

The Formative Years of an Iconoclastic Salafi Scholar	
Author	Emad Hamdeh - BA in History (William Paterson University of New Jersey), MA in Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations (Hartford Seminary), PhD in Theology (University of Exeter)
Family	Albani had a Hanafi father who was an imam
Profession	Albani was a watch-repairer by profession
Islamic education	Studied on his own, mainly in the Zahiriyya library in Damascus
Confidence	Albani's words, as well as the confidence and conviction with which he spoke, made him an influential and charismatic individual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He provided assurance, authenticity, and certainty
Interpreting texts	Albani had to remain uncompromising and consistent in his positions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Had he compromised on his positions he would have been forced to acknowledge that his conclusions were based on a fallible interpretive process rather than the direct meanings of infallible texts
Saudi Traditional Salafism	Albani refused to become part of the Saudi Traditional Salafi hierarchy because he was committed to the truth rather than the Salafiyyah, madhhabs, or any particular individual
Move to Syria	Born in Albania, his family moved to Damascus when he was nine after a secular takeover of Albania
Learning Arabic	He did not speak any Arabic before moving to Damascus Read a lot of modern Arabic novels, including <i>Lupin</i>
Learning fiqh	His father taught him Hanafi fiqh texts such as <i>Marāqī al-falāḥ: sharḥ nūr al-īdāḥ</i> and <i>al-Qudūrī</i>
Influence	Read an article by Rashid Rida in which he criticizes al-Ghazali's <i>al-Iḥyā'</i> 's use of weak and fabricated hadiths
Debates with father	"I would use hadith and Sunnah as evidence and he would say the madhhab"
Kicked out of home	His father was leaving the village for a few days and asked him to lead the second prayer in his place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Albani held that the second congregation had no basis in the Sunnah <p>His father asked him to comply or leave</p> <p>Albani was prepared to sever all relationships, even with his father, in</p>

<p>Response of Albani</p>	<p>order to not go against the Sunnah</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It could be argued that disobeying his father for a trivial fiqh opinion was itself going against the Sunnah <p>“According to them disobedience means disobeying your father without a valid reason based on ijtiḥad and without the intention of following the Quran and Sunnah</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I do not think any practicing Muslim would consider this disobedience; if that were the case, Abraham AS would also have been considered disobedient” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He cited Prophet Abraham even though their situations are different <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abraham’s issue was the clear and serious creedal issue of shirk and tawḥid; Albani’s issue was the madhhabs and its acceptance of probabilistic ijtiḥad
<p>Interactions with Shu‘ayb al-Arna‘ut</p> <p>Albani on al-Arna‘ut</p>	<p>Arna‘ut was a general term that referred to Albanians, Serbians, and Bosnians</p> <p>“He would spread lies and fabrications about me as is always the case with the followers and the muqallids towards Ahl al-Sunnah”</p> <p>“He criticizes Salafis as much as he can, as though he is saying: ‘I do not accept the Salafi madhhab as a madhhab”</p>
<p>Albani and Saudi Arabia</p>	<p>He sharply criticized those who performed taqlid of one imam or madhhab, which was the case of most scholars in Medina and Saudi Arabia at the time, who followed the Hanbali madhhab</p> <p>Albani was appointed as a professor of hadith in the University of Medina</p> <p>The fact that he instigated students to question and challenge their professors, sometimes in a rude manner, caused other professors to dislike him</p> <p>Albani and his followers considered the mihrab an evil innovation and thus eventually built their own mosques</p> <p>In <i>Ṣifat ṣalāt al-Nabī</i> Albani wrote that the position of the hands in prayer differed from that recommended by centuries of Hanbali jurisprudence</p>
<p>Hadith studies before Albani</p>	<p>Albani is to be credited for sparking a renewed study of hadith texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They used to say the knowledge of hadith was cooked, eaten, and digested <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There was no room, and no one would think that a man would come and give rulings on hadiths

Dismissal from University of Madinah	Some of the professors were angry with me and wrote to the mufti directly and/or to the king, and gave the impression that I was forming a party and doing something <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The Mufti Shaykh Ibn Baz sent a letter kindly saying that they would not be renewing his contract for the upcoming year
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