

Introduction to the Shafi'i School

Liban Hussein

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Al-Fiqh al-Manhaji

A Systematic Manual According to the Madhhab of Imam al-Shafi'i

by Dr. Mustafa al-Khin, Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bugha, and Dr. Ali al-Sharbaji

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This project is a work-in-progress collection of notes and commentary based on the lectures of Shaykh Mahdi Lock on the Shafi'i madhhab, using *Al-Fiqh al-Manhaji* as the core text.

Quote

"I used to turn the page gently in front of Malik out of reverence for him, lest he hear its sound."

— Imam al-Shafi'i

Introduction

This document is a working companion to *Al-Fiqh al-Manhaji: A Systematic Manual According to the Madhhab of Imam al-Shafi'i*, authored by Dr. Mustafa al-Khin, Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bugha, and Dr. Ali al-Sharbaji.

It is based on and inspired by ongoing lectures by Shaykh Mahdi Lock, and aims to support students of the Shafi'i madhhab through:

- Structured and summarized fiqh notes

- Clarifications of key legal rulings and definitions
- Side references from classical commentaries
- Thematic breakdowns by chapter and legal category
- Occasional comparisons with other madhahib where relevant

The long-term goal is to provide an accessible, organized study companion for English-speaking students of sacred law, rooted in reliable Shafi'i methodology and sources.

Organization

The content follows the topical arrangement of the original *Al-Fiqh al-Manhaji* volumes, beginning with purification and prayer, and progressing through the major sections of worship, transactions, personal law, and social obligations. Each section is broken into:

- Main rulings and definitions
- Evidence when included
- Summary tables where beneficial
- Notes, commentary, or clarifications based on trusted teachers and works like *Taqrirat al-Sadidah*

Chapters Currently in Progress

1. Purification (al-Taharah)
2. Prayer (al-Salah)
3. Zakat
4. Fasting (al-Siyam)
5. Hajj and Umrah

More will be added over time, and each chapter will eventually include details on the footnotes and commentaries by the authors.

! Note

This is a living document and will be updated continuously as lectures continue, new insights emerge, and the annotations grow. Feedback, questions, and contributions are welcome.

Introduction to the Shafi'i School

The Founder of the School

Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i al-Muttalibi is the founder of the Shafi'i school. His lineage connects with that of the Prophet Muhammad at their common ancestor, Abd Manaf. He was born in Gaza in the year 150 AH and was brought to Mecca, where he began his pursuit of knowledge.

He studied under Imam Khalid ibn Muslim al-Zanji, the Mufti of Mecca, as well as under al-Fudayl ibn Iyad, Sufyan ibn Uyaynah, and others.

Then he traveled to Madinah at the age of twelve, and memorized the entire *Muwatta* in nine days, intending to stay with Imam Malik. He studied under Imam Malik until he became one of his top students. He also took knowledge from the scholars of Madinah and Mecca. He engaged deeply in Arabic linguistics and poetry and was praised for his mastery. Even al-Asma'i benefited from him, and he learned from the ancient poetry of the Banu Hudhayl tribe.

He traveled to Yemen and took knowledge from scholars such as Mutarrif ibn Mazin, Hisham ibn Yusuf the judge, Amr ibn Abi Salamah, and Yahya ibn Hasan. Then he traveled to Iraq and studied with Waki', Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Shaybani, the jurist of Iraq, and others such as Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Abu Thawr, and others.

He composed the book *Al-Hujjah* and established what became known as the old school of thought. Later, he took knowledge from the scholars of Egypt, such as Imam Ahmad ibn Abi Surayj and others, and turned toward Egypt, where his juristic reasoning matured through extensive debate. He revised some of his earlier opinions and established the new school of thought.

He is regarded as the renewer (mujaddid) of the second century, as he combined between the sciences of hadith and the intellectual reasoning of opinion-based jurisprudence. He laid

down the foundations of usul al-fiqh, authoring *Al-Risalah*, the first book on legal theory. His knowledge extended across hadith, Qur'an, Arabic, grammar, history, poetry, and theology. He lived a life of asceticism and worship, turning away from the world and preferring the hereafter. He passed away in Egypt in the year 204 AH.

Imam Ahmad said: "Imam al-Shafi'i was like the sun for the world and like health for the body — can either of these be replaced or substituted?"

He also said: "Knowledge of jurisprudence was locked up with its people until God opened it through al-Shafi'i."

Imam Abu Zur'ah said about him: "I do not know of anyone who had a greater impact on the people of Islam than al-Shafi'i."

May God have mercy on them and be pleased with them all.

The Imams of the School

3rd Century:

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Abu Thawr, al-Zafarani, al-Karabisi.

Students of al-Shafi'i (transmitters of the school):

Al-Muzani, al-Buwayti, al-Rabi' al-Muradi, Harmalah, al-Rabi' al-Jizi, Yunus ibn Abd al-Ala.

4th Century:

Ibn Surayj, al-Mutawakkil al-Kabir al-Shashi, Abu Hamid al-Isfarayini, al-Ishtakhri, al-Marwazi, Ibn Abi Hurayrah, Ibn al-Qass.

5th Century:

Al-Mawardi, Abu Ishaq al-Shirazi, Abu Muhammad al-Juwayni, Imam al-Haramayn, al-Laythiji, al-Bandaniji, al-Mutamali, al-Qaffal al-Saghir al-Marwazi, al-Qadi Husayn, al-Furani, al-Masudi, Ibn al-Sabbagh, al-Mutawalli.

6th Century:

Al-Ghazali (Hujjat al-Islam), al-Shashi, al-Nasafi, al-Imrani.

7th Century:

Ibn al-Salah, al-Qazwini, al-Izz ibn Abd al-Salam, al-Nawawi, al-Rafi'i (the two masters of the school), Ibn al-Firkah, Ibn Daqiq al-Id.

8th Century:

Ibn al-Rif'ah, al-Taqi al-Subki, al-Taqi al-Maqdisi, al-Isnawi, al-Azra'i, al-Balqini, Ibn al-Mulaqqin, al-Zarkashi, Ibn al-Naqib, al-Sharif al-Bazdari, al-Muhibb al-Tabari.

9th Century:

Al-Wali al-Iraqi, al-Taqi al-Husni, al-Shihab ibn Zamlan (author of *Sufrat al-Zurrah*), Ibn Qadi Shuhbah, Ibn al-Marzujah, al-Dimyati, al-Jalal al-Mahalli, al-Afqahisi, Ibn al-Maghribi, Abd Allah ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Afdal.

10th Century:

Imam al-Jalal al-Suyuti, Shaykh al-Islam Zakariyya al-Ansari, al-Khatib al-Shirbini, al-Shihab al-Ramli, his son al-Shams, Ibn Hajar al-Haytami, Abd Allah ibn Umar al-Bahrami, Ibn Qasim al-Ubbi, Ibn Ziyad, al-Baqi'ir, al-Burhan al-Zarqawi, Ali al-Tirmasi, al-Rashidi.

11th Century:

Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Kurdi (jurist of the Hijaz), Sulayman al-Jamal, others.

12th Century:

Al-Bajuri, al-Sharqawi, al-Bijirmi, Abd Allah ibn Husayn Ba Faqih, Abd Allah ibn Ahmad Basudan, Sa'id ibn Muhammad Ba'ishin, Abd al-Rahman ibn Sulayman al-Ahdal, Ali Basirin, others.

13th Century:

Sayyid Alawi ibn Ahmad al-Saqqaf, Ahmad ibn Zayni Dahlan, Bakri Shatta, Abd al-Rahman al-Mashhur, Abu Bakr ibn Abd al-Rahman ibn Shihab, Abu Bakr ibn Ahmad al-Khatib, Abd Allah al-Bajaji, Abd Allah ibn Umar al-Shatiri, Ahmad ibn Umar al-Shatiri, Abd al-Rahman ibn Abd Allah al-Saqqaf, Muhammad ibn Hadi al-Saqqaf, Muhammad ibn Salim ibn Hafiz, others.

14th Century and Later:

A large number of scholars appeared and authored works in the later centuries. May Allah be pleased with them all. The scholars of the madhhab wrote prolifically — so much so that it is difficult to even count all their writings.

This is exemplified in the work of Imam al-Subki, *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyyah al-Kubra*, which spans ten volumes. It demonstrates the vast number of scholars in the Shafi'i tradition, the range of their service, and how nearly every field of Islamic knowledge has Shafi'i representatives.

Among the Usulis (Legal Theorists):

Al-Juwayni (author of *al-Burhan*), al-Ghazali (author of *al-Mustasfa*), al-Razi (author of *al-Mahsool*), al-Nasafi (author of *al-Jawami*), al-Baydawi (author of *Minhaj al-Usul*), and others — their books are among the most significant in the field of usul al-fiqh.

Among the Hadith Scholars:

The hadith masters include: al-Daraqutni, Ibn Khuzaymah, Ibn Hibban, Abu Ya'la, al-Khatibi, al-Baghdadi, al-Bayhaqi (author of *al-Sunan*), al-Zayla'i (author of *al-Ahadith*), al-Haythami (author of *Majma' al-Zawa'id*), Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (author of *Fath al-Bari*), and others.

Among the Historians and Biographers:

Ibn 'Asakir (author of *Tarikh Dimashq*), al-Dhahabi (author of *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'*), al-Safadi (author of *al-Wafi*), Ibn Kathir (author of *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*), Ibn al-Athir (author of *al-Kamil*), and others.

Among the Theologians (Mutakallimun):

Al-Talmasani (author of *Shu'ab al-Iman*), Abd al-Qahir al-Baghdadi, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (author of *al-Matalib al-'Aliyah*), and others in the field of theology and doctrine.

Among the Logicians and Philosophers:

Al-Ayji, al-Amdi, al-Baji, al-Asfahani, al-Taftazani, and others.

Among the Quran Commentators:

Al-Mawardi (author of *al-Nukat wa al-'Uyun*), al-Khazin, al-Baq'a'i, al-Jamal.

Among the Quran Reciters:

Ibn al-Jazari (author of *al-Nashr*), al-Shihab al-Qastallani.

Among the Linguists and Grammarians:

Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi, Ibn Malik (author of *al-Alfiyyah*), Ibn Aqil, Ibn Hisham, al-Fayruzabadi (author of *al-Qamus*), and others.

Among the Sufi Masters:

Al-Qushayri (author of *al-Risalah al-Qushayriyyah*), Imam al-Ghazali, Imam Abd Allah ibn Alawi al-Haddad.

And countless other imams and scholars who contributed to the sciences and branches of knowledge across the Islamic tradition.

A Summary of the History of the Shafi'i Madhhab

The history of the madhhab can be summarized in five phases:

1. The Founding Phase

This began with the establishment of the school and ended with the death of Imam al-Shafi'i, may God be pleased with him. During this phase, he authored foundational works such as *al-Umm*.

2. The Transmission Phase

In this phase, his students and companions began spreading the madhhab. Among the most well-known of their writings is *Mukhtasar al-Muzani*.

3. The Expansion and Branching Phase

This stage witnessed the documentation and expansion of legal issues within the madhhab. Two major methodological approaches emerged:

- **The Iraqi Approach:** Led by Abu Hamid al-Isfarayini, followed by al-Mawardi, Abu al-Tayyib al-Tabari, al-Bandaniji, al-Mutamali, Salim al-Razi, and others.
- **The Khurasani (Persian) Approach:** Led by al-Qaffal al-Saghir Abu Bakr al-Marwazi, followed by Abu Muhammad al-Juwayni, al-Furani, al-Qadi Husayn, Abu Ali al-Sinji, al-Masudi, and others.

4. The Refinement Phase

This was a period in which the leading scholars of the madhhab, such as al-Rafi'i and al-Nawawi, reviewed and analyzed the views of the madhhab, clarifying its issues and positions. Their most important works in this phase include:

- *al-Muharrar* and *al-Sharh al-Kabir* by al-Rafi'i
- *al-Minhaj* and *al-Majmu'* (commentary on *al-Muhadhdhab*) by al-Nawawi
- *Rawdat al-Talibin* by al-Nawawi

In these works, they refined legal issues and weighed between competing reports and positions within the school.

5. The Consolidation Phase

This phase is marked by the efforts of two great scholars:

- **Ibn Hajar al-Haytami:** Author of *Tuhfat al-Muhtaj bi Sharh al-Minhaj*
- **al-Shams al-Ramli:** Author of *Nihayat al-Muhtaj ila Sharh al-Minhaj*

These two expanded upon the works of al-Nawawi and al-Rafi'i, clarified unresolved matters, and addressed new branches and questions. Their contributions shaped the mature form of the madhhab.

If the madhhab has been authenticated with agreement between al-Nawawi and al-Rafi'i, then it is considered the relied-upon position (mu'tamad). If there is disagreement between the two, the matter is referred to Ibn Hajar and al-Ramli. If they agree, that becomes the relied-upon view. In cases of disagreement between them, scholars of different regions tend to follow one over the other:

- Scholars of the Hijaz, Hadramawt, and Egypt follow Ibn Hajar.
 - Scholars of al-Sham and Egypt tend to prefer al-Ramli.
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On Other Authors and Works

As for other authors whose writings are often transmitted, their opinions are accepted in legal practice and fatwa unless they are known to contain error, carelessness, or weakness — something only recognized by those well-trained in this field, i.e one who has taken from Shuyookh in this field.

The Most Important Books of the Shafi'i Madhhab

Books of fiqh in the madhhab are generally divided into the following categories: foundational texts (mutun), commentaries (shuruh), glosses (hawashi), legal responsa (fatawa), and others.

Among the most important books currently circulated in circles of learning are:

Foundational Texts (Mutun)

- *Al-Risalah al-Jami'ah* by al-Sayyid Ahmad ibn Zayn al-Habashi
- *Safinat al-Najah* by Shaykh Salim ibn Sumayr al-Hadrami
- *Al-Muqaddimah al-Hadramiyyah* (in two versions: large and small) both by Shaykh Abd al-Rahman Bafadl
- *Al-Bayquniyyah* in poetry
- *Matn al-Ghayah wal-Taqrīb* by Imam Abu Shuja' al-Asfahani
- *Sufrat al-Zurrah* by Imam Shihab al-Din Ahmad ibn Zaydan
- *Umdat al-Salik*

Commentaries (Shuruh)

- *Nayl al-Raja* (on *Safinat al-Najah*) by Ahmad ibn Umar al-Shatiri
- *Yusr al-Karim* (on *al-Muqaddimah al-Hadramiyyah*) by Shaykh Sa'id ibn Muhammad Ba'ishin
- Commentary by Ibn Qasim al-Ghuzzi on *Matn Abu Shuja'*
- Commentary by al-Khatib al-Shirbini on *Matn Abu Shuja'*
- *Fath al-Muin* by Shaykh Zayn al-Din ibn Abd al-Aziz al-Malibari
- *Sharh al-Minhaj* by Imam al-Nawawi
- *Kanz al-Raghibin* by al-Muhalli
- Commentary by al-Khatib al-Shirbini (on *Mughni al-Muhtaj*)
- *Nihayat al-Muhtaj* by al-Shams al-Ramli
- *Tuhfat al-Muhtaj* by Ibn Hajar al-Haytami

Supercommentaries (Hawashi)

- Supercommentary by al-Bajuri on the commentary of Ibn Qasim
- Supercommentary by Sayyid Bakri ibn Shata al-Dimyati on *Fath al-Muin*
- Supercommentary by Abd Allah ibn Hijazi al-Sharqawi on *Sharh al-Tahrir*
- Supercommentary by the scholars of Madinah on the commentary of Ibn Hajar
- Supercommentary by Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Kurdi
- Supercommentary by al-Tarmasi
- Supercommentary by al-Khatib
- Supercommentary by Shaykh Sulayman al-Jamal (on multiple commentaries)

Additional Supercommentaries

- Supercommentary by Abd al-Hamid al-Shurwani and Ibn Qasim al-'Abbadi
- Supercommentary by al-Qalyubi
- Supercommentary by al-Umayrah on *Sharh al-Muhalli*
- Supercommentaries on *Nihayat al-Muhtaj* by al-Tarmasi and al-Rashidi

Collections of Legal Opinions (Fatawa)

- *Fatawa* of Sultan al-Ulama al-Izz ibn Abd al-Salam
- *Fatawa* of Imam al-Subki
- *Fatawa Nawawiyyah* by Imam al-Nawawi
- *Fatawa Kubra* by Ibn Hajar
- *Fatawa Bahjiyyah*
- *Fatawa Bughiyyat al-Mustarshidin* by al-Sayyid Abd al-Rahman al-Mashhur

Books on Legal Derivation of Hadith(Takhrij al-Hadith)

- *Talkhis al-Habir* by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani
- *Badr al-Munir* and *Tuhfat al-Muhtaj* (both noted for takhrij by Ibn al-Mulaqqin)

Books Supporting the Madhhab with Evidences

- *Nihayat al-Matlab fi Adillat al-Madhhab* by Imam al-Haramayn al-Juwayni
- *Al-Hawi al-Kabir* by al-Mawardi
- *Al-Majmu'* (commentary on *al-Muhadhdhab*) by Imam al-Nawawi
- *Fath al-Aziz* (also known as *Sharh al-Wajiz*)
- *Sharh al-Minhaj* by al-Subki
- *Sharh al-Muharrar* by al-Taqi al-Subki

Lexicons of Fiqh Terminology

- *Al-Misbah al-Munir* by al-Fayyumi
- *Tahrir al-Tanbih* and *Daqa'iq al-Minhaj* by al-Nawawi
- *Al-Nuzum al-Mustatab fi Hall Alfaz al-Madhhab* by Ibn Batal al-Rukni

Biographical Dictionaries of Shafi'i Scholars

- *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyyah* by Ibn Asim al-Abbadi
- *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyyah al-Kubra* by al-Subki
- *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyyah* by al-Isnawi
- *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyyah* by Qadi Shihab
- *Al-Tuhfa al-Bahiyyah fi Taqat al-Shafi'iyyah* (manuscript) by al-Sharqawi

Distinct Merits of the Shafi'i Madhhab

The Shafi'i school is distinguished by many unique features, of which we mention:

1. Strong Foundation on Textual Proof

Its founder, may Allah have mercy on him, based the school firmly on scriptural evidence from the Qur'an and Sunnah. He was a student of Imam Malik and learned directly from the followers of the Prophet's companions. Later scholars like Ahmad ibn Hanbal followed him, and the great hadith masters such as al-Bayhaqi and Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani served the madhhab by compiling evidences, demonstrating that many of the leading hadith scholars (*Huffadh, a memorizer of no less than 100,000 Ahadith with their respective chains of narration!*) were from the Shafi'i school.

2. Groundbreaking Work in Legal Theory

Imam al-Shafi'i was the first to codify the principles of jurisprudence (usul al-fiqh) in a structured work. His students and their students developed major reference works, such as those by al-Juwayni and al-Ghazali, that became foundational texts across madhhab lines.

3. Balanced Methodology

The madhhab strikes a balance between the rationalist approach (ahl al-ra'y) and the traditionalist approach (ahl al-hadith).

4. Widespread Ijtihad

A large number of independent jurists (mujtahidun) emerged within the madhhab and made contributions in every era and region, such as al-Izz ibn Abd al-Salam, Ibn Daqiq al-'Id, al-Subki, al-Suyuti, and many others.

5. Rich Literature

There is an abundance of books written by scholars verifying, refining, and supporting the madhhab throughout the centuries, making learning and research easier for students.

6. Global Reach

Followers of the madhhab are found across the Muslim world — from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Southeast Asia to India, Persia, Iraq, the Levant, the Arabian Gulf, Hijaz, Hadramawt, Yemen, Egypt, and even parts of East Africa.

7. Successive Revivers

At the start of nearly every century, a notable reviver (mujaddid) of the madhhab has emerged. Among them:

- Imam al-Shafi'i for the 2nd century
- Abu al-Abbas ibn Surayj for the 3rd
- Abu al-Tayyib al-Tabari for the 4th
- Abu Hamid al-Ghazali for the 5th
- Fakhr al-Din al-Razi for the 6th
- Imam al-Nawawi for the 7th
- Al-Isnawi for the 8th
- Ibn Hajar al-Haytami for the 9th
- Al-Suyuti for the 10th