

SUMMER IMMERSION HADITH MASTERS



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SESSION 7

Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani

- He was born in Cairo, Egypt
- He lived in the last quarter of the eighth century and the first half of the ninth century
- His parents were both from wealthy, affluent families
 - His mother passed away when he was a baby
 - His father passed away when he was four
 - Ibn Hajar could remember small moments with his father
 - He went to hajj with his father as a baby
- He was entrusted to Az-Zaki Al Kharuby
 - He took care of Ibn Hajar from the age of four to fourteen
- He went to Hajj a few times with Az-Zaki

Early Studies

- Az-Zaki made sure he studied deen early on
- He memorized the Quran by the age of nine
- He led taraweeh in Mecca at the age of twelve
 - He was known for his memory and knowledge
- He lived right near the Kaaba and therefore went to many study circles of hadith
- His main focus was to master the Arabic language (lughah)
- He learned from some of the greatest authorities in lughah

- He would say poetry effortlessly when he was young
- Masters of the language would refer to his opinion on the meanings of words and poetry
- Where he lived, the Shafi fiqh was prominent
 - He pursued the knowledge of Usul Al Fiqh
- When he was fourteen, his guardian Al Kharubi passed away

Travels and Teaching

- He then pursued hadith
- He studied with many hadith scholars
 - Az Zain Al Iraqi, Ibn Mulaqqin
- He traveled to Yemen and Sham
 - In each place, he took as much as he could
 - In between he stayed in Mecca
- By the time he was traveling, he was already well-known
 - He was greeted everywhere with respect
- He taught consistently throughout his life in a few different ways
 - He would teach in circles just for the narration of hadith
 - He would teach subjects (ex: fiqh, tafseer)
 - He would explain the sciences of hadith
- At one point, he was requested to be a qadhi, but he didn't want to take on that responsibility
 - Many of the salaf did this - they abstained from that position
 - There was constant pressure on him, so eventually he became a qadhi

Characteristics

- He is called Ibn Hajar due to an ancestor named Hajar
 - It wasn't his immediate father
- He disciplined himself in many aspects of life
 - He was very careful with his time
 - If he wasn't teaching or writing, he was busy in ibadah
 - He kept a tasbeeh in his sleeve
- He only gave his input if someone asked for it. Otherwise, he was silent
- He was either benefiting others or benefiting himself
- When he studied books, he would write down the text himself
 - He fixed any writing errors
 - He would thoroughly read what he wrote
 - He would then memorize it and recite it to his teacher
- His night was largely devoted to ibadah
- He was very balanced in his character and temperament
 - His students said that even if he was facing problems, he was still smiling and cheerful
 - People criticized him a lot
 - Once while he was teaching hadith, a man with mental illness yelled obscenities at Ibn Hajar from the window
 - His students were angry and went to remove him but Ibn Hajar stopped them
 - After a little while, they concluded the majlis and went to leave
 - The man came again in front of Ibn Hajar and yelled the same things in his face
 - When the man left, they found out that he was arrested and taken to jail for something else
 - Ibn Hajar wrote to the governor to have him release

- When Ibn Hajar wrote a book on a compilation of his teachers, someone insulted him and his family
 - When people knew about this man, the government had him arrested
 - Ibn Hajar again vouched for the man to be released
- He never sought revenge - he would respond to academic critique without putting anyone down
 - When it came to insults, he was still kind
- He had five or six daughters, and a few of them passed in their childhood, while others passed away in a plague
 - His patience was one thing, but it led him to write a whole book about plagues
 - One of his daughters passed away while she was expecting and also from a plague
 - Allah gave her two shahadas
- He was always self sufficient
 - He never relied on anyone for sustenance
 - At the time, a part of someone's salary would be given as meat
 - He never ate that meat himself
 - He wanted to avoid the possibility of haram income of the government
 - If he wanted meat, he bought it with his own money
- He was disciplined in his spending and consumption with wealth
- He has over six hundred scholars that he studied with
 - Fifty-five of them were well-known women
 - He always respected his teachers and gave them gifts
 - He received their duas
 - Serving people results in duas
 - Etiquette with teachers is that we behave with them in such a way that their hearts make dua for us

His Works

- One of his most famous books is Fathul Bari, which is a commentary on Sahih Bukhari
 - It's several volumes
- He wrote books on narrators of hadith
 - One of the most extensive is called Tahdheebu Tahdheeb
 - He abridged a few of these books because they were very long and comprehensive
- Once when he was a young boy, he drank zamzam and asked Allah to take him to the level of a prominent hadith scholar named Hafidh Adh-Dhahabi
 - Twenty years later at Hajj, he drank zamzam and asked Allah to take him to the next level
 - His students asked him if he had surpassed Adh-Dhahabi in knowledge, and he stayed quiet. His students said, "however, from what we heard from his teachers and contemporaries, he definitely had surpassed Adh-Dhahabi"
- He was dedicated to history and compiled a few books on history
 - Each focused on a different era

Family Life

- When Kharubi died when Ibn Hajar was fourteen, Shamsuddin ibn Khattan (another man who Ibn Hajar's father gave wasiyyah to), a scholar, took care of him and brought him to the next level with 'ilm
- Shamsuddin also got him married to the daughter of a prominent family
 - Ibn Hajar included her in the study of knowledge
 - She received ijazas from his teachers
 - She became a shaykha in her own right and hosted study circles in their home

- There were shuyookh who would read hadith books in their home annually and it would last two months (Rajab and Shaban)
 - Just before Ramadan, there would be a khatm of those books
 - His wife would host a large feast after that and invite many people
 - Ibn Hajar would attend and welcome everyone
- Some of their daughters would be taken to scholars and would listen to hadith at a young age
 - They grew up with knowledge
- He had one son who also grew up with knowledge and eventually became a mufti and qadhi

Legacy

- Ibn Hajar's books were prized possessions that had a lot of value
- His style of approaching hadith became the standard
- His compilations of hadith were also taken as the standard

Conclusion

- When we learn this knowledge, we have to make some resolutions
- We should introduce positive changes in our lives
- The purpose of learning this is to shift our routines and try to become more like these people
- Even if we don't acquire great amounts of knowledge, we should try to be righteous and have taqwa
 - Being righteous is an obligation, being a scholar of deen is optional
 - We should abstain from everything Allah dislikes and adopt what He likes
- We should also make the intention to further our knowledge

- Everyone is in a different situation, so it varies
- We should try to consistently seek knowledge, regardless of how little
- It helps us improve ourselves and better understand our deen
- Make the intention to serve the deen of Allah (SWT)
 - This can be by volunteering, teaching, etc.
 - There are many ways to serve deen
 - If we do something that results in someone coming close to Allah, we are rewarded for their deeds as well

