

Professor, Writer, Scholar

Imam Zaid Shakir



Photo by Robin Holland

“A leading intellectual light”

-- *The New York Times*

“One of the towering principal voices not only in contemporary Islam but in American society”

-- *Dr. Cornel West*

Imam Zaid Shakir, a gifted scholar, author and lecturer, is fast becoming one of the most influential voices for Islam in the West as well as a compelling force for the improvement of race relations in America. Trained in both the academic and religious intellectual traditions, Imam Shakir is uniquely qualified as a commentator on the substantial issues of our time.

Born in Berkeley, California, to a family descended from African, Irish and Native American roots, Imam Shakir spent his formative years in housing projects. These early experiences instilled in him a compassionate and realistic work ethic, as well as an unshakeable desire for social change and economic justice. And, as an American who came of age during the civil rights movement, he brings both sensitivity about African-American and poverty issues and scholarly discipline to his faith-based work. It was while serving

in the Air Force that he accepted Islam in 1977. He remained in the military for four years and received an accommodation medal for his dedicated service.

Imam Shakir holds degrees from American University (Washington, D.C.), Rutgers University and Abu Noor University (Syria), having immersed himself in the intense study of Arabic, Islamic law, Quranic studies and spirituality with some of the top traditional Islamic scholars of our age. While a professor at Southern Connecticut State University, he also served as interfaith council chaplain at Yale University.

Having lectured at such universities as Stanford, UCLA, Berkeley, Yale, Harvard, Columbia, Rutgers and Temple, Imam Shakir has served as resident scholar at the Zaytuna Institute, in Hayward, California.

Writer of many essays and commentaries in national publications, he is the

author of “Heirs of the Prophets” and “Scattered Pictures: Reflections Of An American Muslim.” He also wrote an introduction to his mother’s memoir, “Dear Self: A Year in the Life of a Welfare Mother” -- a ForeWord Magazine Book-of-the-Year Award winner. Richelene Mitchell’s journal, found by her children after her death, offers a heart-aching yet compassionate look at dealing with poverty and racism in America.

Most recently, “Treatise for the Seekers of Guidance” -- which deals with the purification of the soul -- has been translated in its entirety and explained with an in-depth commentary by Imam Shakir. This new literary work with moving translation and insightful narrative will prove to be invaluable literature of enduring benefit and is astoundingly relevant for our individual lives and society at large.



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