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The Biography of Great Muhaddith **Sheikh Muhammad Nāsiruddin Al-Albāni**

(May Allah's Mercy be upon him)

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*In the name of Allâh the Most Beneficent,
the Most Merciful*

Preface

Of a very important essence is the preservation and propagation of the history of the scholars of Islam as this in itself is cardinal to the preservation of the history of Islam. So also it is of immense importance to recognize the nobility of scholars. The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said,

«لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَا يُوقِّرُ كَبِيرَنَا وَيَرْحَمُ صَغِيرَنَا وَيَعْرِفُ لِعَالِمِنَا حَقَّهُ»

“He is not of us one who does not respect our elders,

nor is he merciful to our young ones nor does he regard the rights of our *Aalim* (scholar)^[1] .

This book represents a brief narration of the life of one of the foremost scholars of Islam in the recent past, the Great *Muhaddith*, Ash-Sheikh, Al-'Allaamah Abu Abdir-Rahmân Muhammad Nâsiruddîn Al-Albâni (May Allah's Mercy be upon him)

The book tells the tale of a Muslim child born towards the end of the Muslim (Ottoman Empire) in Eastern Europe. A child who was destined to become an inspiration for the entire *Ummah* be they scholars or otherwise. The story of a modest beginning, the education and character building of this noble son of Islam, the striving and perseverance in the pursuit of knowledge, his service in the preservation of the religion and what was to become of the position of that personality in the Muslim world. Finally, a discussion of the legacy of knowledge, student, books and guidance (in the form of wills), which he bequeathed to the *Ummah*.

O Lord of the Seven Heavens, the Earth and what they contain, bless and forgive our *Shaykh* and do not leave us without a befitting successor. *Ameen*.



[1] Ahmad, Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhî and others. *Saheeh*, see *Saheeh Al-Jâmi'* no 5444.

Introduction

All praise is for Allâh, we praise Him, seek His aid and ask for His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allâh ﷻ from the evils of ourselves and the evil of our actions. He whom Allâh ﷻ guides then there is none who can misguide him, and he whom Allâh ﷻ misguides then there is none who can guide him. We bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped (in truth) except Allâh ﷻ alone, having no partners and we bear witness that Muhammad ﷺ, is His slave and Messenger.

To proceed,

Verily, Allâh the Exalted and Magnificent selected from amongst His creatures those He loves and guides them to faith, thereafter He chooses from the generality of believers those that He loves and favors them. He teaches them the book (the Qur'ân) and Wisdom (Sunnah) and gives them firm comprehension of the religion.

He ﷺ teaches them interpretation and honors them above all believers. Their lives are booty and their death a calamity. Abdullah ﷺ ibn 'Amr ibn 'Aas narrates that the Prophet ﷺ said,

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ انْتِزَاعًا يَنْتَرِعُهُ مِنَ الْعِبَادِ، وَلَكِنْ يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ بِقَبْضِ الْعُلَمَاءِ حَتَّى إِذَا لَمْ يَبْقَ عَالِمٌ اتَّخَذَ النَّاسُ رُؤُوسًا جُهَالًا، فَسُئِلُوا فَأَفْتَوْا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ فَضَلُّوا وَأَضَلُّوا»

“Verily, Allâh will not take away knowledge by taking it away from (the minds of) the Servants. Rather, Knowledge shall be taken away by the taking away (death) of the Scholars until no scholar shall remain. People would take ignorant people as leaders asking them religious verdicts, they would answer without knowledge (they would rather answer based on their desires) they will mislead people and will be misled”^[1]

Allâh ﷻ blessed this Ummah in this generation with Ash-Sheikh, Al-'Allâmah Abu Abdur Rahmân Muhammad Nâsiruddîn Al-Albâni. For more than half of a whole century he was involved in active learning and teaching of the Religion, with great

^[1] Reported by Bukhâri (100) and Muslim. What is in the second bracket is from the narration of Bukhâri.

efforts towards purifying it with clear evidence from the distortions of the people of innovations and propagating it such that aspects of it that had been literally forgotten due to years of confusion and complete abandonment are remembered and practiced with full sincerity.

His call was to the book of Allâh – The Qur'ân and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ according to the understanding of the pious predecessors – the call of the *Salaf Salih*, as commanded by Allâh and His Messenger. This call was made by Ash-Sheikh Al-Albâni for about 70 years through magazines, radio programs, phone calls from across the world, teaching in mosques, schools and in universities in different parts of the world at different times and through his books which number over 200 in titles with some of them being up to 40 volumes read in all parts of the world. Some of them have been translated into so many different languages of the world.

However since his demise, in 1420 AH (1999), people who sought to know what family backgrounds Sheikh Al-Albâni had, his education, his interest in the Science of *Hadîth* and other things concerning his life could only do that through summarized usually single-paged internet downloads. This would not satisfy the curiosity of the minds that marveled at the dexterity of the Sheikh.

The few Arabic texts – about two or three – that could be found around, were in few hands and since not all those who had access to Ash-Sheikh either through his translated works or through discussions of teachers and preachers who referred to his works or through any other means could have access to the

Arabic texts, the necessity to compile one in English Language increased.

Also, due to the unavailability of readily accessible material(s) on the biography of the Sheikh, different people say different things about Ash-Sheikh some of which are correct, some wrong, and some others needing clarifications. Some people raised certain opinions about Ash-Sheikh such as that... 'Was Al-Albâni a *Muhaddith* or a *faqeeh*?' 'Was he a scholar or a caller?' and such others. Clearly enough, some of these issues are propagated by certain individuals so as to assist them in the perpetration of ideas and positions they hold that Al-Albâni criticized strongly.

Being convinced about the need to write this book, we planned it to be in two stages. Firstly, we would initially, for our references, rely on the works of Sameer Ameen Az-Zuhairi (a student of Ash-Sheikh Al-Albâni) titled *Muhaddith-ul-'Asr, Muhammad Nâsiruddîn Al-Albâni* and that of Ibrahim Muhammad Al 'Aliyy titled *Muhammad Nâsiruddin Al-Albâni, Muhaddith ul 'Asri wa Nâsirus Sunnah*, some incidents concerning his life which the Sheikh himself mentioned in some of his books and some of his cassettes which numbered over 200 with us at the time.

Secondly, to follow up this, we would meet one or two of the people of learning who had links with Ash-Sheikh either directly or through his students so that we would verify and possibly add to whatever we would have gathered.

At the completion of the first stage, one of us traveled on several occasions to get in touch with Ash-Sheikh Muhammad Al-Ameen Al-Haleel Abu Abdul

Musawwir (*Hafizahullâh*), a graduate of Qur'ân from the Imâm Saud University in Riyadh, a direct student of Ash-Sheikh Abdul Azeez bin Abdullah bin Baaz, Ash-Sheikh Muhammad bin Salih Al-Uthaimen, Ash-Sheikh Muhammad bin Salih Al-Laydân (the current Chief Justice of Saudi Arabia), Dr. Rabiee bin Hadee Al-Madkhalee and later, Ash-Sheikh Muhammad Nâsiruddin Al-Albâni for about 10 years.

With him, we had the opportunity and access to more books written by some of the students of Ash-Sheikh Al-Albâni who were with him at different periods about different aspects of his life. Some of them being compilations of articles published in different Islamic journals and magazines about Ash-Sheikh Al-Albâni^[1]. Ash-Sheikh Al-Ameen Al-Haleel assisted in the verification of the material – making corrections, adjustments, inclusions and referencing of the reports. He also mentioned some incidents concerning Ash-Sheikh Al-Albâni, which were not mentioned in the books.

For example, Ash-Sheikh Al-Ameen provided us firsthand narrations of what the immediate family of Ash-Sheikh Al-Albâni looks like, particularly his children one of whom, by Allâh's Mercy, a female, is getting to become what her father was – a scholar in every sense of the word. We have not found this very important aspect of Ash-Sheikh Al-Albâni's life in any

[1] An example is the book *Maqaalaatu Al-Albâni* compiled by Nurudeen Taalib, which contains articles written by more than 12 of the direct students of Sheikh Al-Albâni such as Ash-Sheikh Zuhair Shaaweesh, Dr. Muhammad bin Latfee As-Sibaag, Ash-Sheikh Muhammad 'Eed 'Abbaasiyy amongst others.

of the books on the biography of the Sheikh.

In one of the visits to Ash-Sheikh Al-Ameen, he provided us with one of the most elaborate and most reliable works on the life history of Ash-Sheikh Al-Albâni, titled "*Hayaatu Al-Albâni wa Aathaaruhu wa Thanaau Ulamaa alaehee*" by Muhammad Ibrahim Ash-Shaybâniyy. This book was compiled by the author, himself a student of Ash-Sheikh Al-Albâni, in the lifetime of Ash-Sheikh and according to him, he read the book to Ash-Sheikh Al-Albâni in several sittings over a period of 2 years before the first edition was actually published in 1407 AH (1987 CE) about 13 years before the demise of Ash-Sheikh Al-Albâni – (May Allah's Mercy be upon him). The book is compiled in two volumes of about 950 pages.

It is necessary to mention that what we have presented is more of a reduced compilation of what we got talking about reference materials after we met Ash-Sheikh Al-Ameen Al-Haleel. This is more so bearing in mind the fact that Ash-Sheikh Al-Albâni had lived a very active life for over 70 years with each part of it worthy of mentioning.

Nevertheless, we tried to make sure to a large extent that what we present is representative of a life filled with search for knowledge and the teaching of it, the reawakening of the Sunnah and the defence of it, an exemplary life of complete servitude to Allâh in humility and devotion lived by Ash-Sheikh Al-Albâni.

While we do not in anyway claim infallibility, we pray Allâh ﷻ forgive us our mistakes, accept this work as an act of *Ibaadah* and make it beneficial to us

﴿يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ ۚ إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ﴾

"The Day where upon neither wealth nor sons will avail. Except him who brings to Allâh a clean heart (free from Shirk and Nifaaq)." (Ash-Shu'ara 26: 88-89)

Wa sallallaahu 'alaa Nabiyyinaa Muhammad wa aalihi wa Sahbihi wa sallam

**Abu Nâsir Ibrahim Abdur-Rauf
& Abu Maryam Muslim Ameen**

Safar 1427 H

Background and Endowments

His name:

He is Ash-Sheikh, Al Muhaddith^[1] Muhammad Nâsiruddin bin Nooh Najaati bin Aadam. His *Kunyah*^[2] is Abu Abdir-Rahmân after his eldest son and he was called Al Arnaootiyy^[3], Al

[1] *Usoolu ul Hadîth* pg 295 by Muhammad 'Ajaaj Al Khateeb

[2] The practice of putting the prefix of Abu (father) or Umm (mother) before a name to show respect and esteem for him. Bearing *Kunyah* was the practice of the Prophet (ﷺ), his Companions and our pious predecessors.

[3] After the name of their people - the people of Arnaoot. This was the name given to those who were emigrants of Syria at the time.

Ashkoderiyy^[1], Ad-Dimashqiyy^[2] and Al-Albâni.^[3]

His birth:

He was born in the year 1332AH (1914CE) in the Town of Ashkoderâ, which was the Capital City of Albania at the time. He lived in the town for about 9 years in a poor family.

A significant event:

Ash-Sheikh Al-Albâni's father was one of the scholars of his town^[4] and a jurist of the Hanafi *Madhhab*. Having graduated from the Institute of Shari'ah in Istanbul, Turkey he returned home to be the *Mufti* of Albania, teach his people the tenets of their faith and propagate the religion of Islam. He soon became a scholar of repute to whom people flocked for knowledge.

Soon the leadership of Albania was entrusted to Ahmad Zugu who began to imitate the ways of his Eastern European neighbors (who are non-Muslims)

[1] After his place of birth, Ashkoderâ.

[2] After his place of residence and learning, Damascus.

[3] After his Country of origin, Albania in Europe. These names denote relationship with a place (usually the place of birth or residence) or a vocation. There are countless numbers of our pious predecessors who are known only by their *Nisba* (pl. *ansaab*) such as Imâm Bukhârî whose name is Muhammad bn Ismail from the town of Bukhaara in Khuraasan, present day Uzbekistan.

[4] One of his students was the renowned Scholar of *Hadîth*, Ash-Sheikh Shu'aib Al Arnâoot *hafizahullaah*. Ash-Sheikh Shu'aib has a Verification and Commentary of Musnad Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal in 50 Volumes.

and started to follow in the footsteps of Turkish leader, Kemal Ataturk. He prohibited women from using the *Hijâb* (face veil) and mandated people to wear foreign styled attire. He even mandated that the *Adhân* (call to prayer) be changed from Arabic to the Albanian language!!

It was on this note that some families felt it necessary to migrate from Albania for the fear of losing their religion and the contamination of their children's religion.

Ash-Sheikh Al-Albâni's father was one of those parents. He decided to emigrate to Shaam due to its nobility as mentioned in the *Ahadeeth* of the Prophet ﷺ^[1]. Thus, he boarded with his family a ship to Beirut

[1] Shaam.. The ancient historic region of the world which witnessed the Prophethood and Messengership of many Prophets and Messengers of Allâh *Salawatullaahi wasalaamuhu 'Alaihim*. It consist of cities such as Halab, Hums, Damascus, Tarblus, Soor, Palestine, Asqalaan amongst others. (*Mu'jam ul Buldaan* Vol 3 pg 313 to 315 by Yaaqoot bin Abdullah Al Hamawiyy). The area is often described as the cradle of civilizations, since many of the greatest human achievements that later spread to encompass the world had their beginnings in ancient Shaam.

About 10,000 Companions of the Prophet ﷺ entered Shaam and a good number of them were buried there. It has therefore, been a major learning center throughout the history of Islam such that there was hardly any renowned scholar of Islam that did not learn or teach in the region. Today, the area includes Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine and Israel.

Abdullah bin 'Umar ؓ said "One day, the Prophet ﷺ said to us 'So, when the fitnah (trials and tribulations) appears, verily *Al Imaan* (faith) shall be in Shaam.' (*Takhreej Ahaadeeth Fadaail Shaam wa Dimashq*, Abul Hassan 'Ali bin Muhammad Ar-Rabi'i by Muhammad Naasiruddeen Al-Albâni pg 31)

and from there to Damascus.

This event (*Hijrah*) was later to be one of the two events that made Ash-Sheikh excel as it protected his religion, gave him the opportunity to learn from a number of eminent scholars who were many in Damascus as compared to Albania and also gave him the opportunity to benefit from the books of the Zahiriyyah Library,^[1] one of the largest and richest libraries of the Muslim World.

His looks:

Ash-Sheikh Al-Albâni has no physical blemish, being fair in complexion with redness and being a quaint with very broad shoulders. Possessive blue eyes, a huge frame, white tender beard, which he never left to exceed a fist length. Some times he would dye with *henna* and whenever he did so, he was extremely handsome.

He would frequently wear a short *jallaabiyah* (free flowing garment) and would usually wear a cap or a white-collar skullcap. Once in a while he would wear a

^[1] The history of the building, which dates from the late 5th-6th century after Hijrah, is as interesting as the holdings of the library itself. One of the largest and best preserved of the Damascene *madrasas*, Az-Zahiriyyah was named after Sultan Az-Zâhir Baybars, the first of the Mamluk Sultans.

Many Important Muslim scholars who studied and lived in Damascus such as Ash-Sheikh Al-Islam Ibn Taimiyyah, Ibn Katheer, Imam An-Nawawi, Hâfidh Ibn Salah, Hâfidh Al-Mizzi, Shamsudeen Adh-Dhahabi and many others had there library of books donated to the library. Thus, it is considered as exclusively the richest library of *Hadith* manuscripts in the world.

gatrah (sheet of clothing made to hang loosely over the head and shoulder) and whenever he did, he would use a white one and not a red one. Ash-Sheikh had a pair of spectacles for reading which he would wear most of the time when reading but not always.

He was a very vibrant person such that when he walked those with him would be exhausted due to his long slides. Sameer bin Ameen Az-Zuhairi said...

"I have seen him several times while ascending the stairs of the Salâhuddin Mosque^[1] and those of us with him could hardly keep pace with him"^[2]

"He looks awesome and magnificent such that I cannot remember ever having seen anyone as awesome and magnificent as he is"^[3]

His intellectual acumen:

Sameer bin Ameen Az-Zuhairi writes:

"As for his intellect, he was brilliant such that one would be amazed of his brilliance and memory. Ash-Sheikh would be teaching a class and then break for prayer or food and when he finished, and returned to his seat, he would start off again with the exact word he had paused on as though he never stood up."^[4]

^[1] This mosque is the center of the Salafiyyah Da'wah in Amman, Jordan. The Imâm of the mosque is Ash-Sheikh Muhammad bin Ibrahim Shaqrah *hafizahullaah*, one of the closest students to Ash-Sheikh Muhammad Nâsiruddîn Al-Albâni.

^[2] *Muhaddith ul-'Asr*, Muhammad Nâsiruddîn Al-Albâni, pg 10 by Sameer bin Ameen Az-Zuhairi

^[3] *Muhaddith-ul 'Asr* pg 11

^[4] *Ibid*