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A Living Example of a Scholar's Perseverance and Diligence

The Master Linguist al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān 'Awf al-Kūnī

By Abū Afnān Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh (حفظه الله)

On my visit to Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān 'Awf al-Kūnī¹ (حفظه الله) on Monday 2nd Jumādā al Awwal 1438, he mentioned that there was a manuscript of the book *Al-Jāmi' Bayna al-Munṭaqā wa al-Tamhīd* from Abū Ishāq al-Ishbīlī, which is an explanation of Imām Mālik's *Al-Muwattā'*, compiled from al-Bājī's *Al-Munṭaqā* and Ibn 'Abd Al-Barr's *Al-Tamhīd*, and that Shaykh 'Aṭīyyah Muḥammad Sālim wanted this manuscript transcribed by hand, as the original was written in the script commonly found in the *Maghrib* and other parts of Africa.

Subsequently, Shaykh 'Abd Al-Rahmān proceeded to copy the manuscript by hand until he completed it, which was only a portion of the original book and numbered close to 1,000

¹ The Shaykh resides in *al-Madīnah* but is originally from Burkina Faso and is a student of Shaykh Muḥammad Amīn al-Shanqītī.

Shaykh 'Abd Allāh al-Bukhārī listed him as one of his *Shuyūkh* and described him as a 'Master Linguist'. The Shaykh participates in knowledge-based conferences in and outside of *Madīnah* and is known for his proficiency in the books of Arabic grammar and poetry, *Usūl al-Fiqh* and *Fiqh al-Mālikī*, as well as having explained the *Muqaddimah* of *Ibn Abī Zayd* numerous times. He has two published books, an explanation of the *Lāmīyah* of *al-Shanfarah* along with its grammatical analysis, and an explanation and grammatical analysis of the poem of *Ka'b Ibn Zuhayr*.



"Truth has Come and Falsehood has Vanished" ﴿جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ﴾
al-Qur'aan, Soorah al-Isla 17:81



handwritten pages. It took *Shaykh ‘Abd Al-Rahmān* nearly six months to transcribe it, as he wrote every day after ‘Asr until he became tired.

Upon completing the manuscript, *Shaykh ‘Abd Al-Rahmān* presented it to *Shaykh ‘Atīyyah Muḥammad Sālim* as requested and then asked the *Shaykh* if he could machine-copy what he had written out by hand. Because *Shaykh ‘Atīyyah* needed it, he refused but allowed *Shaykh ‘Abd Al-Rahmān* to copy the original manuscript.

Upon machine-copying the original manuscript, *Shaykh ‘Abd Al-Rahmān* transcribed it again by hand for his personal use, which took him only five months to complete the second time. The *Shaykh* mentioned that he benefitted tremendously from this book and that *Shaykh ‘Atīyyah*'s refusal to let him copy his first handwritten transcription was in reality a benefit in disguise; he then quoted the Arabic proverb, “رب ضارة نافعة” (It is possible that sometimes what is harmful benefits).

The *Shaykh* recounted this story after I asked him about two of the explanations of *Al-Muwatṭa*: *Al-Tamhīd* and *Al-Muntaqā*. After relating the story to me, the *Shaykh* showed me his handwritten copy and had me read to him the very last page in the book, in which he recounted the story along with the dates and the period of time he took to hand-write each copy.

Throughout my reading to him, the *Shaykh* made *du’ā’* for *Shaykh ‘Atīyyah* and kept saying, “تلك الأيام قد مضت” (Those are the days that have passed).

It was a beneficial sitting and a real-life glimpse into the diligence of the *mashāyikh* and the immense value they gave/give to acquiring knowledge, books and manuscripts.

