



Virtues of the Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal: Volume One (Library of Arabic Literature)

By Ibn al-Jawzi

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Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 241 H/855 AD), renowned for his profound knowledge of hadith—the reports of the Prophet’s sayings and deeds—is a major figure in the history of Islam. Ibn Hanbal was famous for living according to his own strict interpretation of the Prophetic model and for denying himself even the most basic comforts in a city then one of the wealthiest in the world, and despite belonging to a prominent family. His piety and austerity made him a folk hero, especially after his principled resistance to the attempts of two Abbasid caliphs to force him to accept rationalist doctrine. His subsequent imprisonment and flogging became one of the most dramatic episodes of medieval Islamic history. Ibn Hanbal’s resistance influenced the course of Islamic law, the rise of Sunnism, and the legislative authority of the caliphate. *Virtues of the Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal* tells the formidable life tale of one of the most influential Muslims in history.

Virtues of the Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal is a translation of the biography of Ibn Hanbal penned by the Baghdad preacher, scholar, and storyteller Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597 H/1201 AD). Volume One presents the first half of the text, offering insights into Ibn Hanbal’s childhood, education, and adult life, including his religious doctrines, his dealings with other scholars, and his personal habits. Set against the background of fierce debates over the role of reason and the basis of legitimate government, *Virtues of the Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal* tells the formidable life tale of one of the most influential Muslims in history.

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“Michael Cooperson’s fluid translation is accompanied by substantial notes and a glossary of names and terms.”

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“One hundred chapters and over 150,000 words of Munaqib Abi Allah Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Hanbal pulsate with energy; these pages are vibrant with events of extraordinary nature, and they contain hundreds of facets of individual and collective lives of a bygone era; Cooperson’s translation captures the soul of the book...”-*Islamic Studies*

"Cooperson’s translation is uncommonly deft... On the whole, this translation is a grand success. It will be valuable for teachers to illustrate early Islamic piety, early Islamic law, early Sunni theology, and everyday life in Baghdad."

-Christopher Melchert, *Journal of Islamic Studies*

About the Author

Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597 H/1201 AD) was a Baghdadi storyteller, preacher, and prolific Islamic scholar associated with the Hanbali school of jurisprudential thought. He is well known for his exegeses of the Qur’an and Hadith, including his famous compendium, *Al-Tahqiq*.

Michael Cooperson is Professor of Arabic language and literature at UCLA. His research interests include the cultural history of the early Abbasid caliphate, Maltese language and literature, and time travel as a literary device.

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