

Biography: Imam Abdul Aziz Ibn Baaz (Rahimahullaah)

Imaam ‘Abdul-‘Azeez bin ‘Abdillaah bin Baaz: 1330H-1420H

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His Name and Lineage:

He was the noble and exemplary scholar, ‘Abdul-‘Azeez bin ‘Abdillaah bin ‘Abdir-Rahmaan bin Muhammad bin ‘Abdillaah Aali Baaz, may Allaah have mercy on him. Baaz was a family that had deep roots in knowledge, business, and agriculture. They were known for their virtues and character. Shaikh Sulaymaan bin Hamdaan, may Allaah have mercy on him, said in his book on the biographies of the Hanbalee scholars: “Their origin was in Madeenah, then one of their ancestors moved to Dur’eeyah.”

His Birth and Early Youth:

He was born in Riyadh, the capital city of Najd on the 12th of Dhul-Hijjah, 1330H. This is where he spent his childhood, adolescence and early adult years.

Imaam Ibn Baaz was raised in an environment engrossed in knowledge, since Riyadh at that time was filled with scholars and people of guidance. It was also a place of security and peace since King ‘Abdul-‘Azeez had re-conquered it and established justice there based on the laws of Islaam. This was after Riyadh had been a place of endless turmoil and instability.

Imaam Ibn Baaz first started by learning the Qur’aan as was the custom of the Salaf, who would memorize and master the Qur’aan before moving on to other subjects. So he **memorized the entire Qur’aan by heart before reaching the age of puberty**. He then went on to study at the hands of the scholars in his area.

It is also important to note that **his mother**, may Allaah have mercy on her, **played a large role in his path towards knowledge**, since she would be the one who would constantly encourage and incite him towards acquiring knowledge, as he stated towards the end of one of his lectures, “My journey with the writers”, in which he discussed some examples of his life.

Imaam Ibn Baaz had sight for the first part of his life. Then due to Allaah’s infinite wisdom, He willed that the Imaam’s **sight weaken due to an eye disease in 1346H**, which eventually lead to him **completely losing his eyesight in 1350H** when he was **close to twenty years of age**. However, this did not prevent him from his perseverance and diligence in seeking knowledge, which he continued to do and excel in.

Benefits of Losing His Sight:

Remarkably, **losing his eyesight was a means of benefit** for Imaam Ibn Baaz, since he was able to achieve several advantages of which we will mention four, as an example and not to limit:

- 1. Reward from Allaah:** Imaam Al-Bukhaaree reported in his Saheeh a Hadeeth Qudsee, in which Allaah said: “If my servant is tested with losing his two beloved (eyes), I will substitute them with Paradise.”[Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree: no. 5653]
- 2. Strong Memorization:** Imaam Ibn Baaz was the Haafidh (Memorizer) of this era when it came to Knowledge of Hadeeth. If you were to ask him on a hadeeth found in the Six Collections of Hadeeth or other collections such as the Musnad of Imaam Ahmad, you would find him well versed in the hadeeth’s chain of narration, textual wording, the scholars who spoke on it, its narrators and its explanation.

3. Lack of Interest in Worldly Splendors: Imaam Ibn Baaz refrained from chasing after the pleasures of the worldly life, living an abstemious and humble lifestyle.

4. High Determination: Losing sight, only made Imaam Ibn Baaz more determined and perseverant in his quest for seeking and acquiring knowledge, to the point that he became one of the senior scholars, known throughout the world. Allaah indeed replaced the light in his eyes with light in his heart, love for knowledge, and following of the Prophet's Sunnah.

His Teachers:

After memorizing the Qur'aan, Imaam Ibn Baaz, may Allaah have mercy on him, went on to study the other Islaamic sciences under many of the scholars of Riyadh, the most prominent of whom were:

1. Shaikh Muhammad bin 'Abdil-Lateef Aali Shaikh, the great-great grandson of Imaam Muhammad bin 'Abdil-Wahhaab,
2. Shaikh Saalih bin 'Abdil-'Azeez Aali Shaikh, the great-great grandson of Imaam Muhammad bin 'Abdil-Wahhaab and the Chief Judge of Riyadh,
3. Shaikh Sa'ad bin Hamad Al-'Ateeq, Judge of Riyadh,
4. Shaikh Hamad bin Faaris, Vice-Chancellor of the Treasury of Riyadh,
5. Shaikh Sa'ad Waqqaas Al-Bukhaaree, from the scholars of Makkah whom he learned the science of Tajweed from in 1355H,
6. Shaikh Muhammad bin Ibraaheem Aali Shaikh, former Chief Muftie of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He attended his study circles for about ten years, learning all of the Islamic sciences from him, from 1347H to 1357H, when his teacher nominated him to be a judge. May Allah have mercy on all of them.

His Students:

Imaam Ibn Baaz, may Allaah have mercy on him, had numerous students that would attend his classes and study circles. The most famous and distinguished among them were:

1. Muhammad bin Saalih **Al-'Uthameen**, former member of the Council of Senior Scholars, may Allaah have mercy on him,
2. 'Abdullaah bin Hasan **Al-Qu'ood**, current member of the Permanent Committee for Islamic Research and Fataawaa and of the Council of Senior Scholars,
3. 'Abdullaah bin 'Abdir-Rahmaan **Al-Ghudayyaan**, current member of the Permanent Committee for Islamic Research and Fataawaa and of the Council of Senior Scholars,
4. 'Abdul-Muhsin **Al-'Abbaad**, former Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor of the Islamic University of Madeenah,
5. Saalih bin Fawzaan **Al-Fawzaan**, current member of the Permanent Committee for Islamic Research and Fataawaa and of the Council of Senior Scholars,
6. Rabee' bin Haadee **Al-Madkhalee**,
7. 'Abdul-'Azeez bin 'Abdillaah **Ar-Raajihee**

His Books and Treatises:

Even though the Imaam was pressed for time as a result of his duties and role in giving da'wah and educating, he still made time to write books and treatises that addressed important issues, which the Muslims were in need of knowledge of. Amongst his most famous works were:

1. *The Obligation of Following the Sunnah*
2. *The Ideological Attack*
3. *The Life and Call of Imaam Muhammad bin 'Abdil-Wahhaab*
4. *Three Treatises on the Prayer*
5. *The Correct Belief and what Opposes It*

6. *Important Lessons for the Muslim Ummah*
7. A Criticism of Arab Nationalism
8. *The Dangers of Tabarruj*
9. Two Essays on Fasting and Zakaat
10. *The Ruling on Pictures*
11. *The Ruling on Celebrating the Prophet's Birthday*
12. *A Warning against Innovations*

And there are many more books, which can be read and printed at the Imaam's official web site binbaz.org.sa. This was in addition to his many fataawaa (religious verdicts) that were collected, compiled and published, which range in numerous volumes.

His Appointment As A Judge:

When Imaam Ibn Baaz was selected for being the **Judge of the Kharj district**, he accepted it *unwillingly* since he had no desire or love for position. But it was due to the encouragement of his teacher, Shaikh Muhammad bin Ibraaheem Aali Shaikh, and the order of King 'Abdul-'Azeez that he took up the position. So he went to ad-Dalam, the capital city of the Kharj district at that time, and the people greeted him warmly. As soon as he got out of the car that transported him there, he ascended the Central Mosque and prayed two rak'at, in accordance with the Sunnah. Then he rested for a while in the presence of the Ameer of ad-Dalam at that time, Naasir bin Sulaymaan al-Huqbaanee, may Allaah have mercy on him. Thereafter the people gathered around him and so he gave them a profound admonition. From the things he told them was that he had no desire to be the Judge of their district but that he was ordered and so he must obey the leader.

As soon as he commenced working at his position, Allaah brought much good through his hands and **he judged the people with justice and kindness**. He served in this position for **a little over fourteen years**. During this time, the Kharj district became a place of good and uprightness. Imaam Ibn Baaz would attribute this success to the good hearts of the people and their high esteem for virtue and justice. Because the courts were in ad-Dalam, he lived there in the Judge's Residence given to him by Imaam 'Abdullaah bin Faysal bin Turkee.

Imaam Ibn Baaz was well known throughout the Muslim world for his religious verdicts (*fataawaa*) and his beneficial books. He would preside over committees for educational seminars in Saudi Arabia, and give various lectures over the telephone to Muslims outside of the Kingdom. He would also answer the questions of the people over the radio and during the blessed times of Hajj and Ramadaan. And his words would appear in Muslim newspapers, magazines, and articles throughout the world.

His Educational and Religious Positions:

1. He served as a Judge in the Kharj District of Saudi Arabia for fourteen years from 1357H to 1371H.
2. He taught at the Educational Institute of Riyadh in 1372H and in the College of Sharee'ah after its inception in 1373H, covering the subjects of Fiqh, Tawheed and Hadeeth. He remained in this teaching position for nine years until 1380H.
3. In 1381H, he was appointed Vice-Chancellor of the Islamic University of Madeenah, where he served until 1390H.
4. He was then appointed as the Chancellor of the Islamic University of Madeenah in 1390H, after its former Chancellor, Shaikh Muhammad bin Ibraaheem Aali Shaikh died in Ramadaan of 1389H. He remained in this position until 1395H.

5. In 10/14/1395H, the King ordered that Imaam Ibn Baaz be appointed as Head of the Council for Islamic Research, Verdicts, Da'wah and Guidance. He held this position [for nineteen years] until 1414H.

6. In 1/20/1414H, the King appointed Imaam Ibn Baaz as the Chief Muftee of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He held this position along with being the Head of the Council of Senior Scholars and the Head of the Committee for Islamic Research and Verdicts.

He also held the following positions:

1. Head of the Permanent Committee for Islamic Research and Verdicts,
2. President and Member of the Founding Committee for the Muslim World League,
3. President of the higher World League Council,
4. President of the World Supreme Council for Mosques,
5. President of the Islamic Fiqh Assembly in Makkah, which is under the Muslim World League,
6. Member of the Higher Council of the Islamic University of Madeenah,
7. Member of the Supreme Committee for Islamic Propagation.

His Physical Attributes and Appearance:

The Shaikh, may Allaah have mercy on him, was of **medium build, and neither tall nor short**. He had a **round face** and was of a **golden-brown color**. He had a curved nose and a **beard that was short on the cheeks but thick below the chin**. His beard used to be black, but when too many white hairs started showing, he dyed it with henna. Indeed, his description resembled that of many of the scholars before him.

He had a beautiful appearance. He would always try to wear **white garments**, and would love **wide clothes**, and thawbs that would reach the **middle of his shin**.

His Humility and Piety:

The Imaam knew his own worth and so he would be very humble before Allaah. So he would treat the people in a kind manner, with gentleness and mercy. He would not transgress over anyone or show arrogance to anyone. He would not give a false impression of grandness nor would he get up to the leave when in the company of the poor and needy, or refrain from walking and intermingling with them. He would also never turn away from listening to the advice of those who were below him.

What also showed his humbleness was that he would answer the invitation of his students and close friends to come to their wedding gatherings. He would always arrive early and ask one of the brothers to recite some *ayaat* from the Qur'aan, which he would then go on to explain to everyone present.

His Death:

Imaam Ibn Baaz passed away on **Thursday, the 27th of Muharram, 1420H (5/13/1999)**, due to **heart failure**. He was **89 years old** at the time. **Millions** of people throughout the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia gathered to witness his funeral prayer and he was buried in the **'Adl Cemetery in Makkah**. Muslims throughout the world mourned his loss and it was only a few months later that the Muslim world would lose another great scholar, Imaam Al-Albaanee, may Allaah have mercy on them both.