

## **Hafiz Abu Musa al-Madini** ﷺ

By Muaz Billoo

There are a number of great figures and luminaries from Islamic history who are seldom remembered for their innumerable contributions and efforts in keeping the spirit of Islam alive. Among them is the great Hadith master, Shaikh al-Islam, Hafiz Abu Musa al-Madini ﷺ.

**Full Name:** Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr ‘Umar ibn Abu ‘Isa Ahmad ibn ‘Umar al-Asbahani.

**Birth Date:** Dhul Qa’dah, 500 AH.

**Passing Date:** Jumada al-Ula 9<sup>th</sup>, 581 AH.

**Some of his teachers:** Abu Mansur Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullah Mandawayh, Ghanim al-Burji, Abu ‘Ali al-Haddad, Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullah al-Sharrabi Ballizah, Hafiz Muhammad ibn Tahir al-Maqdisi<sup>1</sup>, Abu Zakariyya ibn Mandah, Hibatullah ibn al-Hasan al-Abraquhi, Hibatullah ibn al-Husain al-Baghdadi and those of their caliber. He particularly studied under Abu al-Qasim al-Taymi and others.

**Some of his students:** Abu Sa’d al-Sam’ani<sup>2</sup>, Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Musa al-Hazimi<sup>3</sup>, Hafiz Abdul Ghani al-Maqdisi<sup>4</sup>, ‘Abdul Qadir al-Ruhawi, Muhammad ibn Makki al-Asbahani, al-Nasih ‘Abdur Rahman ibn al-Hanbali, and others.

Hafiz ibn ‘Abdul Hadi ﷺ says,

“He was vast in knowledge, expansive in narration. He was the foremost in this field (of Hadith) along with having very short chains of narration.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Some of his works:**

- *Ma’rifah al-Sahabah*, wherein he provides corrections to Hafiz Abu Nu’aym’s work on the same subject (on the lives of the Sahabah).
- *Al-Mughith fi Gharib al-Quran wa al-Hadith*
- *Al-Lataif*
- *‘Awali al-Tabi’een*
- Hafiz ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani ﷺ says that Hafiz Abu Musa al-Madini wrote a booklet on the subject of *Salat al-Tasbih*, supporting its authenticity.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The author of *Shurut al-Aimmah al-Sittah*, published with annotations from ‘Allamah Zahid al-Kawthari and Shaikh Abdul Fattah Abu Ghuddah.

<sup>2</sup> The author of *al-Ansab*, currently published in 13 volumes and annotated by Shaikh Abdur Rahman ibn Yahya al-Mu’allimi.

<sup>3</sup> The author of *Shurut al-Aimmah al-Khamsah*, published with annotations from ‘Allamah Zahid al-Kawthari and Shaikh Abdul Fattah Abu Ghuddah.

<sup>4</sup> The author of *al-Kamal Fi Asma al-Rijal*, which would serve as the basis for Hafiz al-Mizzi’s *Tahdhib al-Kamal*.

<sup>5</sup> *Tabaqat ‘Ulama al-Hadith* 4:113

<sup>6</sup> *al-Talkhis al-Habir*.

He once narrated the entirety of Imam al-Hakim's *Mari'fah 'Uloom al-Hadith* to Hafiz Isma'eel from memory.

Al-Dubaythi says, "Abu Musa lived until he became unmatched in his time, and the shaykh of his era with respect to both his chains of narration and in memory."

Al-Sam'ani says, "I have heard from him, and he even wrote from me. He was reliable (*thiqah*), truthful (*saduq*)."

'Abdul Qadir al-Ruhawi says,

"He would not accept anything (i.e. remuneration for teaching) from anyone. Many people would (attempt to) give him wealth, and he would reject it, saying, 'distribute it among those whom you see fit,' and would refuse to accept it. He had such a level of humility that he would teach both children and adults, and he would guide beginners. I have seen him teaching children the memorization of the Qur'an using tablets. He would forbid people from walking with him (i.e. similar to an entourage). I (al-Ruhawi) once did this, for which he rebuked me. I studied under him for approximately a year and a half, and I never saw in him nor heard from him any such error for which he was criticized."

Abu Mas'ud says, "Abu Musa is a hidden treasure."

Hafiz ibn 'Imad al-Hanbali writes,

"Abu Musa al-Madini Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr 'Umar ibn Ahmad al-Hafiz passed away [in the year 581]. He authored numerous works, and he passed at the age of 80. He heard from Ghanim al-Burji, and a group of Abu Nu'aym's students, and left none behind like him. He passed away in Jumada al-Ula, and along with his proficient memory and expertise in Hadith narrators, he was a man of piety and worship."<sup>7</sup>

**Note:** It is important that our knowledge drives us to practice upon what we learn. The commands and teachings of Allah and His Messenger must be seen in our practice, such as through worship and piety. This is what made these Imams exceptional.

Hafiz al-Dhahabi describes him as *al-Hafiz al-Kabir* (the grand Hadith master), *Shaikh al-Islam*. Husain al-Bawarri says that a person had once came up to him, stating that he had seen such a dream in which he seemed to have witnessed the Messenger of Allah's passing. Husain al-Bawarri replied, "If you are truthful, then that would mean an Imam without equal has just passed away in his time, for indeed these types of dreams have been seen at the time of the passing of the likes of Imam al-Shafi', [Sufyan] al-Thawri, and Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal." Al-Bawarri said, "By nighttime, we received the news of Hafiz Abu Musa's passing."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *Shazarat al-Dhahab Fi Akhbar Man Dhahab* 6:448

<sup>8</sup> *Tadhkirah al-Huffaz* 4:1334-1336.