



Shaykh Abū al-Khayr on the left and *Shaykh* Makkī al-Kettānī on the right

***Shaykh Abū al-Khayr Al-Maydānī 1293-1380=1876-1961 (Syria)*¹**

Muḥammad Khayr (Abu Al-Khayr) ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn Ibn Bakrī Al-Maydānī Al-Ḥanafī Al-Naqshbandī Al-Mujaddidī Al-Nadari was the *Shaykh* of the Levant and one of its senior scholars. He was a *faqīh*, *muḥaddith* and a man of immense piety and fear of Allah and love for the Prophet. He cried profusely out of the fear of Allah.

He was born in Damascus in 1875-76 (1293) in the district of Maydān of poor but pious parents.

After his fathers demise, his mother moved with him to another locality and he completed his early education at the Al-Rushdiyah School, than the Anbar School. He was always first in class. When his higher education was completed, he went to Istanbul, Turkey to enter the military academy, but for reasons Allah wanted, he returned to Damascus to finish some paper work. His mother sent him with a question to *Shaykh* Salīm Almsūtī. This *Shaykh* immediately realized that this young boy was righteous and intelligent and asked him to study the Islamic Sciences. *Shaykh* Al-Maydānī wanted his mothers approval first, so *Shaykh* Salīm went to her and convinced her. He told her that her son would be the *Shaykh* of Shām (Syria). He was closely attached to his *shaykh*, with who he studied Fiqh and Hadith.

Some of his other teachers were:

- *Shaykh* ‘Isā Al-Kurdi from whom he took the Naqshbandī Order. After *Shaykh* Salīm passed away, *Shaykh* Abū Al-Khayr stayed with *Shaykh* ‘Isā until he passed away. He received *ijāza* from *Shaykh* ‘Isa and even married his daughter.
- *Shaykh* Muḥammad Kutb who was the *Shaykh* al-Qurra in his time.

¹ Prepared by Shoayb Ahmed with additional information from an article by *Shaykh* Ḥusayn Ṣa’biyya.

- *Shaykh* Amīn Suwayd, with who he read and studied *Sharh Ibn Aqīl* and *Al-Ushmuni*.
- *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Ḥakīm Al-Afghānī who emulated the Ṣaḥāba in his ways. He was a renowned Hanafi jurist and is said to have been a noted commentator of *al-Bidāya*, *al-Kanḥ* and other books.
- *Shaykh* Sultan Al-Dāghistānī with who he studied *Sharh Al-Daghistani*, *Sharh Al-Maqsūd fi Al-Sarf* and *Taīm Al-Muta’llim*.
- *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Dibs wa Zayt
- *Shaykh* ‘Aṭā Allah Al-Kasm under him read part of *Al-Dur Al-Mukhtar*.
- *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Al-Burhānī under who he studied *Al-Ajrūmiya* and *Al-Sanusiya* in Tawḥīd.
- *Shaykh* Bakrī Al-‘Aṭṭār with who he read some of *Sunan Ibn Majah*.
- *Shaykh* Muhyidīn ibn Salīm Almsūtī under who he studied *Sharh Sh. Khalid Al-Aḥhari* and *Qatr*.
- *Shaykh* Maḥmūd Al-‘Attār under who he studied *Al-‘Awāmil wa Al-Aḥbār* and *Al-Kāfiya*.

In addition, he studied and read *Al-Sahibayn*, *Al-Jami’ Al-Sagheer* in Hadith and in Fiqh he studied *Nur Al-Idāh*, *Muniyat Al-Musallī*, *Al-Qudūri*, *Nanweer Al-Absaar* with various commentaries. He also read *Fath Al-Ghaib fi Shaqqi Al-Jaib* by *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Qādir Al-Jilānī and some grammar. His attachment to his teacher, *Shaykh* Salīm was so strong that his *shaykh* said to him, “There is nothing in my chest, except that I have granted it to you”. He received *Ijazā* from *Shaykh* Salīm.

As a student he ensured that he prepared the lesson thoroughly before proceeding to the class. When he read *al-Hidāya* with *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Ḥakīm al-Afghānī he found that his own understanding corresponded to his teachers.

After his studies, he began teaching. He found himself attached to imparting his knowledge through teaching. He used to awake about one and a half hour before Fajr during which he engaged in voluntary Ṣalāt including Ṣalāt al-Tasbīḥ after which he sat facing the direction of the Qibla engaged in seeking forgiveness (*istighfār*) and after Fajr he read some *adhkār* and about two juz of the Qurān, after which he taught till the morning. This session was allocated to Hadith, after which there was a lesson in Fiqh. In addition he conducted one or two lessons after Zuhur, ‘Asr and ‘Ishā Ṣalāt either in Jami’ Al-Towbah or in Jami’ Abi Bakr Al-Ajuri. His teaching approach focused on trying to instill within the student the true spirit of Islam and the Sharia’ and to expose them to the secrets of the Qurān. In this way such scholars would emerge who would carry the responsibility of da’wa and return the former glory to the Umma. He travelled to the Hijaz to be in close proximity to the House of Allah and to complete his quest for knowledge. His first visit was in 1903 (1321) which was followed by visits in 1923 (1343), 1942 and 1943 (1363). During the last two visits, he used to sit in the Haram where students and scholars gathered around him. This was mainly after ‘Isha and Fajr. With the result a number of scholars from the Hijaz benefitted and narrated from him. Some of them were:

- *Shaykh* Muḥammad Amīn Kutbī
- *Shaykh* ‘Alawī Al-Māliki
- *Shaykh* Yahyā Amān
- *Shaykh* Muḥammad Khayr Al-Pakistani
- *Shaykh* Mukhtār Makhdūm
- *Shaykh* Ḥusayn ‘Abd al-Ghanī Al-Falambāni
- *Shaykh* Ṣāliḥ Idrīs Al-Kalantānī

- *Shaykh* Muḥammad Yāsīn Al-Fādānī
- *Shaykh* Zakariya ibn ‘Abd Allah Billa
- *Shaykh* Khalīl Ṭayiba
- *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda

He visited cities in Syria like Homs, Hama, Aleppo. He also visited Beirut, Tripoli, Al-Quds and Baghdad.

Shaykh Abū Al-Khayr was proficient in Turkish, Persian, Kurdish, French and was well acquainted with English and at times would even discuss matters related to Medicine, Interpretation of Dreams, Algebra and Physics. He was well versed in many sciences, but was renowned as a scholar of Hadith. He was a specialist in the Hanafi *madhhab* and memorized a substantial amount in Sīra and Islamic History. When he discussed Sīra and he related some sad incident, he cried and very often the listeners wept along with him. In poetry he had memorized poems of contemporary and classical poets. He had a unique style in teaching grammar and morphology. He was appointed as the Head of the Ulama League in 1946 (1365). Two books or treatises are credited to him. One, on the biography of his *shaykh*, *Shaykh* ‘Isā Al-Kurdi, and the other in Usul-Hadith. His preoccupation in teaching did not give him the chance to write extensively. His lessons concentrated mainly on Fiqh, Hadith and Tasawwuf.

Shaykh Maḥmūd Rankūsī and *Shaykh* Lutfī Al-Fayūmī were two of his famous students.

He was living example and embodiment of the Qurān and Sunna. On seeing him a person would be reminded of Allah. He used to say, “Allah has created me for the people and not for myself”. He had some unique qualities that very few people could match him in, namely his kindness, humility, his obedience to his parents and teachers, his mercy and compassion to his students and his excessive *dhikr*. He used to present them with gifts on occasions of marriage or when they were blessed with the birth of a baby. He slept very little at night. He had a passion for all the sciences and this is evident from his amazing library and his many students. He devoted a lot of attention to solving peoples problems and answering their questions, at any time, even if the person came at night and he was asleep, then he awoke. It is well known about him, that he did not sleep until he answered someone’s question or learned something new.

He passed away on a Friday, the 17th day of the month of Ramadān in 1961 (1380). *Shaykh* Maḥmūd Rankūsī led the janāza Ṣalāt which was attended by many ‘*ulama*. He was regarded by some as one of the *awliya* in Shām along with *Shaykh* Amīn Suwayd and *Shaykh* Ḥāfiz Al-Ḥajjār.