

A Brief Biography of Ibn Battah al-Ukbari

Various Scholars



The *Imaam*, the Hadeeth Master (*Haafidh*), the Hanbalee Legal Jurist (*Faqeeh*), the devout worshipper and ascetic. He was born in the year 304H in Ukbaraa, a land close to Baghdaad, and died in the year 387H. His father was a *Faqeeh* and it was under his auspices that he began his studies and he often reports from him in his books. He was sent to Baghdaad to study hadeeth while still young, then he travelled to various lands such as Shaam, Basrah, Makka and Thagur studying under a host of the leading scholars of his time and excelled in *aqeedah*, *hadeeth* and *fiqh*.

He heard from the likes of Abu al-Qaasim al-Baghawee, Abu Dharr al-Baaghandee, Abu Bakr bin Ziyaad an-Naisabooree, Ismaa'eel al-Warraaq, al-Qaadee al-Mahaamalee, Muhammad bin Mukhlid, Abu Taalib Ahmad bin Nasr al-Haafidh, Muhammad bin Ahmad bin

Thaabit al-Ukbaree, Alee bin Abee al-Aqab, Ahmad bin Ubaid as-Saffaar, ibn Saa'id and others.

A group of the scholars narrated from him such as Abu al-Fath bin Abee al-Fawaaris, Abu Nu'aym al-Asbahaanee, Ubaidullaah al-Azharee, Abdul-Azeez al-Azjee, and Abu Ishaq al-Barmakee, Abu Muhammad al-Jawharee, Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Eesaa as-Sa`see and others. He has been praised by more than one Imaam and was famous for enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. [Ibn Katheer, 'al-Bidaayah wa an-Nihaayah' (11/368-369); ibn Hajr, 'Lisaan al-Meezaan' (4/133+); adh-Dhahabee, 'Siyar' (16/529-533)]

Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee said: Abu Haamid ad-Dawlee narrated to me that when ibn Battah returned from his travels he confined himself to his house for forty years [only rarely going out]. He was not seen in the market place and neither was he seen breaking fast except on the day of *Eed*. He used to enjoin the good and not a single bad narration [concerning people] would reach him except that he put it in a better light." Ibid and al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee, 'Taareekh Baghdaad' (10/372)]

Abdul-Waahid bin Alee al-Ukbaree said, "I have not seen any of the scholars from the *Ashaabul Hadeeth* or other than them having a better disposition and mannerism than ibn Battah" [al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee, 'Taareekh Baghdaad' (10/372)]

Ahmad bin Muhammad al-Ateeqee said, "Ibn Battah was a righteous Shaykh, one whose supplications were answered." [Ibn al-Jawzee, 'al-Muntadhim' (7/194)]

Abu al-Fath al-Qawwaas said: I mentioned the knowledge and ascetism of ibn Battah to Abu Sa'eed al-Ismaa'eelee and so he went to him. When he returned he commented, "his [knowledge and ascetism] is beyond description." [Al-Asqalaanee, 'Lisaan al-Meezaan' (4/134)]

Abu Mas'ud Ahmad bin Muhammad al-Bajlee, the Haafidh said, "I have loved the Hanbalees since the day I saw Abu Abdullaah bin Battah." [Ibn Abee Ya'laa, 'Tabaqaatul Hanaabilaa' (2/145)]

Ibn al-Amaad said, "the great *Imaam*, the *Haafidh*, ibn Battah, the Hanbalee *Faqeeh* and righteous servant." [Ibn al-Amaad, 'Shadharaat adh-Dhahab' (3/122)]

However in the field of hadeeth he has been criticised for his precision although in and of himself he is regarded to be truthful (*sadooq*). It is important to note that the scholars of hadeeth have cleared him of the possibility of fabricating. [Adh-Dhahabee, 'al-Mughnee fee ad-Du`afaa' (2/417), 'al-Uluw' (2/417), 'Siyar' (16/529-533); as-Suyutee, 'al-Laa`ee' (1/85) and others; a defence of him against a number of criticisms levelled against him can be found in ibn al-Jawzee, 'al-Muntadhim' (7/194+) and al-Mu'allamee, 'at-Tankeel' (pp. 561-571)]

At this point it is necessary to mention that the People of Innovation have capitalised on a statement concerning this great *Imaam* made by *al-Haafidh* ibn Hajr al-Asqalaanee, may Allaah have mercy upon him. Using this statement they have attempted to declare this *Imaam* a fabricator and liar, may Allaah forgive them and us.

Ibn Hajr in his notice of ibn Battah begins by declaring him an *Imaam* and then proceeds to criticise him for his lack of precision in narration. He quotes the words of al-Ateeqee about him that "despite his lack of precision [in narrating] he was an *Imaam* in the *Sunnah* and an *Imaam* in *fiqh*, possessor of miraculous events and one whose supplications were answered, may Allaah be pleased with him."

He then proceeds to mention a *munkar* narration concerning the Attributes of Allaah and after identifying ibn Battah as being the source of this narration [although his being the culprit is differed over by the Scholars of Hadeeth], ibn Hajr comments, "and I do not know what I should say about ibn Battah after this."

It should be noted here that if ibn Hajr thought ibn Battah to be a liar or fabricator it would be necessary for him to mention this clearly, for the likes of this *Haafidh* could not possibly remain silent on such an issue.

Furthermore, as-Suyutee may Allaah have mercy upon him, further clarifies ibn Hajr's position on him. He says, after quoting the above mentioned words of ibn Hajr, "I saw in the handwriting of ibn Hajr in his notes to 'Mukhtasar al-Mawdoo`aat' of ibn Darbaas [concerning this hadeeth], "...this *baatil* addition that occurs at the end of it is not present here and so it is clear that it occurs due to the poor memory of ibn Battah."

So in this narration ibn Hajr explicitly clears ibn Battah of intentional fabrication and hence his stance on him falls in line with the majority of Hadeeth Masters. Allaah knows best.[ibn Hajr al-Asqalaanee, 'Lisaan al-Meezaan' (4/134); as-Suyutee, 'al-Laa`ee al-Masnoo`ah' (1/75)]

His books concerning *Aqeedah* that have been published are 'al-Ibaanah al-Kubraa' in seven volumes with the *tahqeeq* of Yusuf bin Abdullaah al-Waabil and 'ash-Sharh wal-Ibaanah' with the *tahqeeq* of Dr. Ridaa Nu`saan. May Allaah have mercy upon him.