
Brief Biography of Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَجْمَهُ اللهُ)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

His Name and Lineage:

He was Muhammad Naasir-ud-Deen Ibn Nooh Ibn Aadam Najaatee, al-Albaanee by birth, ad-Dimashqee by residence and al-Urdunee (from Jordan) due to his migration and place of death. He was born in Ashkodera, the capital of Albania, in the year 1332H (1914 C.E.) and it is to this country that he ascribes himself.

He was a Muhaddith (scholar of hadeeth), a Faqeeh (scholar of Fiqh), a caller to the Book and the Sunnah with the understanding of the Salaf as-Saalih (righteous predecessors). And he was a proficient writer and an expert scholar.

His father was al-Hajj Nooh, from the major Hanafee scholars of his land. During the doomed secularist, Ahmad Zogu's¹ reign of Albania there was severe oppression for the Muslims of that land. Because of this, al-Hajj Nooh migrated with all of his children, which included Muhammad Naasir-ud-Deen, fleeing for the sake of his religion to the land of Shaam. He travelled to Shaam due to what was reported in the prophetic ahaadeeth about its virtues and merits. And it is there that he and his family took residence. Fifty years later, the Shaykh (al-Albaanee (رَجْمَهُ اللهُ)²) migrated from here to 'Amaan, the capital of Jordan. And it is in this city that he remained for the rest of his life as a scholar and teacher and a Faqeeh and educator.

His Educational Background and Teachers:

He received his education in a school, which was part of a relief shelter in Damascus, the capital of Syria. This school served as a place of refuge for seekers of knowledge for many previous generations. He benefited and learned from a number of Shuyookh and people of knowledge the likes of his father al-Hajj Nooh, Sa'eed al-Burhaanee³ and others.

Allaah made the science of the Prophetic Hadeeth beloved to him during the prime of his life and the early part of his youth. This was during the time when he would review articles written by Shaykh Muhammad Rasheed Ridaa (رَجْمَهُ اللهُ) in the magazine Al-Manaar, in which he would criticize weak narrations that Aboo Haamid al-Ghazaalee mentioned in his book Ihyaa 'Uloom-ud-Deen.

Shaykh Muhammad Raaghib at-Tabbaakh (رَجْمَهُ اللهُ), the historian and Muhaddith of Halab (Aleppo), authorized him with an Ijaazah (certification) to teach his collection of narrations on trustworthy reporters, called "al-Anwaar al-Jaliyyah fee Mukhtasar al-Athbaat al-Halabiyyah." This happened when he saw the Shaykh's intelligence and extraordinary abilities and his brightness in comprehending and understanding,⁴ as well as his strong desire to learn the Islaamic sciences and the knowledge of Hadeeth.

¹ I heard our Shaykh say many times, when mentioning this man's name: 'The one whom Allaah has caused his heart to go astray.' You can find a biography of Ahmad Zogu in the book Al-Mawsoo'at-ul-'Arabiyyah Al-Muyassarah (1/733).

² (رَجْمَهُ اللهُ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah have mercy on him

³ This is a refutation against those who claim that: 'al-Albaanee had no teachers (i.e. Shuyookh)' or that 'He studied the knowledge on his own!'

⁴ In spite of this, there are some evil mischievous people today, who are guided by their desires and say about our Shaykh: 'He was dumb and not able to understand.' So what transgression do we find from these small ignoramuses and foolish people!

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His Early Role in Da'wah and Effects on the Ummah:

He began writing and authoring books during the first stages of the second part of his life (i.e. after reaching middle age). One of the first books he wrote on Fiqh, which was based on knowing the evidences and using comparative Fiqh, was his book: "Tahdheer-us-Saajid min Ittikhaadh al-Quboor Masaajid" (Warning the Worshipper against taking Graves as a Place of Worship). This book was printed many times. And from his first books in which he referenced and checked hadeeth, was his book "ar-Rawd-un-Nadeer fee Tarteeb wa Takhreej Mu'jam at-Tabaraanee as-Sagheer" (Blossoming Gardens: Arrangement and Referencing of the book Mu'jam as-Sagheer of at-Tabaraanee). This book is still in manuscript form and not printed.

The Shaykh was called and invited by many Islaamic universities and Muslim organizations around the world to take high positions with them, but he turned down most of them by making excuses due to his many pre-occupations with regard to (acquiring and teaching) knowledge.

He was put in charge of teaching the subject of Prophetic Hadeeth in the Islaamic University of Madinah at the time of its inception for the length of three years, beginning from the year 1381H. Because of him, this move had a great influence in bringing about a scientific and comprehensive revival of the subject of Hadeeth throughout the entire world – on all fronts. As for the official front, then this was by all the universities having a strong concern for that subject, such that they produced a hundred university treatises, which deal specifically with the Science of Hadeeth. As for the general nationwide front, then this was such that a large number of students of knowledge applied for studies in the Science of Hadeeth and specialization in that field. And this goes as well for all the other things that came as a result afterwards. So it became one of the Shaykh's many effects.

One of the greatest proofs for this is the large amount of Hadeeth books, with checked and authenticated chains of narration, and written indexes for Hadeeth that exist today, a majority of which were not known in previous years. No one can deny this effect due to its clear and obvious nature – not even those who opposed the Shaykh and fought against his methodology.

The Scholars' Praise for Him:

The senior scholars and Imaams of this time praised him and they would ask him questions, go to visit him, seek religious verdicts from him and exchange letters with him. And if they, may Allaah preserve those of them who are living and have mercy on those who have died, were to be counted, all of them would not be able to be accounted for.

At the head of them was the noble Shaykh and great scholar, 'Abdul-'Azeez Ibn 'Abdillaah Ibn Baaz,⁵ for he had great esteem and profound respect for him. May Allaah have mercy on them both.⁶

Shaykh 'Abdul-'Azeez al-Hudda (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ) said:

"The Shaykh, the great scholar, the ocean (of knowledge), Muhammad al-Ameen ash-Shanqeetee (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ) – the one whom no one's knowledge of the Science of Tafseer and the Arabic Language was comparable to his during his lifetime – used to respect Shaykh al-Albaanee so remarkably to the point that when he would see him passing by, and he was giving his class in the masjid of Madeenah, he would stop his class to stand and give Salaam to him out of respect for him."

The great scholar, the teacher, Muhibb-ud-Deen al-Khateeb (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ) said:

"And from the callers to the Sunnah who devoted their lives to reviving it was our brother Muhammad Naasir-ud-Deen Nooh Najaatee al-Albaanee."

The great scholar Muhammad Haamid al-Fiqee (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ) said:

⁵ The brother, Dr. Muhammad Lutfee As-Sabaagh, may Allaah grant him success, related to us that he heard Shaykh Ibn Baaz (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ), say about our Shaykh: 'I don't know of anyone under the surface of the sky with more knowledge of the Hadeeth of Allaah's Messenger than Shaykh Naasir.' [See Ad-Dustoor Newspaper of Jordan (10/8/1999)]

⁶ Translator's Note: This section of the scholars' sayings about al-Albaanee was added from Al-Asaalah Magazine Issue 23, pg. 76-77.

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“...the brother, the Salafee, the Scholar, Shaykh Naasir-ud-Deen.”

The former Muftee of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Ibraheem Aali Shaykh (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ) said:

“And he is the upholder of the Sunnah, a supporter of the truth and an opposition to the people of falsehood.”

During his lifetime, the father, the Shaykh, ‘Abdul-’Azeez Ibn Baaz (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ) said:

“I have not seen under the surface of the sky a person knowledgeable of the Hadeeth in our current time the likes of the great scholar, Muhammad Naasir-ud-Deen al-Albaanee.”

And he (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ) was asked about the hadeeth of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)⁷:

“Indeed Allaah raises up from this ummah at the beginning of every century someone who will revive it for them (i.e. a mujaddid).”

So he was asked who is the mujaddid of this century? He replied:

“Shaykh Muhammad Naasir-ud-Deen al-Albaanee. He is the mujaddid in my opinion and Allaah knows best.”

Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Saalih al-’Uthaimen (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ) said:

“From what I came to know of the Shaykh through my gatherings with him – and they were few – was that he was very serious about acting upon the Sunnah and fighting against the innovations. And this was regardless of whether it was about the Belief or about actions. As for through my readings of his written works, then I have come to know that about him, and also that he possesses a vast amount of knowledge of Hadeeth, in terms of reporting them and investigating them. And Allaah has benefited many people through what he has written such as about knowledge, aspects of the Manhaj, and concern for the science of Hadeeth. And he has had an enormous influence on the Muslims, all praise be to Allaah.”

The great scholar, Shaykh Zayd Ibn Fayaad (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ) said about him:

“Indeed, Shaykh Muhammad Naasir-ud-Deen al-Albaanee is from the most prominent and distinguished personalities of this era. He had great concern for the Hadeeth – its paths of transmission, its reporters and its levels of authenticity or weakness. This is an honourable task from the best things in which hours can be spent and efforts can be made. And he was like any other of the scholars – those who are correct in some matters and err in other matters. However, his devotion to this great science (i.e. of Hadeeth) is from that which requires that his prestige be acknowledged and his endeavours in it be appreciated.”

Shaykh Muqbil Ibn Haadee al-Waadi’ee (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ) said:

“Indeed, there cannot be found an equal in terms of the knowledge of Hadeeth like that of Shaykh Muhammad Naasir-ud-Deen al-Albaanee. Allaah has given benefit through his knowledge and his books numerous times more than what has been accomplished by those zealots for Islaam who act upon ignorance – those who organize reformation and revolutionary movements. And that which I sincerely believe and am convinced about is that the Shaykh Muhammad Naasir-ud-Deen al-Albaanee is from the mujaddideen (reformers/revivers) whom the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) spoke the truth of when he said:

‘Indeed Allaah raises up from this ummah at the beginning of every century someone who will revive it for them (i.e. a mujaddid).’ Reported by Aboo Daawood and authenticated by Al-’Iraaqee and others.”

⁷ (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him

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The Basis of His Da'wah:

The students of the Shaykh – those who learned from him through the university or through his private gatherings of knowledge or through his written works – are many and widespread throughout all parts of the world, all praise be to Allaah. They are spreading the authentic knowledge and calling the people to the pure methodology with strength and firmness.

The Shaykh spent all of his life calling to Allaah upon sound proofs and evidences, basing his call on the methodology of Tasfiyah and Tarbiyah, which is based on knowledge and self-purification. So he was a noble instructor and a truthful educator (enforcing Tarbiyah).⁸ By Allaah, we were brought up and raised tremendously by his methodology (manhaj), his agreeable countenance, his good manners, his high morals, his elevated character and his soft heart.

His Characteristics:

The Shaykh (رَجْمَةُ اللَّهِ), had many praiseworthy characteristics. Among the most clear, manifest and highest of them was his profound precision with regard to knowledge, his diligence, perseverance, his tolerance (with others), his firmness upon the truth, his quickness to return to correctness,⁹ his patience with the hardships of knowledge and Da'wah, and his taking of insults and harms for the sake of the Da'wah, bearing that with patience and consideration.

One of the greatest things that distinguished the Shaykh from many of his (Muslim) brothers amongst the people of knowledge was his strong support for the Sunnah and its adherents,¹⁰ his firmness upon the methodology of the Salaf As-Saalih, his love for those who called to it, and his refutation against the deviants from all levels and various positions, with an extreme clearness and a rare clarity.

His Fame:

The Shaykh (رَجْمَةُ اللَّهِ) received a tremendous acceptance from the righteous Muslims all over the world. He gained wide and vast fame and notoriety in all of the different regions of the world, even though he did not seek after it nor strive for it. On the contrary, he would run away and flee from it. And he would always repeat these words: "Love for fame will break one's back." (رَجْمَةُ اللَّهِ).

No one amongst mankind had a blessing or bounty over him in any of the worldly affairs. His knowledge was his mediator and his patience was his guide.¹¹ He was persistent (in his efforts), perseverant, patient, always struggling, earnest and hard working.

⁸ As for what some people relate from him that he, (رَجْمَةُ اللَّهِ), said: 'I taught and I did not educate (using Tarbiyah)', then he only said this out of humbleness and to suppress his soul. And even if this is not so, then I ask, is there anything besides knowledge that will purify and cultivate (Tarbiyah)? Is it only words and expressions?! Or is it purely passions and emotions?!

⁹ There is no contradiction between these last two characteristics, as is made quite clear with the least bit of reflection. By Allaah, how many times have we seen the humility of our Shaykh while he listened to those lower than him in his gatherings. In fact, he even asked some of his youngest students and sought explanations from them for aspects of knowledge that he had trouble with. And he would accept peoples' arguments with open-mindedness. So he had no pride or haughtiness. We ask you, O Allaah, to rectify our hearts and to grant us refuge from the evils of our souls.

¹⁰ The Shaykh handed me his introduction – written with his own hand – to the book Madaarik An-Nadhr fee As-Siyaasah of the brother, the Shaykh 'Abdul-Maalik Ramadaanee – so that I can give it to him. In this introduction is found the Shaykh's support for the book, according to the correct manner, and his aid for what clear truth is found in it. But in spite of this, we hear from some people that they have doubts about the Shaykh's introduction (!) or they say that he wrote it before the book was put in order! So then what was it?! That book was the book itself, without any doubt about it! As for what was supplemented to it, then that was only to aid and support its original status – they were not additions that changed the books main ideas. So based on this, warning against this book and belittling its status is an injustice that is contrary to what is correct and it is in opposition to what our senior scholars and Shaykhs are upon.

¹¹ So what some people say to themselves or that which some of them whisper to others – that they share credit in the Shaykh's fame or that they are responsible for people knowing him (!), then these are words, which the present situation and current conditions contradict and oppose.

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The Last Part of His Life:

The Shaykh (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ), did not cease to be devoted to the knowledge, persistent in authoring works, diligent in teaching and educating until he reached the age of eighty-six. He did not stop authoring books, writing letters and doing referencing and checking of ahaadeeth – because of his heart’s attachment to that – until the last two months of his life, when he grew very weak. This was until Allaah took his soul in death right before sunset (Maghrib) on Saturday when eight days remained for the end of the month Jumaadaa al-Aakhira of the year 1420H (10/2/1999).

His Death and Its Effect on the Ummah:

The Shaykh’s Janaazah (funeral) prayer was performed on the evening of the same day that he died. Scores of people, whose number exceeded that of five thousand persons, prayed over him in a musalla (place of prayer). Despite the fact that his body was prepared, he was prayed over and then buried, his burial was completed at the earliest time possible, in compliance with his final Will, in which he encouraged that the prophetic Sunnah be adhered to and acted upon.

The scholars, students of knowledge and common people were all affected by his loss. When the news of his death was conveyed, he was remembered and praised by the high and respected people of knowledge, such as Shaykh ‘Abdul-‘Azeez Ibn ‘Abdillaah Aali Shaykh, Chief Muftee of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Saalih al-‘Uthaimen, Shaykh ‘Abdullaah Ibn Jibreen, Shaykh Saalih Ibn ‘Abdil-‘Azeez Ibn Muhammad Aali Shaykh and others.