

Introduction to the Shafi'i Madhhab- Taqirrat al-Sadidah

Liban Hussein

2025-05-06

Table of contents

| | | |
|----------|---|----------|
| 1 | Al-Fiqh al-Manhaji | 2 |
| 1.0.1 | A Systematic Manual According to the Madhhab of Imam al-Shafi'i . | 2 |
| 2 | Introduction | 3 |
| 2.1 | Organization | 3 |
| 2.1.1 | Chapters Currently in Progress | 3 |
| 3 | Introduction to the Shafi'i School | 4 |
| 3.1 | The Founder of the School | 4 |
| 3.2 | The Imams of the School | 5 |
| 3.2.1 | 3rd Century | 5 |
| 3.2.2 | 4th Century | 6 |
| 3.2.3 | 5th Century | 6 |
| 3.2.4 | 6th Century | 6 |
| 3.2.5 | 7th Century | 6 |
| 3.2.6 | 8th Century | 6 |
| 3.2.7 | 9th Century | 7 |
| 3.2.8 | 10th Century | 7 |
| 3.2.9 | 11th Century | 7 |
| 3.2.10 | 12th Century | 7 |
| 3.2.11 | 13th Century | 7 |
| 3.2.12 | 14th Century and Later | 8 |
| 3.2.13 | Among the Usulis (Legal Theorists) | 8 |
| 3.2.14 | Among the Hadith Scholars | 8 |
| 3.2.15 | Among the Historians and Biographers | 8 |
| 3.2.16 | Among the Theologians (Mutakallimeen) | 8 |
| 3.2.17 | Among the Quran Commentators | 9 |
| 3.2.18 | Among the Quran Reciters | 9 |
| 3.2.19 | Among the Linguists and Grammarians | 9 |

| | | |
|--------|---|----|
| 3.2.20 | Among the Sufi Masters | 9 |
| 3.3 | A Summary of the History of the Shafi'i Madhhab | 9 |
| 3.3.1 | 1. The Founding Phase | 9 |
| 3.3.2 | 2. The Transmission Phase | 10 |
| 3.3.3 | 3. The Expansion and Branching Phase | 10 |
| 3.3.4 | 4. The Codification Phase | 10 |
| 3.3.5 | 5. The Consolidation Phase | 11 |
| 3.4 | On Other Authors and Works | 11 |
| 3.5 | The Most Important Books of the Shafi'i Madhhab | 11 |
| 3.5.1 | Foundational Texts (<i>Mutun</i>) | 12 |
| 3.5.2 | Commentaries (<i>Shuruh</i>) | 12 |
| 3.5.3 | Institutional Approaches | 12 |
| 3.5.4 | Supercommentaries (<i>Hawashi</i>) | 13 |
| 3.5.5 | Legal Opinions (<i>Fatawa</i>) | 13 |
| 3.5.6 | Works on Takhrij al-Hadith | 14 |
| 3.5.7 | Books Supporting the Madhhab with Evidences | 14 |
| 3.5.8 | Fiqh Lexicons | 14 |
| 3.5.9 | Biographical Dictionaries | 14 |
| 3.6 | Distinct Merits of the Shafi'i Madhhab | 14 |
| 3.6.1 | 1. Strong Foundation on Textual Proof | 15 |
| 3.6.2 | 2. Groundbreaking Work in Legal Theory | 15 |
| 3.6.3 | 3. Balanced Methodology | 15 |
| 3.6.4 | 4. Widespread Ijtihad | 15 |
| 3.6.5 | 5. Rich Literature | 15 |
| 3.6.6 | 6. Global Reach | 15 |
| 3.6.7 | 7. Successive Revivers | 16 |

1 Al-Fiqh al-Manhaji

1.0.1 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

(c) 2025 Liban Hussein

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.

i 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

2 Introduction

The long-term goal of this project is to provide an accessible, organized study companion for English-speaking students of sacred law, rooted in reliable Shafi’i methodology and sources (as taught by Shaykh Mahdi Lock)

2.1 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 works like *Taqrirat al-Sadidah*
-

2.1.1 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. Before going into Fiqh al-Manhaji itself, an introduction to the foundation and origin of the Madhab through a translation of the beginning portion of Taqirrat al-Sadidah is provided.

! 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.

3 Introduction to the Shafi'i School

3.1 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 ﷺ 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, to closely accompany 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 and became qualified to give Fatawa at the age of 15. He engaged deeply in Arabic linguistics and poetry and was praised for his mastery. Even al-Asma'i (a transmitter of Arab poetry) 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' ibn Jarrah, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Shaybani, the jurist of Iraq.

He composed the book *Al-Hujjah* and established what became known as the old school of thought. Major scholars took knowledge from him, including Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Abu Thawr, and others.

He turned towards Egypt, revising many of his earlier legal opinions. There, he founded his new legal school.

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 Allah 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.

i The Humility of the Imam and the Wisdom of His Legacy

Imam al-Shafi'i once said:

"I wish that the people would learn this knowledge and none of it be attributed to me."

Ironically, or perhaps providentially, his du'a was accepted. The enduring beauty of the Shafi'i school is that it was polished, codified, and brought to legal maturity by the hands of scholars after him — such as **al-Ghazali**, **al-Rafi'i**, and **al-Nawawi** — who preserved the madhab in the clearest possible form.

3.2 The Imams of the School

Core Students from the 3rd Century:

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

3.2.1 3rd Century

Transmitted the old madhhab:

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

3.2.2 4th Century

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

3.2.3 5th Century

al-Mawardi, Abu Ishaq al-Shirazi, Abu Muhammad al-Juwayni, Imam al-Haramayn, al-Bayhaqi, al-Bandaniji, al-Muhamali, al-Qaffal al-Saghir al-Marwazi, al-Qadi Husayn, al-Furani, al-Masudi, Ibn al-Sabbagh, al-Mutawalli

3.2.4 6th Century

al-Ghazali (Hujjat al-Islam), al-Shashi, al-Baghawi, al-Imrani

3.2.5 7th Century

Ibn al-Salah, al-Qazwini, al-Izz ibn Abd al-Salam, al-Nawawi, al-Rafi'i, Ibn al-Firkah, Ibn Daqiq al-Id

3.2.6 8th Century

Ibn al-Rif'ah, al-Taqi al-Subki, al-Qamuli, al-Isnawi, al-Adhra'i, al-Bulqini, Ibn al-Mulaqqin, al-Zarkashi, Ibn al-Naqib, al-Sharif al-Barizi, al-Muhibb al-Tabari

3.2.7 9th Century

al-Wali al-Iraqi, al-Taqi al-Hisni, al-Shihab ibn Raslan, Ibn Qadi Shuhbah, Ibn al-Muzajjad, al-Damiri,
al-Jalal al-Mahalli, al-Afqahisi, Ibn al-Muqri, Abd Allah ibn Abd al-Rahman Ba-Fadl

3.2.8 10th Century

al-Jalal al-Suyuti, Zakariyya al-Ansari, al-Khatib al-Shirbini, al-Shihab al-Ramli, al-Shams al-Ramli,
Ibn Hajar al-Haytami, Abd Allah ibn Umar Ba-Makhrama, Ibn Qasim al-Abbadi, Ba Qushayr, Ibn Ziyad

3.2.9 11th Century

Burhan al-Birmawi, Ali al-Shabaramilsi, and others

3.2.10 12th Century

al-Bajuri, al-Sharqawi, al-Bujayrimi, Abd Allah ibn Husayn Bal Faqih, Abd Allah ibn Ahmad Basudan,
Sa'id ibn Muhammad Ba'ishin, Abd al-Rahman ibn Sulayman al-Ahdal, Ali Basabrin, and others

3.2.11 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 Ba Jammah, 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, and others

3.2.12 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.

3.2.13 Among the Usulis (Legal Theorists)

al-Juwayni (*al-Burhan*), **al-Ghazali** (*al-Mustasfa*), **al-Razi** (*al-Mahsool*), **Taj al-Subki** (*Jam' al-Jawami*), **al-Baydawi** (*Minhaj al-Usul*)

3.2.14 Among the Hadith Scholars

al-Daraqutni, **Ibn Khuzaymah**, **Ibn Hibban**, **Abu Nu'aym**, **Ibn al-Mundhir**, **al-Khatibi**, **Khatib al-Baghdadi**,
al-Bayhaqi (*al-Sunan*), **al-Iraqi** (*Alfiyyah*), **al-Haythami** (*Majma' al-Zawa'id*), **Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani** (*Fath al-Bari*)

3.2.15 Among the Historians and Biographers

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

3.2.16 Among the Theologians (Mutakallimeen)

al-Halimi (*Shu'ab al-Iman*), **Abd al-Qahir al-Baghdadi**, **Fakhr al-Din al-Razi** (*al-Matalib al-'Aliyah*),
Adud al-Ayyi, **al-Aamidi**, **Ulaa al-Baji**, **al-Asfahani**, **al-Taftazani**

3.2.17 Among the Quran Commentators

al-Mawardi, al-Khazin, al-Baghawi (*Ma'alim al-Tanzil*)

3.2.18 Among the Quran Reciters

al-Ja'bari, Ibn al-Jazari (*al-Nashr*), al-Qastallani

3.2.19 Among the Linguists and Grammarians

Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi, Ibn Malik (*al-Alfiyyah*), Ibn Aqil, Ibn Hisham, al-Fayruzabadi (*al-Qamus*)

3.2.20 Among the Sufi Masters

al-Qushayri (*al-Risalah al-Qushayriyyah*), al-Ghazali, 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.

3.3 A Summary of the History of the Shafi'i Madhhab

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

3.3.1 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*.

3.3.2 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*.

i The Legacy of al-Muzani and the Departure of al-Tahawi

Al-Muzani, one of the closest students of Imam al-Shafi'i, played a pivotal role in transmitting the madhhab. His *Mukhtasar* became a foundational reference for later scholars.

His nephew, Abu Ja'far al-Tahawi, initially studied under him in the Shafi'i school. However, when al-Tahawi showed signs of leaning toward the Hanafi madhhab, al-Muzani reportedly remarked:

“You will never attain a high rank in knowledge.”

Feeling dismissed and underestimated, al-Tahawi left the Shafi'i school and committed himself to the Hanafi tradition. In time, he rose to become one of its most authoritative jurists—authoring works like *Sharh Ma'ani al-Athar* and *Aqidah al-Tahawiyyah*, which continue to be studied across madhhabs to this day.

3.3.3 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-Mahamili, Sulaym 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.

3.3.4 4. The Codification Phase

This stage was carried out at the hands of the two great scholars of the madhhab: al-Rafi'i and al-Nawawi. Among the most important works produced in this phase are:

- *al-Muharrar al-Sharh al-Saghir* and *al-Sharh al-Kabir*, all by al-Rafi'i, which are themselves based on al-Ghazali's *al-Wajiz*.
- *al-Minhaj*, *al-Majmu' Sharh al-Muhadhdhab*, and *Rawdat al-Talibin*, all by al-Nawawi, which likewise draw upon *al-Wajiz*.

In these works, both scholars refined and systematically arranged the issues of the madhhab, clarified the evidences, and reconciled between the varying narrations and positions within the school.

3.3.5 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*

In these works, both scholars compiled and analyzed rulings from across the school. They clarified points left unaddressed by earlier jurists (namely Nawawi and Rafi'i), referenced various transmitted positions, and organized them into a coherent legal system covering the entire breadth of jurisprudential topics.

i The Authority of Ibn Hajar and al-Ramli

Once the madhhab had been firmly established through the works of al-Nawawi and al-Rafi'i, it continued to flourish at the hands of Ibn Hajar and al-Ramli. Later scholars accepted their writings as authoritative in fatwa.

- When Ibn Hajar and al-Ramli agree on a matter, their position is adopted as the **relied-upon** (mu'tamad).
- If they differ, the **opinion of al-Nawawi** is preferred.
- If al-Nawawi was silent on the matter, **either of the two** may be relied upon.
- If they both disagreed on a matter not addressed by earlier scholars, **the people of the Hijaz and Hadramawt** prefer Ibn Hajar, whereas **Egyptians and Syrians** often favor al-Ramli.

3.4 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.

3.5 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*), supercommentaries (*hawashi*), legal responses (*fatawa*), and others.

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

3.5.1 Foundational Texts (*Mutun*)

- *Al-Risalah al-Jami'ah* by **Ahmad ibn Zayn al-Habashi**
- *Safinat al-Najah* by **Salim ibn Sumayr al-Hadrami**
- *Al-Muqaddimah al-Hadramiyyah* (both large and small versions) by **Abd al-Rahman Ba Fadl**
- *Al-Yaqut al-Nafis* by **Ibn Ahmad ibn Umar al-Shatiri**
- *Matn al-Ghayah wal-Taqrib* by **Abu Shuja' al-Asfahani**
- *Safwat al-Zubad* by **Shihab al-Din Ahmad ibn Raslan**
- *Umdat al-Salik* by **Ibn Naqib**

3.5.2 Commentaries (*Shuruh*)

- *Nayl al-Raja* — on *Safinat al-Najah* by **Ahmad ibn Umar al-Shatiri**
- *Bushra al-Karim* — on *al-Muqaddimah al-Hadramiyyah* by **Sa'id ibn Muhammad Ba'ishin**
- Commentary on *Matn Abi Shuja'* by **Ibn Qasim al-Ghazzi**
- *Al-Iqna'* by **al-Khatib al-Shirbini**
- *Fath al-Allam* — on *Murshid al-Anam* by **al-Jurdani**
- *Fath al-Wahhab* — on *al-Minhaj* by **Zakariya al-Ansari**
- *Fath al-Muin* — on *Qurrat al-Ayn* by **Zayn al-Din ibn Abd al-Aziz al-Malibari**

3.5.2.1 Major Commentaries on Imam al-Nawawi's *Minhaj*

- *Kanz al-Raghibin* by **al-Muhalli**
- *Mughni al-Muhtaj* by **al-Khatib al-Shirbini**
- *Nihayat al-Muhtaj* by **al-Ramli**
- *Tuhfat al-Muhtaj* by **Ibn Hajar al-Haytami**

! Why These Commentaries Matter

These commentaries form the backbone of Shafi'i legal reasoning. They are not merely explanatory — they shape how the madhhab is transmitted, applied in fatwa, and taught around the world.

- They clarify ambiguous expressions in the core texts (*mutun*).
- They reconcile variant opinions and serve as the primary references for jurists and students alike.
- They preserve the reasoning of the madhhab's foremost authorities, including **Ibn Hajar**, **al-Ramli**, and **al-Nawawi**.

3.5.3 Institutional Approaches

In institutions like **al-Azhar**, it is common for two or three major commentaries to be read alongside the *mutun* during lessons with the teacher. This approach emphasizes

layered analysis, discussion, and legal evaluation in the classroom.

In contrast, in the **Hijaz**, particularly in **Yemen**, teachers focus primarily on the *mutun* in class. Students are expected to study the commentaries independently after mastering the texts. This fosters precision, retention, and discipline in the early stages of learning.

Each tradition carries its strengths — al-Azhar cultivates comparative analysis, while the Hijazi model emphasizes firm mastery before engaging multiple views.

3.5.4 Supercommentaries (*Hawashi*)

- Supercommentary by **al-Bajuri** on the commentary of **Ibn Qasim** on *Matn Abi Shuja'*
- Supercommentary by **Bakri ibn Shatta al-Dimyati** on *Fath al-Muin*
- Supercommentary by **Abd Allah ibn Hajjazi al-Sharqawi** on *Sharh al-Tahrir*
- Madinan tradition of supercommentaries on **Ibn Hajar's** *Muqaddimah*, notably:
 - **Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Kurdi**
 - **al-Tarmisi**
- **al-Bujayrimi** on *al-Iqna'* of **al-Khatib**
- **al-Jamal** and **al-Bujayrimi** on *Sharh al-Minhaj*
- Further supercommentaries on *Minhaj al-Talibin* exist

i Unpublished Treasures

Some supercommentaries remain in manuscript form and are in the process of being published. Among them:

- **al-Dimyari** on various texts
- **al-Azhari**
- **Taqi al-Subki**

Other important supercommentaries include:

- **Abd al-Hamid al-Sharwani** and **Ibn Qasim al-Ubadi** on *Tuhfat al-Muhtaj*
- **al-Qalubi** and **Umayrah** on *Sharh al-Mahalli*
- **al-Shirbini** and **al-Rashidi** on *Nihayat al-Muhtaj*

3.5.5 Legal Opinions (*Fatawa*)

- *Fatawa* of **al-Izz ibn Abd al-Salam**
- *Fatawa* of **al-Subki**
- *Fatawa al-Suyuti* (al-Hawi lil-Fatawi)
- *Fatawa Nawawiyyah* by **al-Nawawi**
- *Fatawa Kubra* by **Ibn Hajar**

- *Fatawa Bamakhramah*
- *Bughiyyat al-Mustarshidin* by **Abd al-Rahman al-Mashhur**

3.5.6 Works on Takhrij al-Hadith

- *Talkhis al-Habir* by **Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani**
- *Badr al-Munir* and *Tuhfat al-Muhtaj* by **Ibn al-Mulaqqin**

3.5.7 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'* by **al-Nawawi**
- *Fath al-Aziz* by **al-Rafi'i**
- *Sharh al-Minhaj* by **Taqi al-Din al-Subki**

3.5.8 Fiqh Lexicons

- *al-Misbah al-Munir* by **al-Fayyumi**
- *Tahrir al-Tanbih* and *Daqaiq al-Minhaj* by **al-Nawawi**
- *al-Nazm al-Mustadhab fi Hall Alfaz al-Madhhab* by **Ibn Batal al-Rukbi**

3.5.9 Biographical Dictionaries

- *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyyah* by **Ibn Asim al-Abbadi**
- *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyyah al-Kubra* by **Taj al-Din al-Subki**
- *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyyah* by **al-Isnawi**
- *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyyah* by **Qadi Shuhbah**
- *al-Tuhfa al-Bahiyyah fi Taqat al-Shafi'iyyah* by **al-Sharqawi**

3.6 Distinct Merits of the Shafi'i Madhhab

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

3.6.1 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.

3.6.2 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.

3.6.3 3. Balanced Methodology

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

3.6.4 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.

3.6.5 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.

3.6.6 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.

3.6.7 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