the deep secret of Shari’ah.

“He claims that the Taaba’een did not consider this as Kufr even though they left this world as true believers. He claims the blessed Ashaab did not consider this as Kufr, yet, not a drop of Kufr ever reached them. The Holy Prophet - *may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him* - never mentioned anything about this belief even though he was the one who was blessed with Divine Revelation.”

After he had said these words, the entire court was silent. Everyone in the court from the most powerful to the least powerful were speechless. They could not stop the flow of words from this eminent Sunni scholar. In spite of him openly insulting Mamun, besides drawing their swords, no one could even move their tongues. In fact, at that moment, it appeared as if Sheikh Abdul Aziz - *may Allah be pleased with him* - was the ruler and everyone else was under him. There is no doubt that there is no fear on the Awliyah and nor is there sadness.

Sheikh Abdul Aziz Kinaani - *may Allah be pleased with him* - continued, “You have lit a spark which does not brighten Shari’ah but actually tries to extinguish the Sunnah. You have started something which does uplift Shari’ah but something which uplifts Bid’ah and heresy. In fact, you have not proven yourself as the deputy of the Holy Prophet - *may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him* - but you have actually tried to prove that you are a prophet yourself.

“The Holy Prophet - *may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him* - had never ever said that the Qur’an is a creation. But you claim that no one can be a Muslim until and unless he does not believe in this Kufr. The Holy Prophet - *may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him* - gave protection even to those disbelievers who were under his control but even the Muslims are not safe from you.

“Mamun, fear Allah. Bear in mind that the rope is long but there is no escape from the ultimate Power of Allah. He can give power and might to the rulers of the day and even to the religious leaders but He can also take it away. At first, you had made the innocent blood of Muslims in Syria Halaal and had some of them killed, let it not be, that others would think that your blood (or life) is also permissible to be taken. Become a true successor to this throne and do not become known as a tyrant who captured this throne.”

As he continued speaking, everyone remained silent and even the Sheikh began to raise his voice. There is no doubt that this was indeed Divine Help which people could see in the Sheikh. It could be seen that the Sheikh had not come on his own but had been sent to this place.

Sheikh Abdul Aziz Kinaani - *may Allah be pleased with him* - continued to explain from the Qur'an and Sunnah how a Muslim ruler should be. He also described the difference between Mamun and the past rulers of the Abbasid period. He also narrated a few Ahadith which proved beyond a shadow of doubt that after the Khulafah Raashideen, there would be immense fitnah and there will be many false and corrupt beliefs which will appear and which would try and lead Muslims away from the right path.

“O Ameerul Mo'mineen, the Qur'an has clearly informed us that we should certainly believe in it as being the Divine Word of Allah Almighty which was brought by Jibra'eel and presented in the blessed heart of the Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*. Nowhere has it informed us that we should call the Qur'an a creation.

“The Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* - and the blessed Ashaab - *may Allah be pleased with them* - never commanded us to say this. What has happened to you that instead of being a mercy for this Ummah, you have become a curse. As long as a person does not accept the Qur'an as creation, he is not safe from your sword. I swear that this is the same fitnah which we have been warned about. These are same infidels who are gathered around you and who wish to mislead the Muslim Ummah. Are their evidence more powerful than what the Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* - has given us? None of the past Muslims had this belief

that the Divine Attributes of Allah Almighty should be considered as creation. If you think otherwise, does this mean that only you and your supporters are Muslims while the rest of us are not Muslims?"

He then took the name of the infidel Jahm bin Safwan who started this fitnah and who was certainly refuted by certain of the blessed Ashaab and who were still living at that time.

The great Sheikh then continued, "I have only appeared here to prohibit evil and propagate good which is Fard upon me. If this is the truth which I have spoken, then please leave the company of these infidels who you have joined. These are the heretics who spreading Kufr in the name of Tauheed.

I therefore challenge all of you as is the Sunnah of Nabi Ebrahim - *peace be upon him* - to bring forward proof and evidence. Yes, there is also a habit of these people that when they feel they cannot answer, then they do the same thing as they did to Nabi Ebrahim - *peace be upon him* - of throwing him in a fire. If you adopt that attitude of tyranny and oppression, then please remember that this is not the Sunnah of Nabi Ebrahim - *peace be upon him*. This is the Sunnah of Nimrud. At the same time, if you wish to put me in a fire as well, then remember that we are the followers of Nabi Ebrahim - *peace be upon him* - and are prepared to endure this as well or else, I would not have come here.

I wish to also inform you that this is a function which has been created to debate a certain issue, however, I also wish to inform you that as I stood outside, your followers and subjects were also saying to me that, 'Allah has made me very ugly.' From this statement of theirs, one can figure out the level of their knowledge.

I wish to ask you this question. If someone insults the decoration which you have placed in your court, would they be insulting the decoration or would they be insulting you as the person who had placed this decoration. When these people insulted me by saying that I was ugly, they had actually insulted Allah Almighty Who had created me. In other words, they had indirectly insulted Allah Almighty. Is this what is called Tauheed? When Nabi Yusuf - *peace be upon him* - asked to be given the power to control the affairs of Egypt, he did not ask because he was handsome, he asked because he was

‘Hafeez’ and ‘Ameen’. In other words, a debate is based on knowledge and not appearance.”

Mamun remained completely speechless while Sheikh Abdul Aziz - *may Allah be pleased with him* - was speaking. However, the heretical followers of the Mu’tazilah could not remain silent when they realised that the Khalifah was becoming highly influenced by the words of the great Sheikh. They decided to interject before more harm was caused to their movement.

After listening to Sheikh Abdul Aziz - *may Allah be pleased with him*, Mamun said, “O Abdul Aziz! May Allah have Mercy on you. Whatever you have spoken, I have listened to it. At the same time, whatever you have attributed to me, I wish to say that I am pure of this. I do not want to oppress the creation of Allah but rather I wish to call them towards Tauheed and the truth. It has also become clear to me that you wish to fight for the truth and that is the reason that you display no fear. Because of this, it stands to reason that you are someone who should be respected. If you have any proof and evidence, if you have any testimony which you claim is the testimony of Nabi Ebrahim - *peace be upon him* - then please present that. As long as you cannot present evidence from the Qur'an and also logical evidence, your words would only remain a claim and nothing else.”

Mamun then indicated that the leader of the Mu’tazilah, namely Bashar Murisi, will ask the questions and Sheikh Abdul Aziz - *may Allah be pleased with him* - will have to give answers. The debate then began and the heretic continued to give verse after verse. (This seems to be the habit of these heretics to give verse after verse from the Qur'an which has nothing to do with the subject been discussed).

Sheikh Abdul Aziz - *may Allah be pleased with him* - continued to counter act these questions from the Qur'an and proved that none of these verses had anything to do with the subject at hand. As for Mamun, at times he praised the heretic and at times, he was extremely happy with the answers given by Sheikh Abdul Aziz - *may Allah be pleased with him* . In fact, at that moment, he was sitting on the fence.

Suddenly the heretic, Bahsha, shouted out, “I abandon all of my evidence. I wish that you answer one simple question. If you are able to do this, then the debate will end right

now. My question is this, ‘Has Allah Almighty not described Himself as the Creator of everything in the Qur’an.’”

The Sheikh replied that indeed this was the case.

Bashar said, “If that is the case, is the Qur'an also not included in ‘everything’?”

Sheikh Abdul Aziz replied, “The first thing is to define what ‘a thing’ actually is. In other words, what is meant by ‘Shay un’.”

However, the heretic replied that he did not want to know anything further and that the Sheikh had to answer this question before moving on.

Sheikh Abdul Aziz said, “The manner of your question is incorrect. There is deceit in this question. If you are able to listen to what I say, I will be able to prove this.”

However, again and again, the heretic was forcing Sheikh Abdul Aziz - *may Allah be pleased with him* - to answer this question of whether the Qur'an is also “shay un” or not. In other words, was it part of everything or not. In his cunning, the heretic also turned to Mamun and asked him that he should order the Sheikh to answer this question. After all, it was the Sheikh who had claimed initially that he had *Hujjat-e-Ebrahimi*.

In fact, this also instigated the supporters of the heretic, Mohammed bin Jahm, to also jump on the bandwagon and shout at the Sheikh to answer the question.

In fact, even Mumun began to have doubts and for the first time, he also asked the Sheikh in a little angry tone to answer this question of whether the Qur'an was part of ‘shay un’ or not.

Sheikh Abdul Aziz - *may Allah be pleased with him* - was also worried that if he answered that the Qur'an was also part of ‘shay un’, then all of these people would scream that indeed the Qur'an is also part of creation and that he (the Sheikh) had admitted this himself. However, when the Divine Help of Allah Almighty comes, no one can stop it.

The Sheikh then replied that “yes”, indeed the Qur'an was also part of ‘Shay un’.

When he heard this Bahshar jumped up in joy. In fact, both he and Mumun then said to Sheikh Abdul Aziz - *may Allah be pleased with him* - that he had also agreed with them that the Qur'an was creation and that Allah Almighty had created everything.

However, they had no idea what answer the great Sheikh was about to give them.

He then presented the 28th verse of Surah Ale Imran in which Allah Almighty declares:

لَا يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكُفَّارِيْنَ أَوْلَيَاءَ مِنْ ذُوْنِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا أَنْ تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ تُقْبَةً وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ طَرَالٌ

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

“The Muslims must not befriend the disbelievers, in preference over the Muslims; whoever does that has no connection whatsoever with Allah, except if you fear them; Allah warns you of **His wrath**; and towards Allah only is the return.”

In this verse, Allah Almighty uses the word “nafs” to describe His Divine Wrath. Sheikh Abdul Aziz - *may Allah be pleased with him* - then asked them, “In the Qur'an, it is mentioned that every nafs (or soul) will have to taste death, does this therefore mean that Allah Almighty will also have to face death? After all, the word nafs is used. If the Qur'an becomes a creation simply because you attributed the word ‘shay un’ to it, then it also means that Allah Almighty will also have to taste death because He has used the word nafs for Himself according to your thinking?”

When Sheikh Abdul Aziz - *may Allah be pleased with him* - mentioned these words, the entire court again went into a state of shock and silence. They were not mere words, but a lightning bolt. Bashar also became speechless. In fact, at that time, Mamun began to say, “Ma' azzallah (three times), the Divine Being of Allah Almighty is pure of death”.

He then ordered that the debate be completed. He also addressed the great Sheikh and said to him, "Even though the complete debate cannot be finished in this one sitting there is no doubt that you have certainly defeated those who have opposed you. I am also a witness that they have not managed to make you speechless or answerless. From my side, there is complete freedom and safety for you. From what I have seen as far as your knowledge is concerned, I believe that you should be in charge of the official religious lessons on behalf of the state."

Mamun also commanded that a reward of ten thousand Dirhams be given to Sheikh Abdul Aziz - *may Allah be pleased with him* - and a house be given to him as well. As he was leaving the court, Mamun also approached him and admitted that he had certainly achieved a great success and victory.

There is no doubt that this victory of Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Yahya Kinaani - *may Allah be pleased with him* - was a great victory for the Ahle Sunnah Wa Jamaah. In fact, at that time in history to refute the idea that the Qur'an was not a creation was like walking on a sharp sword. However, he sacrificed his own safety for the Divine Pleasure of Allah and with the result, victory was written in his destiny.

This event has been recorded in the manuscripts which are in the Damascus Museum.