

Biography: Shaykh 'Abdul-Aziz Bin Baaz

Source: www.ibnbaz.org.sa

Shaykh 'Abdul-'Azeez bin 'Abdillaah bin 'Abdir-Rahmaan bin Muhammad bin 'Abdillaah bin Baaz, was the Grand Mufti, the highest ranking scholar in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and head of the Committee for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, the arbiter of all that is Islamically proper, correct, and permissible in Saudi Arabia. His decisions were unchallenged, and his retrogressive opinions were given great prominence in Saudi Arabia. The shaykh was known for his honesty, generosity, modesty and love for the poor, widows and orphans.

The shaykh was born in the city of Riyaadh, the capital of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on Dhul-Hijjah, 1330 A.H. His family was well-known for its interest in Islamic knowledge.

His Childhood & Youth

The shaykh's father died when he was young, therefore, it was a big responsibility on his mother to raise the shaykh. As a matter of fact, when asked about his childhood, the shaykh said, "my father died when I was three years old; and I only had my mother who took care of me and educated me encouraging me to learn more about Sharee'ah [Islamic Law]; she also died when I was twenty six."

In fact, his mother played an important role in bringing him up and later in directing him toward memorizing the Qur'aan, at the age of fourteen, and studying different Islamic books. Life was not easy for the shaykh; when he was thirteen or so, he had to work with his older brother, Muhammad, selling "Bishts", men's gowns, on the market.

Despite the fact that he helped a great deal in supporting his family, he had never forgotten to study Qur'aan, Hadeeth, Fiqh (Jurisprudence), and Tafseer. In 1346H, when the Shaykh was sixteen, he started losing his eyesight after being afflicted with a serious infection in his eyes. By the time he was twenty, he had totally lost his sight and become blind. Nonetheless, his thirst for knowledge was unquenchable; he dedicated his full time to studying Islamic books benefiting and learning from different Shaykhs.

His Education

At that time, there were no schools like today. However, the shaykh managed to gain a great deal of Islamic knowledge through his constant reading of Islamic literature as well as his accompaniment to different scholars and shaykhs from whom he learned and benefited a lot. Some of these shaykhs were:

1. Shaykh Muhammad bin Ibraaheem bin 'Abdul-Lateef Aalush-Shaykh. Ibn Baaz stayed with this shaykh for almost ten years. He was later chosen by his shaykh to be the judge of Al-Kharj.
2. Shaykh Muhammad bin 'Abdul-Lateef bin Hasan Aalush-Shaykh.
3. Shaykh Sa'ad bin Hammad bin 'Ateeq, the judge of Riyaadh city at that time.
4. Shaykh Hammad bin Faaris; Ibn Baaz benefited a lot from this shaykh in the field of Arabic grammar.
5. Shaykh Sa'd Wakhas al-Bukhaaree, one of Makkah's best scholars in Tajweed (mastery of reading the Holy Qur'aan).

Job Titles

The shaykh assumed a number of posts and responsibilities such as:

1. The judge of Kharj; upon the recommendation of Shaykh Muhammad bin 'Abdul-Lateef Aalush-Shaykh, Shaykh Bin Baaz was appointed as the judge of Al-Kharj from 1357 A.H. to 1371 A.H.
2. In 1371 A.H. and after spending fourteen years in Al-Kharj as a judge, he was transferred to Riyaadh where he became a teacher in the Riyaadh Institute of Science, he taught in the Faculty of Sharee'ah [Islamic Law] from 1373 A.H. to 1381 A.H.
3. In 1381 A.H. he was then appointed Vice President, and later President, of the Islamic University in Madeenah.
4. In 1395 A.H. a royal decree named him Chairman of the [Government] Department of Scientific Research and Iftaa' [guidance] with the rank of Minister.
5. In 1414 A.H. he was appointed Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Head of the Council of 'Ulamaa' (Senior Scholars). Over the years, he held a large number of positions as president or member of various Islamic councils and committees, and chaired a number of conferences both within the Kingdom and overseas, in addition to writing a great number of books in different fields and issuing a large body of fataawaa [religious decrees]. In 1402 H he was awarded the King Faisal International Prize for Service to Islaam.

His Achievements

Indeed the shaykh set an example to the Muslim youth wherever they may be; his main concern besides studying Sharee'ah was Da'wah both inside and outside the country. Shaykh Ibn Baaz also had undertaken a number of charitable organizations and activities such as:

1. His endless support for Da'wah organizations and Islamic centres all over the world.
2. The establishment and supervision of schools for teaching the Holy Qur'aan.
3. The foundation of an organization that facilitates marriage for Muslim youth.
4. The popular radio program, "Noourun 'Alaa ad-Darb" [light on the path], which hosting one of the shaykhs, discusses a lot of problems answering different questions by listeners as well as providing fatwa if needed.

His Books And Writings

Although Shaykh Ibn Baaz was busy with so many things in his life including his job as minister, he managed to write a good number of books on different issues. The number of books written by shaykh Ibn Baaz exceeds sixty and it is hard to name them all in here; however, the subject matter that he mainly wrote on was Hadeeth, Tafseer, Faraa'id, Tawheed, Fiqh and also a great deal of books on Salaah, Zakaah, Da'wah, Hajj and 'Umrah.

His Lectures And Lessons

Shaykh Ibn Baaz's life was full of lectures and sermons which he delivered in public or privately at his mosque. Like his books, his lectures and sermons were

so many but they revolved majorly around the situation of the Muslim world and around issues that concerned the Islamic Ummah [nation].

In addition, the Shaykh's time was devoted to the lessons he gave after the Fajr prayer, giving fataawaa during the day, meeting delegates from Muslim countries and sitting with the people after the Maghrib prayer to solve their problems and offer help as much as he could. He also used to invite people after 'Ishaa' prayer to have lunch with him.

His Death

On Thursday morning May 13, 1999 and at the age of ninety, shaykh Ibn Baaz died. The next day, following Friday prayer, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd bin 'Abdul-'Azeez, Crown Prince 'Abdullaah, Prince Sultaan, shaykhs, scholars and hundreds of thousands of people performed funeral prayers at the Holy Mosque in Makkah for late Shaykh 'Abdul-'Azeez bin 'Abdillaah bin Baaz (rahimahullaahu ta'aalaa).