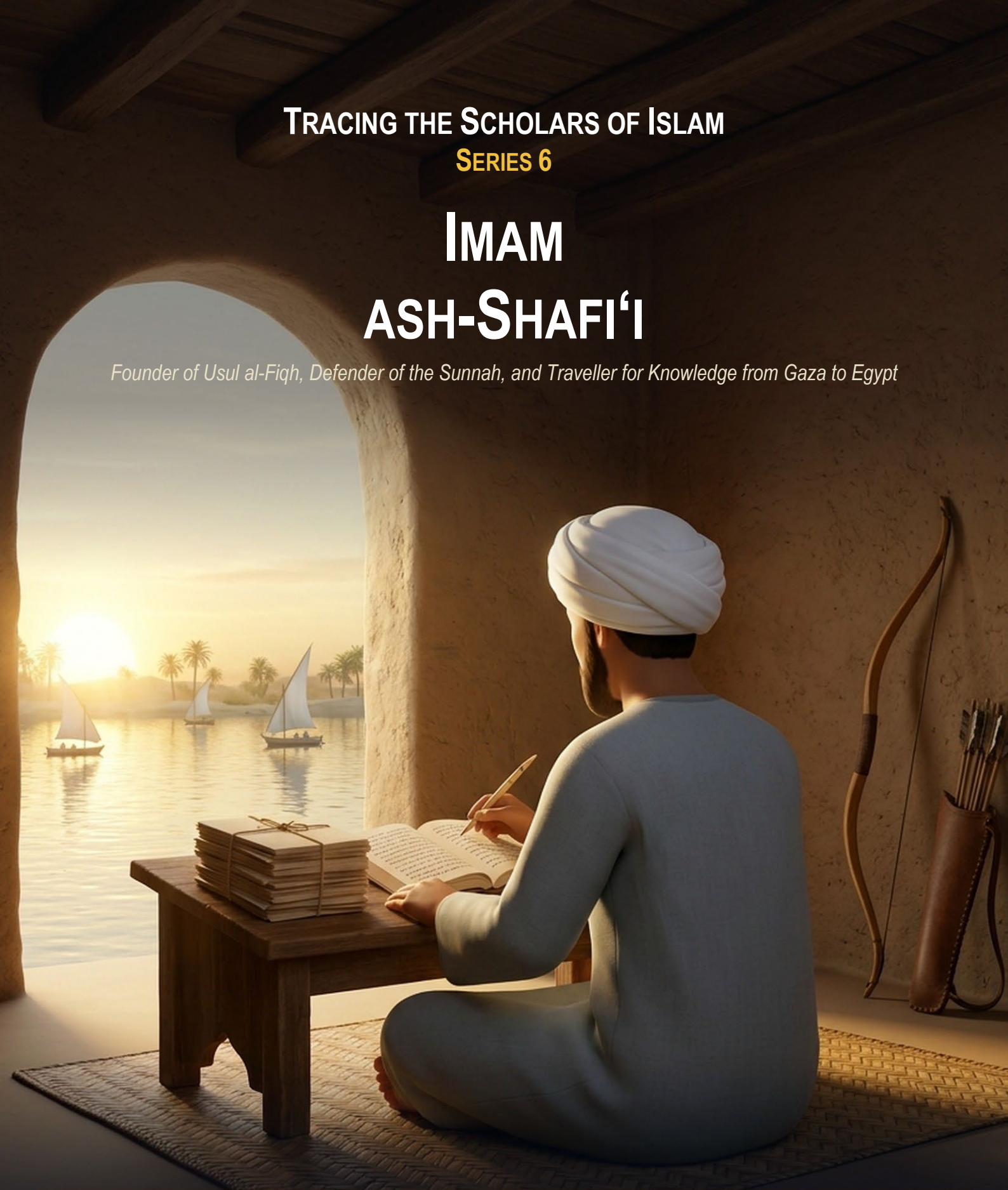
TRACING THE SCHOLARS OF ISLAM

SERIES 6

IMAM ASH-SHAFI'I

Founder of Usul al-Fiqh, Defender of the Sunnah, and Traveller for Knowledge from Gaza to Egypt



HJ CHE ALIM HJ CHE HARON

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱلرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي ٱلۡأَمۡرِ مِنكُمۡۖ فَإِن تَنَٰزَعۡتُمۡ فِي شَيۡءٖ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَٱلرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمۡ تُؤۡمِنُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلۡيَوۡمِ ٱلۡأٓخِرِۚ ذَٰلِكَ خَيۡرٞ وَأَحۡسَنُ تَأۡوِيلًا

"O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result."

SURAH AN-NISA' 4:59

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who commands us to refer every dispute back to His Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and upon his family, his Companions, and the imams who preserved his Sunnah.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

This sixth book of Tracing the Scholars of Islam tells of the imam whose school is followed by most Muslims in the Malay world. May the story of Imam ash-Shafi'i kindle our love of seeking knowledge and honouring the Sunnah, and may this knowledge be 'ilmun yuntafa'u bih, knowledge that brings benefit.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

The cover of this eBook, in a **3D** illustration style, shows an imam **drawn from behind, without a face** — because no true likeness of Imam ash-Shafi'i exists, and the faces of the early scholars are not invented. Unlike the earlier books, this time the view is from **behind his left shoulder**. He is **writing with a reed pen** at a low desk, with **bundles of finished manuscripts** beside him — a symbol of the book ***al-Risalah***.

Against the wall lean **a bow and a quiver of arrows**, for the books of biography mention that he was a skilled archer from his youth.

Through the arched window appears **the River Nile at sunrise**, with sailing boats and date palms on the far bank — Egypt, where he rewrote al-Risalah, taught, and passed away.

Two gold lines at the bottom frame the author's name, while the image runs in full to the edge of the page.

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Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; brown box = history note (reports from the books of history and biography); blue table = comparison. Underlined blue narrator names can be clicked to open the narrator's page on sunnah.com.

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IMAM ASH-SHAFI'I

The sixth book of **Tracing the Scholars of Islam** tells of the imam whose school is followed by ***most Muslims in the Malay world***: ***Imam Muhammad ibn Idris ash-Shafi'i*** رحمه الله. He was a student of Imam Malik (Series 5), a student of a student of Imam Abu Hanifah (Series 4), and the teacher of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal — like a chain linking the four imams of the schools.

Imam Ahmad said of him: ***"Ash-Shafi'i was like the sun for the world, and like good health for people."***

Note: The translation of the Qur'anic verses in this eBook is Sahih International. The grading of each Hadith is stated in its Hadith box. Information from the books of history and biography is placed in brown "History Note" boxes.

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REFER IT TO ALLAH AND THE MESSENGER

SURAH AN-NISA' 4:59

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱلرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي ٱلۡأَمۡرِ مِنكُمۡۖ فَإِن
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ٱلۡأٓخِرِۚ ذَٰلِكَ خَيۡرٞ وَأَحۡسَنُ تَأۡوِيلًا ٥٩

O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/4:59

COMMENTARY ON VERSE 4:59

Allah commands: ***"if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger"***. This verse became the core of Imam ash-Shafi'i's life's work: setting out ***the method*** by which rulings are derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah — the science later known as ***Usul al-Fiqh***.

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WHO WAS IMAM ASH-SHAFI'I?

His full name was ***Muhammad ibn Idris ibn al-'Abbas ibn 'Uthman ibn Shafi' ibn as-Sa'ib ibn 'Ubayd ibn 'Abd Yazid ibn Hashim ibn al-Muttalib***, with the kunyah ***Abu 'Abdillah***. He was of ***Quraysh***, from Banu al-Muttalib, and his lineage meets that of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at 'Abd Manaf.

He was ***born in Gaza in 150 AH***, the year Imam Abu Hanifah died, and grew up as ***a poor orphan***. His mother took him to ***Makkah*** as a child. He ***memorised the Qur'an before the age of seven***, and memorised Imam Malik's al-Muwatta' in his early teens.

THE VERDICT OF THE SCHOLARS

Imam Ahmad: "Ash-Shafi'i was ***like the sun for the world***." **Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Qattan:** "I have never seen anyone ***more intelligent or more learned in fiqh*** than ash-Shafi'i." **Abu Zur'ah ar-Razi:** "Ash-Shafi'i has not a single Hadith in which he erred." **Yahya ibn Ma'in** and **adh-Dhahabi** judged him ***trustworthy***, while **Ibn Hajar** called him ***the mujaddid (renewer of the religion) of the second century***.

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MEMORISING THE QUR'AN AS A CHILD

The biographical works say ash-Shafi'i ***memorised the Qur'an as a child***, before studying Arabic, Hadith and fiqh in depth (see chapter 19 on the differing reports of his age). The Qur'an was ***the foundation*** of all his learning.

SURAH AL-QAMAR 54:17

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا ٱلْقُرْءَانَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِن مُّدَّكِرٍ ﴿١٧﴾

And We have certainly made the Qur'an easy for remembrance, so is there any who will remember.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/54:17

"And We have certainly made the Qur'an easy for remembrance". Tafsir Ibn Kathir 54:17

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HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 5027

حَدَّثَنَا حَجَّاجُ بْنُ مِنْهَالٍ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي عَلْقَمَةُ بْنُ مَرْثَدٍ، سَمِعْتُ سَعْدَ بْنَ عُبَيْدَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ السُّلَمِيِّ، عَنْ عُثْمَانَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ وَعَلَّمَهُ». قَالَ وَأَقْرَأَ أَبُو عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ فِي إِمْرَةِ عُثْمَانَ حَتَّى كَانَ الْحَجَّاجُ، قَالَ وَذَاكَ الَّذِي أَقْعَدَنِي مَقْعَدِي هَذَا.

TRANSLATION:

'Uthman رضى الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"The best of you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it."** (Sa'd ibn 'Ubaydah) said: Abu 'Abd ar-Rahman (as-Sulami) taught the Qur'an from the caliphate of 'Uthman until the time of al-Hajjaj, and he said: "That is what has kept me sitting in this seat of mine."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Hajjaj ibn Minhal, from Shu'bah, from 'Alqamah ibn Marthad, from Sa'd ibn 'Ubaydah, from Abu 'Abd ar-Rahman as-Sulami, from 'Uthman ibn 'Affan رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Virtues of the Qur'an, Hadith No. 5027.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5027

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Ash-Shafi'i began as ***a student of the Qur'an***, and ended as ***a teacher of the Ummah***. The firmest path of knowledge begins with the Qur'an.

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AN ORPHAN IN MAKKAH

Ash-Shafi'i's father died when he was still a baby. His mother, a woman of the ***al-Azd*** tribe of Yemen, took him to ***Makkah*** so that he would grow up near his Qurashi kin and not lose his lineage.

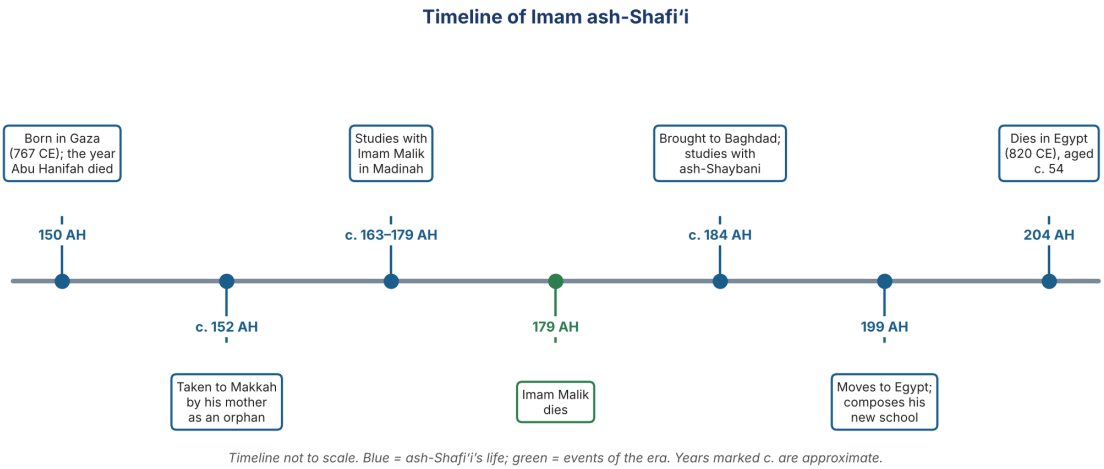


Figure 1: Timeline of Imam ash-Shafi'i.

HISTORY NOTE: WRITING ON BONES

The books of biography quote ash-Shafi'i: ***"I was an orphan in my mother's care, and she had no money to pay a teacher."*** His teacher accepted him because ash-Shafi'i ***helped teach the other children*** when the teacher was away.

Unable to buy paper, he ***wrote his lessons on bones, potsherds and palm stalks***, storing them in jars at home. This is a ***biographical report*** (not a Hadith) from al-Bayhaqi's Manaqib ash-Shafi'i and Siyar A'lam an-Nubala' — a story teaching that ***poverty is no barrier to knowledge***.

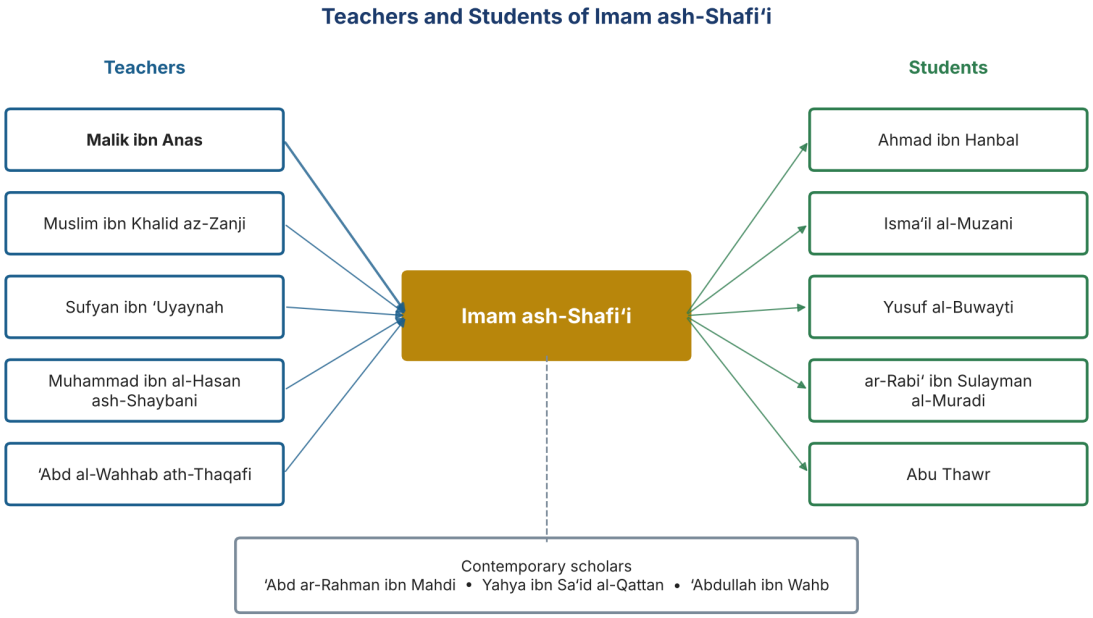
REFERENCES:

Al-Bayhaqi, Manaqib ash-Shafi'i; adh-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam an-Nubala', vol. 10.

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PERMITTED TO GIVE FATWA WHILE YOUNG

In Makkah he studied fiqh with the mufti of Makkah, ***Muslim ibn Khalid az-Zanji***, and Hadith with ***Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah***. According to adh-Dhahabi, Muslim ibn Khalid told him while he was still a youth: ***"Give fatwa, O Abu 'Abdillah. By Allah, the time has come for you to give fatwa."*** Yet ash-Shafi'i was not satisfied — he travelled on to Madinah to study with Imam Malik.



Simplified diagram based on the books of narrators (Tahdhib al-Kamal, Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'). The real lists are much longer.

Figure 2: Teachers and students of Imam ash-Shafi'i.

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THE HONOUR OF CARING FOR ORPHANS

Ash-Shafi'i grew up as ***an orphan*** (chapter 4). The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was also an orphan, and Allah reminded him:

SURAH AD-DUHA 93:6–9

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَـَٔاوَىٰ ٦

Did He not find you an orphan and give [you] refuge?

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَآلًّا فَهَدَىٰ ٧

And He found you lost and guided [you].

وَوَجَدَكَ عَآئِلًا فَأَغْنَىٰ ٨

And He found you poor and made [you] self-sufficient.

فَأَمَّا ٱلْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ ٩

So as for the orphan, do not oppress [him].

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/93:6-9

"Did He not find you an orphan and give [you] refuge"? ***"So as for the orphan, do not oppress [him]"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 93:6

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 5304

حَدَّثَنَا عَمْرُو بْنُ زُرَارَةَ، أَخْبَرَنَا عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ بْنُ أَبِي حَازِمٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ سَهْلٍ، قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم «أَنَا وَكَافِلُ الْيَتِيمِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ هَكَذَا». وَأَشَارَ بِالسَّبَّابَةِ وَالْوُسْطَى، وَفَرَّجَ بَيْنَهُمَا شَيْئًا.

TRANSLATION:

Sahl ibn Sa'd رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"I and the one who cares for an orphan will be in Paradise like this"** — and he pointed with his index and middle fingers, keeping a little space between them.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Amr ibn Zurarah, from 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Abi Hazim, from his father Abu Hazim Salamah ibn Dinar, from Sahl ibn Sa'd as-Sa'idi رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Divorce (Kitab at-Talaq), Hadith No. 5304.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5304

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Every orphan may hold ***the talent of an imam***. Whoever cares for and educates an orphan is promised ***closeness to the Messenger of Allah*** ﷺ in Paradise.

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A MOTHER'S SACRIFICE

Behind ash-Shafi'i's success stands ***a mother*** who sacrificed. According to the biographical works, his mother brought him from Gaza to ***Makkah*** so that he would grow up among his people and near the scholars (chapter 4).

SURAH LUQMAN 31:14

وَوَصَّيْنَا ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ بِوَٰلِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُۥ وَهْنًا عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ وَفِصَٰلُهُۥ فِى عَامَيْنِ أَنِ ٱشْكُرْ لِى وَلِوَٰلِدَيْكَ إِلَىَّ ٱلْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٤﴾

And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/31:14

"His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness". Tafsir Ibn Kathir 31:14

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HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 5971

حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا جَرِيرٌ، عَنْ عُمَارَةَ بْنِ الْقَعْقَاعِ بْنِ شُبْرُمَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي زُرْعَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَنْ أَحَقُّ بِحُسْنِ صَحَابَتِي قَالَ « أُمُّكَ ». قَالَ ثُمَّ مَنْ قَالَ « أُمُّكَ ». قَالَ ثُمَّ مَنْ قَالَ « أُمُّكَ ». قَالَ ثُمَّ مَنْ قَالَ « ثُمَّ أَبُوكَ ». وَقَالَ ابْنُ شُبْرُمَةَ وَيَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو زُرْعَةَ مِثْلَهُ.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: A man came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said: O Messenger of Allah, who is most deserving of my good companionship? He said: **"Your mother."** He said: Then who? He said: **"Your mother."** He said: Then who? He said: **"Your mother."** He said: Then who? He said: **"Then your father."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Qutaybah ibn Sa'id, from Jarir ibn 'Abd al-Hamid, from 'Umarah ibn al-Qa'qa' ibn Shubrumah, from Abu Zur'ah ibn 'Amr, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Good Manners, chapter on who is most entitled to good companionship, Hadith No. 5971. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2548).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5971

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ mentioned ***the mother three times*** before the father. The devotion of a mother who raises her child with knowledge — like ash-Shafi'i's mother — becomes ***an ongoing charity***.

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A TRAVELLER FOR KNOWLEDGE

Imam ash-Shafi'i's life was a long journey in search of knowledge: from Gaza to Makkah, to Madinah to study with Imam Malik (around 163 to 179 AH), to Yemen, to Baghdad to study with Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ash-Shaybani, and finally to Egypt. Every step was promised a reward by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2699

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ يَحْيَى التَّمِيمِيُّ، وَأَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْعَلاَءِ الْهَمْدَانِيُّ - وَاللَّفْظُ لِيَحْيَى - قَالَ يَحْيَى أَخْبَرَنَا وَقَالَ الآخَرَانِ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو مُعَاوِيَةَ، عَنِ الأَعْمَشِ، عَنْ أَبِي صَالِحٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم «مَنْ نَفَّسَ عَنْ مُؤْمِنٍ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرَبِ الدُّنْيَا نَفَّسَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرَبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمَنْ يَسَّرَ عَلَى مُعْسِرٍ يَسَّرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَمَنْ سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ فِي عَوْنِ الْعَبْدِ مَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ فِي عَوْنِ أَخِيهِ وَمَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَهَّلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَمَا اجْتَمَعَ قَوْمٌ فِي بَيْتٍ مِنْ بُيُوتِ اللَّهِ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَيَتَدَارَسُونَهُ بَيْنَهُمْ إِلاَّ نَزَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّكِينَةُ وَغَشِيَتْهُمُ الرَّحْمَةُ وَحَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلاَئِكَةُ وَذَكَرَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِيمَنْ عِنْدَهُ وَمَنْ بَطَّأَ بِهِ عَمَلُهُ لَمْ يُسْرِعْ بِهِ نَسَبُهُ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"Whoever relieves a believer of a hardship of this world, Allah will relieve him of a hardship of the Day of Resurrection. Whoever makes things easy for one in difficulty, Allah will make things easy for him in this world and the Hereafter. Whoever conceals (the faults of) a Muslim, Allah will conceal (his faults) in this world and the Hereafter. Allah helps His servant as long as the servant helps his brother. Whoever follows a path seeking knowledge, Allah will make easy for him, through it, a path to Paradise. No people gather in one of the houses of Allah, reciting the Book of Allah and studying it among themselves, except that tranquillity descends upon them, mercy covers them, the angels surround them, and Allah mentions them among those who are with Him. And whoever is slowed down by his deeds will not be hastened forward by his lineage."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya ibn Yahya at-Tamimi, Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah and Muhammad ibn al-'Ala' al-Hamdani, from Abu Mu'awiyah, from al-A'mash, from Abu Salih, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Remembrance and Supplication, chapter on the virtue of gathering to recite the Qur'an and remember Allah, Hadith No. 2699.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2699a

LESSON FROM THIS HADITH

Whoever follows a path seeking knowledge, Allah makes easy for him a path to Paradise. For ash-Shafi'i, that path was truly long — thousands of kilometres across the desert.

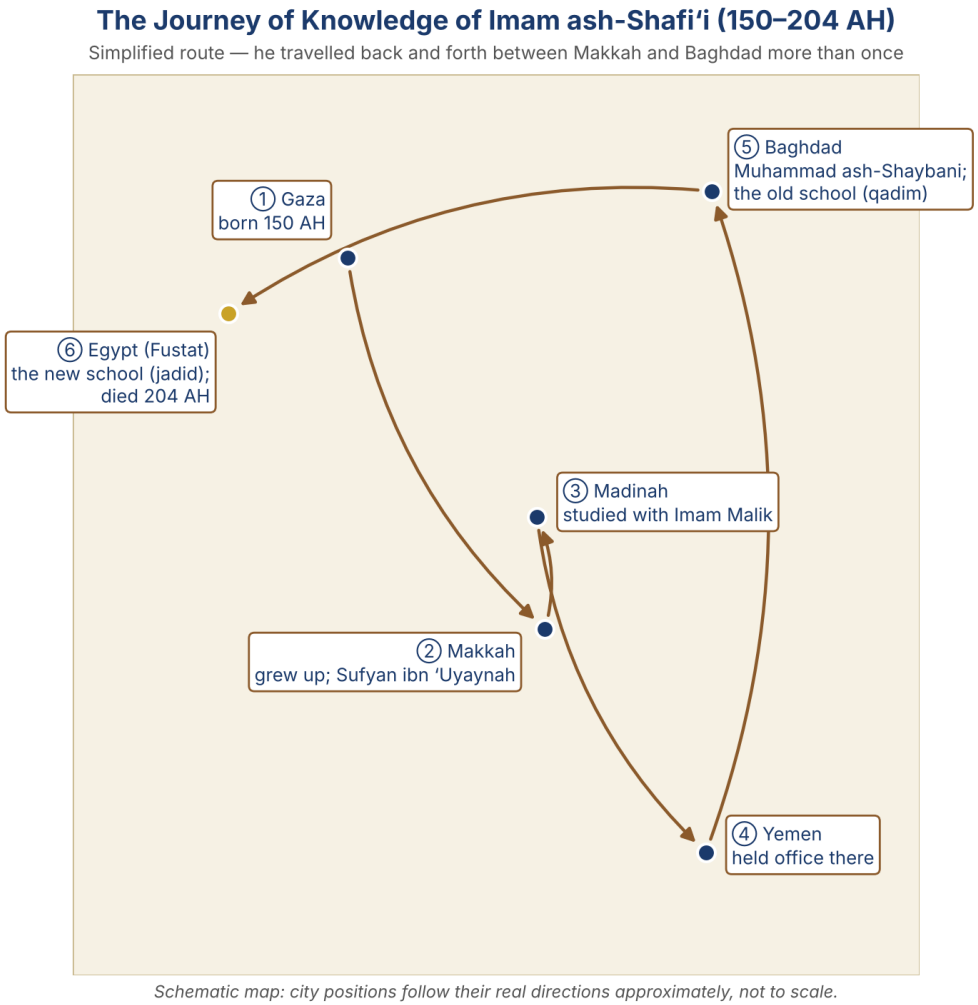


Figure 3: The journey of knowledge of Imam ash-Shafi'i (schematic map).

ARCHER AND POET

HISTORY NOTE: HIS SKILL IN ARCHERY

The books of biography quote that in his youth, ash-Shafi'i's interest was focused on ***two things: archery and knowledge***. He is said to have been so skilled in archery that he rarely missed the target.

He was also famous for his ***eloquent Arabic***, having lived among the tribe of Hudhayl in the desert — a tribe renowned for the purity of its language. Many verses of wisdom are attributed to him.

Archery is a sunnah encouraged by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 2899

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مَسْلَمَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا حَاتِمُ بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ، عَنْ يَزِيدَ بْنِ أَبِي عُبَيْدٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ سَلَمَةَ بْنَ الأَكْوَعِ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ مَرَّ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم عَلَى نَفَرٍ مِنْ أَسْلَمَ يَنْتَضِلُونَ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم «ارْمُوا بَنِي إِسْمَاعِيلَ، فَإِنَّ أَبَاكُمْ كَانَ رَامِيًا ارْمُوا وَأَنَا مَعَ بَنِي فُلاَنٍ». قَالَ فَأَمْسَكَ أَحَدُ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم «مَا لَكُمْ لاَ تَرْمُونَ». قَالُوا كَيْفَ نَرْمِي وَأَنْتَ مَعَهُمْ. قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم «ارْمُوا فَأَنَا مَعَكُمْ كُلِّكُمْ».

TRANSLATION:

Salamah ibn al-Akwa' رضى الله عنه said: The Prophet ﷺ passed by a group of people from (the tribe of) Aslam who were competing in archery, and he said: **"Shoot, O children of Isma'il, for your father (Isma'il) was an archer. Shoot, and I am with Banu so-and-so."** One of the two teams stopped shooting. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked: "Why do you not shoot?" They said: "How can we shoot when you are with them?" The Prophet ﷺ said: **"Shoot, and I am with all of you."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Maslamah, from Hatim ibn Isma'il, from Yazid ibn Abi 'Ubayd, from Salamah ibn al-Akwa' رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Jihad and Military Expeditions, chapter on encouraging archery, Hadith No. 2899.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:2899

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LESSON FROM THIS HADITH

Islam values ***strength of body*** as it values strength of mind. A great imam like ash-Shafi'i was also an archer — knowledge and fitness go hand in hand.

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THE STRONG BELIEVER

Ash-Shafi'i was strong not only in knowledge but also ***in body*** — a skilled archer (chapter 8). The Messenger of Allah ﷺ praised the strong believer:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2664

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، وَابْنُ، نُمَيْرٍ قَالاَ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ إِدْرِيسَ، عَنْ رَبِيعَةَ بْنِ عُثْمَانَ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى بْنِ حَبَّانَ، عَنِ الأَعْرَجِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم « الْمُؤْمِنُ الْقَوِيُّ خَيْرٌ وَأَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِ الضَّعِيفِ وَفِي كُلٍّ خَيْرٌ احْرِصْ عَلَى مَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَلاَ تَعْجِزْ وَإِنْ أَصَابَكَ شَىْءٌ فَلاَ تَقُلْ لَوْ أَنِّي فَعَلْتُ كَانَ كَذَا وَكَذَا. وَلَكِنْ قُلْ قَدَرُ اللَّهِ وَمَا شَاءَ فَعَلَ فَإِنَّ لَوْ تَفْتَحُ عَمَلَ الشَّيْطَانِ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer, and in both there is good. Strive for what benefits you, seek the help of Allah, and do not be weak. If something befalls you, do not say: If only I had done such-and-such, it would have been such-and-such. Rather say: Allah has decreed, and what He wills He does. For "if only" opens the door to the work of Satan."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah and Muhammad ibn 'Abdillah ibn Numayr, from 'Abdullah ibn Idris, from Rabi'ah ibn 'Uthman, from Muhammad ibn Yahya ibn Habban, from 'Abd al-Rahman al-A'raj, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Divine Decree (Kitab al-Qadar), chapter on the command to be strong and to abandon weakness, Hadith No. 2664.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2664

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Strength in Islam covers ***faith, knowledge and body***. This Hadith also teaches: ***strive*** for what benefits you, ***seek Allah's help***, and ***do not give up***.

KIND OF STRENGTH	EXAMPLE FROM ASH-SHAFI'I
Strength of faith	Patience in illness and trial.
Strength of knowledge	Founding the science of usul al-fiqh.
Strength of body	A skilled archer.

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POETRY WITH WISDOM

Ash-Shafi'i was also known as ***an eloquent poet***. The poems attributed to him are collected in ***the Diwan of ash-Shafi'i***, though the chains of some are debated (chapter 19). Islam does not reject good poetry:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6145

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْيَمَانِ، أَخْبَرَنَا شُعَيْبٌ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، أَنَّ مَرْوَانَ بْنَ الْحَكَمِ، أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّ عَبْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنَ الأَسْوَدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ يَغُوثَ أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّ أُبَيَّ بْنَ كَعْبٍ أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «إِنَّ مِنَ الشِّعْرِ حِكْمَةً».

TRANSLATION:

Ubayy ibn Ka'b رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"Indeed, some poetry contains wisdom."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Abu al-Yaman, from Shu'ayb, from az-Zuhri, from Abu Bakr ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from Marwan ibn al-Hakam, from 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn al-Aswad ibn 'Abd Yaghuth, from Ubayy ibn Ka'b رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Good Manners, Chapter on Permissible Poetry, Rajaz and Camel-Songs, Hadith No. 6145.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6145

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LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Poetry that contains ***wisdom and advice*** is an effective tool of da'wah. Much of ash-Shafi'i's advice on ***knowledge, manners and friendship*** has spread through verses of poetry to this day.

PRAISEWORTHY POETRY	BLAMEWORTHY POETRY
Contains wisdom and advice	Contains lies and empty words.
Reminds of Allah	Distracts from Allah.
Practised by its poet	Its poet says what he does not do (26:226).

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AL-RISALAH AND THE DEFENDER OF THE SUNNAH

SURAH AL-HASHR 59:7

مَّآ أَفَآءَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِۦ مِنْ أَهْلِ ٱلْقُرَىٰ فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِى ٱلْقُرْبَىٰ وَٱلْيَتَـٰمَىٰ وَٱلْمَسَـٰكِينِ وَٱبْنِ ٱلسَّبِيلِ كَىْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةًۢ بَيْنَ ٱلْأَغْنِيَآءِ مِنكُمْ ۚ وَمَآ ءَاتَىٰكُمُ ٱلرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَىٰكُمْ عَنْهُ فَٱنتَهُوا۟ ۚ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ ۖ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَدِيدُ ٱلْعِقَابِ ﴿٧﴾

And what Allah restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns - it is for Allah and for the Messenger and for [his] near relatives and orphans and the [stranded] traveler - so that it will not be a perpetual distribution among the rich from among you. And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/59:7

COMMENTARY ON VERSE 59:7

Allah says: ***"whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from"***. In his book ***al-Risalah***, Imam ash-Shafi'i explained at length that ***the Sunnah is binding proof***, including Hadith narrated by trustworthy narrators. For this he was called ***Nasir as-Sunnah*** — the defender of the Sunnah.

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The duty to convey Hadith faithfully — explained by ash-Shafi'i in al-Risalah — is affirmed by the following authentic Hadith:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3461

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو عَاصِمٍ الضَّحَّاكُ بْنُ مَخْلَدٍ، أَخْبَرَنَا الأَوْزَاعِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا حَسَّانُ بْنُ عَطِيَّةَ، عَنْ أَبِي كَبْشَةَ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «بَلِّغُوا عَنِّي وَلَوْ آيَةً، وَحَدِّثُوا عَنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَلاَ حَرَجَ، وَمَنْ كَذَبَ عَلَيَّ مُتَعَمِّدًا فَلْيَتَبَوَّأْ مَقْعَدَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ».

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn 'Amr رضى الله عنهما reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Convey from me, even if it is a single verse. And narrate from the Children of Israel, there is no harm (in it). And whoever lies about me deliberately, let him take his seat in the Fire."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Abu 'Asim ad-Dahhak ibn Makhlad, from al-Awza'i, from Hassan ibn 'Atiyyah, from Abu Kabshah as-Saluli, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Prophets, Hadith No. 3461.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3461

LESSON FROM THIS HADITH

Knowledge must be conveyed ***just as it was heard***, without adding or taking away. An-Nawawi quotes ash-Shafi'i's famous words: ***"If a Hadith is authentic, then that is my school."***

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FOUNDER OF USUL AL-FIQH

Before ash-Shafi'i, scholars had exercised ijtihad, but ***its rules had not been gathered*** into one book. Ash-Shafi'i was the first to compose the science of ***Usul al-Fiqh*** — the science of how rulings are derived from the evidence.

HISTORY NOTE: A LETTER FROM 'ABD AR-RAHMAN IBN MAHDI

According to adh-Dhahabi and al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, the Hadith master of Basrah, ***'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Mahdi***, wrote to the young ash-Shafi'i asking him to write a book on ***the meanings of the Qur'an, the standing of the Sunnah, consensus, and abrogation***. Ash-Shafi'i's reply became the book known as ***al-Risalah*** — "the Letter".

After reading it, Ibn Mahdi said: ***"I did not think Allah had created a man like this."*** This is a biographical report quoted in the books of rijal.

REFERENCES:

Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad; adh-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam an-Nubala' — biography of ash-Shafi'i.

FOUR SOURCES OF LAW

In al-Risalah, ash-Shafi'i ordered the sources of law as ***the Qur'an, the Sunnah, Ijma' (consensus) and Qiyas (analogy)***. This order was later accepted by almost every school, though they differ in the details. His great book of fiqh, ***al-Umm***, was dictated to his student ar-Rabi' ibn Sulayman in Egypt.

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THE REWARD OF IJTIHAD

The science of usul al-fiqh founded by ash-Shafi'i is ***a tool for ijtihad***: deriving rulings from the evidence. The Qur'an mentions ***the ones who [can] draw correct conclusions*** in a matter:

SURAH AN-NISA' 4:83

وَإِذَا جَآءَهُمۡ أَمۡرٞ مِّنَ ٱلۡأَمۡنِ أَوِ ٱلۡخَوۡفِ أَذَاعُواْ بِهِۦۖ وَلَوۡ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى ٱلرَّسُولِ وَإِلَىٰٓ أُوْلِي ٱلۡأَمۡرِ مِنۡهُمۡ لَعَلِمَهُ ٱلَّذِينَ يَسۡتَنۢبِطُونَهُۥ مِنۡهُمۡۗ وَلَوۡلَا فَضۡلُ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيۡكُمۡ وَرَحۡمَتُهُۥ لَٱتَّبَعۡتُمُ ٱلشَّيۡطَٰنَ إِلَّا قَلِيلٗا ٨٣

And when there comes to them information about [public] security or fear, they spread it around. But if they had referred it back to the Messenger or to those of authority among them, then the ones who [can] draw correct conclusions from it would have known about it. And if not for the favor of Allah upon you and His mercy, you would have followed Satan, except for a few.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/4:83

Tafsir Ibn Kathir 4:83.

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HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 7352

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يَزِيدَ، حَدَّثَنَا حَيْوَةُ، حَدَّثَنِي يَزِيدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الْهَادِ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ الْحَارِثِ، عَنْ بُسْرِ بْنِ سَعِيدٍ، عَنْ أَبِي قَيْسٍ، مَوْلَى عَمْرِو بْنِ الْعَاصِ عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ الْعَاصِ، أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ «إِذَا حَكَمَ الْحَاكِمُ فَاجْتَهَدَ ثُمَّ أَصَابَ فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ، وَإِذَا حَكَمَ فَاجْتَهَدَ ثُمَّ أَخْطَأَ فَلَهُ أَجْرٌ». قَالَ فَحَدَّثْتُ بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَبَا بَكْرِ بْنَ عَمْرِو بْنِ حَزْمٍ فَقَالَ هَكَذَا حَدَّثَنِي أَبُو سَلَمَةَ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ. وَقَالَ عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ بْنُ الْمُطَّلِبِ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ، عَنْ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم مِثْلَهُ.

TRANSLATION:

'Amr ibn al-'As رضى الله عنه reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: **"When a judge gives a ruling, striving to reach the right view, and he is correct, he has two rewards; and when he gives a ruling, striving to reach the right view, and he errs, he has one reward."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Yazid al-Muqri', from Haywah ibn Shurayh, from Yazid ibn 'Abdullah ibn al-Had, from Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn al-Harith, from Busr ibn Sa'id, from Abu Qays, the freed slave of 'Amr ibn al-'As, from 'Amr ibn al-'As رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Holding Fast to the Qur'an and Sunnah, Hadith No. 7352; also narrated by Muslim (No. 1716).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7352

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

A mujtahid who is right gets ***two rewards***, and one who errs still gets ***one reward***. That is why ash-Shafi'i dared ***to change his view*** when he found stronger evidence (chapter 15).

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THE ETIQUETTE OF DISAGREEMENT

Ash-Shafi'i was a formidable debater, but ***his debates had manners***. He differed with his teacher Imam Malik, with ash-Shaybani and with many scholars — yet his tongue stayed clean.

HISTORY NOTE: "CAN WE NOT REMAIN BROTHERS?"

Adh-Dhahabi relates from ***Yunus ibn 'Abd al-A'la as-Sadafi***: he once debated ash-Shafi'i on a question and they parted. Later ash-Shafi'i met him, took his hand and said: ***"O Abu Musa, can we not remain brothers even if we do not agree on a single question?"***

He is also reported to have said: ***"I never debated anyone except that I wished Allah would make the truth appear on his tongue."*** Both are biographical reports (not Hadith).

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This discipline of the tongue rests on the words of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6018 (MUTTAFAQ 'ALAYH)

حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الأَحْوَصِ، عَنْ أَبِي حَصِينٍ، عَنْ أَبِي صَالِحٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم «مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ فَلاَ يُؤْذِ جَارَهُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ ضَيْفَهُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him not harm his neighbour; whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him honour his guest; and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Qutaybah ibn Sa'id, from Abu al-Ahwas, from Abu Hasin, from Abu Salih, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Good Manners, Chapter: Whoever Believes in Allah and the Last Day Should Not Harm His Neighbour, Hadith No. 6018. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 47).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6018

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

True faith shows in ***a guarded tongue***: speak good or stay silent. In disagreement — especially on social media today — this Hadith reminds us that ***the aim of discussion is the truth***, not victory or tearing down another's honour.

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THE OLD SCHOOL AND THE NEW SCHOOL

HISTORY NOTE: QAWL QADIM AND QAWL JADID

Imam ash-Shafi'i's opinions while in Iraq are known as ***qawl qadim*** (the old school). When he moved to ***Egypt***, he revised many of his opinions after encountering new evidence and circumstances — and these are known as ***qawl jadid*** (the new school). He also rewrote al-Risalah in Egypt.

This change was not a sign of weakness but of ***scholarly honesty***: a scholar follows the evidence even if it means leaving his own opinion. Imam ash-Shafi'i died in Egypt in 204 AH.

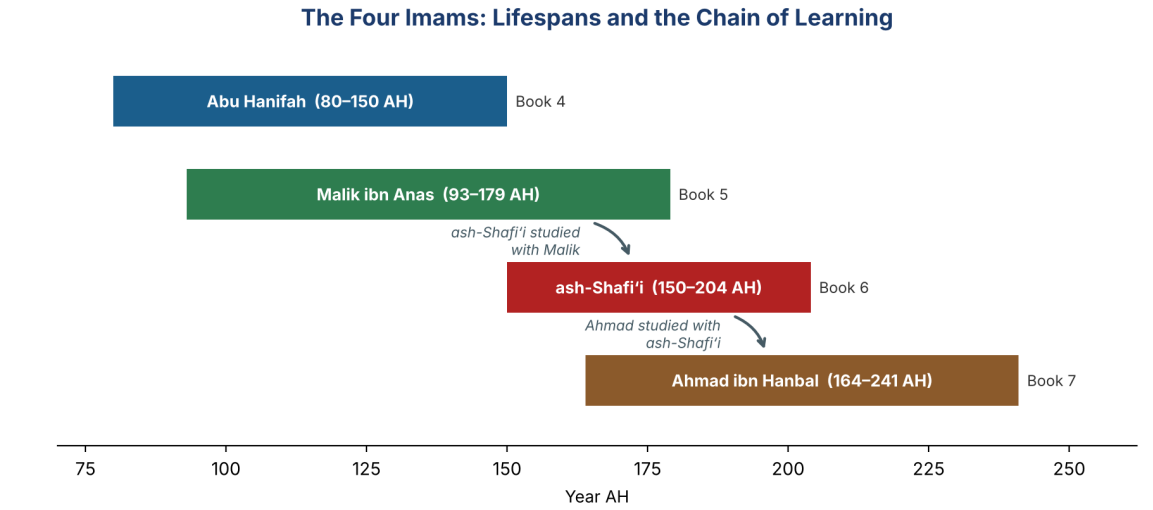
LESSON

Knowledge is not for defending one's ego, but for seeking the truth. Ash-Shafi'i teaches us ***the courage to change one's view when stronger evidence is found***.

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THE FOUR IMAMS

Ash-Shafi'i stands in the middle of ***the golden chain*** of the four imams: he studied with ***Imam Malik***, learned from ***Muhammad ash-Shaybani*** (Abu Hanifah's student), and taught ***Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal***.



Ash-Shafi'i also studied with Muhammad ash-Shaybani, Abu Hanifah's student. Approximate years. Sources: Wikipedia, "Al-Shafi'i", "Abu Hanifa", "Malik ibn Anas".

Figure 4: The four imams — lifespans and the chain of learning (approximate years).

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IMAM	LINK WITH ASH-SHAFI'I
Abu Hanifah (Book 4)	Ash-Shafi'i learned from his student, Muhammad ash-Shaybani.
Malik ibn Anas (Book 5)	Ash-Shafi'i's teacher in Madinah.
Ahmad ibn Hanbal (Book 7)	Ash-Shafi'i's student in Baghdad.

These four imams ***respected one another*** despite their differences — an example for the Ummah today.

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ILLNESS AND DEATH IN EGYPT

Ash-Shafi'i's last years in Egypt were his ***most productive***, but also years of ***pain***. Adh-Dhahabi mentions that he suffered a severe illness with bleeding, yet ***kept teaching, dictating books and revising his views*** to the end. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ promised that a Muslim's suffering is never wasted:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 5641

حَدَّثَنِي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْمَلِكِ بْنُ عَمْرٍو، حَدَّثَنَا زُهَيْرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَمْرِو بْنِ حَلْحَلَةَ، عَنْ عَطَاءِ بْنِ يَسَارٍ، عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الخُدْرِيِّ، وَعَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا يُصِيبُ الْمُسْلِمَ مِنْ نَصَبٍ وَلاَ وَصَبٍ وَلاَ هَمٍّ وَلاَ حُزْنٍ وَلاَ أَذًى وَلاَ غَمٍّ حَتَّى الشَّوْكَةِ يُشَاكُهَا، إِلاَّ كَفَّرَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ خَطَايَاهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri and Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنهما narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"No fatigue, illness, worry, sorrow, harm or distress befalls a Muslim — even a thorn that pricks him — except that Allah expiates some of his sins by it."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Muhammad, from 'Abd al-Malik ibn 'Amr, from Zuhair ibn Muhammad, from Muhammad ibn 'Amr ibn Halhalah, from 'Ata' ibn Yasar, from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri and Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Sick, chapter on the expiation of sins through illness, Hadith No. 5641. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2573).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5641

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Every pain, fatigue and sorrow wipes away a Muslim's sins. Ash-Shafi'i turned his pain into a field of reward and kept serving knowledge. He died on the eve of Friday at the end of Rajab 204 AH and was buried in ***al-Qarafah, Egypt***. Sultan ***Salah ad-Din al-Ayyubi*** later built a madrasah beside his tomb.

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THE SHAFI'I SCHOOL IN THE MALAY WORLD

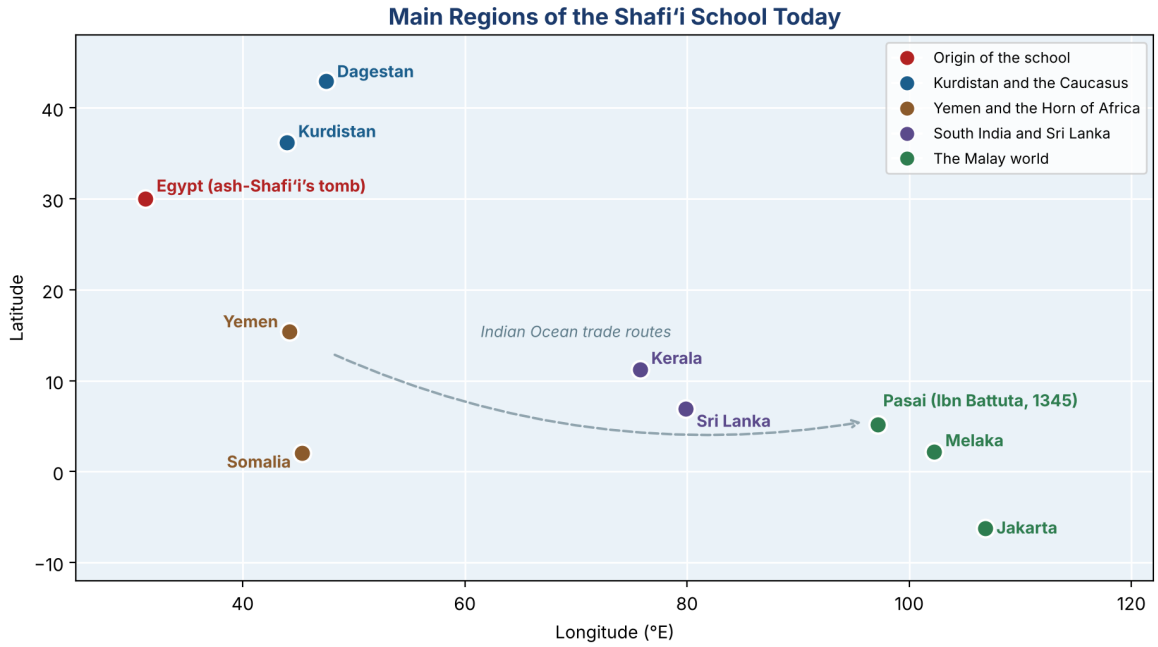
The Shafi'i school spread to ***Egypt, Syria, Yemen, Hadramawt*** and the shores of the Indian Ocean — and reached ***the Malay world*** through traders and preachers. Ibn Battutah (Series 35) recorded that the Sultan of ***Samudera Pasai*** followed the Shafi'i school and loved discussing fiqh with scholars. To this day Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, Singapore and southern Thailand follow it.

Later, the scholars of the Malay world wrote Shafi'i fiqh in ***Jawi script*** so that ordinary people could learn it — among them ***Nuruddin ar-Raniri*** with ***as-Sirat al-Mustaqim*** and ***Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari*** with ***Sabil al-Muhtadin***, both of whom, in sha' Allah, will be figures in this series. Through their books, the fiqh of an imam who died in Egypt reached the village surau of the Malay world.

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THE SHAFI'I SCHOOL TODAY

The school built by an orphan from Gaza is now followed by ***more than 350 million*** Muslims.



Example places; approximate positions. Over 350 million followers. Sources: Wikipedia, "Shafi'i school", "Samudera Pasai Sultanate".

Figure 5: Main regions of the Shafi'i school today (example places).

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HISTORY NOTE: THE THIRD-LARGEST SCHOOL

According to Wikipedia, the Shafi'i school is followed by ***more than 350 million*** people — about ***17.5% of Muslims***. It is the principal school in ***Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore***, the Horn of Africa, South India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, and among the Kurds and in the Caucasus.

Traders carried the school across ***the Indian Ocean***. The traveller ***Ibn Battuta***, who visited ***Samudera Pasai*** in ***1345***, recorded that its sultan followed the school of ***Imam ash-Shafi'i***.

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Wikipedia, "Samudera Pasai Sultanate". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samudera_Pasai_Sultanate

REFLECTION

Every time we pray, fast and pay zakat according to the Shafi'i school, we ***continue a chain of knowledge*** that began in Imam Malik's circle in Madinah and reached the prayer rooms of our villages.

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ESTABLISHED REPORTS AND POPULAR STORIES

Many stories about Imam ash-Shafi'i circulate in lectures and books. The following table distinguishes what is established from what needs checking.

THE STORIES AND THEIR STATUS

POPULAR STORY	STATUS
Born in Gaza in 150 AH and died in Egypt in 204 AH.	Established in the books of biography.
Studied with Imam Malik and taught Imam Ahmad.	Established in the books of biography.
Memorised the Qur'an before seven and al-Muwatta' in his early teens.	Quoted in the books of biography; the exact ages vary between reports.
The poem "I complained to Waki' about my poor memory…".	Widely attributed to ash-Shafi'i, but its chain is discussed by the scholars.
The Hadith "A scholar of Quraysh will fill the earth with knowledge" refers to ash-Shafi'i.	Its chain is weak according to many scholars; applying it to ash-Shafi'i is the opinion of some scholars.
The story of him being brought in chains before the caliph Harun ar-Rashid.	Reported in the history books with differing details.

REFLECTION — CHOOSING WITH CARE

Ash-Shafi'i himself taught us to choose authentic Hadith. So stories about him too deserve ***to be chosen with care***.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

LESSONS FROM THIS EBOOK

First: Refer disputes to the Qur'an and Sunnah (4:59).

Second: Poverty and orphanhood are no barrier to knowledge. Ash-Shafi'i grew up a poor orphan.

Third: Follow the path of knowledge, for Allah makes easy a path to Paradise (Sahih Muslim 2699).

Fourth: Balance knowledge and fitness (Sahih al-Bukhari 2899).

Fifth: Convey knowledge faithfully (59:7; Sahih al-Bukhari 3461).

Sixth: Have the courage to change your view when stronger evidence is found.

Seventh: Poverty is no barrier to knowledge. The orphan ash-Shafi'i wrote on bones.

Eighth: Disagree with good manners — speak good or stay silent (Sahih al-Bukhari 6018).

Ninth: Be patient in illness — every pain wipes away sins (Sahih al-Bukhari 5641).

Tenth: Begin knowledge with the Qur'an (54:17; Sahih al-Bukhari 5027).

Eleventh: Honour orphans and mothers (93:6–9; Sahih al-Bukhari 5304, 5971).

Twelfth: Be a strong believer (Sahih Muslim 2664).

Thirteenth: Sincere ijtihad is still rewarded (4:83; Sahih al-Bukhari 7352).

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CONCLUSION

Imam ash-Shafi'i رحمه الله died in Egypt in 204 AH. His school spread across the world, including the Malay world. His most famous student — who was later severely tested for defending the creed — will be the subject of Series 7 of **Tracing the Scholars of Islam**, in sha' Allah: ***Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal***. And Allah knows best.

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GLOSSARY AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

GLOSSARY

TERM	MEANING
Usul al-Fiqh	The science of the rules for deriving Shari'ah rulings from their evidence.
Al-Risalah	The first book of Usul al-Fiqh, by ash-Shafi'i.
Al-Umm	Ash-Shafi'i's great book of fiqh, dictated in Egypt.
Ijma'	The consensus of the mujtahids of the ummah on a ruling.
Qiyas	Giving a new case the ruling of a case with a text because they share the same cause ('illah).
Qawl qadim / qawl jadid	Ash-Shafi'i's old views (in Iraq) and his new views (in Egypt).
Nasir as-Sunnah	"Defender of the Sunnah" — a title of Imam ash-Shafi'i.
Mujtahid	A scholar qualified to derive rulings from the evidence.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Ash-Shafi'i wrote on bones because he had no paper. What excuse do we have for not seeking knowledge today?

2. Why did ash-Shafi'i keep travelling even after he was permitted to give fatwa?

3. How can we "remain brothers" with those who disagree with us?

4. What does the Shafi'i school mean for us in the Malay world, and how can we value it?

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه .

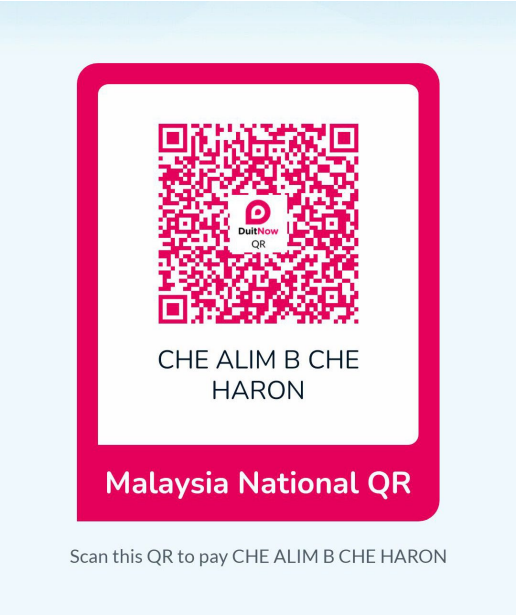
REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Wills (Kitab al-Wasiyyah), chapter on the reward that reaches a person after his death, Hadith No. 1631.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

JAZAKUMULLAHU KHAIRAN KATHIRA

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