

hibited to pray was over.⁷

He also said,

I have not seen him mention any of the pleasures and attractions of this world, he did not delve into worldly conversations and he never asked for any of its livelihood. Instead he directed his attentions and conversations to seeking the Hereafter and what could get him closer to Allāh.⁸

Once, the ruler Muḥammad bin Qalāwūn accused him of wanting to wrench kingship from him due to his large following to which he replied,

I would do that! By Allāh, your kingship and the kingship of Moghul is not even worth two meagre coins in my eyes!⁹

His Teachers¹⁰

He studied under a great number of scholars and he himself mentioned a number of them as related by adh-Dhahabī directly from him.¹¹ This particular chronicle of teachers includes forty-

⁷ al-Bazzār, *al-ʿĀlām al-ʿAlīyyah* [p. 40]

⁸ al-Bazzār [p.52].

⁹ al-Bazzār [p. 74].

¹⁰ Refer to: *Majmūʿ Fatawā Shaykh al-Islām* [18/76-121]; *Dhayl ibn Rajab* [2/387]; Ibn Kathīr [14/136-137]; adh-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirah al-Fuffādh* [3/1496]; Ibn Ḥajr al-ʿAsqalānī, *ad-Durar al-Kāminah fi-ʿĀyān al-Miʿah ath-Thāminah* [1/154].

¹¹ *Majmūʿ al-Fatawā* [18/76-121].

one male scholars and four female scholars. The total number of scholars whom he took knowledge from exceeds two hundred.¹²

The following is a selection of some of his teachers:

- Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdu-l-Dā’im al-Maqdasī
- Abū Naṣr ‘Abdu-l-‘Azīz ibn ‘Abdu-l-Mun‘im
- Abū Muḥammad Ismā‘il ibn Ibrāhīm at-Tanūkhī
- Al-Manjā ibn ‘Uthmān at-Tanūkhī ad-Dimashqī
- Abu al-‘Abbās al-Mu‘ammil ibn Muḥammad al-Bālisī
- Abū ‘Abdullāh Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr ibn Sulaymān al-Āmirī
- Abū al-Faraj ‘Abdur-Raḥmān ibn Sulaymān al-Baghdādī
- Sharaf ad-Dīn al-Maqdasī, Aḥmad ibn Aḥmad ash-Shāfi‘ī
- Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdu-l-Qawī al-Maqdasī
- Taqī ad-Dīn al-Wāsiṭī, Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Alī as-Ṣāliḥī al-Ḥanbalī
- His paternal aunt, Sitt ad-Dār bint ‘Abdu-s-Salām ibn Taymiyyah

His Students

He had many students and those who were affected by him are many, some of his students were:

- Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr.
- Adh-Dhahabī, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad.
- Al-Mizzī, Yūsuf ibn ‘Abdur-Raḥmān.
- Ibn Kathīr, Ismā‘il ibn ‘Umar.
- Ibn ‘Abdu-l-Hādī, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad.

¹² *Al-Uqūd ad-Durriyyah* [p. 3]; *al-Kawākib ad-Durriyyah* [p. 52].

- Al-Bazzār, ‘Umar ibn ‘Alī.
- Ibn Qādī al-Jabal, Aḥmad ibn Ḥusain.
- Ibn Fadlillāh al-Amrī, Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā.
- Muḥammad ibn al-Manj, ibn ‘Uthmān at-Tanūkhī.
- Yūsuf ibn ‘Abdu-l-Maḥmūd ibn ‘Abdu-s-Salām al-Battī.
- Ibn al-Wardī, Zayn ad-Dīn ‘Umar.
- ‘Umar al-Ḥarrānī, Zayn ad-Dīn Abū Ḥafs.
- Ibn Mufliḥ, Shams ad-Dīn Abū ‘Abdullāh.

The Praise of the Scholars for him

Many scholars praised ibn Taymiyyah, not only for his scholarly achievements but also for his active participation in *Jihād* and the affairs relating to public welfare, his abundant concern for others and his worship. Below is a selection of some of these statements:

1. *Al-Ḥāfiẓ* adh-Dhahabī said,

It was amazing when he mentioned an issue over which there was a difference of opinion and when he gave evidence and decided the strongest opinion - he could perform *ijtihād* due to his fulfilling its conditions. I have not seen one who was quicker than he at recalling a verse which pertained to the issue that he derived from it, nor a man who was stronger in recalling texts and referring them to their sources. The *Sunnah* was in front of his eyes and upon the tip of his tongue with eloquent phrases and an open eye.

He was a sign from the signs of Allāh in *tafsir* and expounding upon it. With regards to the foundation of the religion and knowledge of the differing opinions [on an issue], he was unequalled - this along-

side his generosity, courage and lack of attention to the joys of the soul.

Quite possibly his legal rulings in the various sciences reached three hundred volumes, indeed more and he was always saying the truth for the sake of Allāh, not caring for the blame that came to him.

Whosoever associates with him and knows him well accuses me of falling short with regards to him. Whosoever opposes him and differs with him accuses me of exaggeration, and I have been wronged by both parties - his companions and his opponents.

He was white skinned with black hair and a black beard with a few grey hairs. His hair reached his earlobes and his eyes were eloquent tongues. He had broad shoulders and a loud, clear voice with a fast recitation. He was quick to anger but overcame it with patience and forbearance.

I have not seen his like for supplications [to Allāh], his seeking succour with Him and his abundant concern for others. However I do not believe him to be infallible, rather I differ with him on both fundamental and subsidiary matters, for he - despite his vast learning, extreme courage, fluid mind and regard for the sanctity of the religion - was a man from amongst men. He could be overcome with sharpness and anger in discussion, and attack his opponents [verbally] hence planting enmity in their souls towards him.

If only he were gentle to his opponents then there would have been a word of agreement over him - for indeed their great scholars bowed to his learning, acknowledged his ability, lack of mistakes and

conceded that he was an ocean having no limits and a treasure having no equivalent...

He used to preserve the prayers and fasts, glorifying the laws outwardly and inwardly. He did not give legal rulings out of poor understanding for he was extremely intelligent, nor out of lack of knowledge for he was an overflowing ocean. Neither did he play with the religion but derived evidence from the Qur'an, *Sunnah* and *Qiyās* (analogy), he proved [his stances] and argued following the footsteps of the *Imāms* who preceded him, so he has a reward if he erred and two rewards if he was correct.

He fell ill in the castle [wherein he was imprisoned] with a serious disease until he died on the night of Monday 20th *Dhū-l-Qa'dah*, and they prayed over him in the *Masjid* of Damascus. Afterwards many talked about the number that attended his funeral prayer, and the least number given was fifty thousand.¹³

2. Ibn Ḥajr al-'Asqalānī said,

The *Shaykh* of our *Shaykhs*, *al-Hāfiẓ* Abū al-Yu'marī [ibn Sayyid an-Nās] said in his biography of ibn Taymiyyah, 'al-Mizzī encouraged me to express my opinion on *Shaykh al-Islām* Taqī ad-Dīn. I found him to be from those who had acquired a fortune of knowledge in the sciences that he had. He used to completely memorise and implement the *Sunan* and *Āthār* (narrations). Should he speak about *tafsīr*, he would carry its flag, and should he pass a legal ruling in *fiqh*, he knew its limits. Should he speak about a ḥadīth, he was the seat of its knowledge and fully

¹³ Ibn Ḥajr, [under the biography of ibn Taymiyyah].

cognisant of its narrations. Should he give a lecture on religions and sects, none was seen who was more comprehensive or meticulous than he. He surpassed his contemporaries in every science, you would not see one like him and his own eye did not see one like himself...'¹⁴

3. Ibn Hajar also said,

The acclaim of Taqī ad-Dīn is more renown than that of the Sun and titling him *Shaykh al-Islām* of his era remains until our time upon the virtuous tongues. It will continue tomorrow just as it was yesterday. No one refutes this but a person who is ignorant of his prestige or one who turns away from justice...

...those of his stances that were rejected from him were not said by him due to mere whims and desires and neither did he obstinately and deliberately persist in them after the evidence was established against him. Here are his works overflowing with refutations of those who held to *tajsim* (anthropomorphism), yet despite this he is a man who makes mistakes and is also correct. So that which he is correct in - and that is the majority - is to be benefited from and Allāh's Mercy should be sought for him due to it, and that which he is incorrect in should not be blindly followed. Indeed he is excused for his mistakes because he is one of the *Imāms* of his time and it has been testified that he fulfilled the conditions of *ijtihād*...

From the astonishing qualities of this man was that he was the severest of people against the People of

¹⁴ Ibid.

Innovation, the *Rawāfiḍah*, the *Hulūliyyah* and the *Ittiḥādiyyah*. His works on this are many and famous and his *fatāwā* on them cannot be counted, so how the eyes of these innovators must have found joy when they heard those who declared him to be a *kāfir*! And how delighted they must have been when they saw those who did not declare him to be a *kāfir* in turn being labeled *kāfir*! It is obligatory upon the one who has donned the robe of knowledge and possesses intelligence that he consider the words of a man based upon his well-known books or from the tongues of those who are trusted to accurately convey his words. Then he should isolate from all of this what is rejected and warn against it with the intention of giving sincere advice and to praise him for his excellent qualities and for what he was correct in, as is the way of the scholars.

If there were no virtues of *Shaykh* Taqī ad-Dīn except for his famous student *Shaykh* Shams ad-Dīn ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, writer of many works, from which both his opponents and supporters benefited, then this would be a sufficient indication of his [ibn Taymiyyah's] great position. And how could it be otherwise when the Shāfi'ī *Imāms* and others, not to speak of the Ḥanbalīs, of his time testified to his prominence in the [Islāmic] sciences...¹⁵

4. Ibn Kathīr said,

The least he would do when he heard something was to memorise it and then busy himself with learning it. He was intelligent and had much committed to memory, he became an *Imām* in *tafsīr* and every-

¹⁵ From Ibn Ḥajr's endorsement of *Radd al-Wāfir* contained at the end of the book.

thing linked to it and knowledgeable in *fiqh*. Indeed it was said that he was more knowledgeable of the *fiqh* of the *madhhabs* than the followers of those very same *madhhabs* in his time and other than his time. He was a scholar in *Usūl* and the branches of the religion, in grammar, the language and other textual and intellectual sciences.... no scholar of a science would speak to him except that he thought that that science was the specialty of ibn Taymiyyah. As for ḥadīth then he was the carrier of its flag, a *Ḥāfiẓ*, able to distinguish the weak from the strong, fully acquainted with the narrators....¹⁶

He also said,

He was, may Allāh have mercy upon him, from the greatest of scholars but also from those who err and are correct. However his errors with respect to his correct rulings were like a drop in a huge ocean and they are forgiven him as is authentically reported by Bukhārī,

When a ruler makes a ruling, and he is correct then he has two rewards, and if he has erred then he has one reward.

5. *Al-Ḥāfiẓ* al-Mizzī said,

I have not seen the likes of him and his own eye had not seen the likes of himself. I have not seen one who was more knowledgeable than he of the Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger, nor one who followed them more closely.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibn Kathīr, [14/118-119].

¹⁷ Bahjatul Baiṭār, *Ḥayāt Shaykh al-Islām ibn Taymiyyah* [p. 21].

6. *Al-Hāfiẓ* ‘Abdur-Raḥmān ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī said,

He is the *Imām*, the legal Jurist, the *Mujtahid*, the Scholar of Ḥadīth, the *Hāfiẓ*, the Explainer of the Qur’ān, the Ascetic, Taqī ad-Dīn Abū al-‘Abbās *Shaykh al-Islām*, the most knowledgeable of the knowledgeable. It is not possible to exaggerate his renown when he is mentioned and his fame does not require us to write a lengthy tract on him. He, may Allāh have mercy upon him, was unique in his time with respect to understanding the Qur’ān and knowledge of the realities of faith....¹⁸

His Sayings

Shaykh al-Islām was famous for stating profound statements, below is a selection of some of them.

- Every punishment from Him is pure justice and every blessing from Him is pure grace.¹⁹
- Whoever desires everlasting bliss, let him adhere firmly to the threshold of servitude²⁰
- The Lord loves to be loved.²¹
- Guidance is not attained except with knowledge and cor-

¹⁸ ibn Rajab, [2/387-392].

¹⁹ *Majmū‘ Fatāwā* [10/85]

²⁰ ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārīj* [1/531]

²¹ *Majmū‘ Fatāwā* [1/54]

rect direction is not attained except with patience.²²

- In this world there is a paradise, whoever does not enter it will not enter the Paradise of the Hereafter.²³
- The one who is [truly] imprisoned is the one whose heart is imprisoned from Allāh and the captivated one is the one whose desires have enslaved him.²⁴
- This whole religion revolves around knowing the truth and acting by it, and action must be accompanied by patience.²⁵
- Worship is founded upon the Legal Law and following it, not upon ones base desires and innovation.²⁶
- If you do not taste the sweetness of an action in your heart, suspect it, for the Lord, Exalted is He, is the Appreciative.²⁷
- The more the servant loves his Master, the less will he love other objects and they will decrease in number. The less the servant loves his Master, the more will he love

²² *Majmū‘ Fatāwā* [10/40]

²³ ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Wābil* [p. 69]

²⁴ Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Wābil* [p. 69].

²⁵ *Majmū‘ Fatāwā* [10/38]

²⁶ *Majmū‘ Fatāwā* [1/80]

²⁷ ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Madārij* [2/68]