

Some of the Contemporaries and Colleagues of Imām Aḥmad

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*Bishr al-Hāfi*¹

Bishr ibn al-Hārith, Abū Naṣr al-Khurāsānī al-Marwazī al-Baghdādī known as Bishr al-Hāfi (151-227), was a disciple of Fuḍayl ibn ‘Iyād (d. 187) and teacher of Sarī al-Saqāfi. He took ḥadīth from Imām Mālik, Ibn al-Mubārak, Ḥammād ibn Zayd, Sharīk, Hushaym, and others. Al-Dāraqūṭnī called him: *zāhid jabal thiqa* – “an ascetic who is a mountain of knowledge and trustworthiness.” The Scholars of ḥadīth have rarely used the term *jabal*, which is above *ḥujja* (“Proof in himself”), which is above *thiqa* (“trustworthy”). Among his sayings:

- “I do not know anything better than the pursuit of ḥadīth science for whoever fears Allāh and keeps a good intention in this activity; as for myself, I ask the forgiveness of Allāh from having ever pursued it, and from every single step I took in it.” Imām al-Sha‘rānī explained that the reason Bishr abandoned the study of ḥadīth is because he considered it a conjectural science in comparison with the certitude in belief imparted by frequenting Fuḍayl ibn ‘Iyād.² However, the early sources show that this was done out of scrupulous fear of Allāh.³ Sufyān al-Thawrī similarly said: “Would that all my knowledge were erased from my breast! How can I face being asked, tomorrow, about each single ḥadīth I ever narrated: ‘What was your purpose in narrating it?’” He also said: “Would that my hand had been cut off and I never sought after a single ḥadīth!”⁴
- “If talking pleases you, keep silent; and if silence pleases you, then speak.”
- “O Allāh! You know, above Your Throne, that lowliness is more beloved to me than nobility. O Allāh! You know, above Your Throne, that poverty is more beloved to me than wealth. O Allāh! You know, above Your Throne, that I do not put anything before Your love.”

Imām al-Nawawī in his monograph entitled *al-Tarkhīṣ bil-Qiyām* narrates the following commentary by Bishr on the ḥadīth of Mu‘āwiya to [‘Abd Allāh] Ibn ‘Āmir: “Sit, for I heard the Prophet ﷺ say: ‘Whoever likes for men to stand up for him let him take his place in the fire’”⁵:

The Prophet ﷺ only disliked the standing of others from the perspective of arrogance, but from the perspective of sincere love he did not, since he himself stood up for ‘Ikrima ibn Abī Jahl... and he said [concerning Sa‘d ibn Mu‘ādh]: “Stand for your chief,” and he said: “He who *likes* people to stand for him...” indicating that whoever likes people to stand for him, only then must you not stand for him.

It is also established that the Prophet ﷺ used to stand up for his daughter Fāṭima, take her by the hand, and kiss her, and she used to stand up for him, take his hand, and kiss him.⁶

Also related from Bishr al-Hāfi is the statement: “None criticizes Abū Ḥanīfa except an envier or an ignoramus.”⁷ Bishr either followed the School of Abū Ḥanīfa in *fiqh* or that of Sufyān al-Thawrī.

Bishr al-Hāfi’s grandfather was a Zoroastrian from Khurāsān named Bābūr. Ibn al-Jawzī relates from Zubda, the sister of Bishr:

One time Bishr entered my house late at night. He placed one of his feet inside the house and the other outside, and remained thus in reflection until dawn. Afterwards I said to him: “What were you thinking about all night?” He said: “I was thinking of Bishr-the-Christian, and Bishr-the-Jew, and

¹Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣifat al-Ṣafwa* (2:216-218); al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* (9:170-172 #1691).

²Al-Sha‘rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* (1:57).

³See the chapters on Bishr in al-Sulamī’s *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, al-Qushayrī’s *Risāla*, and Ibn al-Mulaqqin’s *Ṭabaqāt al-Awliyā’*.

⁴Both reports cited by al-Dhahabī in the *Siyar* (al-ʿArnaʿūt ed. 7:255, 7:274).

⁵Narrated Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī who said: *ḥasan* (“fair”) and Ahmad in his *Musnad*.

⁶Narrated from ‘Ā’isha by al-Bayhaqī in *al-Sunan al-Kubrā* (7:101 #13346) and al-Hākim (3:154=1990 ed. 3:167, *ṣaḥīh* according to al-Dhahabī). Cf. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ghumārī, *I’lām al-Nabīl bi Jawāz al-Taḥqīl*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qāhira 1994). See also, on this issue, the chapter (#26) on getting up out of respect in al-Bayhaqī’s *al-Madkhal ilā al-Sunan*.

⁷Narrated by al-Dhahabī in his *Tārīkh al-Islām* (6:142) and *Manāqib Abī Ḥanīfa* (p. 32).

Bishr-the-Zoroastrian, and about my soul, and about my name of ‘Bishr,’ and I said to myself: ‘What have you done to merit that He single you out [with Islām]?’ And I kept thinking of His immense favor towards me, and thanking Him that He has made me one of His special servants and clothed me with the vestment of His beloved ones.”

Ibn al-Jawzī also relates from Muḥammad ibn Qudāma: “Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith once met a drunkard on the road who began kissing him and shouting: ‘*Yā sayyidī! Yā Abā Naṣr!*’ and Bishr did not push him away from him. When the drunkard left, Bishr’s eyes filled with tears and he said: ‘A man who loved another man because he imagined that there was some good in him – yet, perhaps, the lover is saved, while the one who is loved is uncertain about his own condition.’”

Imām Aḥmad was awed by Bishr al-Ḥāfi and considered him one of the *Abdāl* – major Saints of the time – only regretting that he did not complete the Sunna by marrying.

Ibn al-Madīnī

‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī, Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ja‘far al-Sa‘dī al-Baṣrī al-Madīnī (d. 234) was the trustworthy Imām and ḥadīth Master and one the most knowledgeable of the ḥadīth Masters of his time. He narrated ḥadīth from his father, from Ḥammād ibn Zayd, and a large number of ḥadīth Masters. From him narrated al-Bukhārī, Abū Dāwūd, al-Baghawī, Abū Ya‘lā, and others. He was a student of Yaḥyā ibn Sa‘īd al-Qaṭṭān together with al-Shādhakūnī, ‘Amr ibn ‘Alī, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn.

Ibn al-Madīnī once said: “I may find the minute defect of a ḥadīth narration forty years later.” His Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Maḥdī said: “‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī is the most knowledgeable of all human beings in the ḥadīth of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, especially in what Ibn ‘Uyayna narrates. Do you blame me for loving ‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī too much? By Allāh! I learn more from him than he does from me.” His other Shaykhs Yaḥyā al-Qaṭṭān and Sufyān ibn ‘Uyayna said the same about him. Al-Bukhārī said: “I did not think little of myself before anyone except before ‘Alī (ibn al-Madīnī).” Al-Nasā‘ī said: “It is as if Allāh created him only for this science (ḥadīth).” He died in Samarrā. Ibn al-Athīr said that the name of Madīnī is related to the city of the Prophet ﷺ but al-Jawharī said that the latter would be “Madanī,” “Madīnī” referring to the city built by the caliph al-Manṣūr, al-Madā’in.⁸

*Al-Qāsim ibn Sallām*⁹

Al-Qāsim ibn Sallām ibn ‘Abd Allāh, Abū ‘Ubayd al-Harawī ؒ (d. 224), was one of the great early ḥadīth Masters and philologists, author of *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth*, *Fada’il al-Qur’ān*, and many other works. A student of al-Shāfi‘ī, Hushaym, Ibn ‘Uyayna, Ghundar, Ibn al-Mubārak, Wakī‘, Ibn Maḥdī, and others, he was one of ‘Abbās al-Dūrī’s Shaykhs. Ishāq ibn Rāhūyah said: “As Allāh loves the truth, Abū ‘Ubayd is better versed and more knowledgeable in the Law than I.” Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī said: “Abū ‘Ubayd was like a mountain into which the Spirit was breathed. He excelled in everything, except that ḥadīth was the specialty of Aḥmad [ibn Ḥanbal] and Yaḥyā [ibn Ma‘īn].”

‘Abbās al-Dūrī said: “I heard Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām mention the vision of Allāh [in the hereafter], the *kursī* where the two Feet are placed, our Lord’s laughter, and where He was [before creation], then he said: ‘All these are sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*) narrations transmitted by the scholars of ḥadīth and *fiqh* one from another; we consider them the truth and do not doubt them. But if it were asked: How does He laugh? or: How does He place His *Qadam*? We reply: We do not explain this; nor did we ever hear anyone explain it.’”

Among his sayings:

- “He who follows the Sunna is like one who is grasping a hot coal. A day spent following the Sunna is, to me, preferable to striking sword-blows in the way of Allāh Almighty.”
- “I am puzzled by those who leave the principles to study the branches.”¹⁰ Shaykh Muhammad ‘Ajāj al-Khaṭīb said he meant by the principles the foundational books (*al-kutub al-ummahāt*) of proof-texts as opposed to the books of *fiqh*.¹¹

⁸Source: al-Khaṭīb, *al-Jāmi‘* (2:385 #1841).

⁹Sources: Ibn Abī Ya‘lā, *Tabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (1:259-262 #369); al-Dhababī, *Siyar* (9:183-191 #1702, 8:287-289 #1482); Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Intiqā‘* (p. 167).

¹⁰Narrated by al-Khaṭīb in *al-Jāmi‘ li Akhlāq al-Rāwī* (2:270 #1612).

Ibn Abī Ya‘lā relates from Ibn Abī al-Dunyā [the ḥadīth Master ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Ubayd (208-281)] the following account by Abū ‘Ubayd:

I visited Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal one day. When I entered his house he got up and embraced me, then he made me sit at the head of his gathering. I said: “Abū ‘Abd Allāh! Is it not said that the owner of the house, or chief of the gathering, is the most deserving of sitting at the head of his house or gathering?” He replied: “Yes, he sits there, and seats whom he wishes there.” I thought to myself: “Take benefit from what you just heard, Abū ‘Ubayd!” Then I said: “Abū ‘Abd Allāh! If I were to come and see you according to what befits you, I would come and see you each and every day.” He replied: “Do not say that. I have brothers whom I do not see all year but once, and in whose love I trust more than in those I see every day.” I said to myself: “This is another one, Abū ‘Ubayd!” When I got up to leave he got up with me. I said: “Please do not, Abū ‘Abd Allāh!” He said: “Al-Sha‘bī said: Part of the perfection of the visitor’s call is that he be accompanied to the door of the house [when he leaves], and to hold the reins of his mount for him.” I said: “Abū ‘Abd Allāh! From al-Sha‘bī?” He said: “From Ibn Abī Zā‘ida, from Mujalid, from al-Sha‘bī.” I said to myself: “Abū ‘Ubayd, this is the third benefit for you!”

Ibn Abī Ya‘lā continues: “It is narrated from Abū Qilāba, from Ibn ‘Abbās, that the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘Whoever holds the reins of someone’s mount not begging anything from him nor fearing him, his sins are forgiven.’¹² Al-Sha‘bī narrated that Ibn ‘Abbās held the reins of Zayd ibn Thābit’s mount, so the latter said: ‘You are holding them for me, you, the Prophet’s ﷺ cousin?’ Whereupon Ibn ‘Abbās replied: ‘This is our practice with the Ulema.’”¹³ It is also narrated that Ibn ‘Abbās would wait for Zayd to come out outside his door in order to take knowledge from him; and when Zayd died he said: “Thus is knowledge taken away.”

(Abū ‘Ubayd must not be confused with his contemporary and philologist namesake Abū ‘Ubayda who is Ma‘mar ibn al-Muthannā al-Taymī (d. ~210). He authored *Majāz al-Qur‘ān*¹⁴ and the lost *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth* as well as historical and lexicographical works. He is cited heavily in Qur‘ānic commentaries and al-Baghawī reports in his that he explained *istawā* as “He mounted” (*ṣa‘ida*) in the verse **﴿Then He established Himself over the Throne﴾** (32:4).¹⁵ Pickthall followed that sense in his translation of the verse as “Then He mounted the Throne.”)

*Ibn Abī Shayba*¹⁶

‘Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Shayba Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Khuwasta, Abū Bakr al-‘Abasī (d. 235), described by al-Dhahabī as the brother, father, and uncle of ḥadīth Masters and their most prestigious representative, “the master of ḥadīth Masters,” “one of those who have reached the sky, an apex of trustworthiness,” “one of the oceans of knowledge,” the author of *al-Musnad*, *al-Aḥkām*, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, and *al-Tafsīr*, “one of the peers of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Ishāq ibn Rāhūyah, and ‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī in age, place of birth, and ḥadīth memorization.” Abū Zur‘a al-Rāzī said: “I never saw anyone with more mastery of the ḥadīth than Abū Bakr ibn Abī Shayba,” rather lavish praise in light of al-Rāzī’s familiarity with Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and al-Bukhārī. His scholarly relatives are: his brothers ‘Uthmān ibn Abī Shayba and al-Qāsim ibn Abī Shayba; his son Ibrāhīm ibn Abī Bakr ibn Abī Shayba; and his nephew Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Abī Shayba. All are ḥadīth Masters except al-Qāsim, who is weak.

‘Abd Allāh ibn Abī Shayba took ḥadīth from Sharīk ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Qādī at age fourteen, Ibn al-Mubārak, Sufyān ibn ‘Uyayna, Hushaym ibn Bashīr, Wakī‘ ibn al-Jarrāḥ, Yahyā al-Qaṭṭān, Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Ayyāsh, Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Ulayya, and other major authorities. From him took al-Bukhārī and Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Abū Zur‘a, Ibn Abī ‘Āsim, Baqī ibn Makhlad, al-Bāghandī, Abū Ya‘lā al-Mawṣilī, Ṣāliḥ Jazara, ‘Abdān, Abū al-Qāsim al-Baghawī, and others.

¹¹This objection is addressed in depth in the section titled “The Superiority of *Fiqh* over *Ḥadīth*” in the chapter on al-Shāfi‘ī.

¹²Narrated by Ibn ‘Asākir.

¹³This ḥadīth is narrated by al-Khaṭīb in *al-Faqīh wal-Mutafaqqih* (2:99), al-Bayhaqī in *al-Madkhal* (p. 137), Ibn Sa‘d (2:360) from Abū Nu‘aym with a sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*) chain according to Ibn Hajar in *al-Isāba* (1:561), al-Tabarānī with a sound chain as indicated by al-Haythamī in the chapter on Zayd in *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id*, Ibn al-Muqri‘ in *al-Rukhsa fī Taqḥīl al-Yad* (p. 95 #30), al-Tabarī in his *Tārīkh* (11:57, al-Fath), and Ibn ‘Asākir in his *Tārīkh* in the biography of Zayd.

¹⁴Published in Cairo in two volumes edited by Fu‘ād Sezgīn (1955 and 1962).

¹⁵In his commentary entitled *Ma‘ālim al-Tanzīl* (al-Manar ed. 3:488).

¹⁶Main sources: al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* (9:394-396 #1841) and *Tadhkira* (2:432-433).

Ibn Abī Shayba showed enmity to Abū Ḥanīfa ؓ as he named one of the longest chapters of his *Muṣannaf* “Book of the Refutation of Abū Ḥanīfa” in which he proceeded to list about one hundred and twenty five “Prophetic ḥadīths which Abū Ḥanīfa contradicted.”¹⁷ This charge, together with Ibn Abī Shayba’s refutation, are refuted in detail in the books of Imām Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī among others, particularly *al-Nukat al-Ṭarīfa fīl-Taḥadduth ‘an Rudūd Ibn Abī Shayba ‘alā Abī Ḥanīfa* (“The Witty Anecdotes in Discussing Ibn Abī Shayba’s Rebuttals of Abū Ḥanīfa”). It remains that the *Muṣannaf* is a precious mine of information on the juridical positions of the Companions and Successors.

Ibn Abī Shayba narrates in the chapter entitled: “Touching the grave of the Prophet” with a *ṣahīḥ* chain according to Ibn Ḥajar and al-Qāḍī ‘Iyād in *al-Shifā’* (in the chapter entitled: “Concerning the visit to the Prophet’s grave ؓ, the excellence of those who visit it and how he should be greeted”):

Yazīd ibn ‘Abd al-Mālik ibn Qusayt and al-‘Utbī narrated that it was the practice of the Companions in the mosque of the Prophet ؓ to place their hands on the pommel of the hand rail (*rummāna*) of the pulpit (*minbar*) where the Prophet ؓ used to place his hand. There they would face the *Qibla* and supplicate to Allāh ؓ hoping He would answer their supplication because they were placing their hands where the Prophet ؓ placed his while making their supplication. Abū Mawdūda said: “And I saw Yazīd ibn ‘Abd al-Mālik do the same.”¹⁸

It is also narrated that Ibn ‘Umar would place his hand on the seat of the Prophet’s ؓ *minbar* then wipe his face with it¹⁹ and that Abū Ayyūb was seen resting his face on the Prophet’s ؓ grave.²⁰ This practice of the Companions clarifies two matters. The first is the permissibility of asking Allāh for things by the Prophet ؓ (*tawassul*) after his death since by their act the Companions were truly making *tawassul*. Likewise it is permissible to ask Allāh ؓ for things by means of other pious Muslims. The second is the permissibility of seeking blessings (*baraka*) from objects connected to the Prophet ؓ.

It is similarly related that in the year of the drought called al-Ramāda (17-18) during the successorship of ‘Umar the Companion Bilāl ibn al-Ḥārith, while slaughtering a sheep for his kin, noticed that the sheep’s bones had turned red because the drying flesh was clinging to them. He cried out “*Yā Muḥammadāh!*” Then he saw the Prophet ؓ in a dream ordering him to go to ‘Umar with the tidings of coming rain on condition that ‘Umar show wisdom. Hearing this, ‘Umar assembled the people and came out to pray for rain with al-‘Abbās, the uncle of the Prophet ؓ.²¹ The same is related from the Companion or Successor Mālik ibn ‘Iyād, also known as Mālik al-Dār.²² A man came to the grave of the Prophet ؓ and said: “Messenger of Allāh, ask for rain for your Community (*istasqi li’ummatik*), for verily they have but perished!” after which the Prophet ؓ appeared to him in a dream telling him: “Go to ‘Umar and give him my greeting, then tell him that they will be watered. Tell him: Be clever!” The man went and told ‘Umar. The latter wept and said: “My Lord! I spare no effort except in what escapes my power!”²³ Ibn Ḥajar identifies Mālik al-Dār as ‘Umar’s treasurer and the man who visited and saw the Prophet ؓ in his dream as the Companion Bilāl ibn al-Ḥārith, counting this ḥadīth

¹⁷ Ibn Abī Shayba (7:277-325).

¹⁸ Ibn Abī Shayba (4:121).

¹⁹ Ibn Qudāma, *al-Mughnī* (5:468) and al-Buhūfī, *Kashshāf* (2:517) cf. al-Mardāwī, *Inṣāf* (4:54), Ibn Muflīh, *Furū’* (3:523). Ibn Bāz had the effrontery to call this act *shirk*.

²⁰ Narrated by Ahmad (38:558 #23585 *isnād da’if*), and al-Ḥākim (4:515=1990 ed. 4:560 *ṣahīḥ*), both with a weak chain because of Dāwūd ibn Abī Ṣāliḥ who is unknown.

²¹ Narrated by al-Tabarī in his *Tārīkh* (2:509).

²² “Umar ibn al-Khattāb’s freedman. He narrated from Abū Bakr and ‘Umar. He was known.” Ibn Sa’d (5:12). “He is agreed upon (as trustworthy), the Successors have approved highly of him.” Abū Ya’lā al-Khalīl ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Khalīlī al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb al-Irshād fī Ma’rifat ‘Ulama’ al-Ḥadīth*, ed. Muḥammad Sa’īd ibn ‘Umar Idrīs, 1st ed., 3 vols. (Riyad : Maktabat al-Rushd, 1989), as quoted in ‘Abd Allāh al-Ghumārī, *Irghām al-Mubtadi’ al-Ghabī bi-Jawāz al-Tawassul bil-Nabī*, ed. Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Saqqāf, 2nd ed. (Amman: Dār al-Imām al-Nawawī, 1992 p. 9). “Mālik ibn ‘Iyād: ‘Umar’s freedman. He is the one named Mālik al-Dār. He saw the Prophet ؓ and heard narrations from Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq. He narrated from Abū Bakr and ‘Umar, Mu’ādh, and Abū ‘Ubayda. From him narrated Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Samān and his (Mālik’s) two sons ‘Awn and ‘Abd Allāh...” *Isāba* (6:164 #8350 Mālik ibn ‘Iyād).

²³ Ibn Kathīr cites it thus from al-Bayhaqī’s *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwa* (7:47) in *al-Bidāya wal-Nihāya* (Ma’ārif ed. 7:91-92=Dār Ihyā’ al-Turāth ed. 7:105) saying: “*isnāduhu ṣahīḥ*” and he also declares its chain sound (*isnāduhu jayyidun qawī*) in his *Jāmi’ al-Masānīd* (1:223) in *Musnad ‘Umar*. Ibn Abī Shayba cites it (6:352= 12:31-32) with a sound (*ṣahīḥ*) chain as confirmed by Ibn Ḥajar who says: “*rawā Ibn Abī Shayba bi’isnādīn ṣahīḥ*” and cites the ḥadīth in *Fath al-Bārī*, Book of *istasqā* ch. 3 (1989 ed. 2:629-630= 1959 ed. 2:495) as well as in *al-Isāba* (6:164 #8350=3:484) where he says that Ibn Abī Khaythama cited it. It is also thus narrated by al-Khalīlī in *al-Irshād* (1:313-314) and Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in *al-Isī’āb* (2:464= 3:1149). Al-Albānī attempted to weaken this report in his *al-Tawassul* (p. 120) but was refuted in the lengthy analysis given by Mamdūh in *Raf’ al-Mināra* (p. 262-278), which refutes other similar attempts cf. Bin Bāz’s marginalia on *Fath al-Bārī*, Abū Bakr al-Jazā’irī’s tract *Wa Jā’ū Yarkudūn*, Ḥammād al-Anṣārī’s articles “*al-Maḥṣūm al-Ṣahīḥ lil-Tawassul*” also titled “*Tuḥfat al-Qārī fīl-Radd ‘alā al-Ghumārī*,” and other such literature.

among the reasons for al-Bukhārī's naming of the chapter "The people's request to their leader for rain if they suffer drought."

'Abd Allāh ibn Abī Shayba should not be confused with the anthropomorphist forger, his nephew Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn 'Uthmān ibn Abī Shayba²⁴ (d. 297) the teacher of Abū Bakr al-Najjād and author of *Kitāb al-'Arsh* ("Book of the Throne") in which he states:

All of creation concurs that whenever they supplicate Allāh ﷻ they raise their hands to the sky. If Allāh ﷻ were in the lowest earth they would not have raised up their hands up to the sky since He would be with them on the earth. Furthermore, the reports are mass-narrated that Allāh ﷻ created the Throne then established Himself over it with His Essence (*bi dhātih*),²⁵ following which He created the earth and the heavens, so He turned (*faṣāra*) from the earth to the heaven and from the heaven to the Throne. Therefore, He is above the heavens and above the Throne with His essence, wholly distinct (*mutakhalliṣan*) from His creation and separate (*bā'in*) from them.²⁶

*Ibn Rāhūyah*²⁷

Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Makhlad, known as Ishāq ibn Rāhūyah (per the *Muḥaddithūn*) or Rāhawayh (per the grammarians), Abū Ya'qūb al-Tamīmī al-Marwazī al-Ḥanzalī (d. 238), one of the major ḥadīth Masters. Abū Qudāma considered him greater than Imām Aḥmad in memorization of ḥadīth, a remarkable assessment considering Aḥmad's knowledge of 700,000 to a million narrations according to his son 'Abd Allāh's and Abū Zur'a al-Rāzī's estimations. Aḥmad himself named him "Commander of the Believers in Ḥadīth," the highest grade in ḥadīth Mastership, owned by no more than thirty Masters in all Islamic history. He once said of himself: "I never wrote anything except I memorized it, and I can now see before me more than 70,000 ḥadīths in my book"; "I know the place of 100,000 ḥadīths as if I were looking at them, and I memorize 70,000 of them by heart – all sound (*ṣaḥīḥa*) – and 4,000 falsified ones."²⁸ He did not reach the same stature in *fiqh*. Al-Bayhaqī and others narrate that he debated al-Shāfi'ī on a legal question, after which the latter disapproved of his title as the "Jurisprudent of Khurāsān."

To a *Jahmī* scholar who said: "I disbelieve in a Lord that descends from one heaven to another heaven," Ibn Rāhūyah replied: "I believe in a Lord that does what He wishes."²⁹ Al-Bayhaqī comments: "Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥanzalī made it clear, in this report, that he considers the Descent (*al-nuzūl*) one of the Attributes of Action (*min ṣifāt al-ʿi'l*). Secondly, he spoke of a descent without 'how'. This proves he did not hold displacement (*al-intiqāl*) and movement from one place to another (*al-zawāl*) concerning it."³⁰

Both al-Qāsim ibn Sallām and Ibn Rāhūyah were teachers to Ibn Qutayba.

*Al-Bukhārī*³¹

Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Mughīra ibn Bardizbah, Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ju'fī al-Bukhārī (194-256), "The Imām of the Muslims, the exemplar of those who declare the Oneness of God, the Shaykh of the believers, he who is relied upon concerning the sayings of the Master of Messengers, the keeper of the rule of Religion, Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ju'fī al-Bukhārī, the author of *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ* ("The Compendium of Sound Narrations")." He heard traditions directly from Mālik ibn Anas and he met Ḥammād ibn Zayd and Ibn al-Mubārak. His ḥadīth-dictation lesson in Baghdād numbered twenty thousand listeners.³² Towards the end of his life he fell victim to the envy of his enemies and was hounded out of his native Bukhārā, then out of Naysabūr, then out of Samarqand, until

²⁴He was declared a liar by 'Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and a forger by 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Khirāsh cf. *Mīzān* (3:642), *Siyar* (11:120 #2532), and *Lisān* (5:317).

²⁵See our article, "The Innovated Phrase, 'In Person'." Al-Dhahabī suppressed the phrase when citing this passage in *al-'Uluw* (p. 494 #103) = *Mukhtaṣar* (p. 220 #103).

²⁶Abū Ja'far ibn Abī Shayba, *Kitāb al-'Arsh wa mā Ruwiya Fīh*, ed. Muḥammad ibn Ḥamd al-Ḥammūd (Kuwait: Maktabat al-Ma'allā, 1986) p. 51.

²⁷Sources: Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (1:6, 1:184); al-Bayhaqī, *Manāqib al-Shāfi'ī* (1:213) and *al-Asmā' wal-Sifāt* (2:375-376 #951); al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* (9:558 #1877); Ibn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'īyya al-Kubrā* (2:89-90, 9:81).

²⁸Narrated by al-Khatīb in *al-Jāmi' li Akhlāq al-Rāwī* (2:380-381 #1832-1833).

²⁹Narrated by al-Dhahabī who identifies the scholar as Ibrāhīm ibn (Hishām) Abī Ṣāliḥ in *Mukhtaṣar al-'Uluw* (p. 191 #234).

³⁰Al-Bayhaqī, *Asmā'* (2:375-376 #951). See our article, "The 'Descent' of Allāh ﷻ."

³¹Main sources: al-Nawawī, *Taḥdhīb al-Asmā' wal-Lughāt* (1:67-76 #3); Ibn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'īyya al-Kubrā* (2:212-241 #50); al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* (10:277-321 #2136).

³²Narrated from Abū 'Alī Ṣāliḥ ibn Muḥammad al-Baghdādī by al-Sam'ānī in *Adab al-Imlā' wal-Istimlā'* (p. 17).

he died in loneliness in the small village of Khartenk near Samarqand. Aḥmad ibn Ḥaḥṣ narrated from him and said: “I went into his house to see him before he died and he said to me: ‘I do not know in all my possessions of a single dirham the licitness of which I am not sure about.’ When I heard this, I was humbled to my soul.”

Al-Bukhārī was born in 194 and was raised an orphan. The beginning of his study of ḥadīth was in 205 at which time he began memorizing the compilations of Ibn al-Mubārak. He began to travel in 210 after he studied ḥadīth from many people in his own land of Bukhārā. He travelled to Balkh, Marw, Naysabūr, Rayy, Baghdād, Baṣra, Kūfa, Madīna, and Makka where he heard from ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr al-Humaydī – al-Shāfi‘ī’s student – receiving al-Shāfi‘ī’s *fiqh* from him as well as from al-Za‘farānī, Abū Thawr, and al-Karābīsī. Ibn al-Subkī therefore included him among the scholars of the Shāfi‘ī School while Ibn Abī Ya‘lā includes him in his *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*.³³

Al-Bukhārī also took ḥadīth from innumerable transmitters in Damascus, Caesarea, ‘Asqalān, and Hims. He mentioned that he heard from a thousand shaykhs in all. Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad al-Qaṭṭān said: “I heard Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl say: ‘I wrote ḥadīth from 1,000 shaykhs or more, from each of them 10,000 ḥadīths or more, and there is not with me one ḥadīth except I remember its chain of transmission.’”

He related ḥadīth to the scholars of that science in the Hijaz, ‘Iraq, Khorasan, and Transoxiana, “with nary a hair on his face.” Among those that related ḥadīth from him are: Abū Zur‘a, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, al-Tirmidhī, Muslim (outside his *Ṣaḥīh*), al-Marwazī, Ṣāliḥ Ibn Muḥammad Jazra, and Ibn Khuzayma. Ibn Abī Ḥātim said: “Abū Zur‘a and my father [Abū Hatim] stopped narrating from him due to the question of the pronunciation of the Qur‘ān.”³⁴ Al-Dhahabī said: “Whether they narrated from him or stopped narrating from him he is the Imām of the world in ḥadīth.” Ibrāhīm al-Khawwāṣ said: “I saw Abū Zur‘a sitting like a boy at the feet of Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl, asking him questions about what makes a ḥadīth weak.” Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī said: “Al-‘Abbās ibn al-Faḍl al-Rāzī al-Ṣāyigh was asked: ‘Who has memorized more, Abū Zur‘a or al-Bukhārī?’ He replied: ‘I met al-Bukhārī between Hulwan and Baghdād and I travelled with him for a while. I tried my best to mention one ḥadīth that he did not know but could not. I can puzzle Abū Zur‘a as many times as I have hairs on my body!’”

Ibn ‘Adī said: I heard al-Bazzār say: I saw al-Bukhārī in his old age. He was thin, neither tall nor short. He lived sixty-two years less thirteen days. Aḥmad ibn al-Faḍl al-Balkhī said: When he was young he lost his eyesight. His mother saw the Prophet Ibrāhīm ؑ in her dream, and he said to her: Allāh has returned your son his eyesight due to your profuse weeping or due to your many supplications.

Al-Bukhārī said to Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Warrāq: “I learned the books of Ibn al-Mubārak and Wakī‘ (a Ḥanafī) and knew their sayings by heart at age sixteen. When I turned eighteen, I began to compile the deeds of the Companions and Successors and their sayings at the time of ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Mūsā. I compiled *Kitāb al-Tārīkh* (“Biographical History”) by the grave of the Prophet ﷺ during moonlit nights. There is hardly a name in Islamic history except I mentioned a story in connection with it, except that I disliked to make the book too long.” Al-Dhahabī said that al-Bukhārī’s

³³In truth, al-Bukhārī was neither Shāfi‘ī nor Hanbalī but a *mujtahid mutlaq* with his own *madhhab* which did not survive him as he was uninterested in other than his *Ṣaḥīh* for a school, and the *Ṣaḥīh* is a complex and concise *fiqh* manual. (It is therefore misleading to characterize the Six Books only as *Kutub Zāhir al-Riwāya* – “the books of the external aspects of narration” cf. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Latīf Farfur in his *Tārīkh al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*.) Muslim was al-Bukhārī’s close student and probably followed his *madhhab*, but he was definitely a *mujtahid murajjih* i.e. one with full knowledge of *ijmā‘* and *khiḷāf*, competent to evaluate all the pre-existing juridical conclusions of the Schools of the Companions and *Tābi‘in* and choose the most correct in his view. Al-Tirmidhī was also al-Bukhārī’s close student and a *mujtahid murajjih* and comparatist of the first rank whose method and school, like al-Bukhārī, is developed in his book – the *Sunan* – not only in the chapter-titles like al-Bukhārī, but in the bodies of the chapters themselves and in more explicit terms than his teacher, both he and Muslim being hugely indebted to al-Bukhārī in their achievement. See ‘Itr, *Al-Imām al-Tirmidhī wal-Muwāzana bayna Jāmi‘ihi wa bayn al-Ṣaḥīhayn*. Abū Dāwūd was a student of Imām Aḥmad whose *madhhab* he followed. Al-Nasā‘ī was without doubt a Shāfi‘ī. The Two Shaykhs and the compilers of the *Sunan* are correctly *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* because they focussed primarily on ḥadīth and its sciences, whereas their counterpart, *Ahl al-Ra‘ī* – such as Imāms Mālik, Abū Hanīfa and their students – emphasized jurisprudence over ḥadīth narration. Ibn Qutayba in *al-Ma‘ārif* (p. 277) also included Ibn Abī Laylā, al-Awzā‘ī, Sufyān al-Thawrī, and Rabī‘a in that category. However, there is no such thing as “The School of *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*” in the singular, nor “The School of *Ahl al-Ra‘ī*” unless one specifically means the Hanafī *madhhab*, as in the phrase *Ahl al-Kūfa*. Imām al-Shāfi‘ī, by the grace of Allāh, united with near-perfection the two currents of Ḥadīth and *Ra‘ī* and so did his students such as al-Muzanī and Abū Thawr. Hence, Ulema such as ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn al-Mahdī could not find enough words to praise his intelligence and the vast majority of the Imāms of ḥadīth and ḥadīth Masters after his time follow the Shāfi‘ī *madhhab* beginning with al-Dāraquṭnī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and his father, al-Baghdādī, Ibn Khuzayma, Ibn Hibbān, al-Khaṭīb, and others, while al-Tabarī, Dāwūd al-Zāhirī, al-Ṭahāwī, and Ibn Ḥazm began as Shāfi‘īs.

³⁴See Appendix titled, “The Controversy over the Pronunciation of the Qur‘ān.”

Tārīkh comprises over 40,000 biographical notices, his *al-Du‘afā’* under 700, and his *Ṣaḥīḥ* is uses the reports of under 2,000 narrators, which al-Dhahabī said indicated that the *Ṣaḥīḥ* is abridged in the extreme.

Al-Bukhārī said: “Whoever compiles a book should begin it with the ḥadīth: ‘Actions count only according to intentions.’”³⁵ The same position is related from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Maḥdī,³⁶ while one of ‘Abdān’s students saw the Prophet ﷺ in his sleep advising that ‘Abdān begin his book with the ḥadīth: “**Allāh brighten the face of him among His servants who hears my words, remembers them, guards them, and transmits them. Many a transmitter of knowledge does not himself understand it, and many may transmit knowledge to others who are more versed in it than they.**”³⁷

‘Umar ibn Ḥaḥṣ al-Ashqar said: “We were in Baṣra writing ḥadīth. One day we visited him and we found him in a house naked. He had exhausted all his resources. We chipped in and we clothed him.” Al-Warrāq said: “I heard Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl say: ‘It is not meet for a Muslim to face a difficulty and not be granted his supplication, if he supplicates.’ I heard him say once: ‘I travelled to see Ādam ibn Abī Iyās, and I ran out of expense money. I began to eat grass without telling anyone. On the third day a stranger came up to me and handed me a purse full of dinars saying: “Spend on yourself.””

‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-Bukhārī said: I heard Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl say: “I met more than 1,000 men from Ḥijāz, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Khurāsān,” and so on until he said: “I never saw a single one of them differ on the following: ‘Religion consists in words and deeds, and the Qur’ān is the Speech of Allāh.’” The first half of the statement is directed against the *Murji‘a* and the doctrine of Imām Abū Ḥanīfa that deeds are the complement and not the essence of *īmān* – against whom al-Bukhārī directs many of the chapter-headings of his *Ṣaḥīḥ*³⁸ – while the second half is directed against the *Jahmiyya* and *Mu‘tazila*.

Al-Warrāq said: I heard Ḥāshid ibn Ismā‘īl and another say: “Al-Bukhārī used to come with us to the ḥadīth sessions when he was a boy. He did not use to write anything. After a while we mentioned it to him. He said: ‘You pressure me too much; show me what you have written.’ We produced what we had, which was more than 15,000 ḥadīths. He recited them all to us from memory, until we took to correcting what we had according to his recital. Then he said: ‘Am I studying in vain, or wasting my time?’ At that time we realized that no one could best him.”

They continued: “The people of knowledge used to put him forward in the study of ḥadīth when he was but a young man, even against his will. They would make him sit by the roadside until thousands would gather around him. Most of them would write his narrations. He was still beardless.” Al-Warrāq said: I heard Sālim ibn Mujāhid say: I was visiting Muḥammad ibn Sallām al-Bikandī and he said to me: “If you had come earlier you would have seen a boy who has memorized 70,000 ḥadīths.” I went out looking for him. When I found him I said: “Are you the one who says: I memorized 70,000 ḥadīths?” He said: “Yes, and more than that, and I will not cite you a ḥadīth from the Companions or Successors except I know the date and place of birth of most of them and that of their death, and where they lived. Nor do I narrate any of them save what I know for certain to be based on a principle of the Religion from the book of Allāh or the Sunna of His Messenger.”³⁹

Al-Bukhārī narrated in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī: “If thirty men fast one day on behalf of someone who died without having fasted an entire month of Ramadan, he will get the reward of their fast.”⁴⁰

Imām al-Bukhārī interpreted the “Face” of Allāh to mean His dominion or sovereignty (*mulk*) in the verse **﴿Everything will perish save His countenance﴾** (28:88), as shown by his statement in the book

³⁵ Narrated from ‘Umar in the Nine Books except Mālik and al-Dārimī. See al-Shāfi‘ī and Abū Dāwūd’s remarks on this foundational ḥadīth.

³⁶ Both are narrated by al-Khaṭīb in *al-Jāmi‘ li Akhlāq al-Rāwī* (2:463 #1984-1985).

³⁷ A mass-transmitted (*mutawātir*) ḥadīth narrated from nineteen Companions by al-Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah, Ahmad, al-Dārimī, al-Shāfi‘ī in his *Risāla* (#1102), al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr* (#4891-4892, #4925, #4994), Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in *Jāmi‘ Bayān al-‘Ilm* (1:175 #184), al-Rāmāhurmuzī in *al-Muḥaddith al-Fāsil* (p. 64), Ibn Abī ‘Āsim in *al-Sunna* (p. 45 #94), al-Khaṭīb in *Sharaf Ashāb al-Ḥadīth* (p. 24) and *al-Faqīh wal-Mutafaqqih* (2:71), al-Tahāwī in *Sharḥ Mushkil al-Āthār* (2:232=4:282 #1600), Ibn Hibbān (1:270 #67, 2:454 #680), and others.

³⁸ See the chapter titled “Sunnī *Irijā’*” in the biography of Abū Ḥanīfa.

³⁹ Meaning he was not merely a memorizer but knew the *fiqh* of each ḥadīth. Ibn Hibbān considered weak any ḥadīth Master that did not know the *fiqh* of the ḥadīths he narrated cf. Ibn Rajab, *Sharḥ ‘Ilal al-Tirmidhī, al-riwāya ḥijl-ma‘nā*.

⁴⁰ This was also mentioned by al-Baghawī in *Sharḥ al-Sunna* (6:326) and is the position of the Shāfi‘ī school as specified by al-Nawawī in *al-Majmū‘* (6:431) and Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī in *Sharḥ al-Minhāj*.

of *Tafsīr* in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*: “Except His *wajh* means except His *mulk*, and it is also said: Except whatever was for the sake of His countenance.”⁴¹

Al-Bikandī said: “Muhammad ibn Ismā‘īl came to see us and we gathered around him. One of us said: ‘I heard Ishāq ibn Rāhūyah say: “I have recorded about 70,000 ḥadīths.”’ Muhammad said: ‘Does this surprise you? There may be in our own time someone who has recorded 200,000 ḥadīths.’ This is what he himself had done.” Ibn ‘Adī narrated from Muhammad ibn Hamdūyah: “I heard Muhammad ibn Ismā‘īl say: ‘I know by memory 100,000 *ṣaḥīḥ* ḥadīths, and 200,000 non-*ṣaḥīḥ* ḥadīths.’” Someone said: “I was visiting Muhammad ibn Sallām al-Bikandī, at which time Muhammad ibn Ismā‘īl entered. After he went out again, Muhammad ibn Sallām said: ‘Every time this boy comes to see me I become perplexed, and the matter of ḥadīth becomes full of ambiguities for me. I remain afraid (to speak) until he leaves!’”

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said: “The apex of memorization is in four people of Khurāsān: Abū Zur‘a, Muhammad ibn Ismā‘īl, [‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān] al-Dārimī, and al-Ḥasan ibn Shujā‘ al-Balkhī.” Ibn Khuzayma said: “I never saw under the sky more knowledgeable a person in ḥadīth than Muhammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī.” Al-Ḥākim narrated from Aḥmad ibn Ḥamdūn: “I heard Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj say, as he came to see al-Bukhārī, after kissing his forehead: ‘Allow me to kiss your feet, Teacher of teachers, rampart of ḥadīth scholars, and physician of the ḥadīth in its minute defects!’”

Ibrāhīm ibn Ma‘qil said: I heard him [Muhammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī] say: “I was with Ishāq ibn Rāhūyah when a man said: ‘Why do you not compile an epitome (*mukhtaṣar*) of the prophetic ways?’ This stayed with me, and was the reason why I compiled this book (the *Ṣaḥīḥ*).”⁴² Al-Dhahabī said: “It has been narrated through two firm channels of transmission that al-Bukhārī said: ‘I extracted this book from about 600,000 (sound) ḥadīths, and I compiled it over sixteen years, and I made it a plea for what lies between myself and Allāh.’”⁴³ Al-Firabrī said: Muhammad ibn Ismā‘īl said to me: “I never included in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* a ḥadīth except I made a major ablution (*ghusl*) and prayed two *rak‘at* beforehand.”

Al-Nawawī said: “The scholars have agreed that the soundest of all ḥadīth compilations are the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, and their vast majority have agreed that the soundest and most beneficial of the two was al-Bukhārī’s.” He continued: “The totality of its ḥadīths are 7,275 with the repetitions and about 4,000 without.”

Khalaf al-Khayyām said: I heard Abū ‘Amr Aḥmad ibn Naṣr al-Khaffāf say: Muhammad ibn Ismā‘īl is twenty degrees more knowledgeable in ḥadīth than Aḥmad (ibn Ḥanbal) and Ishāq (ibn Rāhūyah), and whoever has doubts about it, let him be cursed by me 1,000 times.” Abū ‘Isā al-Firmidhī said: ‘Abd Allāh ibn Munīr said to Muhammad ibn Ismā‘īl when he was about to leave him: “Abū ‘Abd Allāh, may Allāh make you the adornment of this Community!” Abū ‘Isā said: His wish has been granted. Ja‘far ibn Muhammad al-Mustaghfirī in *Tārīkh Nasāf* said, mentioning al-Bukhārī: “If I had to choose I would say he is superior to all his Shaykhs, and I would say that he never met his like.”

Muhammad ibn Abī Ḥātim said: I heard Muhammad ibn Yūsuf say: I was visiting Abū Rajā’ – he meant Qutayba – and he was asked about the divorce pronounced by the drunk (*i.e.* is it valid?). He replied: “Here is Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn al-Madīnī, and Ibn Rāhūyah all wrapped in one – Allāh brought him to you!” And he pointed to Muhammad ibn Ismā‘īl.⁴⁴

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said: “Khurāsān did not produce the like of al-Bukhārī.” The latter’s shaykh, Muhammad ibn Bashshār said when al-Bukhārī entered Baṣra: “Today the master of jurists (*sayyid al-fuqahā’*) came to us.”

⁴¹Cf. al-Bayhaqī’s explanations in his section on the *Wajh* in *al-Asmā’ wal-Ṣifāt*.

⁴²M.M. Azami writes: “Al-Bukhārī did not claim that what he left out were the spurious, nor that there were no authentic traditions outside his collection. On the contrary, he said: ‘I only included in my book *al-Jāmi’* those that were authentic, and I left out many more authentic traditions than this to avoid unnecessary length.’ He had no intention of collecting all the authentic traditions. He only wanted to compile a manual of ḥadīth according to the wishes of his shaykh Ishāq ibn Rāhūyah, and his function is quite clear from the title of his book *Al-Jāmi’*, *al-Musnad*, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, *min umūr Rasūl Allāh wa Sunanihi*, *wa ayyāmihi* (“The Compendium of Sound Narrations Linked Back With Uninterrupted Chains and Epitomized of the Matters of the Messenger of Allāh, His Ways, and His Times”). The word *al-mukhtaṣar*, epitome, itself explains that al-Bukhārī did not make any attempt at a comprehensive collection.” *Studies in Early Hadīth Literature* (p. 304-305). This should be understood by those who ask: “If ḥadīth x is not in al-Bukhārī nor Muslim then how can it be authentic?”

⁴³Narrated by al-Khatīb, *al-Jāmi’ li Akhlāq al-Rāwī* (2:270-271 #1613).

⁴⁴The answer was: divorce does not take effect from one who is deprived of his mental faculties and does not remember what happened to him in his drunkenness.

Al-Bukhārī used to recite the entire Qur’ān once every day, and recite one third of it in the period before dawn. Thus his normal daily devotional practice (*wird*) consisted in one *khatma* and a third.

Bakr ibn Munīr said: I heard al-Bukhārī say: “I hope to meet my Lord without being taken to account for slandering anyone.” Al-Dhahabī said: “A witness to this is his manner of speech in the criticism and authentication of ḥadīth. He would say, at most, about the sub-narrator who is abandoned for unreliability: ‘*Fīhi naẓar* – He is subject to investigation’; or: ‘*Sakatū ‘anh* – The authorities don’t mention him.’ He would not say: ‘So-and-so is a liar,’ nor: ‘He is a forger.’ That was due to his strong fear of Allāh.” Al-Subkī said: “The most damning judgment he would give about an unreliable narrator is: *munkar al-ḥadīth* – his narrations are condemned.” Ibn al-Qaṭṭān related that al-Bukhārī said: “Anyone about whom I say: *munkar al-ḥadīth*, it is not permissible to narrate from him.”

Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb al-Akhram said: “I heard our companions say that when al-Bukhārī came to Naysabūr he was welcomed by 4,000 men on horseback, not counting those that rode mules or donkeys nor those that were on foot.”

Al-Firabrī – one of the narrators of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* – said: “I saw the Prophet ﷺ in my sleep and he said to me: ‘Where are you going?’ I replied: ‘To see al-Bukhārī.’ He said: ‘Give him my *salām*.’” He also narrated from Najm ibn al-Fudayl: “I saw the Prophet ﷺ in my sleep as he was coming out of a village with Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl behind him. Wherever the Prophet ﷺ treaded he treaded, placing his foot exactly where the Prophet ﷺ placed his, and following his traces.”

From ‘Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Ādam al-Tawāwīsī: “I saw the Prophet ﷺ in my sleep with a group of his Companions. I greeted him and he returned my greeting, then I said: ‘What are you waiting for, Messenger of Allāh?’ He replied: ‘Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī.’ After a few days I heard news of the latter’s death. He had died on the very hour that I saw the Prophet ﷺ in my dream.

Al-Warrāq narrated from Ghālīb ibn Gibrīl – with whom al-Bukhārī spent his last days – say: “Abū ‘Abd Allāh stayed with us for a few days and took ill, then his state worsened, until the messenger came to Samarqand with the order of expulsion. Al-Bukhārī got up and got ready to travel. He wore his two leather socks and his turban. He walked about twenty steps and I was supporting him while another man was bringing the animal for him to ride. Then he said: ‘Leave me, I feel too weak.’ He began to supplicate Allāh at length, then he took to his bed and he died – may Allāh have mercy on him. An indescribable amount of perspiration came out of him. When this abated, we shrouded him. We followed his instructions in this as he had said: “Wrap me in three white cloths, without shirt nor turban.” This we did. When we buried him an ineffable smell exuded from the earth of his grave which lasted for days, and facing his grave long white columns (*sawāri*) reaching up to the heaven were seen, so people began to visit his grave in astonishment. People began to take for themselves handfuls of earth from his grave until the grave lay open again. It was impossible to protect it even with the posting of guards. We were overwhelmed, so we built over it a wooden lattice which prevented access to the grave itself. The sweet smell lasted for a long time and was the talk of the people of the region who were amazed at this. Those who had opposed him before realized his status after he died. Some of them came to his grave and showed the marks of repentance and remorse. Ghālīb did not live long after this and was buried at al-Bukhārī’s side.”

The ḥadīth Master Abū ‘Alī al-Ghassānī narrated that Abū al-Faṭḥ Naṣr ibn al-Ḥasan al-Sakanī al-Samarqandī came to them in 464 and said: “We had a drought in Samarqand some years ago. The people made the *istisqā’* prayer but they did not get rain. A saintly man named al-Ṣalāḥ came to the judge and said to him: ‘I have an opinion I would like to tell you. It is that you come out followed by the people and that you all go to the grave of Imām Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī and pray for rain there. Perhaps Allāh will give us rain.’ The judge said: ‘What a good opinion you have!’ He came out and the people followed him, and he prayed for rain in front of them at the grave while people wept and sought the intercession of the one that was in it. Allāh sent such heavy rain that those who were in Khartenk could not reach Samarqand for seven days because of the rain’s abundance.”

Concerning the derivation of blessings (*tabarruk*) through al-Bukhārī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn al-Subkī said: “As for the *Jāmi’ al-Ṣaḥīḥ* itself and its property as a recourse against difficulties and a proven means for the fulfillment of needs, it is a well-known matter. Should we engage in mentioning its many excellences and what is agreed upon concerning it, it would take us to inordinate lengths.”

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Hajjāj, Abū Bakr al-Marwazī or Marwadhī or Marrūdihī (d. 275) was a trustworthy ḥadīth Master and the closest companion of Imām Aḥmad whom he washed and laid in his grave. He was celebrated for his piety. He wrote a book on the difficulties of ḥadīth. Ibn Abī Ya‘lā relates that al-Marwazī said: “I asked Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal about the ḥadīths which the Jahmīs reject concerning the Attributes, the vision of Allāh [in the hereafter], the Prophet’s ﷺ ascension [body and soul], and the story of the Throne; he declared them sound and said: ‘The Community accepted them, and these reports are taken exactly as they come’ [*i.e.* without one seeking to explain them].”⁴⁵ Among his junior students was al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Khalaf, Abū Muḥammad al-Barbahārī (d. 329). He should not be confused with Abū Bakr al-Khallāl, the first compiler of the Ḥanbalī School, who probably never met Imām Aḥmad but learned from his students.

Sulaymān ibn al-Ash‘ath <ibn Ishāq>⁴⁷ <ibn Bishr>⁴⁸ ibn Shaddād ibn ‘Amr ibn ‘Āmir, Abū Dāwūd al-Azdī al-Sijistānī ﷺ (d. 275) was one of the major Imāms of ḥadīth, the meticulous author of the *Sunan* – one of the motherbooks – and a student of Imām Aḥmad. Al-Dhahabī and others related that he declared having heard 500,000 ḥadīths of the Prophet ﷺ among which he selected 4,800 for his *Sunan*. Abū Sulaymān al-Khaṭṭābī heard Abū Sa‘īd ibn al-I‘rābī say in a ḥadīth gathering while the *Sunan* where being read: “If all the knowledge a man possesses consists in a volume of the Qur’ān and this book, he will not need anything else at all.” The Sūfī master Sahl ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Tustarī once said to Abū Dāwūd: “Bring out for me your tongue with which you narrate the Prophet’s ﷺ ḥadīths so that I may kiss it,” whereupon Abū Dāwūd drew out his tongue and al-Tustarī kissed it.

Abū Dāwūd in his *Sunan* was more concerned with the jurisprudence of the ḥadīth than with its chains of transmission.⁴⁹ In his epistle to the Ulema of Makka he writes, “As a rule, any ḥadīth in my book that contains a strong defect, I mention it, as well as those whose chains of transmission are unsound. Anything concerning which I say nothing, is usable (*ṣāliḥ*), some of them being sounder than others.”

Abū Dāwūd said: “The entire Law revolves around four ḥadīths: ‘The lawful is clear as day and the unlawful is clear as day,’⁵⁰ ‘Actions count only according to intentions,’⁵¹ ‘Whatever I forbade you, avoid it, and whatever I ordered you, do it to the extent that you can,’⁵² and ‘Let there be neither harm

⁴⁵ Ibn Abī Ya‘lā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Hanābila* (1:56).

⁴⁶ Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* (10:572-574 #2335; 13:5); al-Khaṭṭābī, *al-Jāmi‘* (2:441-442).

⁴⁷ According to Ibn Dāsa and Abū ‘Ubayd al-Ājurri.

⁴⁸ According to some, while others said Bashīr.

⁴⁹ As stated by Ibn Rajāb in *Sharḥ ‘Ilal al-Tirmidhī* (1:411).

⁵⁰ Narrated from al-Nu‘mān ibn Bashīr in the Six Books, it is ḥadīth 6 of Imām al-Nawawī’s “Forty.” The complete ḥadīth states: “Verily, the lawful is manifest and the forbidden is manifest, but between them there are dubious matters which many people do not know. Therefore, whoever bewares of dubious matters has made himself exempt [of guilt] for the sake of his religion and his honor, and whoever falls into dubious matters, falls into the forbidden. It is as with the shepherd that grazes his herd around guarded grounds: he greatly risks grazing it inside it. Lo! Every king possesses guarded grounds. Lo! Verily, Allāh’s guarded grounds are His prohibitions. Lo! Verily, there is in the body a small piece of flesh; if it is good the whole body is good and if it is corrupted the whole body is corrupted; lo! It is the heart.” Also narrated as part of a long saying of Ibn Mas‘ūd: “Pass judgment according to what is in the Book of Allāh. If [basis for judgment is] not in the Book of Allāh, then according to what is in the Sunna of the Messenger of Allāh. If [basis for judgment is] not in the Sunna of the Messenger of Allāh, then according to what the righteous (*al-ṣāliḥūn*) have judged. <And if something comes up that is not in the Book of Allāh, nor did the Prophet ﷺ pass judgment concerning it, nor did the righteous pass judgment concerning it, then let him exert his own reasoning (*faliyajtahid ra’yahu*).> Let no one say: ‘I am afraid, I am afraid [to judge]! The lawful is clear and the unlawful is clear, and between the two are doubtful matters. Therefore, leave what seems dubious to you for what does not seem dubious to you.” Narrated *mawqūf* from Hurayth ibn Zuhayr by al-Nasā‘ī both in the *Sunan* and *al-Sunan al-Kubrā* (3:469 #5911), al-Dārimī (without the bracketed segment), al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr* (9:187), al-Bayhaqī in *al-Sunan al-Kubrā* (10:115 #20115), and Ibn Abī Shayba with a sound chain according to Ibn Hajar in *Fath al-Bārī* (1959 ed. 13:288).

⁵¹ Narrated from ‘Umar in the Nine Books except Mālik and al-Dārimī. See al-Shāfi‘ī’s remark on this foundational ḥadīth.

⁵² Narrated from Abū Hurayra by Muslim, al-Nasā‘ī, and Aḥmad. Also narrated from the words “Leave me alone” to the end by al-Bukhārī, al-Tirmidhī (*hasan ṣāliḥ*), Ibn Mājah, and Aḥmad.

done nor harm reciprocated' (*lā ḍarar walā ḍirār*).⁵³ Another narration mentions that he added a fifth ḥadīth: "Truly, Religion is nothing but sincere faithfulness."⁵⁴

Among his and 'Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad's students was Abū Bakr al-Najjād, teacher to Ibn Baṭṭa.

*Al-Tustarī*⁵⁵

Sahl ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Yūnus, Abū Muḥammad al-Tustarī ؓ (d. 283). Named by al-Dhahabī "the master of knowers (*shaykh al-ʿarīfīn*), the ascetic sūfī (*al-sūfī al-zāhid*)... He has a firm foothold in the path." He related that when he was three years old he would wake up at night to watch his uncle Muḥammad ibn al-Sawwār pray. He spent his early years with his uncle and Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī whom he met during pilgrimage. Al-Qushayrī said: "He had no peer in his time for correctness of transaction and superlative Godwariness, and he was a person of *karāmāt*." He narrates from 'Umar ibn Wāṣil al-Baṣrī that Sahl said: "My uncle once told me: 'Remember Allāh Who created you.' I said: 'How should I remember him?' He replied: 'Say in your heart, whenever you are alone at night, three times, without moving your tongue: Allāh is with me; Allāh is looking at me; Allāh is watching me.'" This became his lifelong devotion. He memorized the Qur'ān by age seven. He used to practice perpetual fasting and prayed all night. He reached a point where he broke his fast only once every twenty-five nights on one dirham's worth of barley bread for twenty years. Hence, his saying: "Hunger is the secret of Allāh on His earth, He does not confide it to one who divulges it." To a Shaykh who told him that whenever he performed ablution the water that dripped from him changed into sticks of gold he said: "Children are given rattles."

Al-Tustarī considered the audition and study of the ḥadīth of the Prophet ﷺ the highest pursuit as is evident from the following sayings:

- From Ibn Durustūyah: Sahl said to the scholars of ḥadīth: "Endeavor not to meet Allāh except with your inkwell in hand."
- Asked until when should a man write down the ḥadīth of the Prophet ﷺ, he replied: "Until death, and the rest of his ink is poured into his grave."
- To Abū Dāwūd: "Bring out for me your tongue with which you narrate the Prophet's ﷺ ḥadīths so that I may kiss it," whereupon Abū Dāwūd drew out his tongue and al-Tustarī kissed it.
- From 'Alī ibn al-Husayn al-Daqīqī: "Whoever desires this world and the next, let him write down the ḥadīth, for it contains the good of this world and the next."

He also said:

- "The ignorant one is dead, the forgetful one is asleep, the sinner is drunk, and the obstinate one is destroyed."
- "People are all drunk except the Ulema, and the Ulema are all confused except those who practice what they know."
- "Whoever rises not believing that he will enter his grave that very evening, will be the plaything of devils all day."
- "Knowledge is all *dunyā*, and the hereafter part of it is its practice."
- "This world is ignorance on top of mortality. Knowledge is all evidence that convicts except whatever is put into practice, but practice is all smoke except sincerity, and sincerity remains in the greatest peril until death."
- "We have six principles: Holding fast to the Qur'ān; taking the Sunna as a guide; eating what is licit; quitting from harm and avoiding sins; repentance; fulfillment of obligations."
- "There are three types of eaters: one eats light and faith from the start of his food to the end; one eats nothing but food; and one eats garbage (*sirjīn*). The first one names Allāh at the

⁵³ Narrated from Yahyā ibn 'Umāra al-Māzinī and from both Ibn 'Abbās and 'Ubāda ibn al-Sāmit by Ibn Mājah and Ahmad among others.

⁵⁴ Narrated from Abū Hurayra by al-Tirmidhī (*ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*) and Ahmad, from Tamīm al-Dārī by Abū Dāwūd, Muslim and al-Nasā'ī, from Abū Hurayra by al-Nasā'ī and Ahmad, from Ibn 'Umar by al-Bazzār, and from Thawbān by al-Bukhārī in *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr*. This ḥadīth is #7 of al-Nawawī's "Forty".

⁵⁵ *Risāla Qushayriyya* (p. 16-17); *Hilya* (10:198-222 #544, 10:204 #14934); al-Khatīb, *Iqtidā' al-'Ilm*; *Siyar* (10:647-649 #2369); Ibn Farhūn, *Dībāj* (p. 345).

beginning, remembers Him with every bite, and thanks Him at the end; the second one names Him at the beginning and thanks Him at the end; the third one neither names Him nor thanks Him nor remembers Him.”

- “Whoever speaks about what does not concern him will be prohibited from obtaining truthfulness; whoever busies himself with superfluity will be prohibited from obtaining true fear of Allāh; and whoever entertains bad opinions will be prohibited from obtaining certitude. Whoever is prohibited from obtaining these three, he is destroyed!”
- “Among the manners of the most truthful and trustful Saints (*al-Ṣiddīqīn*) is that they never swear by Allāh ﷻ, nor commit backbiting, nor does backbiting take place around them, nor do they eat to satiation. If they promise, they are true to their word, and they never speak in jest.”
- “None truly knows ignorance except a wise, worshipful, learned Jurisprudent of simple living (*‘ālim faqīh zāhid ‘ābid ḥakīm*).”
- “Allāh does not open the heart of a servant if it still contains three things: loving to remain [in the world], love of wealth, and concern about tomorrow.”
- Asked when the *faqīr* attains relief from his ego he replied: “When he no longer sees any time other than the time he is in.”
- “Allāh ﷻ is the *qibla* of intention; intention is the *qibla* of the heart; the heart is the *qibla* of the body; the body is the *qibla* of the limbs; and the limbs are the *qibla* of *dunyā*.”
- “When the servant abides in a specific sin, all his good deeds are admixed with his egotism (*hawā*). His good deeds are not purified as long as he abides in a single sin. He will not deliver himself from his egotism until he ousts from himself all that he knows Allāh detests.”
- “Lukewarmth is heedlessness; dread is vigilance; hardness is death.”
- Asked in what consists the solace of hearts, he replied: “The coming of revelation: **﴿Woe unto those whose hearts are hardened against remembrance of Allāh﴾** (39:22).”
- Asked in what consists spiritual knowledge (*al-ma‘rifā*) he said: “None attains it except after a long, hard struggle. After this, one finds pleasure in contradicting his ego more than he finds pleasure in following his ego. At that time, he knows.”⁵⁶
- “Whoever disputes reliance upon Allāh (*al-tawakkul*), disputes belief (*īmān*); and whoever disputes earning (*al-takassub*), disputes the Sunna.” He defined true *tawakkul* as “Forgetting *tawakkul*.”
- “Sit with one whose limbs address you, not his mouth.”⁵⁷ This is similar to the saying of ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Mu‘tazz: “The knowledge of the hypocrite is his speech while the knowledge of the Believer is his actions.”⁵⁸
- “No one is given a better knowledge than that by which he increases his utter dependence on Allāh.”
- “Life is four kinds. The life of angels consists in obedience. The life of Prophets consists in *‘ilm* and the anticipation of revelation. The life of truthful and trustful Saints (*al-Ṣiddīqīn*) consists in following guidance (*al-iqtidā’*). And the life of the remainder of the people – whether knowledgeable, ignorant, ascetic, or devoted to worship – consists in eating and drinking.”
- “Good deeds both the righteous (*al-barr*) and the hardened sinner (*al-fājir*) perform; none but the *Ṣiddīq* avoids disobedience.”
- He mentioned the unveiling (*kashf*) of the Saints in the poetic verse:
Qulūb al-‘arīfīn lahā ‘uyūn tarā mā lā yarāhu al-nāzīrūn
The hearts of Knowers have eyes that see what onlookers cannot see.

Al-Tustarī was a teacher to the Ḥanbalī anthropomorphist Abū Muḥammad al-Barbahārī who related:

I heard Sahl say: “Allāh created the world and placed in it those who are ignorant and those who have knowledge. The best knowledge is that which one acts upon. For knowledge is all a proof

⁵⁶ Narrated by al-Bayhaqī in *al-Zuhd al-Kabīr* (p. 152 #322).

⁵⁷ I.e. one who benefits others not through discourse but through states of being, in action or in repose, in public or in private, in solace and in hardship.

⁵⁸ Narrated by al-Khaṭīb in *Iqtidā’ al-‘Ilm al-‘Amal*.

[against oneself] except what is put into practice. But what is put into practice is all wind except what is sound and correct. As for what is sound and correct: I do not declare with certainty any act to be so, except what Allāh wills.”⁵⁹

Al-Qushayrī related in his *Risāla*: “I heard the Shaykh Abū ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Sulamī say: I heard Mansūr ibn ‘Abd Allāh say: I heard Abū al-Ḥasan al-‘Anbārī say: I heard Sahl ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Tustarī say: ‘The believers shall look at Him with their eyesights (*bil-absār*) without encompassment (*ihāta*) nor attainment (*idrāk*).”⁶⁰ Al-Qushayrī also said: “Sahl ibn ‘Abd Allāh said: ‘Letters are the speech of act, not that of essence (*al-ḥurūfu lisānu fī ‘lin lā lisānu dhāt*). For they are an effect in something effected (*fī ‘lun fī maf‘ūl*).’ This is also an explicit affirmation that letters are created.”

Al-Tustarī addressed the issue of the establishment of Allāh (*istiwā’*) over the Throne in the manner of Imām al-Ash‘arī, by declaring it a Divine act that is neither qualified nor enquired about: “Reason alone cannot point to One Who is without beginning and without end above a Throne that is brought into being. Allāh erected the Throne as a sign and as tidings for us so that by it the hearts should be guided to Him without trespassing. He did not require the hearts to obtain knowledge of its exact nature. Therefore, His establishment over it is unqualified (*lā kayfa lahu*) and it is impermissible to ask: ‘How does *istiwā’* apply to the Creator of *istiwā’*?’ The believer must only accept and submit, due to the saying of the Prophet ﷺ: ‘He is over His Throne’⁶¹ (*innahu ‘alā ‘arshihi*).”

Al-Dhahabī quotes the above but expresses caution elsewhere in his *Siyar* and in *Mukhtaṣar al-Uluw*, in commentary of a similar statement by ‘Uthmān ibn Sa‘d al-Dārimī (d. 280):

In his book *al-Naqd* he [‘Uthmān al-Dārimī] said: “The Muslims all agree that Allāh is above His Throne, above His heavens.” I say: The clearest thing on this topic is the saying of Allāh: **﴿The Merciful established Himself over the Throne﴾** (20:5). Therefore, let it pass as it came, just as we learned to do from the school of *Salaf*.⁶²

Al-Dārimī’s book also contains bizarre findings in which he exaggerates the affirmation [of the Divine Attributes], concerning which silence would have been more in keeping with the way of the *Salaf* both then and now.”⁶³

On the same subject Ibn Ḥajar said:

When we say: “Allāh is above the Throne,” it does not mean that He is touching it or that He is located on it or bounded by any side of the Throne. Rather, it is a report which is transmitted as is, and so we repeat it while at the same time negating any modality, for **﴿There is nothing whatsoever like unto Him﴾** (42:11), and from Him comes all success.⁶⁴

Al-Tustarī authored a renowned Sūfī commentary of the Qur’ān which has been translated into English. In it he gives the following explanations:

⁵⁹In Ibn Abī Ya‘lā, *Tabaqāt al-Hanābila* (2:18).

⁶⁰This is an explicit denial of both limit and direction on the part of al-Tustarī.

⁶¹The “hadīth of the groaning” narrated from Jubayr ibn Mut‘im from his father from his grandfather and the “hadīth of the mountain-goats” narrated from al-‘Abbās are both weak. There is also the hadīth from Ibn Mas‘ūd that the Prophet ﷺ said: “Between the heaven and the earth there is a distance of five hundred years’ travel, and the thickness of each heaven is a distance of five hundred years’ travel, then between the seventh heaven and the Footstool (*al-kursī*) there are five hundred years, then between the Footstool and the water there are five hundred years. The Footstool is above the water, and Allāh is above the Throne (*al-‘arsh*) – one version states: ‘above the Footstool’ – and nothing is hidden to him of all your deeds.” Narrated with a fair chain by al-Bayhaqī in *al-Asmā’ wal-Sifāt: Al-Asmā’ wal-Sifāt* (Kawtharī ed. p. 401; Hāshidī ed. 2:291-292 #851), Ibn Khuzayma in *al-Tawhīd* (p. 105-106=1:242-244), al-Tabarānī in *al-Kabīr* (9:228 #8987), Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in *al-Tamhīd* (7:139), al-Dhahabī in *al-Uluw* (p. 196-197=*Mukhtaṣar* p. 103-104 #48), al-Lālikā’ī with a weak chain in *Sharḥ Uṣūl I’tiqād Ahl al-Sunna* (1:91 #659) and others. However, the report is weakened by the following aspects: (1) it is a *mawqūf* report halted at a Companion; (2) it has Hammād ibn Salama in all its chains. Al-Dhahabī said of him in *al-Mughnī fī al-Du‘afā’* (1:279 #1711): “Hammād ibn Salama: a trustworthy Imām who is responsible for some blunders and strange things which he alone narrates. Others are more firmly established than he.” (3) Al-Bayhaqī’s similar second to next report in the *Asmā’* is narrated from ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Ās, and al-Dhahabī in *al-Uluw* (p. 365-366 #280-281=*Mukhtaṣar* p. 128 #97) narrates two similar reports from Ka‘b al-Ahbār quoting from the Torah, which raises the likelihood of a common Israelite source through Ka‘b or Ibn ‘Amr or both. Their *mawqūf* reports are subject to caution on the part of the experts, cf. Cf. Ibn Ḥajar’s *Nukat ‘alā Ibn al-Salāh* (2:532); Ibn Kathīr (on Ka‘b al-Ahbār and Wahb ibn Munabbih) in his *Tafsīr* (3:379 on 27:41-44); al-Qārī’s commentary on Ibn Ḥajar’s *Sharḥ al-Nukhba* entitled *Sharḥ Sharḥ Nukhbat al-Fikar fī Muṣṭalahāt Ahl al-Athar* (“Commentary on Ibn Ḥajar’s Commentary on his own book ‘Chosen Thoughts on the Terminology of Hadīth Scholars’” p. 548-549); al-Sakhāwī’s *Fath al-Mughnīh* (1992 ed. 1:150-151); ‘Itr, *Manhaj al-Naqd fī ‘Ulūm al-Hadīth* (p. 328).

⁶²Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* (10:643).

⁶³Al-Dhahabī, *Mukhtaṣar al-Uluw* (p. 214).

⁶⁴Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath, Tawhīd*, ch. 22 (1989 ed. 13:508).

- **﴿And give me from Your presence a sustaining Power﴾** (17:80): “A tongue that speaks on Your behalf, and on behalf of no one else.”
- **﴿Forsake the outwardness of sin and the inwardness thereof﴾** (6:120): “The outwardness of sin is its commission; the inwardness, its love.”

*Ibrahim al-Harbi*⁶⁵

Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Ishāq al-Harbī (198-285) was a prominent companion and student of Imām Aḥmad. He authored a *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth* among other books. Al-Ḥākim relates that he was pre-eminent in Baghdād for four traits: his superlative manners, his knowledge of the Law, his knowledge of ḥadīth, and his asceticism (*zuhd*). Al-Dāraqutnī said that in all these respects he compared to Imām Aḥmad himself.

Among his sayings:

“Not every separation is estrangement, nor is every reunion love; only the nearness of the hearts is love.”

“The stranger is the one who once lived among saintly people who helped him when he ordered good and forbade evil, and supplied him when he had some worldly need, then they died and left him alone.”

“I never wasted anything, nor ate twice in the same day.”

He disapproved of ‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī because he once saw him going to pray behind the Jahmī judge and grand inquisitor against *Ahl al-Sunna*, Aḥmad ibn Abī Du’ad (d. 240). The latter was principally responsible for the 28-month-long jailing and flogging of Imām Aḥmad who had declared him a disbeliever (*kāfir*) for holding that the Qur’ān was created.⁶⁶

Al-Dhahabī relates that al-Ḥarbī’s grave in Baghdād is a place one visits for blessings. Ibn al-Jawzī included himself in the number of those who performed this visitation and relates that al-Ḥarbī himself used to say: “Ma’rūf al-Karkhī’s grave is proven medicine.” This is also related by al-Dhahabī who comments: “The supplication of those in need is answered at every blessed site.”

*‘Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad*⁶⁷

‘Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad (ibn Muḥammad) ibn Hanbal (d. 290), the Imām’s son, compiled and transmitted the *Musnad* of his father and the latter praised his knowledge of ḥadīth. When he died he asked to be buried in al-Qaḥī’a instead of at his father’s gravesite in Baghdād, saying: “I have authentic proof that there is a Prophet buried in al-Qaḥī’a and I prefer to be [buried] near a Prophet to being near my father.”⁶⁸

Ibn Abī Ya’lā narrates from him the following reports from Imām Aḥmad:

– My father said: “The graves of the great sinners of *Ahl al-Sunna* are a garden, while those of the ascetics (*zuhhād*) among the innovators are a pit; the transgressors (*fussāq*) of *Ahl al-Sunna* are the Friends of Allāh, while the ascetics of the innovators are the enemies of Allāh.”

– I asked my father about those who said: “When Allāh ﷻ spoke to Mūsā ﷺ He did not speak with a voice.” My father said: “Allāh did speak with a voice! We narrate those ḥadīths [which prove it] exactly as they came. The ḥadīth of Ibn Mas’ūd states: ‘When Allāh speaks to send a revelation a voice is heard from Him like the dragging of a chain on top of a rock.’⁶⁹ The Jahmīs deny this ḥadīth: they are disbelievers.” This cannot be authentic from the Imām as he could not have failed to know that the voice that is heard is that of the angels as indicated in the narration and as explained in *Fath al-Bārī*.

⁶⁵ Sources: Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣifat al-Safwa* (2:410, 2:214); al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* (10:668-674 #2391 and 8:219 #1425).

⁶⁶ Narrated by al-Khatīb in *Tārīkh Baghdād* (4:142-153 #1825), al-Dhahabī in the chapter on Imām Aḥmad in the *Siyar*, Ibn al-Subkī in *Tabaqāt al-Shāfi’iyya al-Kubrā* (2:37-51), and others.

⁶⁷ Sources: Ibn Abī Ya’lā, *Tabaqāt al-Hanābila* (1:29, 1:184-186); al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* (9:512).

⁶⁸ In Yāqūt al-Hamawī’s *Mu’jam al-Buldān* (1:306).

⁶⁹ The ḥadīth is actually narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās by al-Bayhaqī, Ibn Abī Shayba, Ibn Mardūyah, Abū Nu’aym in *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwa*, and from Abū Hurayra by al-Bukhārī, al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, and others.

– From [Abū] al-Ḥuwayrith ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Mu‘āwiya (d. 130): “Mūsā remained for forty nights such that no one could look at him without falling dead due to the light from the Lord of the worlds.”⁷⁰

‘Abd Allāh also narrated: “I asked my father about the man who touches and kisses the pommel of the Prophet’s ﷺ *minbar* to obtain blessing, or does the same with the grave of the Prophet ﷺ, or something to that effect, intending thereby to draw closer to Allāh. He replied: ‘There is nothing wrong with it.’”⁷¹

A book entitled *Kitāb al-Sunna* is attributed to ‘Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad. Its first edition was sponsored by King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Sa‘ūd and a Jeddah businessman named Muḥammad Ḥusayn Naṣīf (d. 1971 CE).⁷² It was published in Cairo in 1349/1930 by al-Maṭba‘at al-Salafiyya. Al-Kawtharī in his *Maqālāt* (p. 355) lambasted it as a collection of anthropomorphist forgeries and renamed it *Kitāb al-Zaygh* (“The Book of Deviation”). He quoted from it the following excerpts:

- “Is establishment (*istiwā*) other than by sitting (*julūs*)?” (p. 5)⁷³
- “Allāh spoke to Mūsā with His lips (*mushāfahatan*).” (p. 64)
- “Allāh did not touch anything with His hand except Ādam.” (p. 68)
- “When Allāh sits on the Throne, it squeaks like a new saddle.” (p. 70)
- “Allāh sits on the Throne and only four spans remain vacant.” (p. 71)
- “Allāh ﷻ showed part of Himself.” (p. 149)
- “His ﷻ other hand was empty without anything in it.” (p. 164)

Ibn Abī Ya‘lā relates something similar from Aḥmad ibn Ja‘far ibn Ya‘qūb al-Iṣṭakhrī⁷⁴ attributed to Imām Aḥmad himself: “Whoever claims that our pronunciation and recitation (*alfāzuna wa tilāwatuna*) of Qur’ān are created, even if they say that the Qur’ān is the word of Allāh, is a Jahmī, and whoever does not declare him a disbeliever is like him, and Allāh spoke to Mūsā from His mouth (*min fih*), and He handed him the Torah from His hand to his hand.” Al-Dhahabī categorically denies the authenticity of its ascription to Aḥmad.⁷⁵

Kitāb al-Sunna received two recent editions: by Muḥammad Basyūnī Zaghlūl who based his work on the 1930 edition; and by Muḥammad al-Qaḥṭānī, an Umm al-Qurā University graduate and author of *al-Walā’ wal-Barā’*.

Shaykh Nūh Keller commented on *Kitāb al-Sunna* thus:

I looked this book over with our teacher in ḥadīth, Sheikh Shu‘ayb al-Arna‘ūṭ, who had examined it one day, and said that at least 50 percent of the ḥadīths in it are weak or outright forgeries. He was dismayed how Muḥammad al-Qaḥṭānī, the editor and commentator, could have been given a Ph.d. in Islamic faith (*‘aqīda*) from Umm al-Qurā University in Saudi Arabia for readying for publication a work as sadly wanting in authenticity as this.

Ostensibly a “ḥadīth” work, it contains some of the most hard-core anthropomorphism found anywhere, such as the ḥadīth that “when He Most Blessed and Exalted sits on the *kursī*, a squeak is heard like the squeak of a new leather saddle” (*Kitāb al-Sunna* [Dammam: Dār Ibn al-Qayyim, 1986/1406], 1:301), or “Allāh wrote the Torah for Moses with His hand while leaning back on a rock, on tablets of pearl, and the screech of the quill could be heard. There was no veil between Him and him”

⁷⁰Suyūṭī cites it in *al-Durr al-Manthūr* and says it is narrated by Abū al-Shaykh, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Hātim, and al-Ḥākim, while al-Dhahabī declared its chain “soft” (*layyin*). Al-Sha‘rānī in *al-Yawāqūt* (p. 281) mentions that not death, but blindness ensued which Mūsā would then cure with a touch of his hand, and Allāh knows best.

⁷¹Narrated by ‘Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal in *al-‘Ilal fī Ma‘rifat al-Rijāl* (2:492).

⁷²This man also financed the attack on Imām al-Kawtharī by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mu‘allimī al-Yamānī (d. 1976 CE) entitled *al-Tankīl lima Warada fī Ta‘nīb al-Kawtharī min al-Abātīl* in which the latter declared: “Allāh has a body unlike bodies.”

⁷³Al-Qinnawjī wrote in his *Qitf al-Thamar* (p. 39): “Whoever believes that His establishment over the Throne is like the establishment of a creature over a chair is an ignorant and misguided innovator.”

⁷⁴He is unknown.

⁷⁵See al-Dhahabī’s *Siyar* (9:503), chapter on Imām Aḥmad, section entitled *Hāl al-Imām Aḥmad fī Dawlat al-Mutawakkil*. Al-Dhahabī also dismisses the attribution of *al-Radd ‘alā al-Jahmiyya* to Imām Aḥmad. Further down (9:512), al-Dhahabī cites most of al-Iṣṭakhrī’s narration from Aḥmad and exclaims: “By Allāh! The Imām never said these things. May Allāh destroy the one who forged them!... Look at the ignorance of the ḥadīth scholars, who narrate such nonsense without a peep.”

(*ibid.*, 1:294), or “The angels were created from the light of His two elbows and chest” (*ibid.*, 2:510), and so on.

The work also puts lies in the mouths of major Ḥanbalī scholars and others, such as Khārija [ibn Muṣ‘ab al-Sarakhsī] (d. 168/785), who is quoted about *istiwā’*... “Does *istiwā’* mean anything except sitting?” (*ibid.*, 1:106)–with a chain of transmission containing a liar (*kadhḥāb*), an unidentifiable (*majhūl*), plus the text with its contradiction (*mukhālaḥa*) of Islamic faith (*‘aqīda*). Or consider the forty-nine pages of revilement of Abū Ḥanīfa and his school that it mendaciously ascribes to major Imāms, such as that relating that Ishāq ibn Maṣū‘ al-Kusaj (d. 251/865) said, “I asked Aḥmad Ibn Hanbal, ‘Is a man rewarded by Allāh for loathing Abū Ḥanīfa and his colleagues?’ and he said, ‘Yes, by Allāh’” (*ibid.*, 1:180). To ascribe things so stupid to a man of godfearingness (*taqwā*) like Aḥmad, whose respect for other scholars is well attested to by chains of transmission that are rigorously authenticated (*ṣaḥīḥ*), is one of the things by which this counterfeit work overreaches itself, and ends in cancelling any credibility that the name on it may have been intended to give it. Sheikh Shu‘ayb told us he doesn’t believe it is really from Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s son ‘Abdullah, since there is an unidentifiable (*majhūl*) transmitter in the book’s chain of ascription to ‘Abdullah. But the fact that such a work exists may give you an idea of the kinds of things that have been circulated about Aḥmad after his death, and the total lack of scrupulousness among a handful of anthropomorphists who tried literally everything to spread their *bid‘as*.⁷⁶

Later Figures Connected to the Ḥanbalī School

Al-Khallāl

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Hārūn, Abū Bakr al-Baghdādī al-Khallāl (230?-311), a Ḥanbalī ḥadīth Master who is the most important narrative link between Imām Aḥmad and posterity. Some count him among the junior companions of Imām Aḥmad while al-Dhahabī only states: “It is possible he may have seen him as a boy.” He authored *al-Jāmi‘ li ‘Ulūm Aḥmad ibn Hanbal* in forty volumes – the first compilation of Imām Aḥmad’s teachings in *fiqh*, – *al-‘Ilm*, *al-‘Ilal*, *al-Sunna*, and *Akhlāq Aḥmad ibn Hanbal*. A frank anthropomorphist, in his *Kitāb al-Sunna* he states at length that whoever denies that “Allāh sits on the *kursī* and there remains only four spans vacant” is an unbeliever.⁷⁷

*Al-Barbahārī*⁷⁸

Al-Hasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Khalaf, Abū Muhammad al-Barbahārī (d. 329), a ḥadīth Master. He accompanied Aḥmad’s foremost companion Abū Bakr al-Marwazī, as well as the Sūfī Master of his time, Sahl ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Tustarī. Ibn Abī Ya‘lā reports that al-Barbahārī composed a *Sharḥ Kitāb al-Sunna* in which he said: “Whoever takes up arms against one of the Imāms of the Muslims [*i.e.* one of the Caliphs] is a *Khārijī* who has split the unity [lit. ‘split the staff’] of Muslims and contravened the Prophetic reports, and his death is a death in Jāhiliyya.” He also said: “Know that the Religion is nothing other than imitation (*i‘lam anna al-dīna innamā huwa al-taqlīd*), and I mean imitation of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ (*wa al-taqlīdu li aṣḥābi rasūlillah ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*).” This book was published in Madīna at Maktabat al-Ghurabā’ al-Athariyya (1993) and is popular among “Salafis.” Concerning the Jahmīs, al-Barbahārī declared: “Whoever says that his pronunciation of the Qur’ān is created is a Jahmī, and whoever keeps uncommitted, saying that it is neither created nor uncreated, is a Jahmī. This is what Aḥmad ibn Hanbal said.” Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in *al-Intiqā’* relates otherwise from Aḥmad. (Imām al-Bukhārī considered the pronunciation of the Qur’ān created and was expelled from Bukhārā by the Ḥanbalīs for it.)

The group of Ḥanbalīs led by Barbahārī in Baghdād considered themselves reformers and often took to the streets to forcibly redress what they considered unacceptable contraventions of the Religion, injuring or killing those they considered Jahmīs, destroying taverns and musical instruments, striking women singers, etc. In the year 320 in Baghdād, al-Barbahārī was declared wanted by the authorities and the houses of his followers were ransacked. He fled and remained in hiding until his death nine years later.

The worst controversy attached to al-Barbahārī and his group by far was their anthropomorphist teaching on the bases of weak narrations attributing limbs to Allāh. Ibn al-Athīr relates the Caliph al-

⁷⁶From the website <http://ds.dial.pipex.com/masud/ISLAM/nuh/masudq5.htm>.

⁷⁷See on him the *Siyar* (11:311, 9:530-531) and *Tabaqāt al-Huffāz* (3:785).

⁷⁸Sources: Ibn Abī Ya‘lā, *Tabaqāt al-Hanābila* (2:18-29 #588); Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fīl-Tārīkh* (Dār Ṣādir ed. 8:307-309, 8:378); al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* (11:543-45 #2899).

Rādī's edict against the Hanbalīs in the year 323, in which he said: "You mention the 'hand' and the 'fingers' and the 'two feet' and the 'two gilded sandals' and the 'short and curly hair' and the 'climbing' to heaven and the 'descending' to the world – Exalted is Allāh far above what the oppressors and rejecters say of Him! The Commander of the Believers swears an oath before Allāh by which he binds himself, that unless you put an end to your vile belief and crooked way, to destroy you to the last man by sword and by fire inside your very houses!"

*Al-Najjād*⁷⁹

Aḥmad ibn Salmān ibn al-Ḥasan, Abū Bakr al-Baghdādī al-Ḥanbalī al-Najjād (d. 348), eulogized by al-Dhahabī as "the Imām, the ḥadīth scholar, the ḥadīth Master, the jurist, the Mufti, the Shaykh of Iraq," was the Shaykh of al-Dāraquṭnī, al-Hākīm, al-Khattābī, Ibn Mandah, al-Khiraqī, and others. He narrated from 'Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and was the last to narrate from Abū Dāwūd. He was reported to relate narrations which were not consigned in his own records, perhaps due to the loss of his sight.

Abū 'Alī ibn al-Ṣawwāf said: "Aḥmad ibn Salmān al-Najjād used to come with us to the ḥadīth scholars such as Bishr ibn Mūsā and others, holding his shoes in his hands because, he said, 'I love to walk barefoot in pursuit of the ḥadīth of the Prophet ﷺ.'" Ibn Abī Ya'lā comments: "He may have done so to conform with the Prophet's ﷺ saying: 'Shall I not inform you of the one who will carry the lightest burden on the Day of Judgment in front of Allāh? It is the one who races towards good deeds, walking barefoot. Gibrīl told me: 'Allāh looks kindly upon a servant of His who walks barefoot in the pursuit of good.'"⁸⁰

Al-Najjād used to fast every day of the year, and he would break his fast every night with a loaf of bread of which he left aside one mouthful. On the night of *Jumu'a* he would give away his loaf as charity, and eat the mouthfuls he had put aside. He relates:

One time I found myself in difficulty so I went to visit Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī. I told him of my condition and he said: "You should know that I too found myself in difficulty, until I only had small change left in my possession. My wife said to me: 'Look among your books, see what you don't need, and sell it!' After I prayed *'ishā* I sat in the lobby of my house (*al-dihlīz*) to write, whereupon someone knocked at the door. I asked who it was and he said: 'Let me speak to you.' I opened the door. He said to me: 'Put out the light,' so I put it out. He came into the lobby and put down a food-basket (*karra*). Then he said to me: 'We have prepared food for the children, and we wanted you and your children to have your share of it. This is something else together with it,' and he placed something next to the basket, adding: 'Use it as you wish.' I did not know who that man was. Then he left. I called my wife and told her to light the candles. She lit them and came to see. The basket was wrapped in an expensive scarf and contained fifty different kinds of food. Next to it was a purse containing a thousand dinars." I got up and took my leave of al-Ḥarbī, after which I went to Aḥmad [ibn Ḥanbal]'s grave to visit him. Then I went on my way. As I was walking on the side of the road, an old woman, one of our neighbors, met me and said: "Aḥmad, why do you look so downcast?" I told her of my predicament. She said: "Do you know that your mother gave me three hundred dirhams before she died, and said to me: 'Keep them, and if you see my son in difficulty or downcast one day, give them to him.' Come with me so I can give them to you." I went with her and she gave me the sum."

*Ibn Baṭṭa*⁸¹

'Ubayd Allāh ibn Muḥammad, Abū 'Abd Allāh al-'Ukbarī, known as Ibn Baṭṭa (d. 387), a student of al-Najjād and one of the main authorities in doctrine and law in the Ḥanbalī school, was a pious scholar

⁷⁹Main sources: Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (2:7-8); al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* (12:137 #3132), *Mizān* (1:101).

⁸⁰Al-Munāwī cited similar narrations in *Fayd al-Qadīr*: "If you race with each other towards good, walk barefoot, because Allāh multiplies the reward of those who walk barefoot over those who wear shoes." Al-Munāwī said: "Narrated from Ibn 'Abbās by al-Tabarānī in *al-Awsat*, al-Khatīb in *Tārīkh Baghdād*, and al-Hākīm in his *Tārīkh Naysabūr*. Its chain contains 'Isā ibn Nujayh who, al-Dhahabī said, forged narrations. Hence, Ibn al-Jawzī included it among his *Mawdū'āt* (1:217). It is somewhat strengthened by al-Tabarānī's other report whereby 'Whoever walks barefoot in Allāh's obedience, Allāh will not ask him to account for His orders on the Day of Judgment.' However, even the latter report was said to be a fabrication." Ibn al-Jawzī's verdict was confirmed by al-Suyūṭī in *al-La'ālī* (1983 ed. 1:194), Ibn 'Arrāq in *Tanzīh al-Sharī'a* (1:251), al-Ghumārī in *al-Mughīr* (p. 14) and al-Ahdal in *Zawā'id Tārīkh Baghdād* (8:199-200 #1745). Of note here is Shu'ba ibn al-Hajjaj's saying: "Those who go in pursuit of the ḥadīth on horse-back (*'alā al-dawābb*) cannot succeed." Narrated by Abū Nu'aym in the *Hilya* (7:179 #10117).

⁸¹Sources: al-Khatīb, *Tārīkh Baghdād* (10:371-374, 13:167); al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-'itidāl* (3:15 #5394); Ibn Hajar, *Lisān al-Mizān* (4:113-114 #231).

who never left his house in forty years and fasted permanently, except on the two *ʿīds*. Al-Dhahabī declares him “an Imām in the Sunna and an Imām in *fiqh*” but then cites Abū al-Qāsim al-Azharī’s verdict that “Ibn Baṭṭa is extremely weak” (*daʿīf daʿīf*) while al-Khaṭīb declares him a forger and narrates from Abū Dharr al-Harawī and others that al-Dāraqutnī questioned his truthfulness. Ibn Hajar states: “I discovered something in connection with Ibn Baṭṭa which I found scandalous and hideous.” He then shows that Ibn Baṭṭa may have added words to a ḥadīth in order to give it an anthropomorphic slant. The ḥadīth in question is Ibn Masʿūd’s ḥadīth of the Burning Tree narrated by al-Tirmidhī with a weak chain, whereby the Prophet ﷺ said: “When Allāh spoke to Mūsā, the latter was wearing a robe of wool, a wool cloak, and a pair of sandals made of untanned ox leather.” The addition cited by Ibn Hajar and apparently forged by Ibn Baṭṭa reads: “He [Mūsā] said: ‘Who is that Hebrew (*al-ʿibrānī*) who is speaking from the tree?’ And Allāh said: ‘I am Allāh.’” This addition supports two tenets of anthropomorphism, direction and voice, while the position of *Ahl al-Sunna* is that Mūsā ﷺ heard Allāh without either.⁸²

*Ibn Abī Yaʿlā and his father*⁸³

Muḥammad ibn al-Qāḍī Muḥammad Abī Yaʿlā ibn al-Ḥusayn, Al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Farrāʾ, known as Ibn Abī Yaʿlā (d. 526). The author of *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (“Synchronical Layers of the Ḥanbalīs”). Al-Dhahabī said of him: “He exaggerated concerning the Sunna and harped upon the Attributes.... Al-Silafī said: ‘He showed fanaticism for his School and criticized Ashʿarīs a lot without fearing any reproach; he composed books pertaining to his School; he was devout, trustworthy, and well-established as a narrator and we took ḥadīth from him.’” Some of what he relates in the *Ṭabaqāt* is from unknown sources or individuals and therefore unverifiable. Al-Bukhārī himself cast doubt on the authenticity of what is related from Imām Aḥmad by the early Ḥanbalīs.⁸⁴ However, this biographical compendium is full of valuable information as well as interesting anecdotes about Imām Aḥmad and his school. The ḥadīth Master Ibn Rajab continued the work by providing biographical notices on the layers between his time and that of Ibn Abī Yaʿlā.

Ibn Abī Yaʿlā’s father, al-Qāḍī Abū Yaʿlā ibn al-Farrāʾ – Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad ibn Khalaf – (d. 458) was one of the major jurisprudent scholars of the Ḥanbalī school and the author of *Ibṭāl al-Taʿwīl* (“The Invalidation of Figurative Interpretation”) in which, al-Dhahabī says, “he spoke at length citing worthless narrations which are inappropriate for use to assert any Divine Attribute whatsoever.”⁸⁵ Abū Yaʿlā is himself dismissed as an anthropomorphist (*mujassim*) by the Mālikī scholar Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabī,⁸⁶ the Shāfiʿī Ibn al-Athīr, and his own Ḥanbalī colleagues such as Abū Muḥammad al-Tamīmī (d. 488) and Ibn al-Jawzī, throughout the latter’s book *Radd Shubah al-Tashbīh*.

⁸² As narrated from al-Nakhaʿī in al-Thaʿalibī’s *Tafsīr* (4:117).

⁸³ Sources: al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* (14:481 #4749); Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fīl-Tārīkh* (Dār Sādir ed. 10:52 [year 458]).

⁸⁴ In *Khalq Afʿāl al-ʿIbād* as quoted by al-Kawtharī in his edition of *al-Asmāʾ wal-Ṣifāt* (p. 266).

⁸⁵ Al-Dhahabī, *Mukhtaṣar al-ʿUluw* (p. 271).

⁸⁶ In his *al-Qawāṣim wal-ʿAwāṣim* (2:283).