

Inheriting Falsehood:
*The True Account and Correct
Understanding of What Occurred
Between the Two Imaams:
al-Bukhari and al-Dhuhli*



Abu al-Hasan Malik al-Akhdar



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Our *Shaykh*, *al-Allamah*, Rabi' b. Hadi al-Madkhali said, “A huge disagreement occurred between the two *Imams* al-Bukhari and Muhammad b. Yahya al-Dhuhli—Allah have mercy upon them—that almost split the people of hadith and *Sunnah*. However, because of their awareness of the Religion and their deep understanding of the dangers of dividing and differing and its ill effects in the worldly life and the afterlife, they have striven to bury this *fitnah* until this day of ours.”

IT HAS BEEN SAID that “every people have their inheritors.” The modern-day people of *takfir*, for example, have inherited their methodology of murder and rebellion from the likes of Sayyid Qutb, and before him the *Khawarij* of old. Similarly, those who seek a “vast, expansive” *da'wah* are the heirs of Abu al-Hasan al-Ma'rifi, and before him the *Ikhawani* founder Hasan al-Banna. So, what of those who cast doubts on the clear criticisms of the people of innovation and misguidance? Without question, they are the inheritors of 'Ali Hasan al-Halabi and his followers, those who reject these criticisms even though they are based upon reliable evidences and sound arguments, even though they are written by the well-known, respected scholars of the *Sunnah*. They claim that they are not obliged to accept these rulings and criticisms because past scholars differed over similar situations, and no one was forced to “choose sides.”

Most notably, they cite the disagreement that transpired between two *Imams* of hadith: Muhammad b. Isma'il al-Bukhari and Muhammad b. Yahya al-Dhuhli—may Allah have mercy upon them. The Halabis highlight this story in their writings and on their websites and social media networks, such that if you enjoin them to accept the truth about their teachers and callers, which has been clarified in the works of the scholars, they say, “I am not compelled by any of that. Are you not aware of what occurred between al-Bukhari and al-Dhuhli? Did not al-Dhuhli denounce *Imam* al-Bukhari, yet we recognize the virtue of both men and hold both in the highest esteem? So how are we now forced to accept one scholar's criticism of another?” Yet, if one examines the story of these two *Imams*, in the proper historical context, he will find that those who echo the Halabis have inherited nothing but falsehood.

In his biography of *Imam* al-Bukhari, al-Hafiz Ibn Hajr writes,

What Occurred Between [al-Bukhari] and al-Dhuhli Concerning the Issue of the Articulation [of the Qur'an], [al-Bukhari's] subsequent trial, and His Innocence from What was Attributed to Him

Al-Hakim, Abu 'Abdullah, stated in his *Tarikh*¹ that al-Bukhari arrived in Naysabur in 250 AH and stayed there for a time relating narrations. He said, “I heard Muhammad b. Hamid al-Bazzar say, I heard al-Hasan b. Muhammad b. Jabir say, I heard Muhammad b. Yahya al-Dhuhli say, ‘Go to this

¹ I.e. *The History of Naysabur*

pious scholar and listen to him.’ So, the people went and were so engaged with listening to him that there were empty spaces in Muhammad b. Yahya’s gathering. After this, [al-Dhuhli] began speaking about him.”

Hatim b. Ahmad b. Muhammad said, I heard Muslim b. al-Hajjaj say,

When Muhammad b. Isma’il arrived in Naysabur, I had not seen its inhabitants react that way for any leader or scholar. They met him the distance of two-or three-days travel from the town. In his gathering, Muhammad b. Yahya al-Dhuhli said, “Whoever desires to meet Muhammad b. Isma’il tomorrow should go, for I am going.” So, Muhammad b. Yahya and a group of the scholars of Naysabur went to meet him. He entered the town and took up quarters at the house of the Bukharis. Muhammad b. Yahya said, “Do not ask him anything concerning [Allah’s] speech. For if he were to answer contrary to that which we are upon, it would cause a clash between us, and every *Nasibi*, *Rafidi*, *Jahmi*, and *Murji*’ in Khurasan would rejoice.”

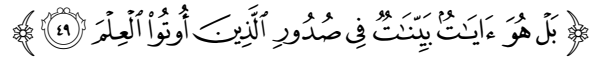
The people crowded around al-Bukhari until the house and roof were full. Then, on the second or third day after his arrival, a man stood up and asked about the articulation of the Qur’an. [Al-Bukhari] said, “Our actions are created, and our articulations are from our actions.” The people began to differ. Some said he stated, “My articulation of the Qur’an is created.” Some said he had not stated this. They differed until they stood up and faced each other. The people of the house came together and expelled them.

Abu Ahmad b. Adiiy said,

A group of scholars mentioned to me that when Muhammad b. Isma’il arrived in Naysabur, and the people gathered around him, some of the scholars of the time envied him and told the people of hadith that he said, “My articulation of the Qur’an is created.” So, when he attended the gathering, a man stood up and said, “O Abu ‘Abdullah, what do you say about the articulation of the Qur’an? Is it created or not created?” [Al-Bukhari] turned away from him. The man repeated the question three times. He insisted [on asking], so al-Bukhari said, “The Qur’an is the speech of Allah, uncreated; the worshiper’s actions are created; and testing [the people concerning it] is an innovation.” The man caused a disturbance stating that he said, “My articulation of the Qur’an is created.”

Al-Hakim said, Abu Bakr b. Abu al-Haytham related to us that al-Farabri said, I heard Muhammad b. Isma’il say, “Indeed, worshipers’ actions are created. ‘Ali b. ‘Abdullah related to us that Marwan b. Mu’awiyah related to us that Abu Malik said that Rib’i b. Hirash said that Hudhayfah said, the Messenger of Allah stated, ‘Allah has created every maker and his work.’”

[Al-Bukhari] said, I heard Ubaydallah b. Sa’id, i.e. Abu Qudamah al-Sarkhasi say, “I have not ceased hearing our companions say that worshipers’ actions are created.” Muhammad b. Isma’il said, “Their movements, their voices, their gains, and their writing are created. As for the evident Qur’an, fixed in the *Masahif* and retained in the hearts, then it is the Speech of Allah, uncreated. Allah says,



“Rather, [the Qur’an] is distinct verses, preserved within the breasts of those who have been given knowledge” [*al-Ankabut* 24:49].

He said, Ishaq b. Rahaway stated, “As for the vessels, then who doubts they are created?” Abu Hamid b. al-Sharqi said, I heard Muhammad b. Yahya al-Dhuhli say, “The Qur’an is the Speech of Allah, uncreated, and whoever claimed that [his] articulation of the Qur’an is created is an innovator. No one sits with this person or speaks to him. So, after this, whoever goes to Muhammad b. Isma’il, be suspicious of him. For no one attends his gathering except someone upon his methodology.”

Al-Hakim said, When the clash between al-Bukhari and al-Dhuhli took place over the issue of the articulation of the Qur’an, the people withdrew from al-Bukhari, apart from Muslim b. al-Hajjaj and Ahmad b. Salamah. Al-Dhuhli said, “Whoever speaks of the articulation, he is not permitted to attend our gathering.” So, Muslim drew his cloak over his turban and rose. He then sent everything he had written from [al-Dhuhli] to him on the back of a camel. I say (i.e. Ibn Hajar), Muslim was just, for he did not narrate from this one nor from that one.

Al-Hakim, Abu ‘Abdullah, said, I heard Muhammad b. Salih b. Hani say, I heard Ahmad b. Salamah al-Naysaburi say,

I entered upon al-Bukhari and said, O Abu ‘Abdullah, indeed, this is a popular man in Khurasan, especially in this city, and he has become persistent in this matter until none of us are able to speak to him about it. So, what do you think? He grasped his beard and said, “I entrust my affair to Allah. Indeed, Allah is All-Aware of His worshipers. O Allah, You know that I did not desire position in Naysabur out of impertinence or vanity or seeking leadership. Rather, I desired to return to my homeland, due to the ascendancy of opponents. This man pursued me out of jealousy because of what Allah granted me, nothing else.” Then he said, “O Ahmad, I am leaving tomorrow, so they can be saved from him speaking on account of me.”

Additionally, al-Hakim related from al-Hafiz Abu ‘Abdullah b. al-Akhram that when Muslim b. al-Hajjaj and Ahmad b. Salamah rose from Muhammad b. Yahya’s gathering because of al-Bukhari, al-Dhuhli said, “This man cannot reside in this city with me.” Al-Bukhari became fearful and departed.

In *Tarikh Bukhara*,² Ghunjar said, Khalaf b. Muhammad related to us that [he] heard Abu ‘Amr Ahmad b. Nasr al-Naysaburi al-Khaffaf say,

One day, we were with Abu Ishaq al-Qurashi, and Muhammad b. Nasr al-Marwazi was with us. The subject of Muhammad b. Isma’il came up, and Muhammad b. Nasr said, I heard him say, “Whoever claimed that I said my articulation of the Qur’an is created is a liar. For I did not say it.” I said, O Abu ‘Abdullah, many people have become engrossed in this discussion. He said, “It is nothing more than what I have said to you.”

² *The History of Bukhara*

Abu ‘Amr said,

I came to al-Bukhari and discussed some matters of hadith until he was in good spirits. Then I said, O Abu ‘Abdullah, there are those who state that you said, “My articulation of the Qur’an is created.” He said, “O Abu ‘Amr, remember this: Any person from Naysabur, etc. who claimed that I said my articulation of the Qur’an is created is a liar, for I did not say it. Rather, I merely said that worshipers’ actions are created.”

Al-Hakim said, I heard Abu al-Walid Hassan b. Muhammad al-Faqih, say, I heard Muhammad b. Nu’aym say, I asked Muhammad b. Isma’il about *Iman* due to what transpired. He said, “It is a statement and an action; it increases and decreases; the Qur’an is the Speech of Allah, uncreated; the best of the companions of Allah’s Messenger is Abu Bakr, then ‘Umar, then ‘Uthman, then ‘Ali. Upon this I live, and, Allah *ta’ala* willing, upon this I will die and be resurrected.”³

Let us examine several points that repudiate the Halibis’ attempts to use this story in support of their falsehood:

FIRST, *Imam* al-Bukhari was free of the charge against him. This can be found in Ibn Hajr’s heading, where he declares al-Bukhari’s “innocence from what was attributed to him.” It can also be found in al-Bukhari’s own statement: “Whoever claimed that I said my articulation of the Qur’an is created is a liar.” Concerning this, the noble *Shaykh*, *al-Allamah* Rabi’ b. Hadi al-Madkhali stated,

This has not been authentically reported from al-Bukhari; rather, he was lied upon...they slandered al-Bukhari stating that he said, “My articulation of the Qur’an is created,” but he is completely free of that. [Al-Bukhari] also said, “Whoever says this of me has lied. Whoever it is, and wherever he’s from, whether al-Hijaz or other than it, he has lied on me. I did not say it.” Rather, it was reported that he said, “Whoever says [his] articulation of the Qur’an is created is a disbeliever.”⁴

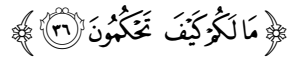
Thus, *Imam* al-Bukhari unequivocally denied making the statement. The same cannot be said of al-Halabi, al-Hajuri, al-Ma’ribi, et al, whose transgressions can be readily found in their writings, speeches, and commentaries. They do not deny them. Rather, they defend them emphatically.

SECOND, this incident cannot be used unrestrictedly in an attempt to silence all criticism. At the mere mention of refutation, some cry, “What about *Imam* al-Bukhari and *Imam* al-Dhuhli?” Are they ignorant of (or ignoring) the fact that *Imam* al-Dhuhli’s criticism of al-Bukhari was based on misinformation? Therefore, this incident does not apply to the knowledge-based refutations of the scholars. If one, for example, were to look at *Shaykh* Rabi’s replies to Abu al-Hasan al-Ma’ribi, he would find detailed responses to Ma’ribi’s many innovated statements and principles, including his call to a “spacious, vast *manhaj*,” his claim that the Companions differed in *aqidah* (creed), and his ascription

³ Ahmad b. Hajr, *Fath al-Bari*, vol. 1, *Hadyu al-Sari* (al-Riyadh: Maktabah Dar al-Salam, 1418 AH – 1997 CE), 684-686

⁴ Rabi’ b. Hadi, *Majmu’ Kutub wa Rasa’il wa Fatawa* vol. 15 (Cairo: Dar Imam Ahmad), 216

of “*ghutha’iyyah*” to some of those same Companions.⁵ So, comparing the *Shaykh*’s criticisms of al-Ma’ribi to what transpired between the two *Imams* of hadith is like comparing a yardstick to a country mile. Allah states,



What is the matter with you? How do you judge?” [*al-Qalam* 68:36]

THIRD, the two scholars, Muhammad b. Isma’il al-Bukhari and Muhammad b. Yahya al-Dhuhli, were both *Imams* of the *Sunnah* and defenders of the correct creed. Their story attests to that. As for al-Dhuhli, he was taking a firm stance against those who stated, “My articulation of the Qur’an is created,” as this was a general statement that could be taken to mean: 1) the Recitation itself (i.e. the Noble Qur’an), or 2) the reciter’s voice, tongue movements, etc. And due to this ambiguity, *Imam* Ahmad stated, “Whoever says [his] articulation of the Qur’an’ is created is a *Jahmi*; whoever says it is uncreated is an innovator.” Thus, al-Dhuhli took this position based on what reached him, though, as we have established, what reached him was unfounded.

As for *Imam* al-Bukhari, he was addressing two separate issues. In the first part of his statement, “The Qur’an is the Speech of Allah,” he was refuting the *Jahmiyyah*. In the second part of his statement, “the worshipers’ actions are created,” he was refuting those who went to the other extreme. In their attempt to rebut the *Jahmiyyah*, some began to say that “the movement of the tongues and the ink in the *Masahif* are not created.” A clear contradiction. This issue prompted al-Bukhari to pen his seminal work *Khalq Af’al al-’Ibad* (*The Creation of Worshipers’ Actions*). *Shaykh al-Islam* Ibn al-Qayyim states,

Abu ‘Abdullah al-Bukhari thoroughly clarified this matter, distinguishing between the Lord’s Action and the servant’s action. He defined the worshipers’ articulations, voices, and movements as created, while negating that the Qur’an, which Jibril heard from Allah, and Muhammad heard from Jibril, is created. He sufficiently explained this issue in his book *Khalq Af’al al-’Ibad*, presenting that which removes doubt, clarifies truth, establishes his scholarship and his position in the Religion, and beautifully refutes both groups.⁶

So, how can the stances of these two *Imams* be likened to the stances of the modern day *hizbis*, who, instead of refuting the people of innovation, have cooperated with them and invented principles to aid and support them?

FOURTH, some argue that these refutations are examples of contemporaries criticizing one another and must therefore be rejected. This understanding is erroneous from more than one perspective. First, the criticism of contemporaries is not rejected absolutely. Our *Shaykh*, the *Muhaddith* of Yemen, Muqbil b. Hadi al-Wadi’i stated,

⁵ *Al-Ghutha*: the foam and scum of the sea. This refers to the Prophet’s description of a large group being vanquished as a result of their love of the worldly life and their fear of death.

⁶ Muhammad al-Musili, *Mukhtasir al-Sawa’iq al-Mursalab ala al-Jahmiyyah wa al-Mu’attilah* vol. 4 (Riyadh: Adwa al-Salaf, 1425 AH – 2004 CE), 1353

The criticism of contemporaries is more reliable than [the criticism of] others. This is because they are more knowledgeable of their peers. So, it is accepted, unless it is known that there was some rivalry or hostility between them, whether due to some worldly matter, a position, or an error in judgment, and one wants to impose his faulty understanding on the other. Know this and do not listen to the statement of the innovators and *hizbis* that the criticism of contemporaries is rejected absolutely.⁷

Next, those who label the likes of *al-Allamah* Rabi' b. Hadi al-Madkhali and Abu al-Hasan al-Ma'ribi contemporaries have gravely erred. Clarifying the distinction between the two men, *al-Allamah* Ahmad al-Najmi stated,

Indeed, *Shaykh* Rabi' is known for his call to the *Sunnah*, along with his consummate knowledge of it and longstanding struggle to defend it. Second, *Shaykh* Rabi' has written [numerous] works, many of them refuting those who oppose the *Sunnah*. And we are not aware of him contradicting the evidences in a single matter, as al-Albani, may Allah have mercy upon him, testified. As for Abu al-Hasan, he is an inexperienced youth who wrote a book or two that were not established upon truth...⁸

FIFTH, these callers claim that because some scholars praise these individuals and others criticize them, the common people are free to make their own choice or stay out of issue altogether. By this, they insinuate that there must be total agreement among the scholars before one is “forced to take a position.” This is clear falsehood. Concerning this issue, *Shaykh* Rabi' was asked, “Is there a condition that the criticism of an innovator requires the consensus of the people of that era, or does one scholar's statement suffice?” He replied:

These are despicable *Mumayi'*⁹ principles, may Allah bless you. In what era did they make consensus a condition? And what is the proof for this consensus? Every condition that is not in the Book of Allah is *batil* (falsehood), even if they are a hundred such conditions. If *Imam* Ahmad or Yahya b. Ma'in criticize an innovator, I ask, is it necessary for all the *Imam's* of the *Sunnah* on earth to agree that this person is an innovator? If *Imam* Ahmad says this person is an innovator, [the matter] is over. Thus, when Ahmad says that so-and-so is an innovator, the people accept this from him and rally behind him. In addition, if Ibn Ma'in says that a person is an innovator, no one would dispute him.

This condition of consensus is impossible [to achieve] in any of the legislative rulings. If two witnesses come and testify that so-and-so committed murder, why don't

⁷ Muqbil b. Hadi, *al-Muqtarib fi Ajwibah ba'd As'ilah al-Mustalib* (Sana: Dar al-Athar, 1425 AH – 2004 CE), 87

⁸ Ahmad b. Yahya. “Shaykh Ahmad Najmi's Advice to Shaykh 'Abdul-Muhsin Al-Abbad Concerning His Book *Rifqan Ahl Sunnah Bi Ahl Sunnah*.” Al-Ajurry. April 2010. Accessed June 1, 2019. <https://www.ajurry.com/vb/showthread.php?t=12540>.

⁹ Those who practice *tamayi'* (softening): This methodology is founded upon principles that oppose the Book of Allah, the *Sunnah* of His Messenger, and the methodology of the Pious Predecessors. At its core, it is an inclination toward the people of innovation and desires and a position of softness and leniency with them. The *mumayi'* flatters the innovators, remains silent about their newly invented matters, and minimizes their danger and corruption.

we require consensus of the *Ummah* that he committed murder? The testimony of two witnesses that so-and-so killed so-and-so requires a judge to rule with Allah's Legislation, either with the *diyyah* (blood wit) or the *qisas* (law of retribution). He must execute the Judgement of Allah. So, is consensus required in such matters? This is more dangerous than deeming someone an innovator. Those [who introduced this principle] are the people of *Tamyiz*, the people of falsehood, callers to evil, and those who fish in muddy waters—as it is said. So, do not pay heed to these falsities. If an insightful scholar criticizes a person—may Allah bless you—it is obligatory to accept his criticism. And if a just, precise scholar raises objections to him, then both sides are studied; and the praise and criticism are examined. If the criticism is clear and detailed, it is given precedence over the praise, even if those who praise are many. If a scholar brings a detailed criticism and is opposed by twenty or fifty scholars who don't have evidence or only have a good thought or merely take from what is apparent, then the criticism is preferred. This is because the one who criticizes has proof, and the proof is given preference. Sometimes the proof is given precedence even if the inhabitants of the earth differ. Thus, if the *hujjah* (proof) is with him, the truth is with him. The *Jama'ah* is what is in accordance with the truth, even if one is alone. If a person is upon the *Sunnah*, and the inhabitants of two or three cities are upon innovation, the *haqq* is with that one person [upon the *Sunnah*]. What he has from truth and proof is given precedence to what those others have from falsehood. It is obligatory to respect proofs and evidences.

﴿قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ﴾ (٦٤)

“Say: ‘Present your proof if you are truthful’” [*al-Naml* 27:64].

And Allah says:

﴿وَأِنْ تَطِيعَ أَكْثَرُ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ﴾ (١١٦)

“If you were to obey most of the people on earth, they would lead you astray from the Way of Allah” [*al-An'am* 6:116].

So large numbers have no value if they are absent of proof. If most of the people of earth gathered together upon falsehood, and did not have proof, their agreement is of no account, even if only one person or a small number confronts them.¹⁰

To conclude, the story of what occurred between *Imam* al-Bukhari and *Imam* al-Dhuhli cannot be used to reject detailed, evidence-laden refutations against the people of desires, despite the futile efforts of Halabi's followers. Instead of attempting to utilize this story for their own corrupt purposes, they should approach it in the manner of the people of hadith. Our *Shaykh*, *al-Allamah*, Rabi' b. Hadi said, A huge disagreement occurred between the two *Imams* al-Bukhari and Muhammad b. Yahya al-

¹⁰ Rabi' b. Hadi. “Is Consensus of the Scholars a Condition of Accepting Disparagement of an Innovator?” albaidha.net. May 2013. Accessed Dec. 14, 2016. <http://www.albaidha.net/vb4/showthread.php?t=48170>

Dhuhli—Allah have mercy upon them—that almost split the people of hadith and *Sunnah*. However, because of their awareness of the Religion and their deep understanding of the dangers of dividing and differing and its ill effects in the worldly life and the afterlife, they have striven to bury this *fitnah* until this day of ours.”¹¹ So, beware of those who attempt to unearth what the noble scholars have striven to bury. We ask Allah to allow us to recognize the truth and adhere to it. Just as we ask Him to allow us to recognize falsehood and disregard it. Indeed, He is All-Aware of His worshipers, Hearer of supplication.



¹¹ Rabi' b. Hadi. "Advice to the Salafis of France." Al-Ajurry. April 2009. Accessed June 1, 2019. <https://www.ajurry.com/vb/showthread.php?t=7964>.