

**Shaykh, Dr Ziyād al-Abbādī**

**(hafīdhahullāh)**

# **THE BIOGRAPHY OF IMĀM IBN MULAQQIN<sup>1</sup>**

**(rahimahullāh)**

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Noble brothers and sisters, the Imām Ibn Mulaqqin his name is: 'Umar ibn 'Ali ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abdillāh, Sirājuddeen, Abū Hafs al-Ansārī al-Wādī-Āshī at-Takrūrī, or 'at-Takrūrī', this is how it is said, at-Takrūrī from the land of at-Takrūr (or at-Takrūr) and then al-Misrī ash-Shāfi'ī, well-known as "Ibn an-Nahwī" [the son of the grammarian]. He was given the *laqab* or *kunya* "Ibn an-Nahwī" because his father was a grammarian and was famed for his dexterity in grammar and as a result loved to be called "Ibn an-Nahwī". He did not meet his father as his father died before he was even a year old. As for the ascription "al-Wādī Āshī" then it is a *nisba* to Wādī Āsh. Who from you my brothers knows where this name comes from? Andalusia. Therefore, his origin is from where? Andalusia.

His father took him to Maghrib [Morocco] and in southern Maghrib is an area, in the far south of Maghrib,<sup>2</sup> a place known as the land of at-Takrūr or at-Takrūr.<sup>3</sup> Most of the people from this

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<sup>1</sup> Translation: 'AbdulHaq ibn Kofi ibn Kwesi al-Ashantī.

From the academic seminar held by *Jam'iyyat Markaz Imām al-Albānī* in Ammān, Jordan dated: 10<sup>th</sup> Sha'bān 1433 AH/30<sup>th</sup> June 2012 CE and it can be accessed here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQm71IxT-4E>

<sup>2</sup> [Translator's Note]: Here, Shaykh Ziyād is defining "al-Maghrib" in the classical sense of the word and including present-day Mauritania within the definition of "al-Maghrib". As we see in the footnote below, "Takrūr" is in present-day southern Mauritania/northern Senegal.

<sup>3</sup> [TN]: the area was actually known as "Takrūr" in Arabic and referred to the Senegal Valley and where the Senegalese and Mauritanian border is now located. It was an empire which flourished from 800-1285 CE and was a rival with the ancient Empire of Ghana. It embraced Islam in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century CE and may have sided with the Berber Almoravids (al-Murabitun) against the Ancient Kingdom of Ghana,

land are black, from the Zunūj,<sup>4</sup> and his father moved to that land and was also given the ascription to that land. Then his father moved to Egypt and settled there and the Imām [Ibn Mulaqqin] was born and raised there. Egypt was [at the time] the capital of knowledge after the fall of the Caliphate in Baghdad as 'ilm and the 'Ulama moved there from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> centuries AH. As a result, senior Imāms came from Egypt and Shām during those periods after what occurred in Baghdad from 600-650 AH when the Mongols ransacked Baghdad, did extraordinary things and destroyed the Caliphate of Bani 'Abbās [i.e. the Abbasids]. Thus, the sciences and the Caliphate transferred to Egypt and I would fluctuate between Egypt and Shām, at times in Shām and at other times in Egypt, it would spread between here and there, yet most of the time it would be in Egypt and the 'Ulama there were many and we will mention the names of the people of knowledge from there.

He was named "Ibn Mulaqqin" because his father died before he was a year old and prior to his death he left Shaykh 'Īsā al-Maghribī to raise him [as a step-son] and 'Īsā al-Maghribī used to teach and recite [laqqin] the Qur'ān in the Congregational Mosque of Tulūn in Egypt. 'Īsā al-Maghribī married Sirājuddeen's mother and he would be angry when people attached him to his step-father and he used to write as his name "Ibn an-Nahwī" as an ascription to his father because he was a grammarian. As his student, Imām as-Sakhāwī states, Ibn Mulaqqin was himself wrote himself that he was born on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> Rabī' al-Awwal 723 AH, just a few years before the death of Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah. Do you know O brothers that Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah died in which year? 728 AH. So Ibn Mulaqqin was born 5 years before the death of Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah and I do not think that he could have possibly met him as being five years of age is not enough but he did meet the students of Shaykh ul-Islām or those who were contemporaries of Shaykh ul-Islām and had long lives. We said O brothers that when his father died he was looked after by Shaykh 'Īsā al-Maghribī who gave him the utmost care and attention and had a major influence on Ibn Mulaqqin, and he used to recite and teach the Qur'ān in the Tuloon Congregational Mosque as we said. He was a righteous man and as he married his mother

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which was located in what is now South-Eastern Mauritania, Western Mali and Eastern Senegal. It thus appears that the term "Takrūr" became a generic term for West Africa. See Umar al-Naqar, "Takrur: the History of a Name", *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1969), pp. 365-374. For more on this in relation to Imām as-Suyūti see: M. Sartain, "Jalal al-Din as-Suyūti's Relations with the People of Takrur," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, vol.16, no.2 (1971), 193-198.

<sup>4</sup> [TN]: This term "Zanj" or "Zunūj" as utilised by Shaykh Ziyād is actually used classically to refer to sub-Saharan Africans from East Africa and not West Africans. The term 'Zanj' ['black skinned'] itself is originally Persian and not Arabic. However, in Shām "Zunūj" is currently applied generically to all sub-Saharan Africans yet this is incorrect as it classically applies to sub-Saharan East Africans and hence the Persian origin of the name of the land Zanzibar [i.e. 'Zanjibār', 'the coast of the blacks'].

his concern for him was greater. He invested his father's wealth and Ibn Mulaqqin memorised the Qur'ān, *al-'Umdah* by al-Maqdisee, *al-Minhāj* and other works [which he memorised]. Then he travelled to seek knowledge and this is the Sunnah of the 'Ulama, how can one become a scholar when he does not travel?! Except if his circumstances are the same as those of Imām Mālik as scholars travelled to him, so whoever is like Mālik has an excuse as he was in Madeenah of the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*). As for people from other lands then they are in need to travel. Travelling for knowledge my brothers begins at the age of about fourteen, fifteen, sixteen or seventeen after he takes knowledge from the people of his land and those areas surrounding his land. He travelled to Damascus, Makkah, Madeenah, Jerusalem and in the surrounding areas of Egypt and other areas and this supported him in hearing from many people of knowledge of that time such as al-Hāfidh al-Alā'ī (*rahimabullāh*), Ibn Sayyid an-Nās and Taqyuddeen as-Subkī, al-Maghlatā'ī, al-'Izz ibn Jamā'ah and al-Qutb al-Halabī, all of whom are famous names in knowledge. Al-Hāfidh al-Mizzī (*rahimabullāh*) gave him ijāzah, as did Jamāluddeen al-Asnawī, Abū Hayyān al-Ghranātī, Burhān ar-Rashīdī and many others. This studentship aided him in obtaining much in the way of knowledge, he was intelligent and had a strong memory and Allāh made it easy for him to author and write. Some people have strong memories yet lazy when it comes to writing, and with some people you could find possess an ability to author and write and of such people is the Imām Ibn Mulaqqin (*rahimabullāh*) who wrote in many different fields yet was distinguished in two areas: fiqh and hadeeth. He was strong in these two sciences and was also skilled in Arabic grammar, recitation, hadeeth, fiqh, Usūl and other fields, as a result he had various positions.

Of his students, and they are many, are al-Hāfidh, al-'Allāmah, Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī (*rahimabullāh*); the precise memoriser Ahmad ibn 'AbdurRahmān ibn Husayn, Abū Zur'ah al-'Irāqī; Imām al-Hāfidh Ibrāheem ibn Muhammad ibn Khaleel, Burhānuddeen at-Tārabulsī [also known as "as-Sibt ibn 'Ajami"]; al-Hāfidh Ahmad ibn Nasr, Nasrillāh at-Tustarī, and many others who took knowledge from him. The Imām's travels, seeking of knowledge and the large number of Shaykhs he had and large amount of students, was a reason for which this Imām was praised. Let's look at what al-Hāfidh al-Alā'ī stated about him: "the Shaykh, the jurist, the Imām, the scholar, the Muhaddith, the Hāfidh", how many descriptions? Imām al-Alā'ī is a senior Imām himself and the statement from a senior is major. Imām al-Alā'ī said:

**"...the Shaykh, the jurist, the Imām, the scholar, the Muhaddith, the Hāfidh, Sirājudeen, Sharaf ul-Fuqahā, Fakhr ul-Fudalā'"**

Eight descriptions for his Imām, Ibn Mulaqqin (*rahimabullāh*). Imām al-'Irāqī says, but first Imām al-'Irāqī is from where? Al-Hāfidh al-'Irāqī, where is he from? Who knows? A senior Imām and you do not know him?! We have present with us now 'Irāqī brothers. Yes, he is Misrī [Egyptian].

He is an Egyptian. He was born in Egypt, lived in Egypt and died in Egypt! So why was he named “al-’Irāqī”? It is like here [in Jordan] there are families with the name “al-Misrī”, are there not in Jordan families with the name “al-Misrī”? The fifth or sixth ancestor could have been from Egypt. So yes an Imām could originally be from Iraq, yes. However, some people get confused due to the naming so for example when we say “al-Hāfidh Ibn Hajar al-’Asqalānī”, where was he from? [some brothers in the audience say: “Asqalān”]. This is an error, he never saw ’Asqalān which was a city next to Gaza, his past origins are from ’Asqalān yet he was born in Egypt, lived in Egypt and died in Egypt! So at times some names can delude people into thinking that these Imāms were actually present [in the lands which they are ascribed to and thus named after]. For example, Imām al-Maqdisī, al-Jamā’ī, his origin is from al-Jamā’īl which is a place in Palestine next to Nāblus. In reality his origins are from there but as for him then he was born in Damascus, lived in Damascus and died in Damascus! An Imām could apparently be ascribed to a land yet that is in regards to his roots, this is even this case with Ibn Mulaqqin who is known as “al-Wādī’Ashī” and he never saw Andalusia even though his origins are from Andalusia. He is also known as “at-Takrūrī” though he never saw Takrūr, he was born in Egypt. His father was the one who lived and resided in these places and was thus ascribed to these places so as a result Ibn Mulaqqin himself was ascribed to those lands.<sup>5</sup> Hāfidh al-’Irāqī states:

**“ash-Shaykh, al-Imām, al-Hāfidh, Ibn Fahd al-Makkī says: ‘al-Imām, al-’Allāmah, al-Hāfidh, Shaykh ul-Islām, Alam ul-A’immah al-A’lām, Umdat ul-Muhadditheen and the Qudwat ul-Musannifeen”.**

Whoever looks at the book *at-Tawdeeh fī Sharh al-Jāmi’ as-Saheeh*, how many volumes is it? *At-Tawdeeh* which is an explanation of Saheeh al-Bukhārī by Ibn Mulaqqin, how many volumes is it? 36 volumes! Sibṭ ibn ul-’Ajāmī stated:

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<sup>5</sup> [TN]: This is an important point highlighted by Shaykh Ziyād and it also rebuts the *ad nauseum* quips which are made by some of those in the Arab lands when they meet British, American, Canadian or other Western Muslims who are originally from parts of Africa and Asia. In some cases, Western Muslims [of African and Asian origins] are faced with complete and utter intellectual denial that they are even from the West and carry the nationalities for which they possess passports, or odd attempts to ascribe the Western Muslim [of African or Asian origin] directly to the land of origin. The way of Ahl ul-Hadeeth however is to ascribe not only to land of origin but also to affirm the land of residence, birth and upbringing. Hence, some students of Imām al-Albānī ascribed him as being “al-Urdunī” [‘the Jordanian’] in their biographies of him. *Additional edits to footnote – Ed.*

“The Huffādh of Egypt are four people,<sup>6</sup> they are all from my Mashāyikh<sup>7</sup>: al-Bulqīnī,<sup>8</sup> who memorised the most in regards to the hadeeth related to Ahkām; al-’Irāqī, who is the most knowledgeable of them in regards to the craft [of the science of hadeeth]; Imām al-Haythamī, Nūruddeen, who is the most knowledgeable of them in regards to memorising texts and Ibn Mulaqqin, who has the most benefits in writing and commenting upon hadeeth...”

As-Suyūṭī (*rahimahullāh*) stated when describing Ibn Mulaqqin:

“The Imām, the faqeeh, author of a many of classifications, one of the Shāfi’ī scholars and Imāms of hadeeth. He excelled in fiqh and hadeeth and classified and authored a great deal in those topics.”

How beautiful it is for a person to be included as having speciality and skill in more than one field! We see, especially during these times we live, that many of those who study in universities and traverse a [Western] academic path become skilled in one field and know nothing about anything else except for little bits here and there. As a result my brothers, and memorise this in your minds, of the most dangerous errors which a student of knowledge can do in the beginning stages of seeking knowledge is to be specialise in one field from the beginning. The basis of a student of knowledge is that he reads about all fields and looks at all sciences, a general and comprehensive reading. After that, whatever field his soul finds comfort with [he proceeds with]. Meaning: he studies fiqh, sīrah, tafseer, hadeeth, the sciences of the Qur’ān and so forth, he reads all fields. Then after that he himself could incline to one field as opposed to another and then specialise and become entrenched in that. He becomes specialise in that field yet still possesses general knowledge in the other sciences. So if he is asked a question about an issue (not too detailed) outside of his specialisation he can answer it, this is what is befitting for a student of knowledge, to look at various sciences. Especially at the beginning of seeking knowledge and reading here and there, as for specialising in a field from the first year of seeking knowledge then after that not possessing anything outside of the specialisation, here is the calamity.

Ibn ash-Shahrah (*rahimahullāh*) stated in his description of Ibn Mulaqqin: “**The Shaykh, the Imām, the Ālim, al-’Allāmah, Umdat ul-Musannifeen...**” These are some statements which

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<sup>6</sup> Why was Egypt during this time distinguished by knowledge? We mentioned this prior, after the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate knowledge transferred to another capital and knowledge spread there and knowledge moved between Shām and Egypt.

<sup>7</sup> Of course, this is his own view.

<sup>8</sup> The Shaykh of Imām Ibn Hajar and if Imām Ibn Hajar within *al-Fath ul-Bārī* says “Shaykh ul-Islām says”, who does he intend? Al-Bulqīnī.

are mentioned in regards to Ibn Mulaqqin, may Allāh have mercy on him. Ibn Mulaqqin became occupied with classifying works from an early age while he was still a youth and he wrote much to the extent that he had the most efforts in authoring. The Qādī, Muhammad ibn 'AbdurRahmān al-'Uthmānī stated about Ibn Mulaqqin:

**“One of the Mashāyikh of Islām, and author of classifications which have not been opened up to anyone else during these times.”**

Imām as-Sakhāwī (*rahimahullāh*) stated:

**“His works became famous across the horizons and it was said that these reached three hundred classifications.”**

How much? Three hundred works! Today if one of us writes a few papers one could remain for a month and still not adequately perfect his understanding of them, as-Sakhāwī continues:

**“The people occupied themselves with these works [of Ibn Mulaqqin] and people benefitted from them immensely during his time.”**

Of Ibn Mulaqqin's works are:

- ❖ *Umdat ul-Muhtāj ilā Kitāb il-Minhāj* – meaning *Minhāj ut-Tālibeen* by an-Nawawī
- ❖ *Khulāsāt ul-Fatāwā fī Tas-beel Asrār al-Hāwī* – meaning *al-Hāwī Sagbeer* in Shāfi'ī fiqh by al-Qazwīnī
- ❖ *Al-Badr ul-Muneer fī Takhreej ul-Abādeeth fī Sharh il-Kabeer* (by Imām ar-Rāfi)
- ❖ *Al-Muqni' fī 'Ulūm il-Hadeeth*

A question to you brothers: from all of the four Madhhabs, scholars from which Madhhab served hadeeth the most? The Shāfi'ī scholars of hadeeth definitely! At the head of those who served hadeeth was al-Bayhaqī firstly, then came an-Nawawī, then came Ibn Mulaqqin, then Ibn Jamā'ah, then Ibn Hajar, as-Suyūtī, as-Sakhāwī and adh-Dhahabī, however adh-Dhahabī his inclination was more to the hadeeth than it was to a fiqh [Madhhab], Ibn Katheer and many others. The Madhhab which has the most fiqh of hadeeth is the Madhhab of Abū Haneefah. At-Tahāwī firstly and then az-Zayla'ī secondly, there were others but the most prominent were these two who served the Madhhab in regards to hadeeth. Also, scholars from the Madhhab of Imām Ahmad served hadeeth greatly yet not like the service of the scholars affiliated to the Madhhab of Imām ash-Shāfi'ī.

He was tested, and we know that this worldly life is an abode of trials, at the end of his life by Allāh decreeing that his library was burnt in a fire. It was a precious library which had few comparisons, imagine a library like this which contained your Usūl and what you heard and relayed from your Shaykhs, this is more severe than losing a child. When his library burned down he started to become confused, he became ill and lost his memorisation, may Allāh have mercy on

him. His son then stopped him from relaying hadeeth, Ibn Mulaqqin only had one son named 'Ali and 'Ali later had a son and two daughters, one called Khadeejah. His son stopped him from relaying hadeeth after this event because he became confused and perplexed at how his library burned down all of a sudden **“how, when it was so valuable to my heart, and it was burned and it contained Usūl, Samā'āt and Shurūh”**, in reality it was a calamity for him. As a result, he became very ill and lost his memorisation, yet it he did not lose his memorisation due to depending on his library however it was due to the severe pain at the loss of this large library. However, this was what Allāh decreed and there is no power or movement except by Allāh.

He died in 16 Rabī' al-Awwal 804 AH/Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> October 1401 CE. This was a brief summary and whoever wants further details about his biography should refer to the introduction in the first volume of *at-Tawdeeh fī Sharh al-Jāmi' as-Sabeeh* as there is a vast biography of Ibn Mulaqqin, may Allāh have mercy on him, and the words which can be said about to him are lengthy.