

The Ustādh Ibn Fawrak mentions that Abū Sahl travelled to 'Irāq during the time of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, and studied with him.<sup>1850</sup>

In citing a biographical account, Ibn 'Asākir points out that al-Ṣū'lūkī did not leave for Irāq until the year 320H:

He was born in 276H, and the first that he heard [knowledge] was 305H, he sought fiqh and prior to leaving for Irāq by a few years he had gained vast knowledge in the various sciences. He used to debate in the gatherings of Abū al-Faḍl al-Bal'amī, the vizier, in the year 317H, and he would be put at the forefront of the gathering. He left for 'Irāq in the year 320H, as he was unique amongst his associates. He entered Baṣrah and studied there for a number of years until he was invited to Aṣbahān and remained there for a few years.<sup>1851</sup>

Ibn 'Asākir affirms that al-Ṣū'lūkī was with al-Ash'arī in Baṣrah, quoting with his isnād from Abū 'Amr al-Razjāhī who said:

I heard the Ustādh, the Imām, Abū Sahl Muḥammad bin Sulaymān al-Ṣū'lūkī - may Allāh have mercy upon him - saying: We attended a sitting with the Shaykh, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī - may Allāh be pleased with him - in Baṣrah, and he debated the Mu'tazilah - may Allāh, the Exalted, desert them - and they were many, until he had [overcome] them all. So he defeated them, everytime one of them was cut off another one came long, until they were all [eventually] cut off. In the second gathering, none of them returned.<sup>1852</sup>

Further, Ibn 'Asākir lists those who accompanied al-Ash'arī in Baghdād, and mentions:

And from those who accompanied Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan in Baghdād and benefited from him from the people of Khurasān were the Shaykh Abū 'Alī Zāhir bin Aḥmad al-Sarkhasī, and likewise, the faqīh, Abū Zayd al-Marwazī, and the faqīh, Abū Sahl al-Ṣū'lūkī al-Nīsabūrī.<sup>1853</sup>

<sup>1850</sup> Refer to *Tabyīn Kadhib al-Muftarī*, p. 183.

<sup>1851</sup> Refer to *Tabyīn Kadhib al-Muftarī*, p. 183-184.

<sup>1852</sup> Refer to *Tabyīn Kadhib al-Muftarī*, p. 93-94.

<sup>1853</sup> Refer to *Tabyīn Kadhib al-Muftarī*, p. 128.

Finally, Ibn 'Asākir states that when al-Ash'arī entered into Baghdād, he never left it, and as such he remained there, died there and was buried there.<sup>1854</sup> All of these details combined indicate that al-Ash'arī did not author al-Ibānah until after 320H, most likely after 322H, since it is mentioned about al-Ṣu'lūkī that when he left for 'Irāq in 320H, he spent a couple of years in al-Baṣrah. He used to accompany al-Ash'arī in Baṣrah as has preceded. Then he accompanied Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī in Baghdād, and after al-Ash'arī moved to Baghdād, he remained and died there, according to Ibn 'Asākir. This is conclusive evidence that al-Ibānah was authored right at the end of his life, when he was in Baghdād and the evidence is taken entirely from a pro-Ash'arī source, Ibn 'Asākir's *al-Tabyīn*.

Then when we look at Ibn 'Asākir's direct quotation from his manuscript of al-Ibānah, we see the following:<sup>1855</sup>

And that Allāh ascended over His Throne, as He said, "**The Most Merciful ascended over the Throne**" (20:5), and that He has a face, just as He has said, "**And the Face of your Lord shall remain (the Face) full of Majesty and Honour.**" (55:27) and that He has a hand, as He said, "**Nay both His Hands are outstretched**" (5:64), and He also said, "**What I created with My Own Two Hands**" (38:75), and that He has an eye, without kayf, as He said, "**Floating under our eyes**" (54:14)...<sup>1856</sup> And we believe that Allāh will be seen on the Day of Judgement with the vision of the eyes, just like the moon is seen on

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<sup>1854</sup> Refer to *Tabyīn Kadhib al-Muftarī*, p. 391. This is in the course of invalidating the report that al-Ash'arī came to the Ḥanbalī scholar, and Imām of Ahl al-Sunnah, Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan bin 'Alī al-Barbahārī (d. 329H) in Baghdād to show his refutations against the Mu'tazilah, al-Barbahārī paid no attention to him, and al-Ash'arī went on to author al-Ibānah.

<sup>1855</sup> Refer to *Tabyīn Kadhib al-Muftarī*, pp. 152-163 where Ibn 'Asākir quotes a lengthy passage, starting from the very beginning of al-Ibānah. And the Ash'arites of today, in all their conniving, deceit and treachery, have tried to claim that because of the variation between what is cited by Ibn 'Asākir and today's published versions of al-Ibānah, the book must have been tampered with, despite the fact that every single instance of variation does absolutely nothing to change the essence of the matter, which is that al-Ash'arī affirms al-'Uluww for Allāh, and the attributes of face, hand and eye, as well as the Nuzūl and Istiwā and other matters. Further, when we find in the books of al-Bāqillānī, and al-Bayḥaqī, and even Ibn Fawrak, affirmation of these attributes as attributes of the essence, the desperation of the contemporary Ash'arites in trying to deal with the very troublesome and irksome al-Ibānah is exposed!

<sup>1856</sup> Refer to *Tabyīn Kadhib al-Muftarī*, p. 158.