



Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Awwāmah ¹

By Shaykh Shoayb Ahmad

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Muḥammad ‘Awwāmah was born in Aleppo in Syria in 1940 (1358). He began his journey and quest for knowledge in 1953 (1373) when he regularly attended the lessons conducted by Shaykh Muḥammad al-Salqīnī. In his early days as a student, he studied under Shaykh ‘Abdullāh Sirājuddīn. From 1958 (1378), he began studying under Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda. He eventually became known for his affiliation to these two illustrious and erudite scholars and he is regarded as their foremost student.

¹ Compiled and translated from <http://www.islamsyria.net/Details.php?QType=1&Id=146>

In 1962 (1382) he enrolled at the Faculty of Sharī‘ah and in this year Shaykh ‘Abdullāh Sirājuddīn appointed him as a teacher at Madrasa al-Sha‘bāniyya. He taught there until 1980 (1400).

In 1959 (1379) he traveled to Egypt where he met a number of senior scholars such as the two Moroccan brothers, Shaykh Aḥmad and Shaykh ‘Abdullāh al-Ghumārī, Shaykh ‘Abdul Wahhāb ‘Abdul Laṭīf and Shaykh Muḥammad Abū Zahra.

He contributed greatly to an Islāmic academic revival in Aleppo and was appointed from a young age as a teacher at Jāmi‘ al-Rawḍa. His teacher, Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda described him as “yesterdays student, today's colleague” and “the excellent *muḥaqqiq* (researcher and editor)”.

In about 1980 (1400) he moved to Medīna in Saudi Arabia where he joined the Islāmic University and established the Center for Academic Research which later became known as the Center for Serving the Sunnah and the Sīrah. It was from this center that he began editing the book, Ithāf al-Mahāra.

In 1986 (1406), he established an office for editing the Islāmic Heritage which is affiliated to Dar al-Qibla.

Shaykh ‘Awwāmah may be described as a person of clear illuminated thought and methodology. This is apparent in his writing, particularly in *Āthar al-Ḥadīth al-Sharīf fī Ikhtilāf al-A‘immat al-Fuqahā* and his book *Adab al-Ikhtilāf fī Masā’il al-‘Ilm wal-Dīn*. Shaykh Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-Ṭanṭawi who is a famous and erudite scholar said: “I am not aware of anyone alive more knowledgeable than him in *taḥqīq*.”

Shaykh ‘Awwāmah has numerous academic contributions other than the two books mentioned above. Some of his works are:

- Musnad ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul Azīz by al-Bāghandī. He provided sources to the Ḥadīth and some explanations.
- Al-Ansāb by al-Sama‘ānī. He edited a portion of it.
- Taqrīb al-Taḥdhīb by Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Hajar with marginal notes by ‘Allāmah ‘Abdullāh al-Baṣrī and his student al-Mayrghani.
- Al-Kāshif by al-Dhahabī. Shaykh ‘Awwāmah wrote an extensive introduction to it.
- Majālis Ibn Nāṣiruddīn al-Dimashqī
- Min Ṣiḥāḥ al-Aḥādīth al-Qudsiyya. A compilation of 100 Ḥadīth Qudsi with a short explanation to them.
- Al-Mukhtār min Farā’id al-Nuqūl wal-Akḥbār. Educational anecdotes for a student.
- Al-Qawl al-Badī‘ fī al-Ṣalāt ‘alā al-Ḥabīb al-Shafī‘ by al-Sakhāwī.
- Al-Sunan by Imām Abū Dawūd. He edited it and compared it with Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Hajar’s version and seven other copies.
- Al-Shamā’il al-Muḥammadiyya by Imām al-Tirmidhī with the commentary by al-Bajūrī.

- Al-Musannaf by Ibn Abī Shayba. He edited it and compared it with various manuscripts and he provided references for the Ḥadīth. He was involved with this work for 16 years and it was finally published in 28 volumes.
- A comparative Ḥadīth study of Naṣb al-Rāyah with manuscripts and he was able to identify about 1000 printing errors.

He has reprinted many of his books every time he improves on the work. He always tries to obtain original copies of the books he is editing. As a result he was blessed with many manuscripts. He is well known for his excellent and informative introductions to many books.

The following are extracts of what other ‘Ulemā had to say about him at the Ithnayniyya held in his honor in April 2007.

Dr. Muḥammad ‘Abduh Yamānī had the following to say:

...This man is a person whose face Allāh has illuminated which is a realization of the Prophet’s Du‘ā when he said: “May Allāh brighten the face of the person who hears my statements and then conveys it in the manner he heard it.” ...I bear witness that this man over the duration of time that I worked with him or during which I read or studied under him or when we worked together on certain projects in the service of the Ḥadīth, I felt that he is truly ‘Awwāmah like the people of Mecca have said. They refer to one who is good at. He is from Aleppo the city which has known many who have had a profound love for the Messenger of Allāh. We are pleased to be with this personality this evening acknowledging his wonderful work and his editing of Musannaf Ibn Abī Shayba. Many of our youth are able to read the texts without knowing the intricacies of *jarḥ wa-ta’dīl*. Therefore this work and the person responsible for it have to be appreciated and we thank Allāh for having afforded him the opportunity to complete this task...

Dr. ‘Abdul Wahhāb Abū Sulaymān, a member of the Council of Senior Scholars of Saudi Arabia said:

In every era Allāh chooses such persons who examples of our pious predecessors in every way. They strive towards the correct understanding and teachings of Islām. One such person is Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Awwāmah who resides in Medina purely because of his love for the place and the desire to promote the pristine teachings of Islām. I have read some of his books and was very pleased with its contents more especially *Safḥāt fī Adab al-Ra’yy*, *Adab al-Ikhtilāf fī Masā’il al-‘Ilm*. I was thoroughly impressed with the book and was even more impressed when I eventually met him after observing his humility and his noble character. Allāh had favored me when I was honored to receive *Ijāzah* from him at his library in Medina in 1428. Shaykh ‘Awwāmah is indeed one of the luminaries of this Ummah about whom we can be proud. He is an excellent example in his extensive knowledge of Fiqh and Ḥadīth coupled with a personality which avoids any type of negativity towards other people.

Dr. Usāma ‘Abdul Razzāq al-Rifā ī, a Qāḍī from Lebanon who first acquainted himself with Shaykh ‘Awwāmah through his book *Āthar al-Ḥadīth al-Sharīf fī Ikhtilāf al-A’immat al-Fuqahā* in the year 1401 H. Thereafter Dr. Usamā was fortunate to have spent some time studying with the Shaykh whose personality he summarized in the following points:

(1). A person of immense knowledge dedicated to knowledge always eager to increase and learn more. He would discourage the following of the rare opinions of the scholars and rather encouraged research and investigation. He emphasized on the need to gradually increase in ones knowledge but to do so with good manners (*adab*).

(2). The educational aspect of the Shaykh’s life is a true reflection of the Prophet’s words “The ‘Ulemā are the heirs of the Prophets.” He stressed on the importance of knowledge and action. He displayed immense love for the Prophet Muḥammad and taught this to those around him. He taught others about humility through his own conduct. He was faithful and true in his love for his teachers.

