

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

رحمه الله Shaykh Ahmad ibn Muhammad Shākir (d. 1377H)

(Compiled by Abu Muhammad Yahya)

Early Life and Lineage:

Shaykh Ahmad ibn Muḥammad Shākir ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Qādir (رحمه الله) was born in Cairo, Egypt, in 1302H (1885CE). His lineage traces back to Al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī (رضي الله عنهما), making him a descendant of the noble family of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.



His father, Shaykh Muḥammad Shākir, was a distinguished Islamic scholar and judge, holding the position of Chief Judge of Sudan in 1900CE. Under his father’s guidance, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Shākir was raised in an environment of knowledge and piety.

Education and Studies:

During his father’s tenure as Chief Judge, Aḥmad ibn Shākir was enrolled in the Ghawrdoon School in Sudan. In 1904CE, he moved back to Egypt and joined the Institute of Alexandria before continuing his studies at Al-Azhar University.

At Al-Azhar, he pursued advanced Islamic sciences, excelling in Hadith, Fiqh, Tafsir, and Arabic language. By 1917CE, he attained the scholarly grade, officially recognized as a qualified scholar. His scholarly prowess was evident early on, and he developed a particular passion for Hadith sciences.

Influence of His Father and Early Exposure to Hadith:

Shaykh Muḥammad Shākir, his father, played a major role in introducing him to Hadith sciences. Under his father's encouragement, Aḥmad ibn Shākir began studying Hadith intensively in 1909CE, delving into its chains of narration (Isnad), text analysis (Matn), and authentication (Takhrij).

He obtained Ijazahs (certifications) in Hadith from some of the greatest scholars of his time, including:

- Shaykh ‘Abdullāh ibn Idrīs al-Sanūsī (Scholar of Morocco)
- Shaykh Aḥmad ibn al-Shams al-Shanqīṭī
- Shaykh Ṭāhir al-Jazā’irī al-Atharī

These scholars, among others, played a key role in shaping his expertise in Hadith and Islamic sciences.

Judicial Career and Retirement:

After completing his studies, Shaykh Aḥmad Shākir served in various judicial positions in Egypt. His deep knowledge of Fiqh, Hadith, and judicial rulings made him highly respected among scholars and judges.

He was eventually appointed head of the highest religious court in Egypt, where he served until his retirement in 1951CE.

Contributions to Hadith and Islamic Scholarship:

Shaykh Aḥmad Shākir is one of the most renowned Hadith scholars of the 20th century. His works in Hadith verification (Takhrij), commentary, and authentication remain foundational references for modern scholars.

Some of his most important contributions include:

1. Musnad of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal – He worked on a critical edition of this massive Hadith collection, completing around one-third of it before passing away.
2. Sunan al-Tirmidhī – He began editing and verifying this collection, and two volumes were printed before he could complete it.
3. Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Hibbān – He verified and edited the first volume, writing an important introduction on Hadith methodology.
4. Al-Risālah of Imām al-Shāfi‘ī – One of his most famous works, where he applied a rigorous Hadith verification methodology. His edition remains a standard reference.
5. Ikhtisār ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth of Ibn Kathīr – He wrote an explanation of this work, which serves as a guide in Hadith sciences.
6. Al-Muḥallā of Ibn Ḥazm – He contributed to editing and verifying this book, which is a significant work in Fiqh and Usul.
7. Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī – He worked on verifying this classic Tafsir, ensuring the accuracy of its narrations.
8. Sharḥ Sunan Abī Dāwūd – He contributed to the verification and checking of this major Hadith work.
9. Kitāb Jamā‘ al-‘Ilm of Imām al-Shāfi‘ī – Another key verification project that he worked on.
10. Alfiyyah of Imām al-Suyūṭī – He wrote an excellent explanation of Imām al-Suyūṭī’s Alfiyyah, which discusses Hadith sciences and authentication methods.

His Ijtihad and Independence in Fiqh:

Unlike many scholars of his time who adhered strictly to one Madhhab, Shaykh Aḥmad Shākir was known for his Ijtihād (independent reasoning). He followed the Qur’ān and Sunnah as the primary sources, even if it meant differing from traditional Madhhab opinions.

His most famous Fiqh-related work is:

- Nidhām al-Ṭalāq (The System of Divorce) – A unique study on the rules of divorce based purely on the Qur’an and Hadith, without strict adherence to any Madhhab. His ijtihād and evidence-based approach in this book sparked major discussions among scholars.

His Death and Legacy:

Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Shākir passed away in 1377H (1958CE) in Cairo, Egypt. He left behind a legacy of Hadith scholarship, academic rigor, and independent reasoning. His works remain widely studied and referenced, especially in the fields of Hadith verification, Fiqh, and Tafsir.

Conclusion:

Shaykh Aḥmad Shākir (رحمه الله) was a pillar of Hadith scholarship in the 20th century, known for his precision in Hadith authentication, his independence in Fiqh, and his rigorous academic methodology. His dedication to verifying the Sunnah without bias towards any particular Madhhab set a new standard for Hadith and Islamic research.

His works continue to benefit students, scholars, and researchers worldwide, making him one of the greatest Hadith scholars of his era.