

# بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

## Imām al-Bayhaqī

(384-458 AH / 994-1066 CE)

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Imām, Ḥāfiẓ, Scholar, Jurist, Shaykh al-Islām Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī ibn Mūsā al-Khusrawjirdi, al-Khurāsānī was born in Sha’bān in the year 384 AH. Bayhaq is among the precincts of Nīshapūr at a distance of about 12 km [from Nīshāpūr] hence he is famous as Al-Bayhaqī.

He attended the class of Abu al-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-‘Alawī, the student of Abū Ḥāmid ibn al-Sharqī from the age of fifteen. He reported extensively from Al-Ḥākim Abū ‘Abdullāh, the famous Ḥāfiẓ. He was very intelligent, knowledgeable, wise, pious and a prolific author. He was a major Shāfi’ī jurist and a prominent Ash’arī theologian.

Ḥāfiẓ ‘Abd al-Ghāfir ibn Ismā’īl says in his *Tārīkh*:

Bayhaqī was an exemplary scholar – content with little and adorned with austerity and scrupulousness. He was a jurist, a Ḥāfiẓ, a master of principles [*uṣūlī*], pious, scrupulous in his religion, peerless and unequalled in his time,

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<sup>1</sup> Sources:

Dhahabī, *Siyār A’lām al-Nubalā’a* Entry:4318 [Vol.11, pg.457]

Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* Year:458 AH. [Vol.8/pg.222]

Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfa’iyyah*, The Fourth Generation, Entry: 251

outstanding in his proficiency and rigorousness [in the sciences.] Though he was among the prominent students of Al-Ḥākim, he surpassed even his teacher [Al-Ḥākim] by mastering various other sciences. He copied Ḥadīth and memorized it from a very young age; he took to fiqh and mastered it. He travelled to Iraq, Al-Jibāl and Al-Ḥijāz and then took to writing. He wrote close to a thousand folios among which are pioneering works and many of them first of their kind. He was a master of both Ḥadīth and Fiqh; of justifications of Ḥadīth [*ʿila*] and reconciliation of conflicting reports.

Many scholars requested him to relocate to Nīshāpūr from Bayhaq in order to benefit from his books; he therefore shifted to Nīshāpūr in the year 441 AH and began reciting his book *Al-Maʿrifah*; many imāms attended the gatherings.

Abu al-Maʿālī Imām Al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī said:

“There is no Shāfiʿī jurist who is not indebted to Imām Shāfiʿī except Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī; he has instead done a favour to al-Shāfiʿī by writing books in support and in verification of his madhhab.”

Dhahabi commented on his statement:

“Abu al-Maʿālī is right in making such a claim. And the truth is just as he has said it. Because, if Al-Bayhaqī wished to form his own madhʿhab, he had the necessary qualities and mastery of the sciences; including a comprehensive knowledge of differing opinions.”

### **Three Dreams:**

When Bayhaqī was writing his book *Al-Maʿrifah fī al-Sunan wa al-Āthār*, a pious scholar Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad saw a dream in which Imām Shāfiʿī was holding the book and he said: ‘Today, I have written seven folios from the jurist Aḥmad’s book.’

Another scholar saw Imām Shāfi'ī in his dream sitting in the mosque and he said: “Today, I have availed from such and such Ḥadīth mentioned in the jurist's [Aḥmad] book.”

Another jurist Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Marwaziyy says: “I saw a chest suspended in the sky and light emanating from it. I asked: ‘What is this?’ I heard someone say: ‘These are the books of Aḥmad Al-Bayhaqī.’”

All three dreams were reported by Imām Bayhaqī's son, Ismā'īl ibn al-Bayhaqī. Imām Dhahabī commented: “These are true dreams. Indeed, Ḥāfiẓ al-Bayhaqī's books are of immense value and of great stature. Few can match the class or clarity of his writing. It is necessary for every scholar to acquaint himself with his books, mainly his *Sunan Al-Kabīr*.”

#### **His prominent teachers:**

1. Abū Ṭāhir ibn Maḥmish al-Ziyādī, the jurist
2. 'Abdullāh ibn Yūsuf al-Aṣbahānī
3. Abū 'Alī al-Rūdhbārī
4. Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sullamī
5. Abū Bakr ibn al-Fūrak, the Theologian [*al-mutakallim*]
6. Ḥamzah ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Muhallabī
7. Abū Bakr al-Hayyirī, the Qāḍī
8. Yaḥyā ibn Ibrāhīm al-Muzakkī
9. Abū Sa'īd al-Ṣayrafī
10. 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Saqqā
11. Abū Sa'īd Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Mālīnī, the Sufi
12. Abu al-Ṭayyib al-Ṣa'lūkī
13. Hilāl al-Ḥaffār
14. Abu al-Ḥusayn ibn Bishrān

...and scholars from Ṭabaran, Nawqān, Baghdād, Makkah, Kūfah; and also among the companions of [Ḥātim] Al-Aṣamm, the famous Sufi. Al-Subkī writes that he studied under more than a hundred teachers.

## His Works:

He was granted munificence in his knowledge and he has written very beneficial books among which are:

1. *Sunan al-Kabīr* [The Greater Collection of Sunnah] in ten volumes which is his masterpiece. It is outstanding because nobody has compiled a book of ḥadīth like it in organization, classification and excellence.
2. *Ma'rifa al-Sunan wa al-Āthār* [The Knowledge of Sunnas and Reports] in four volumes, which is a must read for every Shāfi'ī jurist. Taqiyuddin Al-Subkī says that Bayhaqī meant to demonstrate the expanse of Imām Shāfi'ī's knowledge of ḥadīth with this book.
3. *Al-Asmā'a wa al-Ṣifāt* [The Divine Names and Attributes] in two volumes; Tāj al-Subkī says: 'I haven't seen anything like it.' [It was published by Imam al-Kawtharī, with his foreword and notes]
4. *Kitāb al-Mu'taqad* [or *Kitāb al-I'tiqād*] [Handbook of Creed]
5. *Al-Ba'ath* [wa' *al-Nushūr*] [Resurrection and Judgement Day ]
6. *Al-Targhīb wa al-Tarhīb* [Encouragement to do good and Warning to abstain from evil]
7. *Al-Da'wāt al-Kabīr*, a prayer book. [The Bigger Prayer Book]
8. *Al-Da'wāt al-Ṣaghīr* [The Smaller Prayer Book]
9. *Al-Zuhd* [Asceticism]
10. *Al-Khilāfiyyāt* [The Differences] in three volumes on the differences of

opinion among jurists. Al-Subkī writes that none except a master of both fiqh and ḥadīth can grasp it.

11. *Al-Mabsuṭ fī Nuṣūṣ al-Shāfi'i* [The Extensive: Documents used by Al-Shafi'i] in two volumes, the proofs of Shāfi'i madh'hab – the first book of its kind.

12. *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah* [Proofs of Prophethood] in four volumes

13. *Al-Sunan al-Ṣaghīr* [The Smaller Collection of Sunnah] as one big tome

14. *Shu'ab al-Īman* [Branches of Faith] in two volumes

15. *Al-Mad'khal ila' al-Sunan* [An Introduction to the Sunnah]

16. *Al-Ādāb* [The book of Etiquette]

17. *Faḍā'il al-Awqāt* [The excellence of certain specific times (for worship)] in two slim volumes

18. *Al-Arba'īn al-Kubrā* [The Greater Quadraginta] in two slim volumes

19. *Al-Arba'īn al-Ṣuḡhrā* [The Smaller Quadraginta]

20. *Al-Ru'yah* [The Book of Dreams]

21. *Al-Asrā'a* [The Book of Ascension]

22. *Manāqib al-Shāfi'i* [The Immense Merits of al-Shafi'i]

23. *Manāqib Aḥmad* [The Immense Merits of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal]

24. *Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥābah* [The Superiority of the Companions]

**Among his prominent students and those who narrate from him are:**

1. Shaykh al-Islām Abū Ismāʿil al-Anṣārī
2. his own son, Ismāʿil ibn Aḥmad al-Bayhaqī
3. his own grandson ʿUbaydullāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Bayhaqī
4. Ḥāfiẓ Abū Zakariyyah Yaḥyā ibn Mandah
5. Abū ʿAbdullāh Muḥammad ibn al-Faḍl Al-Furāwī
6. Zāhir ibn Ṭāhir al-Shaḥāmiy
7. Abu al-Maʿālī Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿil al-Fārisī
8. ʿAbd al-Jabbār ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Dahʿhān
9. Abd al-Jabbār ibn Muḥammad al-Khuwārī and his brother
10. Abd al-Ḥamīd ibn Muḥammad al-Khuwārī
11. Abū Bakr ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Buḥayrī al-Nīsābūrī

He passed away in Nīshāpūr on the 10th of Jumādā al-Ūlā, 458 AH (1066 CE). He was washed and placed in a casket and carried to Bayhaq [two days journey in that age] where he was buried. He was 74.

May Allāh ﷻ have mercy on him and be well pleased with him.

