

Al-Haafidh Zayn-ud-Deen Ibn Rajab Al-Hanbalee

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His Name, Kunyah, Nickname and Lineage:

He was the noble Imaam, the Haafidh, the Critic, Zayn-ud-Deen 'Abdur-Rahmaan bin Ahmad bin 'Abdir-Rahmaan bin al-Hasan bin Muhammad bin Abil-Barakaat Mas'ood As-Salaamee Al-Baghdaadee (due to his place of birth), Al-Hanbalee (due to his madh-hab), Ad-Dimashqee (due to his place of residence and death). His kunyah was Abul-Faraj, and his nickname was Ibn Rajab, which was the nickname of his grandfather who was born in that month (of Rajab).

His Birth and Upbringing:

He was born in Baghdad in 736H and was raised by a knowledgeable family, firmly rooted in knowledge, nobility and righteousness. His father played the greatest role in directing him towards the beneficial knowledge.

His Teachers:

He learned and took knowledge from the greatest scholars of the ummah during his time. In Damascus, he studied under Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Zayn-ud-Deen al-'Iraaqee, Ibn an-Naqeeb, Muhammad bin Isma'eel al-Khabaaz, Dawood bin Ibraaheem at-'Aaar, Ibn Qaadee al-Jabal and Ahmad bin 'Abdil-Haadee al-Hanbalee. In Makkah, he heard from al-Fakhr 'Uthmaan bin Yoosuf an-Nuwairee. While in Jerusalem, he heard from al-Haafidh al-'Alaa'ee. In Egypt, he heard from Sadr-ud-Deen Abul-Fath al-Maydoomee and Naasir-ud-Deen bin al-Mulook.

The Educational Positions he was appointed to:

Ibn Rajab devoted himself to knowledge and spent all his time in researching, writing, authoring, teaching, working in the field of knowledge and issuing legal rulings. He was given a teaching position in the Hanbalee School in 791H but then it was taken from him. During the lifetime of his father, he was appointed the *halaqah* (study circle) on Tuesday in the Central Mosque of Banu Umayyah. This was after the death of Ibn Qaadee al-Jabal, may Allaah have mercy on him, in 771H.

His Students:

Students of knowledge turned to Al-Haafidh Ibn Rajab (*rahimahullaah*) to learn under him, benefit from his knowledge and hear his narrations. This was since he was an Imaam in the Science of Hadeeth – both in reporting and investigating. The reason for this was because he spent such a large portion of his time engrossed in that subject that he wasn't known except through the Hadeeth. There was no one found that was more proficient in it (during his time) besides him.

From the most famous of his students were: (1) Abul-'Abbaas Ahmad bin Abee Bakr bin 'Alee al-Hanbalee, known as Ibn ar-Risaam [d. 884H], (2) Abul-Fadl Ahmad bin Nasr bin Ahmad, the Muftee of the lands of Egypt [d. 844H], (3) Dawood bin Sulaymaan al-Mawsilee [d. 844H], (4) 'Abdur-Rahmaan bin Ahmad

bin Muhammad al-Muqree, (5) Zayn-ud-Deen 'Abdur-Rahmaan bin Sulaymaan bin Abil-Karam, well known as Abu Shi'ar, (6) Abu Dharr az-Zarkashee [d. 846H], (7) the Judge 'Alaa-ud-Deen Ibn al-Lahaam al-Ba'alee [d. 803H], and (8) Ahmad bin Sayf-id-Deen al-Hamawee.

The Scholars' Praise for Him: ¹

Ibn Qaadee Shuhbah said of him in his biography, as is stated in *Al-Jawhar-ul-Munaddad* (pg. 48): "He read and became proficient in the various fields of science. He engrossed himself with the issues of the (Hanbalee) madh-hab until he mastered it. He devoted himself to the occupation of knowledge of the texts, defects and meanings of the Hadeeth. And he withdrew himself in seclusion in order to write."

Ibn Hajr said of him in *Inbaa-ul-Ghamr*: "He was highly proficient in the scientific disciplines of Hadeeth in terms of the names of reporters, their biographies, their paths of narration and awareness of their meanings."

Ibraaheem bin Muhammad Ibn Muflih said of him: "He was the Shaikh, the great scholar, the Haafidh, the one who abstained from the worldly life. He was the Shaikh of the Hanbalee *madh-hab* and he wrote many beneficial books."

His Creed:

Ibn Rajab (*rahimahullaah*) treaded the Manhaj of the Salaf with regard to the issues of Eemaan and acquiring knowledge. And he supported it and defended it from the false arguments of the opponents. His books are loaded with that. And he wrote some treatises specifically on this topic such as his book '*Bayaan Fadlu 'Ilm-is-Salaf 'alaal-Khalaf.*' However, there can be found traces of Sufism in his books, may Allaah protect him from inclining towards it's dangerous paths, due to what Allaah has given him from vast knowledge of the Narrations and a clear Salafee Methodology.

His Madh-hab with regard to the Subsidiary Issues:

In Fiqh, he (*rahimahullaah*) followed the madh-hab of the venerable Imaam, Ahmad bin Hanbal, may Allaah have mercy on him. He is counted as being one of the major scholars of the (Hanbalee) madh-hab, and of those who were highly proficient in it. What provides evidence for this is his book: "*Al-Qawaa'id al-Kubraa fil-Furoo'*" for this is one of his most prominent works on the subject of Fiqh, which shows his vast knowledge on the intricate details of Fiqh issues. This is such that Al-Haafidh Ibn Hajr said in his book Ad-Durar: "He did excellent work in it." And Ibn Qaadee Shuhba and Ibn Muflih said: "It indicates his complete knowledge of the (Hanbalee) *madh-hab*."

And in *Kashf-udh-Dhunoon* it states: "It is a book from the marvels of this time. And it is such that he sought to explain much in it. Some claim that he found the scattered principles of Shaikh-ul-Islaam Ibn Taimiyyah and gathered them together, but that is not the case. Rather, he, may Allaah have mercy on him, was above that. This is what was stated."

Al-Haafidh Ibn Rajab, may Allaah have mercy on him, was deeply attached to the works of Shaikh-ul-Islaam Ibn Taimiyyah, for he would issue legal rulings according to them and would constantly reference his books. This is since he served as a student under Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, the most outstanding

¹ **Translator's Note:** This section was added to the translation for additional benefit.

student of Shaikh-ul-Islaam Ibn Taimiyyah, may Allah have mercy on all of them. But in spite of this, he (*rahimahullaah*) wasn't a blind follower or a fanatical adherent (to his teacher). Rather, he would review, authenticate, verify and follow the evidences.

His Written Works:

Al-Haafidh Ibn Rajab, may Allaah have mercy on him, was considered one of the most able and famous scholars in his time at writing. Thus, he has numerous and beneficial works on the subjects of Tafseer, Hadeeth, Fiqh, History and Raqaa'iq (Heart-Softening Material). Amongst his books are:

On Tafseer and Qur'aanic Sciences:

1. Tafseer Surah al-Ikhlaas
2. Tafseer Surah al-Faatihah
3. Tafseer Surah an-Nasr
4. I'raab al-Basmalah
5. Al-Istighnaa bil-Qur'aan

On Hadeeth and Its Sciences:

1. Sharh Jaami' at-Tirmidhee
2. Sharh 'Ilal at-Tirmidhee
3. Fath-ul-Baaree bi-Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhaaree
4. Jaami'-ul-'Uloom wal-Hikam fee Sharh khamseena Hadeethan min Jawaami'-il-Kalim, which is the source for this book

He also has a collection of treatises in which he explains individual hadeeth, such as:

5. Sharh Hadeeth: Maa Dhi'baani Jaa'iaan ursilaa fee Ghanam...**[English: The Craving for Wealth and Status]**
 6. Ikhtiyaar al-Awlaa fee Sharh Hadeeth Ikhtisaam al-Mala al-A'ala
 7. Noor-ul-Iqtibaas fee Mishkaat Wasiyyat-in-Nabee Libn 'Abbaas
 8. Ghayaat-un-Nafa' fee Sharh Hadeeth Tamtheel-ul-Mu'min bi-Khaamat-iz-Zara'
 9. Kashf-ul-Kurbah fee Wasfi Haali Ahlil-Ghurbah **[English: Alleviating Grievances in Describing the Condition of the Strangers]**
- And many others.

On Fiqh:

1. Al-Istikhraaj fee Ahkaam-il-Kharaaj
2. Al-Qawaa'id-ul-Fiqhiyyah
3. Kitaab Ahkaam-ul-Khawaateem wa maa yata'alaqu bihaa

On Biographical and Historical Accounts:

1. Adh-Dhayl 'alaa Tabaqaat-il-Hanaabilah
2. Mukhtasar Seerah 'Umar bin 'Abdil-'Azeez
3. Seerah 'Abdul-Malik bin 'Umar bin 'Abdil-'Azeez

On Heart softening Material and Admonitions:

1. Lataa'if-ul-Ma'aarif feemaa Li-Mawaasim-il-'Aam min al-Wadhaa'if
2. At-Takhweef min an-Naar wat-Ta'reef bi-Haali Daar-il-Bawaar
3. Al-Farq bayna an-Naseehah wat-Ta'yeer **[English: The Difference between Advising and Condemning]**

4. Ahwaal Ahlil-Quboor

His Death:

Al-Haafidh Ibn Rajab, may Allaah have mercy on him, on a Monday night, the fourth of Ramadaan, 795H. He died while in Damascus in a land, which was called al-Humayriyyah, in a garden area he used to rent. His funeral prayer was performed the next day and he was buried in the Baab as-Sagheer graveyard next to Shaikh Abul-Faraj ash-Sheeraazee.