

Imam Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar Al-'Asqalani

The full name of the famous Imam Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar Al-'Asqalani is Abul-Fadl, Shihabuddin Ahmad bin 'All bin Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Ahmad Ai-Kinani AshShafi'i. Ibn Hajar Al-'Asqalani was born on 10th Sha'ban, 773 H. in Egypt, where he grew up also. He memorized the Qur'an at the age of nine years and also memorized Al-Hawi, the book Muktasar of Ibn Al-Hajib, and other books. He travelled to Malika and listened to the teaching of its 'Ulama. While he admired the knowledge of Hadith and began to acquire it from the great Sheikh in Hijaza, Ash-Sham, Egypt and stayed with Az-Zain Al-'Iragi for ten years. He also studied under Al-Balqini, Ibn Al-Mulaqqin and others. Many eminent Sheikh of his time approved his knowledge and allowed him to give religious verdicts and teach.

He had learned the two sources (Qur'an and Hadith) from Al-'Izz bin Jama'a, the language from Al-Majd Al-Fairuzabadi, the Arabic from Al-'Amari, literature and poetry from Al-Badr Al-Mushtaki and writing from a group of professors. He also recited some parts of the Qur'an in all the seven styles of recitation before At-Tanukhi.

He occupied himself with the promotion of the knowledge of Hadith, so he dwelt in its study, teaching, writing and giving Fatawa (religious verdicts). He also taught the Tafsir (interpretation of the Qur'an), the Hadith, the Fiqh (jurisprudence) and preached at many places like Al-Azhar, Jami' 'Amr and others. He also dictated to his students from his memory. Many highly educated people and distinguished scholars travelled to him to acquire from his vast knowledge.

Ibn Hajar Al-'Asqalani authored more than 150 books—most of them being in the studies of Hadith—which flourished during his lifetime, and the kings and princes exchanged them as gifts. His book most worthy of mentioning is Fath Al-Bari - the commentary of Sahih Al-Bukhari, which he had started in the beginning of X17 H., after finishing its introductory part in 813 H., and completed the whole commentary in Rajab 842 H. After the completion of the commentary, he held a party attended by the Muslim dignitaries and spent 500 Dinar on it. Then some kings requested for it and paid 300 Dinar.

Ibn Hajar became the Qadi of Egypt, then Al-Sham was also added to his jurisdiction which he held for more than twenty-one years. He was against holding the office of the Qidi at first, until the Sultan assigned to him a special case, then he accepted to represent Al-Bakini when he begged him very much to preside for him as Qadi Then he presided for others until he was assigned to hold the office of Chief Qadi on 12 Muharram, 827 H. He then left, but he had to took the officelleft of the Chief Gad, for seven times until he led it finally in 852 H. which is the year he died in.

As concerns his personality, Al-'Asqalani was humble, tolerant, patient and endurant. He was also described to be hilarious, steadfast, prudent, ascetic. selfless, generous, spender in charity and a person praying and fasting voluntarily. On the other hand he was said to be used to cracking of lightJokes and telling of humorous anecdotes. He had also good manners of dealing with all the Imam whether highly or lowly placed and with all those who sat with him whether old or young.

Ibn Hajar died after the 'Isha prayer on Saturday, 8th Dhul-Hijja 852 H. May Allah reward him generously.

Imam Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar Al-'Asqalani