



‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ibn ‘Abidīn al-Ḥanafī

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Released by www.marifah.info 1429 H

He is al-Sayyid Muḥammad ‘Alā’ al-Dīn, son of Muḥammad Amīn – the author of *Radd al-Muḥtār* –, son of ‘Umar, son of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, being a descendant of the Prophet ﷺ from Imām Ismā’īl al-A’raj, son of Imām Ja’far al-Ṣādiq, son of Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir, son of Imām ‘Alī Zayn al-‘Ābidīn, son of Imām Ḥusayn, son of Imām ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib and Fātimah, the latter being the daughter of the Prophet ﷺ.

He was born in Damascus on the 3rd of Rabī’ al-Thānī, 1244 h. and was named ‘Alā’ al-Dīn on account of his father’s great love and admiration for the author of *al-Durr al-Mukhtār*, one of the greatest works for legal details and rulings in the Ḥanafī school, Imām ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Ḥaṣkafī.¹ In a letter, Ibn ‘Ābidīn stated:

¹ Imām ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Ḥaṣkafī (d. 1088 h.) was the grand *muftī* of Damascus in the 11th century and his work *al-Durr al-Mukhtār* was a commentary on Imam Tumurtashi’s *Tanwīr al-Abṣār*, one of the most detailed texts in the Ḥanafī school. Imām Ḥaṣkafī added and summarized much from this work in terms of important conditions, legal details, rulings, exceptions, and so forth – in a very concise yet precise manner. The most famous commentaries on the *Durr* are by Ibn ‘Ābidīn and Taḥtāwī, although there were many others including those by Shaykh ‘Ābid Sindhī, ‘Allāmah Ḥalabī, Shaykh Raḥmatī, Mawlānā Aḥsan Nānotwī, and so forth.

“I have named him Muḥammad ‘Ala’ al-Dīn optimistic, hopeful, and wishful that he be like him [Imām Ḥaṣkafī] in knowledge and righteousness. May Allah make him amongst the foremost of His righteous servants by the honor of His Prophet, Muḥammad ﷺ, the master of the messengers (*bi jāh nabiyyih muḥammad sayyid al-mursalīn*), *āmīn*.”²

In the year 1252 h. Ibn ‘Ābidīn passed away while ‘Alā’ al-Dīn was only eight years old. It is related that afterwards the works of his father were sold by his students, many of them coming into the possession of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Ghunaymī of Maydān under whom ‘Alā’ al-Dīn studied.³ Initially, he busied himself with the sciences related to the recitation of the Qur’ān, the mastering of which allowed him to seek further knowledge within which he excelled, especially *fiqh*, like his father.

Among his teachers were:

- Hāshim ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Sa’dī al-Tājī (d. 1264 h.), from whom he took *fiqh*,
- ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-Kuzbarī (d. 1262 h.), the Shāfi’ī *faqīh* and *muḥaddīth*, from whom he took *hadīth*,
- Sa’id ibn Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥalabī al-Ḥanafī (d. 1259 h.), the *faqīh* of his age, with whom he sat and took the six books and gained *ijāzah* therein along with his cousin al-Sayyid Aḥmad,
- Ḥasan ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥasan al-Bītār (d. 1272 h.), the Shāfi’ī *faqīh*,
- Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Bājūrī (d. 1276 h.), the *Shaykh al-Azhar* and commentator on the *Jawharat al-Tawhīd*,

² As related by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Farfūr; see *al-Ḥadiyyat al-Alā’iyyat*, with notes by ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Jābī (Pg: 6 ed. Dār ibn Hazm, 2003). This biography has been taken mainly from the introduction of this edition, though it is not a word for word translation.

³ Imām ‘Abd al-Ghanī ibn Tālib al-Ghunaymī al-Maydānī (d. 1298 h.) was a leading student of Ibn ‘Ābidīn and an author of many great works such as *al-Lubāb fi Sharḥ al-Kitāb* and *Sharḥ ‘Aqīdat al-Taḥāwīyyah*. (Dr. Ṣalāḥ Abu’l Ḥājj’s *Tabaqāt al-Ḥanafīyyah* #326)

- Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ‘Ulaysh (d. 1299 h.), the Mālikī *faqīh* whose roots were in the *maghrib*,
- Jamāl ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn Shaykh ‘Umar al-Ḥanafī al-Makkī, the Muftī and Shaykh of the scholars of Makkah, a *mufasssīr*, *muḥaddith*, and *faqīh*,
- Muḥammad ‘Uthmān ibn Muḥammad al-Mīrghanī al-Ḥanafī al-Husaynī (d. 1268 h.), a *mufasssīr* and Sūfī,
- Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Kutbī al-Makkī, the Muftī of the Ḥanafī’s in Makkah and a student of al-Sayyid Aḥmad al-Taḥṭāwī⁴,
- Aḥmad ibn Zaynī Daḥlān (d. 1304h.), the Muftī of the Shafī’ī’s in Makkah and lecturer in the Masjīd al-Haram,
- Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Alī al-Saqqā (d. 1298 h.), from the greatest of scholars in Egypt,
- Ḥāmid ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Ubayd Allah al-‘Attār (d. 1263 h.),
- Ḥasan ibn ‘Umar al-Shattī al-Ḥanbalī (d. 1274 h.),
- Muṣṭafa ibn Aḥmad al-Muballit al-Shafī’ī (d. 1284 h.), and
- Muḥammad al-Mahdī al-Zawāwī al-Maghribī, from whom he took the *Tariqat al-Khalwatiyyah*, traversed it, and was then put into the *khalwah* (spiritual retreat). After this he received permission to rectify and guide other spiritual wayfarers and prescribe to them various spiritual litanies to cleanse their hearts and lead them to Allah. He states, regarding certain diseases of the heart, in his *Hadiyyat al-Alā’iyyat*:

“Verily, it is manifest within the texts and the consensus [of the scholars] on the prohibitive nature of envy and contempt towards [other] Muslims, intending evil, arrogance, self-pride, showing off, hypocrisy and all other disgraceful acts related to the heart.”⁵

⁴ Imām Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ismā’il al-Taḥṭāwī (d. 1231 h.) is the foremost authority of the later Ḥanafī school along with Ibn ‘Ābidīn. He studied in al-Azhar and wrote many works such as his *Hāshiyah ‘ala al-Durr al-Mukhtār*, *Hashiyāh ‘ala Marāqī al-Falāḥ*, *Kashf al-Rayn ‘an Bayān al-Mash’ ‘ala Jawrabayn*, and others. (Ibid #316)

⁵ Pg: 249

He was later entrusted to give legal verdicts (*fatāwa*) in Damascus during the time of Muftī Amīn al-Jundī⁶ and then travelled with him to Istanbul, being part of the committee that gathered and put together the *Majallat al-Ahkām al-‘Adillah* – being one of the greatest works on civil law ever written.

Apart from being an accomplished scholar in spirituality and law, he also authored some important works. Among his most well-known works are:

- *Qurrat ‘Uyūn al-Ukhyār Takmilah Hāshiyat Radd al-Muḥtār*, a completion of his father’s commentary on the *Durr al-Mukhtār*, which he sought to do while journeying to Istanbul after being requested to take up such a task. He completed it in the year 1290 h. It has been published a number of times.
- *Mīnat al-Jalīl li Bayān Isqāt mā ‘ala al-Zimmat min Kathīr wa’l Qalīl*, which has been published alongside the *Majmu’at al-Rasā’il* of his father,
- *Igāthat al-‘Āri li Zalat al-Qārī*, regarding the mistakes in recitation of the Qur’an in the prayer and related rulings,
- *Mi’rāj al-Najāḥ Sharḥ Nūr al-Idāḥ*, in one large volume, incomplete, and in manuscript form, which was kept in the Dhāhiriyyah Library #6667 and now in the Asad Watniyyah Library,
- *Al-Hadiyyat al-‘Alā’iyyat li Talāmīz al-Madāris al-Ibtidā’iyyat*, describing the work the author, ‘Alā al-Dīn, states:

“I have gathered within it what is necessary for everyone [to know] regarding the rulings of worship... and have concluded it with a noble section regarding belief.”⁷

It was first published during the lifetime of the author himself, in 1299 h.⁸

⁶ He is Shaykh Amīn ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab al-Jundī al-‘Abbāsī (d. 1295 h.), the Muftī of the Ḥanafīs in Damascus and leading Ottoman scholar.

⁷ Pg: 285

⁸ The edition of Shaykh Sa’īd Burḥānī is particularly recommended and has been published numerous times.

Some of His Statements in the *Hadiyyah* (Gift)

On Knowledge:

“One only teaches knowledge to those who are worthy of it, and one does not hold back knowledge from those worthy of it.”⁹

“Seeking knowledge and deep understanding with a sound intention is that one seek with the two the countenance of God, not that one seek wealth and fame.”

On *Fiqh*:

“Learning *fiqh* is from the most important of matters because it is the bedrock of the religion. When one grasps abundantly from it he should study the knowledge of ascetism, the sayings of the wise, the descriptions of the righteous, the knowledge of sincerity and [knowledge of] the diseases of the self, and knowledge of what is for one and what is against one...¹⁰ A work which has secured in gathering this is the *Ihya’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn* of Imām Ghazālī.”¹¹

On *Kalām*:

“Studying dogmatic theology, the art of debate, and engaging in it beyond the limits of need is prohibited according to what has come from the narration of Ḥammād ibn Abū Ḥanīfah when he was studying

⁹ Pg: 238

¹⁰ This was the definition of *fiqh* provided by Imam Abu Ḥanīfah, namely that *fiqh* is “Knowledge of the self, what is for it and what is against it.” (*ma’rifat al-nafs, mā lahā wa mā ‘alayh*)

¹¹ Pg: 240

dogmatic theology and was forbidden by his father from this. Ḥammād said, ‘I have seen you studying it so what makes you forbid me?’ He [Abu Ḥanīfah] replied, ‘My son. We would debate and every individual from among us would exercise immense caution fearing that his companion (his opponent) would err. Today all of you debate and every one from amongst you desires that his companion (his opponent) err and slip...’¹²

On Miracles:

“The miracle of a saint is permitted, and the difference between it and a miracle [of a prophet] is *tahaddī*.¹³ It is permitted for a saint to know that he is a saint or to not know that he is one, as opposed to a prophet.”¹⁴

On *Tafwīd* & *Ta’wīk*:

“And the *salaf* believed in all of this (the *mutashabihāt*) upon the meaning which Allah intended and His Prophet intended without seeking the reality of these aspects through their own understanding unless Allah conveyed it to them.

As for the *khalaf*, when innovation and misguidance appeared, they embarked on figurative interpretation and averted it [the *mutashabihat*] from its apparent (*dhāhir*) for fear of disbelief (of the ignorant masses). They gave preference to newly introduced

¹² Pg: 239, the pious scholars who engaged in praiseworthy *kalām* did so to the extent required, to defend the truth, and with utter hope that their opponents would not slip into error as errors in belief are a serious matter that no Muslim wishes for another.

¹³ *Tahaddī* refers to the miracles presented as a challenge to the non-believers who accused the prophet’s (upon them all be peace) of being liars.

¹⁴ Pg: 282; Prophets always know that they are prophets and it is not possible that they do not know.

interpretations over the disbelief of carrying it [the *mutashabihat*] upon the apparent [meaning]. Thus, they said that *istiwa* meant conquering (*istawla*)... and *yad* meant power (*qudra*), and *nuzūl* meant the descent of mercy.

He who finds himself able on the way of the *salaf* walks upon their trodden path otherwise he follows the *khalaf* so that he is protected from danger.”¹⁵

On Certain Sins of the Heart & Tongue:

“Impermissible *hasad* is to wish for the removal of a blessing bestowed by Allah upon one’s brother - whether one seeks it for his own self or not. When one desires for his self the like of it [the blessing (without wishing for it to be removed from another)] then it is not *hasad* but is *ghibtah*, and this desire is *wājib* for necessary religious blessings like prayer and its like. It is recommended for praiseworthy aspects such as noble deeds and charitable acts. It is permitted in what one enjoys of permitted things like food, drink, dress, and so forth.”¹⁶

“*al-Kibr* is impermissible, and it is the path of Iblīs. It is from the exuberances of the blameworthy character. Its possessor is competing with Allah in His pride and greatness. From the outward it (such pride) is termed *takabbur*, but inwardly arrogance *kibr*.”¹⁷

“*Namīmah* is impermissible, and it is to disclose what is disliked... regardless of whether it is by stating or pointing out or through writing...”¹⁸

¹⁵Pg: 280

¹⁶ Pg: 248

¹⁷ Pg: 250

¹⁸ Pg: 248

“*al-Tajassus* is impermissible, and it is to seek out the faults of people.”

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He passed away – May Allah have mercy on him - into the grace of his Lord in the month of *Shawwāl*, 1306 h., before the rising of the sun. His funeral prayer was held in the Ummayyad Mosque and people from all over the country attended. He was buried adjacent to his father as well as his grandfather, Sayyid ‘Umar, and Imam Ḥaṣḥkafī – May Allah have mercy on them all and upon all the Muslims. *Āmīn*.²⁰



¹⁹ Pg: 250

²⁰ Many thanks to Mufti Hussain Kadodia for his corrections to this article.