

THE MARTYR SCHOLAR: IMAM MUHAMMAD SAEED RAMADAN AL-BOUTI

He was born in 1929AD - 1347AH in *Cilka* (Jeilka), a village located on the Shore of Tigris River, in the meeting point of the Syrian, Iraqi and Turkish borderlines, and a part of Ibn-Umar Region (known as Cizîra-Botan [Boutan Island], or Cizre) in Turkey.

His father is the known scholar Mulla Ramadan Al-Bouti -may Allah's mercy be upon his soul- who had migrated to Damascus after the Islam-opposing procedures imposed by Ataturk.

He was enrolled in a primary school in Sarouja district, though his education and knowledge were not limited to school efforts only, since his father had the most remarkable role as his tutor. Regarding that phase of his life, Sheikh Al-Bouti narrates:

"Afterwards my father was my one and only tutor, he started by teaching me the principles of Islamic Aqeedah (creed), then a brief summary of Prophet Muhammad's biography -may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him- through a small volume called Thakheerat Al-Labeeb Fi Seerat Al-Habib (The Supply Of The Wise For The Biography Of The Beloved). After that he started teaching me the basics of Uloom Al-Aalah (Supplementary Sciences) from Arabic syntax and grammar to Arabic conjugation, and he set me on the path of memorizing Alfiyyat Ibn-Malek (The -Thousand-Verse- Poem of Ibn-Malek) by explaining 5-6 verses I had to memorize later each day by heart. And I remember having completed the whole poem in less than a year although I haven't reached maturity age yet. In the same period he'd taught me Al-

Amreeti's 1200-Verse; Nazm Al-Ghaya Wa Al-Taqreeb (The Versification of The Aim and Facilitation) in Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence)."

His mother passed away at the time he was thirteen years of age, therefore, his father remarried a woman from a virtuous Turkish family, which became a reason Sheikh Al-Bouti learned Turkish, in addition to his well-established Kurdish and Arabic languages.

After passing primary education in school, he enrolled in *Manjak Mosque* as a student of Sheikh Hasan Habannaka Al-Maydani. Sheikh Al-Bouti narrates about that period:

"One day, my father came to me -before enrolling me as the youngest student of the Sheikhs and mentors of The Institute of Islamic Guidance [the name later given to Manjak Mosque]- and started advising me and sharing the hopes he had for me, and among what he said then was: [Know my son; that had I known the path leading to Allah to be through cleaning dirt from the roads, I would have made a dustman out of you, but I looked and discovered that the path to Allah is through the knowledge of Him and His Deen (religion), and that is why I have decided to put you through this path.] Then he greatly stressed and emphasized upon me; not to make any job or certificate a goal out of that knowledge. Days later, he accompanied me to Sheikh Hasan Habannaka -may Allah's mercy be upon him, entrusting him with me in his institute and he went back to his own affairs."

"I left the house to become a boarding student in The Institute of Islamic Guidance since that day.

I used to visit the house to see my father on Tuesdays during daytimes only, before taking his permission back to Manjak."

“I used to participate alongside the old students in the lessons instructed by the scholars without understanding much, but I realized later how fruitful my attendance was. I also used to receive more lessons from my father on Tuesday visits; in Arabic syntax, grammar and rhetoric, he helped me memorize Al-Suyuti’s Uqoud Al-Juman (The Collars of Silver by Jalal Al-Deen Al-Suyuti) and taught me books in Mantiq (Logic) and Aristotle’s 10 Categories, alongside teaching me explanations to Jam’ Al-Jawami’ (The Grand Collection Of Grand Collections By Ibn Al-Subki) in Usul Al-Fiqh (Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence).”

At that time, not surpassing seventeen years of age, he proceeded preaching, and started giving Friday sermons in a mosque near *Manjak* in *Meedan* district.

After encouragement from some of his teachers, he began memorizing The Holy Qur’an by heart. Although his father indicated the great reward awaiting the one who memorizes The Holy Qur’an, he warned him from the guilt and sin of forgetting it. So Sheikh Al-Bouti decided to stop. However, he became a frequent reciter of the holy book to an extent of completing it once every three days. That frequency resulted in the memorization of many *Suras* (chapters) of The Qur’an by the Sheikh in addition to recalling most *Suras* with the location of the verses within, all that without any effort of memorizing The Holy Qur’an the traditional method followed by most of those who wish to do so.

His Qur’an reciting frequency had as well the notable impact on; his fascination with literature, his Arabic intuition, and the Arabic eloquence evident in most his speeches and writings.

He got married at the age of eighteen, and has six sons and one daughter.

In that period, he became deeply fascinated with literature of both contemporary and past authors such as: Mustapha Sadeq Al-Rafi'i, Al-Jahez, Al-Aqqad and Al-Mazini, as well as Al-Hariri's *Maqamat* (The Assemblies of Al-Hariri). And In 1952, he had the first of his writings published; an article titled 'In Front of the Mirror' in *Al-Tamaddun Al-Islami* magazine (The Islamic Urbanization) which also published several later articles of his. However, the true start of his literary works was a tale titled '*Mammo Zein*' he translated from Kurdish. '*Mammo Zein*' was a reflection of pure love, impassionate emotion and rare loyalty, poured -by translator Al-Bouti- into a bright Arabic rhetoric and an attractive narrative composition. Its many reprints still issue today.

In 1953, He finished his studies in the Institute Of Islamic Guidance (which has transformed from '*Manjak* Mosque' to a certified Islamic *Shari'a* institute) after spending six years under Sheikh Hasan Habannaka's guidance.

He travelled to Cairo in the year of 1954 to pursue his academic university study in Al-Azhar, he narrates about his literary experience during that period: "*When I completed my secondary school education –along with a portion above it and travelled to Al-Azhar to pursue my university education, I used to send a weekly literary or social article to Al-Ayyam newspaper that was released by the late Nassuh Babeel, who would publish it under the title 'Week By Week.'*" That was during 1954-1955".

He returned to Damascus after receiving a qualification degree in Islamic *Shari'a* from Al-Azhar University in 1955, followed by a Diploma

in Education from The Faculty of Arabic Language of the same university in 1956.

In 1958, he was appointed a teacher of Islamic Education subject in the city of Homs, Syria.

Later, he became an Associate Professor (Amanuensis) in the University of Damascus, then an emissary to Cairo to acquire Doctorate (PhD) in *Usul Al-Fiqh* (Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence) to which he received honours degree with recommendation for his thesis 'Regulations of Public Interests in Islamic Shari'a'.

In 1965, he was appointed a Professor in The University of Damascus, Faculty of Shari'a, then an Assistant professor, and later, a Lecturer (Senior Professor).

In 1975, he was appointed Vice Dean of the faculty, later to be Dean in 1977. Then he was appointed Head of The Department of *Al-'aqa'ed Wa Al-Adyan* (Religious Studies). He remained after his retirement an emeritus contract lecturer.

During that time and till 1981, he was remote to public image, and settled with the academic field, in addition to a couple of weekly lessons that gathered large numbers of the youth of Damascus and its surrounding areas in *Al-Sanjakdar* Mosque. Later on, he moved the lessons to *Tankaz* Mosque due to the need for larger space, until finally settling in *Al-Iman* Mosque, which held the last lessons of the martyred sheikh -may Allah bless his soul-. Other lessons were held in his father's -Sheikh Mulla Ramadan Al-Bouti- mosque and The Great Mosque of Damascus (*Umayyad* Mosque), with the commentary of (The

Aphorisms of *Ibn Ata' Allah*) being among the most prominent of his lessons.

After 1985, a personal relationship connected both Sheikh Al-Bouti and the former president Hafez Al-Asad when the latter requested a meeting with Dr. Al-Bouti after reading some of his books. Frequent long sessions between the two followed after, resulting in numerous positive outcomes such as: Releasing a large number of prisoners gradually as well as opening the doors back for those who had to leave Syria due to the events at that time, and addressing numerous issues regarding; *Shari'a* institutes, media, and Islamic books in addition to more. That relationship with the president provoked several slanders against Sheikh Al-Bouti, which proven later to be void and ridiculous.

During the drastic events of Algeria, Sheikh Al-Bouti took a distinct stand that caused a lot of disapproval and criticism back then, especially after the releasing of his book '*Al-Jihad Fi Al-Islam*' (Jihad in Islam), to which several symposiums were held for discussing its content and responding to it. Strangely enough, three years later a statement was issued by the same people adopting the same stand Sheikh Al-Bouti took at the beginning of the events.

Ideas Distinguished his Scientific and Preaching Track:

- He reproaches some Islamic thinkers for abandoning the *Ibadat* (acts of worship), *Adhkars* (remembrances of Allah) and *Awrad* (collections of *Adhkars*) which are the first supplies on the road of preaching the way of Allah.
- He discusses spreading the terms; (Islamic Thought) and (Islamic

Thinkers), and he has a known point of view against the matter.

-He has a lucid and graceful spirit, quick into tears, which is evident in most of his lessons and lectures.

-He never stopped gently advising the rulers, he had stances with the rulers in Syria secretly and publicly, especially regarding Prayers within the military (which were restricted), against some drama productions (which secretly offended the image of Islam), his known actions against laying off veiled employees (who wore the Hijab) from some government departments, and regarding the curriculums of Arabic Language and Islamic Education.

His scientific specializations were of broad diversity (Many compare him with the scholar *Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali*), reflecting into his scientific activities domestically and overseas, as well as his books and lessons. His deep understanding of *Ulum Al-Aql* (Analytical Sciences) and *Ulum Al-Naql* (Inherited Sciences) enabled him to absorb the purposes of *Shari'a* and precisely comprehend its aims, which equipped him with a supreme ability of connecting the old and the new. That guaranteed him a constant attendance in all scientific and intellectual conferences which held (through discussion and research) the most substantial and serious topics that occupy the largest share of human thought and have a significant role in guiding human societies scientifically and intellectually.

What characterized his writings was that he -instead of taking the role of a weak defender- faced westerners (who attacked Islam) with stultifying their ideas and proving with scientific evidence how ridiculous these ideas were, especially those concerning the realities of

Islam, while taking the steps of precision and precaution in whatever he had written.

He has many Activities on the Arab and International levels:

- Participated in many conferences and symposiums on the Arab and International levels such as The Islamic Intellectual Forum in Algeria for many years.
- He gave lectures in most Arab and western countries, with his lecture in the European Union Parliament Counsel in Strasbourg, 1991, titled *Huqouq Al-Aqalliyyat* (Rights of The Minorities in Islamic *Shari'a*) being among his most prominent.
- He participated as a counsellor in some meetings of *Al-Majma' Al-Fiqhi Al-Islami* (The Islamic Fiqh Academy).
- Member of the Accounting and Auditing Organisation for Islamic Financial Institutions.
- Member of the Light of Islam Association in France.
- Member of Taba Foundation in Abu-Dhabi
- The supervisor of scientific activity of The *Umayyad* Mosque (The Grand Mosque of Damascus).
- Member of the Higher Board of Oxford Academy.
- Member of the Royal Society of the Islamic Civilisation Research in Amman.
- He was granted many awards including the Islamic Personality of the Year 2004 award in Dubai.

He has numerous TV programs of scientific and social content that have been airing in many channels for a long time, some of these programs:

- Ma' Al-Bouti fi Qadaya Al-Sa'a* (With Al-Bouti: Matters of the Hour).
- Ma' Al-Bouti fi Hayateh WaFikreh* (With Al-Bouti: His Life and

Thought).

-*Al-Islam Fi Mizaan Al-'ilm* (Islam in the Balance of Science).

-*Al-Jadeed Fi I'jaz Al-Qur'an* (The Recent -In the Interpretations- of the Miracles of Qur'an)

-*Mashahed Wa 'ibar Min Al-Qur'an Wa Al-Sunnah* (Scenes and Lessons from the Qur'an and Sunnah)

-*Dirasat Qur'aniyyah* (Qur'anic Studies) which he kept instructing for more than quarter a century.

His Books exceeded sixty, among them:

-*Al Insaan Musayyar Am Mukhayyar?* (Is Human Driven or Given a Choice?)

-*Hadhihi Mushkilatuhom* (These are Their Problems)

-...*WaHadhihi Mushkilatuna* (...And These are Our Problems)

-*Hadha Walidi* (This is My Father)

-*Muhadaraat Fi Al-Fiqh Al-Muqaran* (Lectures in Comparative Jurisprudence)

-*Al-Islam Maladh Kul Al-Mujtama'at Al-Insaniyya* (Islam is the Haven of All Human Communities)

-*Al-Hub Fi Al-Qur'an Wa Dawr Al-Hub Fi Hayat Al-Insan* (Love in the Qur'an, and The Role of Love in Human Life)

-*Min Al-Fikr Wa Al-Qalb* (From the Mind and the Heart)

-*Yughalitunak Idh Yaquloun* (They Deceive You by Saying)

-*Manhaj Al-Hadara Al-Insaniyya Fi Al-Qur'an* (The Approach of Human Civilization in the Qur'an)

-*Al-La Madhabiyya: Akhtar Bid'a Tuhadded Al-Shari'a Al-Islamiyya* (Non-Madhabism: The Most Dangerous Bid'a Threatening Islamic Shari'a)

-*Al-Salafiyya: Marhala Zamaniyya Mubarakah, La Mazhab Islami*

(Salafism: A Blessed Historic Period, Not an Islamic Sect)

-*Shakhsiyyat Istawqafatni* (Personalities Caught My Attention)

-*Al-Mar'a Bayn Tughyan Al-Nizam Al-Gharbi Wa Lata'ef Al-Tashri' Al-Rabbani* (Women between The Tyranny Of The Western System and The Gentleness Of The Divine Legislation)

-*La Ya'teeh Al-Batel* (-Qur'an- Inconceivable of Falsehood)

-*'Aa'isha Um Al-Mu'mineen Radiya Allah 'anha* (Aisha, Mother Of Believers, May Allah Be Pleased With Her)

-*Naqd Awham Al-Madiyya Al-Jadaliyya* (The Abolition of The Delusions Of Dialectic Materialism)

-*Tajrubat Al-Tarbiah Al-Islamiyya Fi Mizan Al-Bahth* (The Experience Of Islamic Nurture In The Balance Of Research)

-*Abhath Fi Al-Qimma* (Studies at the Top)

-*Qadaya Fiqhiyya Mu'asira* (Contemporary Jurisprudential Issues)

-*Tahdeed Al-Nasl* (Birth Control)

-*Qadaya Sakhina* (Hot Issues)

-*Al-Madhaheb Al-Tawhidiya Wa Al-Falsafat Al-Mu'asira* (Monotheistic Schools And Contemporary Philosophies)

-*Al-Ta'arrof 'Ala Al-Dhat* (Knowing The Self)

-*Al-Islam Wa Al-Gharb* (Islam And The West)

And many others..

However, the most prominent of Sheikh Al-Bouti's books at all are:

-*Al-Hikam Al-'Ata'iyya: Sharh Wa Thleel* (The Aphorisms Of Ibn Ata' Allah Al-Sakandari: Commentary And Analysis), which is of four volumes

-*Fiqh Al-Seera Al-Nabawiyya* (The Fiqh Of The Biography Of The Prophet -may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him-)

-*Kubra Al-Yaqiniyyat Al-Kawniyya* (The Greatest Cosmic Certainties: The

Existence Of The Creator And The Task Of The Creature).

Many of his books were translated to several languages such as English, French, German, Turkish, Russian and Malaysian.

Sheikh Al-Bouti was a renovator and a modern scholar. He was devout, fearful of Allah and faithful to Him, of pure innermost and genuine intention, ardent of the law of Allah and Islamic ethics and brave in speaking the truth. He filled his own as well as other people's lives with gentle words, pious advice and beneficial wisdom from The Holy Qur'an and The *Sunna*. He was a true follower of the *Salaf*, a warner of *Bid'a* (unprecedented additions to Islam), and a scholar who is superior in all aspects.

Concerning the Syrian events that took place since the beginning of 2011:

Sheikh Al-Bouti -may Allah bless his soul- embraced the same stand he had during the events of Algeria, which lead to putting an end to these events at that time-. His explicit, clear and straightforward attitude towards the events distinguished him from the rest, an attitude that kept far away from the method of incitement, and close to stopping any cause of bloodshed, all under the light of Shari'a evidence. He directed his exhortation towards both sides, which gave his enemies a chance to get at him by trying their best to stain his image, but Allah , Glorified and Exalted be He, granted him the proper status when he chose him a martyr in the evening of (Thursday 21/March/2013 AD - 10/Jumada Al-Awwal/1434 AH) with a passing craved for by every rational Muslim, in a gathering described by the Prophet -may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him-: *"persons who assemble in the house among the houses*

of Allah (mosques) and recite the book of Allah and they learn and teach the Qur'an (among themselves), there would descend upon them the tranquility, mercy would cover them, the angels would surround them and Allah makes a mention of them in the presence of those near Him."

He was giving his lesson in *Tafsir* (Qur'an Exegesis) in the *mihrab* (prayer niche) of *Al-Iman* Mosque in Damascus with nearly fifty students of Islamic *Shari'a* -May Allah mercy their souls-. He earned the title '*Shaheed Al-Mihrab* (Martyr of the Mihrab)' following the steps of the noble companion (of the Prophet –may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him-) Umar Ibn Al-Khattab -may Allah be pleased with him- and was buried next to Sultan Salah Al-deen Al-Ayoubi (Saladin).



In the conclusion of this fragrant, blessed biography, we and in response to what some spiteful people spread confirm that the Sheikh refused, till the last days of his life, to leave Al-Sham (Syria) despite all the temptations he was offered, and of which he mentioned in the last episode of 'With Al-Bouti: Matters Of The Hour' he recorded on the day he was martyred. The Sheikh has no sons of daughters residing in Turkey.



References: *Hadha Walidi (This is My Father)*, *Al-Bidayat (The Beginnings)*, researches and articles dedicated to Dr. Muhammad Saeed Ramadan Al-Bouti, the archive of the website and other sources.

The webpage that represents the method and approach of the Sheikh on facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/Sh.AlBouti>