

Autobiography of Shaykh Bilāl ibn ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Sālimī

Translator’s Introduction

Shaykh Bilāl al-Sālimī is among the scholars of ḥadīth in Egypt. He was highly praised by the great scholar al-‘Allāmah Ḥasan ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab Marzūq al-Bannā (رحمه الله), who explicitly referred to him as “*from the scholars of ḥadīth in Egypt*,” and on another occasion said to him directly: “*You are the ḥadīth scholar (muḥaddith) of Egypt*.” He would also advise students and seekers of knowledge, saying: “*Go to the ḥadīth scholar in Alexandria*,” directing them to Shaykh Bilāl al-Sālimī.

He began his autobiographical statement with the Khutbah al-Ḥājah and then said:

“Indeed, a group of my brothers and students sought an introduction to my person, my shaykhs, and my pursuit of knowledge. I answered their request and approved their desire, especially since this is a matter of religion, as Ibn Sīrīn (رحمه الله) said:

إِنَّ هَذَا الْعِلْمَ دِينٌ فَانْظُرُوا عَمَّنْ تَأْخُذُونَ دِينَكُمْ

‘Indeed, this knowledge is religion, so look carefully at whom you take your religion from.’

And likewise the Imām of Dār al-Hijrah, Mālik ibn Anas (رحمه الله), said:

إِنَّ هَذَا الْعِلْمَ هُوَ لَحْمُكَ وَدَمُكَ، وَعَنْهُ تَسْأَلُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، فَانْظُرْ عَمَّنْ تَأْخُذُ

‘Indeed, this knowledge is your flesh and blood, and you will be questioned about it on the Day of Resurrection, so look carefully at whom you take it from.’

So I say—and with Allāh is all success:

My lineage: I am Abū al-‘Abbās Bilāl ibn ‘Abd al-Ghanī ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd ibn ‘Aṭīyyah ibn Ibrāhīm Abū Hilāl al-Hilālī al-Sālimī, then al-Iskandarī.

I was born on 21/7/1970 CE, and I was raised in my father’s home (رحمه الله) located in the village of al-Sālimiyyah, in the care of my great mother and my siblings, after my father passed away while I was ten years old. His death was a tremendous trial, but Allāh (جل وعلا) may compensate His servant by placing in his heart strength, patience, and endurance in the face of the hardships of living—and that indeed occurred—until these trials refined my heart, and I became more resilient and firmer in resolve in all affairs of my life. So to Allāh belongs all praise and bounty; from trials come gifts.

Upbringing in Knowledge

I set out upon the path of guidance and adhered to the Sunnah before reaching the age of twenty. Then I began frequenting gatherings of knowledge in the year 1990 CE, specifically. At that time, the majority of those claiming to be Salafī callers were not known, except for al-Ḥuwaynī, al-‘Adawī, al-Qūṣī, Ibn Abī al-‘Aynayn, and others. I sat with all of them: some I accompanied for several years, some for a year, some for months, and some for several sittings.

Then I traveled for ‘umrah in 1997 CE, and my greatest wish was to meet the scholars, especially the great Imām Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-

‘Uthaymīn, whom I knew and studied under through his valuable explanations, by way of his beneficial recordings and his engaging style.

And it was from Allāh’s granting of success to me that, after staying as a guest with one of my Egyptian friends residing in the city of Jeddah, while I was still in iḥrām—on the very first day—I went to pray Maghrib at Maṣjid al-Amīrah Ḥaṣṣah in the al-Jāmi‘ah district.

After finishing the prayer and while leaving the maṣjid, I found an announcement stating that Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymīn had a lecture after Maghrib at Maṣjid al-Amīr Mit‘ab in the al-Thaghr district. So I insisted on going, despite the exhaustion of travel. Indeed, my friend and I went and were able to attend the lecture, which was titled ‘The Virtue of Knowledge and Its Impact on the Individual and Society.’ I shook the Shaykh’s hand despite the severe crowding around him, and I was keen to attend his gatherings in the Ḥaram during that period.

From that moment, the idea of traveling to the Kingdom (of Saudi Arabia) surged upon me strongly. I then remained for three years with Shaykh Muṣṭafā al-‘Adawī—Allāh guide him (هداه الله). During that time, one of my fellow students was acquainted with Shaykh Rabī‘ al-Madkhalī (رحمه الله) though he concealed this so as not to be expelled.

By Allah’s granting of success to me, we exchanged discussion regarding Shaykh Muṣṭafā’s violations and excesses against Imām al-Albānī (رحمه الله) until the discussion led this brother to speak to me about al-‘Allāmah Rabī‘ (رحمه الله) and about the manhaj. He clarified for me how al-‘Adawī had concealed from us the manhaj and the scholars of the manhaj during that period, and he explained the ḥizbiyyah (partisanship) that enveloped all the shaykhs of Egypt, except those whom Allāh had mercy upon.

His words fell deeply into my heart. Allāh reward him with good on my behalf. I then resolved to travel again to the Kingdom. I tried many times until Allah permitted it, and I traveled in the year 2000 CE for a second ‘umrah. During it, I met Shaykh Rabī‘ ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī (رحمه الله) and grant the Muslims benefit through his life. Never had I been happier meeting a shaykh than I was in meeting this great scholar, for I saw a scholar in the truest sense: firm, courageous, and resolute upon the truth in a manner unmatched by anyone of his era, yet possessing gentleness, mercy, and compassion toward his students that astonish and delight the heart—what a loss for the people of desires.

I sat with him in several gatherings during that journey. When the time of my departure came, I sought advice from him. So he advised me—after emphasizing taqwā of Allāh—to remain firm upon the Salafī manhaj, to leave those shaykhs—al-Ḥuwaynī and al-‘Adawī and those wavering like them—and to adhere closely to the Salafī shaykhs in Egypt.

He directed me (at that time) to Usāmah al-Qūṣī (هداه الله) and Maḥmūd Luṭfī ‘Āmir (هداه الله). Indeed, I went to them and met each of them once, but their methods did not appeal to me, as they lacked a structured methodology in teaching that firmly grounds a student of knowledge. So I did not return to them again, and all praise is due to Allāh for His granting of success.

At that time, what occupied my mind was how to obtain a work visa and travel with it to the Kingdom, on the condition that it be close to al-Qasīm, so that I could seek knowledge at the hands of our Shaykh, the Imām, the ‘Allāmah Ibn ‘Uthaymīn. By the favor of Allāh, I was granted success in that, but it occurred in July 2001 CE, that is, a few months after the death of our Shaykh, the Imām—alas.

All praise is due to Allāh, who granted me success to reside in the Kingdom—the land of tawhīd; Allāh guard it and protect it from every harm and evil. Through this blessing—the blessing of residing in this land—I was able to study in many places, including:

1. Four years in the Grand Mosque of ‘Unayzah with students of Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymīn, including Dr. Sāmī al-Ṣuqayr, whom our Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymīn (رحمه الله) appointed to lead the Grand Mosque; he is his son-in-law and is now a member of the Council of Senior Scholars; and Dr. Khālīd al-Muṣliḥ, who is married to his other daughter; and Dr. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dahsh. All three were appointed by the Shaykh (رحمه الله) to teach in the Grand Mosque.

I also met Shaykh ‘Abdullāh al-Fālīḥ (رحمه الله). He was ascetic and highly skilled in the Arabic language, and he was among the remaining students of al-‘Allāmah Ibn Sa‘dī (رحمه الله). Out of mercy for him, I did not read anything to him, as he was very advanced in age—and he would forget often—Allāh have vast mercy upon him.

2. At Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Makkiyyah, with a select group of senior Salafī shaykhs, foremost among them the ‘Allāmah and great Muḥaddith Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī Ādam al-Itaybī (رحمه الله).

3. At Imām Muḥammad ibn Sa‘ūd Islamic University, Bachelor’s degree in Sharī‘ah (College of Sharī‘ah).

4. I also met scholars from among the best scholars on earth—whose mention will come. And Allāh indeed bestowed His favor upon me by granting me study under some of them for many long years, with others for a year, with others for months, and with others in scattered gatherings.

5. And Allāh also bestowed His favor upon me by granting me to read to major scholars, such as:

- Our Shaykh, the ‘Allāmah Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā al-Najmī (رحمه الله). I read to him the beginnings of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, and I heard the beginnings of the remaining four Sunan, and he granted me ijāzah therein. Some of his books were read to him in my presence while I listened, and he granted me a general ijāzah in all his narrations, as recorded in his thabat (a scholar’s written record of his chains of transmission and ijāzāt), al-La’ālī’ al-Durriyyah fī Jam‘ al-Asānīd al-Najmiyyah.
- Likewise, I read Nukhbat al-Fikar and its explanation to our Shaykh, the ‘Allāmah Yaḥyā ibn ‘Uthmān al-‘Aẓīmābādī (رحمه الله), and he granted me a specific ijāzah therein. I frequently attended his flourishing sittings in explanation of Kitāb al-Tawḥīd by Shaykh al-Islām Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Waḥḥāb (رحمه الله), as well as al-‘Aqīdah al-Wāsiṭiyyah, the two Ṣaḥīḥs, the explanation of Sunan al-Tirmidhī, and the explanation of al-Nuzḥah, among other works, in the Maṣjid al-Ḥarām. He then granted me a general ijāzah in all his narrations, as recorded in his thabat, al-Najm al-Bādī fī Tarjamat al-‘Allāmah al-Muḥaddith al-Salafī Yaḥyā ibn ‘Uthmān al-Mudarris al-‘Aẓīmābādī.
- I listened to and attended the gatherings of our Shaykh, the ‘Allāmah Muḥammad ‘Alī Ādam al-Itayūbī (رحمه الله) for more than a year and seven months at Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Makkiyyah and at Maṣjid al-Abrār in al-Nakāsah in Makkah al-Mukarramah—Allāh increase it in honor—such as the gatherings of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Alfīyyat al-Suyūṭī, Sunan al-Nasā’ī, and Sunan Ibn Mājah. And he (رحمه الله) granted me a general ijāzah therein and in all his narrations, as recorded in his thabat, Mawāhib al-Samad li-‘Abdihi Muḥammad.
- I read to our Shaykh, the virtuous Dr. Yaḥyā ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Shahrī (حفظه الله) from Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī for nearly a year, and he granted me a specific ijāzah therein. I also read to him al-Arba‘ūn al-‘Ajlūniyyah in

two sittings at Masjid Dhī al-Nūrayn in the Ḥisām district of the city of Khamīs Mushayṭ in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and he granted me a specific ijāzah therein; then he granted me a general ijāzah in all his narrations.

- I read to our Shaykh, the ‘Allāmah Muḥammad Amīn al-Hararī (رحمه الله) the beginnings of the six books in his flourishing home in Makkah al-Mukarramah, and he granted me a specific ijāzah therein. I attended his lessons in tafsīr at Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Makkiyyah for more than a year and a half, and he granted me a general ijāzah in all his narrations, as recorded in his thabat, Jam‘ al-Asānīd wa Muḥaffar al-Maqāṣīd min Asānīd Kull al-Funūn.

- And there are other ijāzāt which I have recorded in my thabat, Ithāf al-Rijāl al-Nujub bi-Asānīd al-Ajzā’ wa al-Kutub.

My Shaykhs

They exceed two hundred shaykhs, but I will mention among them the eminent ones who had an impact upon me in my path in seeking knowledge:

- Our Shaykh, the ‘Allāmah, the Imām Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-‘Uthaymīn (رحمه الله).
- Our Shaykh, the ‘Allāmah Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā al-Najmī (رحمه الله).
- Our Shaykh, the ‘Allāmah Zayd ibn Muḥammad al-Madkhalī (رحمه الله).
- Our Shaykh, the ‘Allāmah Ṣāliḥ ibn Fawzān al-Fawzān (رحمه الله).
- Our Shaykh, the ‘Allāmah Ṣāliḥ ibn Muḥammad al-Luḥaydān (رحمه الله).
- Our Shaykh, the ‘Allāmah Rabī‘ ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī (رحمه الله).
- Our Shaykh, the ‘Allāmah ‘Ubayd ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Jābirī (رحمه الله).
- Our Shaykh, the ‘Allāmah ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ghudayyān (رحمه الله).
- Our Shaykh, the ‘Allāmah Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bannā (رحمه الله).

And many others—this is from the favor of Allāh upon me. Allāh have mercy upon those of them who have passed away and preserve the living.

My Authored Works

- al-Ḥāfil fī Fiqh al-Nawāfil (the first volume has been published).
- Khazā' in al-Asrār fī Adhkār al-‘Ashī wa al-Ibkār (printed several times).
- Abra' ilā Allāh min al-Jāmiyyah wa al-Madkhaliyyah. It is a refutation of those who defame Ahl al-Sunnah with labels of partisanship in order to repel people from them and from their manhaj—the manhaj of truth (printed multiple times).
- al-Zahr al-Maṭlūl fī al-Khabar al-Ma‘lūl (unpublished; four volumes completed).
- Bahjat al-Akhyār fī Alfiyyat al-Aḥādīth al-Qiṣār (one volume, currently under print, to be released soon, in shā' Allāh).
- al-Fawā'id wa al-Farā'id (one volume, unpublished).
- Alfiyyat al-Uṣūl (a concise treatise in the style of a matn).
- Majma' al-Baḥrayn wa Multaqā al-‘Aqdayn fī Ḥifẓ al-Alfiyyatayn (two volumes, question-and-answer format).
- Nafḥ al-Arīj fī Uṣūl fann al-Takhrīj (one volume, unpublished).
- al-Tawṭīd fī Uṣūl Dirāsāt al-Asānīd (one volume, unpublished).
- Riyy al-Ghulal fī Uṣūl Dirāsāt al-‘Ilal (one volume, unpublished).
- al-Mu‘tarak al-Salmī fī Uṣūl Dirāsāt al-Baḥth al-‘Ilmī (one volume, unpublished).
- al-Bayyināt fī Uṣūl Taḥqīq al-Makhtūṭāt (one volume, unpublished).
- Imtā' al-‘Uqūl bi-Riyāḍat Taṭbīq al-Uṣūl (one volume, unpublished).
- Irshād al-‘Uqalā' ilā Ḥukm Ityān Adbār al-Nisā' (one volume, unpublished).
- Aḥkām al-‘Aqīqah (one volume, unpublished).
- Ḥukm Ṣalāt al-Rak‘atayn ba‘da Ṣalāt al-‘Aṣr (a treatise, unpublished).

- al-Rājih fī Mas'alat Ḥukm 'Amal al-Jawāriḥ (a treatise, unpublished).
- Ḥukm Ṣiyām al-Dahr (a treatise, unpublished).
- al-Rāyah al-Manṣūbah li-man Kāna fī Nāfilah wa Uqīmat 'Alayhi al-Maktūbah (a treatise, unpublished).
- 'Abīr al-Basātīn min Kalām Salafinā al-Ṣāliḥīn (a treatise, unpublished).
- 'Unwān al-Sa'adah fī al-Ḥirṣ 'alā al-'Ibādah (one volume, unpublished).
- Fiqh Badhl al-Naṣīḥah (one volume, unpublished).
- al-Durar al-Marjāniyyah fī Naḥī Wafāt al-Ṣaḥābī al-Jalīl 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Jaḥsh (رضي الله عنه) 'alā al-Naṣrāniyyah (a treatise, unpublished).
- al-Taḥqīq al-Mu'rib 'an Ḥadīth al-Tahlīl 'Ashran ba'da Ṣalāt al-Fajr wa al-Maghrib (a treatise, unpublished).
- Ithāf al-Zumrah bi-Baḥth Ḥadīth: 'Man Makatha fī al-Masjid ba'da Ṣalāt al-Fajr...' (a treatise, unpublished).
- Nuzul al-Abrār fī al-Silsilah al-Ṣaḥīḥah wa al-Ḍa'īfah min al-Āthār (two volumes completed).
- al-Ḥilm fī Naṣḥ Ṭālib al-'Ilm (a treatise, unpublished).
- Kabh al-A'ādī bi-Bayān I'tiqādī (a treatise, unpublished).

And others.

Secondly: Shurūḥ (Commentaries)

- al-Ḥawī fī Ḥall Masā'il Tadrīb al-Rāwī (two volumes; not yet completed).
- al-Tabyīn fī Taqrīb Alfīyyat al-Ḥāfiẓ Jalāl al-Dīn (two volumes; not yet completed).
- Nasīm al-Saḥar fī Sharḥ Nukhbat al-Fikar (two volumes, under print).
- Qalā'id al-Durar Sharḥ Nukhbat al-Fikar (question-and-answer format; one volume, under print).

- Bayt al-Qaṣīd fī Ḥall Masā'il Kitāb al-Tawḥīd (two volumes; not yet completed).
- Nūr al-Qamarayn Sharḥ Kitāb Bayna al-Imāmayn (by our Shaykh Rabī' (رحمه الله)) (two volumes; not yet completed).
- Munqidh al-'Abīd Sharḥ Kitāb al-Tawḥīd by Ibn Khuzaymah (رحمه الله) (four volumes; not yet completed).
- al-Ḍiyā' al-Lāmi' Sharḥ Kitāb al-Jāmi' li-Akhlāq al-Rāwī wa Ādāb al-Sāmi' (two volumes; not yet completed).

And others.

Thirdly: Taḥqīqāt (Scholarly Verifications)

- Taḥqīq of Sharḥ al-Arba'in al-Nawawiyyah by al-Nawawī (published by Dār al-Ḍiyā' in Ṭanṭā).
- Taḥqīq of al-Mukhtārah by al-Ḍiyā' al-Maqdisī (nine volumes completed).
- Taḥqīq of al-Mughnī by Ibn Qudāmah, which I titled al-Mudnī fī Taqrīb al-Mughnī, in the style of al-Irwā' by Imām al-Albānī (رحمه الله), I have completed ten volumes, and it will—in shā' Allāh—be released in thirty volumes.
- Taḥqīq of several seminars by some contemporary Salafī shaykhs (published by Dār Sabīl al-Mu'minīn).

And others.

This, then—and I ask Allāh for steadfastness and success until I meet Him. Allāh send prayers and salutations upon Your servant and Messenger Muḥammad, and upon his family and his Companions, and grant him abundant peace. And all praise is due to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds.”

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<https://almdrasaalnabawiyya.org/السيرة-الذاتية-للشيخ-بلال-السالمي/>