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Imams of the Valley

AMIN BUXTON



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CONTENTS

Foreword	9
Imam al-Muhajir	11
Imam 'Ali bin 'Alawi “Khali' Qasam”	15
Al-Faqih al-Muqaddam	17
Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqaf	21
Shaykh 'Umar al-Mihdar	25
Imam al-'Aydarus al-Akbar	28
Imam al-'Adani	32
Shaykh Abu Bakr bin Salim	36
Habib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-Rahman al-'Attas	41
Imam al-Haddad	47
Habib Ahmad bin Zayn al-Habashi	53
Habib Abd al-Rahman Balfaqih	62
Habib 'Abdullah bin Husayn bin Tahir	68
Habib 'Ali al-Habashi	74

Habib 'Abdullah bin 'Umar al-Shatiri	78
Habib 'Umar bin Sumayt	84
Habib Muhammad bin Salim bin Hafiz	89
Habib Ibrahim bin 'Aqil bin Yahya	93
Habib Ahmad Mashhur al-Haddad	100
Habib Muhammad bin 'Abdullah al-Haddar	107
Habib 'Abd al-Qadir al-Saqqaf	114
Habib "Sa'd" al-'Aydarus	121
References and Diagrams	127
Final Word	134



FOREWORD

All praise is due to Allah, Whose bounty is limitless, and peace and blessings be upon His Beloved Muhammad and upon his pure family, noble Companions and all those who follow their path until the Last Day. Love for the family of the Messenger ﷺ and the pious members of his Ummah is one of the foundations of this religion but attainment of this love requires knowledge. The following pages are an attempt to acquaint the English speaker with some of the greatest Imams of the 'Alawi Way, who made the Valley of Hadramawt their home. It is hoped that this acquaintance will lead to love for them and attachment to them, and be of the utmost benefit in this life and the next. The way of these Imams was to prefer obscurity and they are probably better known in the Heavenly realm than on this Earth. However, there is a need for us to come to know them.

Volumes could not do justice to any of the Imams mentioned here and words cannot express the stations which they reached. However, it is hoped that such an introduction can be a door leading to greater things.

Some of the teachers and pupils of each Imam are mentioned to illustrate the importance of the concept of *sanad*, the unbroken chain which connects Imam to Imam and preserves the purity and authenticity of the knowledge

IMAMS OF THE VALLEY

which they transmit. Dates are generally given in the Hijri calendar, although some corresponding dates are given.

We thank Allah for the presence of those who embody the way of these great Imams in the times in which we live. At their forefront is sayyidi Habib 'Umar bin Hafiz and Habib Abu Bakr bin 'Ali al-Mashhur, who represent the final link in this amazing chain. We have recently lost the physical presence of Habib "Sa`d" al-`Aydarus but his memory lives on. May Allah reward Shaykh Munir Ba Zuhayr, who, along with the forementioned, was the inspiration for this work. May Allah also reward Shaykh Abdurragman Khan and Shaykh Riyad Saloojee for their assistance. May Allah preserve them and increase them.



IMAM AL-MUHAJIR

His Lineage

He is the Imam, al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far al-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zain al-'Abidin, bin Husayn al-Sibt, bin 'Ali bin Abu Talib and Fatima al-Zahra, the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

His Life

He was born in Basrah, Iraq, around 273 Hijri (886 CE). He grew up under the supervision of his parents in an environment surrounded by scholars and living examples of prophetic character. He memorised the Qur'an and then mastered the sciences of the Sacred Law until he reached the rank of *mujtahid*. He also had his own hadith collection (*musnad*) and was held in great esteem by Imam al-Tabari. He kept the company of Bishr al-Harith, amongst others.

He had vast wealth and influence in Iraq but was immersed in the acquisition of knowledge, worship and calling to Allah. He could easily have attained political power but he knew the danger this entailed to his religion, and when his brother attained a position of leadership, he admonished him until he left it. His inner sight allowed him to witness the calamities and tribulations that would

take place in Iraq, and he realised the greatness of the sacred trust that he was carrying in his loins. Thus, he emigrated, following the commandment of his Lord: 'Therefore flee to Allah,'¹ and following his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, in his command to leave places of tribulation. It was for this emigration that he became known as *al-Muhajir il-Allah*, the one who emigrates to Allah.

He left Basrah in 317 with his wife, his son, 'Abdullah (who out of his humility preferred to be known as 'Ubaydullah or "the small servant of Allah"), and 'Ubaydullah's sons, Jadid, Basri, and 'Alawi. With them also was Sharif Muhammad bin Sulayman, the grandfather of the Ahdal family and Sharif Ahmad al-Qudaymi, the grandfather of the Qudaymi family, and a group of 70 people. His son Muhammad remained in Iraq to take care of their property and wealth. First, the Imam went to Medina, where he stayed with his relatives for an entire year. In the same year, members of the Qaramitah sect entered Mecca and slaughtered many of the pilgrims who were preparing to go to 'Arafat and stole the Black Stone, which was only returned 20 years later. Imam al-Muhajir made the pilgrimage in 318 and touched the place where the Stone once was. After this, he set out for Yemen with his party. Sharif Ahmad al-Qudaymi settled in northern Yemen and Sharif Muhammad bin Sulayman in Tihama on the Red Sea coast, but Imam al-Muhajir continued on until he reached the valley of Hadramawt. He first settled in the village of Jubayl, and then Hajrayn, where he built a house, the remnants of which still exist. Next he travelled to the village Qarat Bani Jushayr, and he finally settled in al-Husayyisah near Seiyun.

He relied completely upon Allah regarding his choice for the emigration and

1. *Al-Dhariat*, 51:50

only chose Hadramawt as the abode of his offspring by His command and the permission of His Messenger ﷺ.

Imam al-Muhajir arrived in Hadramawt at a time when an offshoot of the Kharijite sect, called the Ibadiyah, held political power and had widespread influence throughout the Valley. His calm demeanour, Prophetic character and powerful oration convinced many of the falsehood of the Ibadi beliefs. He persevered in the spreading of truth until he almost single-handedly removed the Ibadi sect from the Valley without, according to most accounts, ever taking up arms against them. Many people repented at his hands, returning to true adherence to the Prophetic way. From his time onwards, the vast majority of the people of Hadramawt adhered to his methodology: the Shafi'i school in jurisprudence and the Ash'ari school in tenets of faith. Because of his emigration and efforts in calling people to Allah, his offspring and followers became safe from innovation and false beliefs, and this paved the way for the religion to flourish in Hadramawt and then to be spread to the corners of the earth. It was the progeny of Imam Ahmad bin 'Isa who brought Islam to millions of people in India, the islands of the Indian Ocean, South East Asia and East Africa and credit for this must be attributed to the Imam and his hijrah to Hadramawt.

It has been said that the migration of the Prophet ﷺ was from Mecca to Madina, and the migration of his offspring was from Basrah to Hadramawt. One of the knowers of Allah saw the Prophet ﷺ and asked him: "Are you pleased with the migration of al-Muhajir Ahmad bin 'Isa to Hadramawt?" The Prophet said to him, "I am pleased with everything Ahmad bin 'Isa is pleased with."

His Death

Imam al-Muhajir passed away in 345 (956), after rendering a great service to the religion and was buried in al-Husayyisah. His grandson Imam 'Alawi, the son of 'Ubaydullah, was the first to be given that name, and he is the ancestor of all the 'Alawi sayyids who became known as the Ba 'Alawi or Bani 'Alawi, the sons of 'Alawi.

The greatest of the Ba 'Alawi scholars would often visit his grave, especially Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqaf and Imam 'Abdullah al-'Aydarus. Habib 'Abdullah bin 'Umar bin Yahya said, "I only smelled the beautiful scents that I smelled in the presence of our Master Muhammad ﷺ at the grave of our Master al-Muhajir il-Allah, Ahmad bin 'Isa." He also said about our Master al-Muhajir that, "He is the best of those in the Valley, the most knowledgeable, the greatest in righteous works, the strongest in intellect, and the closest to the Prophet ﷺ."



IMAM 'ALI BIN 'ALAWI “KHALI' QASAM”

His Lineage

He is Imam 'Ali Khali' Qasam, bin 'Alawi, bin Muhammad Sahib al-Sawma'ah, bin 'Alawi, bin 'Ubaydullah, bin al-Imam al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far al-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, bin Husayn al-Sibt, bin 'Ali bin Abu Talib and Fatimah al-Zahra, the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

His Life

He was born in Bayt Jubayr, not far from Tarim. He studied at the hands of his father and visited Tarim regularly until he became the first of the 'Alawi sayyids to settle there in 521 (1126), along with his brothers and cousins.

It was he that ordered the construction of the great Ba 'Alawi Mosque. The Mosque was built with mud bricks which were transported from his land in Bayt Jubayr, as he wanted to be certain that the building materials were completely pure and lawful.

He also bought a plot of land East of Tarim which he named Qasam after some land which his ancestors owned in Basra in Iraq. He built a house there

and planted numerous date palms, thus earning the name “Khali' Qasam” or the “Planter of Qasam.” Qasam later grew into a town and the date palms he planted became a source of wealth for his descendants.

His connection with his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, was so strong that whenever he would give greetings to him, in his prayer and outside of it, by saying, “Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the mercy and blessings of Allah,” he, and those around him, would hear the response directly from the Prophet: “And peace be upon you, O Shaykh, and the mercy and blessings of Allah.” People would come from far and wide to hear the greetings of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

His Death

He died in Tarim around 529 (1134) and was the first of the 'Alawi sayyids to be buried in the Zanbal cemetery. He left behind a number of children, the best known of which was Imam Muhammad “Sahib Mirbat” who settled in the town of Mirbat in Oman, where he died and was buried in 556 (1160).



AL-FAQIH AL-MUQADDAM

His Lineage

He is al-Faqih al-Muqaddam, al-Ustadh al-'Azam Muhammad bin 'Ali, bin Muhammad Sahib Mirbat, bin 'Ali Khali' Qasam, bin 'Alawi, bin Muhammad Sahib al- Sawma'ah, bin 'Alawi, bin 'Ubaydullah, bin al-Imam al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far al-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, bin Husayn al-Sibt, bin 'Ali bin Abu Talib and Fatima al-Zahra, the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

His Life

Al-Faqih al-Muqaddam was born in Tarim in 574 (1178) and grew up in an environment of knowledge and righteousness, memorising the Qur'an and mastering the sciences of the Sacred Law in his youth. He studied at the hands of Tarim's greatest scholars and very quickly surpassed his peers until he reached the rank of *mujtahid*, and became known as "al-Faqih," or "the Jurist." At the same time he took the path of spiritual struggle until Allah gave him the greatest of openings. He would teach and fast during the day and spend his nights in worship in one of the caves in the Nu'ayr Valley outside Tarim. One

night, his son Ahmad followed him. When the Imam remembered Allah, the whole valley responded by loudly proclaiming His transcendence, at which point Ahmad fell unconscious.

Although his predecessors embodied the way of *ih-san* mentioned by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the Hadith of Jibril, al-Faqih was the first of the 'Alawi sayyids to outwardly profess the way of *tasawwuf*. This he did after the great Shaykh of the Maghrib, al-Ghawth Shu'ayb Abu Madyan, sent his envoy to Tarim with instructions to invest him with his *khirqah* or mantle, symbolising the transmission of spiritual authority. Shaykh Abu Madyan also instructed his envoy to go to Shaykh Sa'id bin'Isa al-'Amudi (died 671) in Qaydun in the Daw'an Valley to likewise invest him. Al-Faqih did not, however, fully embrace the way of Shaykh Abu Madyan. Rather he took a path which was a combination between the way of Abu Madyan, the way of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jaylani and the way of his forefathers. He was assisted in this by Shaykh Sa'id al-'Amudi, who came to Tarim to offer him his allegiance.

The climate that he lived in was one of political instability to the extent that al-Faqih would sit in the lesson of his teacher, Shaykh 'Ali Ba Marwan, with his sword on his lap. Different tribes vied for power in the Hadramawt Valley and the 'Alawi sayyids, because of their popularity, were seen by tribal leaders as a threat. Al-Faqih had no desire for political power and hated to see bloodshed and dissension in the ranks of the believers. He thus symbolically broke his sword, announcing that his way and the way of the 'Alawi sayyids and those that loved and followed them was one of non-violence.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had warned of the internal divisions that would blight his nation in a hadith narrated by Imam Muslim, and informed us that the one who sits at these times is better than the one who stands. He then praised the one who takes his sword and breaks its blade with a rock. The fact

that al-Faqih al-Muqaddam's had embraced the way of *tasawwuf* and pacifism did not mean a withdrawal from society and non-involvement in the affairs of the Muslims. To the contrary, his sword was the sword of knowledge and Prophetic character which he wielded to rectify and benefit society.

He and the 'Alawi sayyids after him would use the respect in which they were held to resolve disputes. They brought harmony to society by their concern for the rights of their fellow Muslims. This was manifested in attending their funeral prayers, visiting the sick and establishing gatherings of knowledge and remembrance. They spent their wealth on the poor and needy, on their guests, on building mosques and places of learning and establishing endowments for them, on planting date palms and organising irrigation and on providing drinking water for travellers on the roads and for city dwellers. Al-Faqih himself would set aside 360 barrels of dates at the time of harvest, which he would then distribute to the poor throughout the year with the help of his wife, al-Sayyidah Zaynab, the daughter of his uncle Ahmad.

Just as he was concerned with the general populace, he established a *zawiyah* and exerted his efforts giving spiritual instruction to his pupils until they themselves became qualified to instruct others in the spiritual path. Amongst his greatest students were his sons 'Alawi, 'Abdullah, 'Abd al-Rahman, Ahmad and 'Ali, all imams in their own right, as well as Shaykh 'Abdullah Ba 'Abbad and his brother Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman and Shaykh 'Ali bin Muhammad al-Khatib.

Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqaf said: "I have not heard speech more powerful than the speech of al-Faqih, other than the speech of the Prophets, upon them be peace. I do not give any of the *awliya'* precedence over him other than the Companions, or someone whose merit was mentioned by the Prophet ﷺ such as Uways al-Qarani."

Al-Faqih was the first to establish the annual group visit to the Prophet Hud ؑ. On one occasion, he did not attend the visit, so the Prophet Hud came to him and said: “O Shaykh! If you do not visit me, I will visit you!”

Imam al-Haddad said in praise of him: “Shaykh of shaykhs, Master of the Giants”; “Shaykh of those on the path to Allah, one and all”; “a caller to Allah with true words and praiseworthy deeds”; “his state at the beginning of his path was like the state of his contemporaries at the end of their path.”

His Death

Towards the end of his life al-Faqih shunned creation and became completely absorbed with the witnessing of his Lord. When he was asked who would be the Shaykh after him, he replied: “Umm al-Fuqara’.” He was referring to his wife Zaynab, named after Zaynab bint Khuzayma, the wife of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, as “the Mother of the Poor” for her care of the destitute. She had been his best supporter in his life and continued his work after his death to the point where his students came to her for guidance, assistance and blessings. Al-Faqih was finally united with his Lord in 653 (1255) and was buried in Zanbal. His grave was the first that anyone would visit in the graveyard, and for that reason he became known as “al-Muqaddam,” the one whose grave is given precedence over all others. He was universally recognised as the Shaykh of the 'Alawi Tariqah and all chains of connection in the spiritual path return to him. From his progeny came forth great Imams in every generation who continue to spread the light of prophecy until the present time. May Allah attach us to “the Greatest Master;” and benefit us by him in this life and the next.



SHAYKH 'ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-SAQQAF

His Lineage

He is Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqaf bin Shaykh Muhammad Mawla al-Dawilah, bin 'Ali Mawla Darak, bin 'Alawi al-Ghuyur, bin al-Faqih al-Muqaddam, Muhammad bin 'Ali, bin Muhammad Sahib Mirbat, bin 'Ali Khali' Qasam, bin 'Alawi, bin Muhammad Sahib al-Sawma'a, bin 'Alawi, bin 'Ubaydullah, bin al-Imam al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far al-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, bin Husayn al-Sibt, bin 'Ali bin Abu Talib and Fatima al-Zahra, the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

He was given the name “al-Saqqaf” because he concealed his true state from the people of his time under a ceiling (*saqf*) of humility and hatred of fame. Another opinion is that he rose above his contemporaries until he became like a ceiling on top of them. Imam al-Saqqaf was also known as “al-Muqaddam al-Thani,” the “second Muqaddam,” in recognition of the proximity in rank to his great, great grandfather al-Faqih al-Muqaddam.

His Life

Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqaf was born in Tarim in 739 (1338). He memorised the Qur'an and learnt the sciences of the Sacred Law in his early years. He had such a thirst for knowledge that he knew practically by heart Imam al-Ghazali's *Wajiz* and Imam al-Shirazi's *al-Muhadhab*. He was also endowed with knowledge of the heart which he received from the Imams of his time, amongst them his father Shaykh Muhammad Mawla al-Dawilah, along with Shaykh Muhammad "Sahib al-'Ama'im" and Shaykh Muhammad Ba 'Abbad.

His acts of *mujahadah* (spiritual striving) were immense. He reached the level where he would recite the whole Qur'an four times during the day and four times during the night. He spent 33 years without sleeping about which he said: "How can someone sleep when if he lies on his right side sees Paradise and if he lies on his left side sees the Fire?" He would spend a month or more in isolation in the proximity of the grave of the Prophet Hud ؑ, taking with him his books and a small amount of provision. He was in a constant state of remembrance of Allah to the extent that when he removed his clothes they continued in *dhikr*.

After travelling to Ghayl Ba Wazir, Shihr and Aden to deepen his inner and outer knowledge, he returned to Tarim, where he started teaching and giving spiritual instruction. He was greatly concerned with the spiritual progress of his students, who flocked from far and wide to learn from him. In doing so, he strengthened and built upon the foundations of the Tariqah, which had been laid by al-Faqih al-Muqaddam.

He said: "The one who has no *wird* (litany or regular act of devotion) is a monkey." "The one who has no *adab* (etiquette) is a bear." "All knowledge without action is meaningless; all knowledge and action without intention is worthless; all knowledge, action and intention not in accordance with the Sunnah

is rejected; all knowledge, action and intention in accordance with the Sunnah without scrupulousness is at risk of coming to nothing.”

Like his predecessors he was concerned with benefiting society. He planted numerous date palms and upon each planting he would recite Surah Ya Sin or the whole Qur'an. Out of his scrupulousness upon handling the dates that would be distributed as zakat, he would not lick his fingers so as not to take anything from the property of the poor. He built ten mosques in different parts of Hadramawt, the most famous being Masjid al-Saqqaf in Tarim. He said of this Mosque that “When I started building it, the four Imams (Abu Hanifa, Malik, al-Shafi' and Ahmad) were in the four corners and the Prophet ﷺ was in the *mihrab* (prayer niche).” On Wednesday and Sunday night, he established a *Hadarah* of *dhikr* in which the poems of the great Shaykhs of the Way are recited. The *Hadarah* continues to this day.

He left behind thirteen sons and seven daughters. All his sons were great Imams, the most famous being Shaykh Abu Bakr al-Sakran and Shaykh 'Umar al-Mihdar. One of his greatest students was Shaykhah Sultanah al-Zubaydiyah, who reached the pinnacle of knowledge of the Divine and established a *ribat* in her home town to accommodate seekers of this knowledge. She died in 847 and was buried in her home town, which was known thereafter as the Hawtah (or “safe haven”) of Shaykhah Sultanah. Her grave lies close to the grave of Imam al-Muhajir, and her poetry continues to be recited in the *Hadarah*.

His Death

In his old age, the Shaykh was unable to maintain the acts of worship in which he had been constant throughout his life. He thus had someone read the Qur'an to him while he listened. In spite of his weakness he would always be in the mosque in a state of purity when the time of the prayer entered. He continued

IMAMS OF THE VALLEY

leading gatherings of knowledge and remembrance, gradually passing the responsibility on to his sons until he was finally united with his Lord in Sha'ban 819 (1416). He was buried in Zanbal alongside his father.



SHAYKH 'UMAR AL-MIHDAR

His Lineage

He is Shaykh 'Umar al-Mihdar bin Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqaf bin Shaykh Muhammad Mawla al-Dawilah, bin 'Ali Mawla Darak, bin 'Alawi al-Ghuyur, bin al-Faqih al-Muqaddam, Muhammad bin 'Ali, bin Muhammad Sahib Mirbat, bin 'Ali Khali' Qasam, bin 'Alawi, bin Muhammad Sahib al-Sawma'ah, bin 'Alawi, bin 'Ubaydullah, bin al-Imam al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far al-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, bin Husayn al-Sibt, bin 'Ali bin Abu Talib and Fatimah al-Zahra', the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

The name “al-Mihdar” means “the one who comes swiftly when called.”

His Life

He was born in Tarim and grew up under the watchful eye of his father, the great Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqaf, who he came to imitate in all his states and actions. Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman chose for his son the best of teachers, amongst them Shaykh Abu Bakr Bilhaj Ba Fadl. He quickly mastered jurisprudence and the other outward sciences, to the point where he practically

knew Imam al-Nawawi's *Minhaj al-Talibin* by heart. He later travelled within Yemen and to the Hijaz in search of knowledge. His father, wishing to direct him towards the inner sciences, said to him: "The jurists only have a small ray of light while the *sufis* have a blazing torch. An ounce of the actions of the heart is equal to a ton of the actions of the body."

Like his predecessors he took the path of intense spiritual struggle, on the principle of "*Those who truly strive for Our sake, We will show them Our Ways.*"² He crushed his lower self by denying it its pleasures, such that he did not eat dates for thirty years because they were the food that he desired most. The fruit of his labours was the outpouring of knowledge direct from Allah, which astounded the scholars of his time. When asked about this, he said that this was knowledge "from above." "You enter the houses through their doors whereas I scale the walls." He said: "If I wished to comment on Allah's statement: *We do not abrogate a verse or cause it be forgotten except that We bring something better than it*,³ I could have laden a thousand camels."

In spite of the divine gifts with which he had been blessed, Imam al-Mihdar had intense fear of his Lord. He said: "I wish that I was a sheep that would be slaughtered and eaten." He would often say: "If I knew that one good deed of mine was accepted by Allah, I would have fed the whole of Tarim on meat and grain, even the livestock."

He spent his wealth feeding the poor and supporting students of knowledge. He provided financial support to the majority of 'Alawi families in Tarim. He built a mosque in Tarim, the famous Masjid al-Mihdar, which he generously endowed, and another near al-Shihr. He established a number of safe havens (*huwat*) in the area of al-Shihr where people could seek refuge from tribal

2. *Al-'Ankabut*, 29:69

3. *Al-Baqarah*, 2:106

conflict.⁴ His influence was such that he united the 'Alawi sayyids under his leadership, putting in a place a *niqabah* or council headed by the leading 'Alawi scholars of the time. A covenant was made which bound the 'Alawi sayyids to stand together to defend the truth and reject falsehood and oppression, and to call to good and forbid evil. It dictated how charity should be distributed and gave the final word on the affairs of the community to Shaykh 'Umar al-Mihdar.

His Death

Shaykh 'Umar had no sons but left behind four daughters: 'A'ishah, who he married to his nephew and pupil, Imam al-'Aydarus; Fatimah, who he married to his other nephew, Shaykh 'Ali bin Abu Bakr al-Sakran; and Maryam and 'Alawiya.

He continued calling to Allah, preserving and promoting the way of his predecessors until, in 833 (1429), he answered the call of his Lord while in prostration in the Zuhr prayer. He was buried in the Zanbal cemetery in the proximity of his family and relatives. His poetry is still read in gatherings, particularly the *Hadarah* of Imam al-Saqqaf.

4. The "*hawtah*" became a feature of Hadramawt – an area designated by someone of authority to be a safe haven, in which killing and fighting were outlawed and people were safe from tribal conflict and the oppressions of the rulers.



IMAM AL-'AYDARUS AL-AKBAR

His Lineage

He is Imam 'Abdullah al-'Aydarus bin Shaykh Abu Bakr al-Sakran bin Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqaf bin Shaykh Muhammad Mawla al-Dawilah, bin 'Ali Mawla Darak, bin 'Alawi al-Ghuyur, bin al-Faqih al-Muqaddam Muhammad, bin 'Ali, bin Muhammad Sahib Mirbat, bin 'Ali Khali' Qasam, bin 'Alawi, bin Muhammad Sahib al-Sawma'ah, bin 'Alawi, bin 'Ubaydullah, bin al-Imam al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far al-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, bin Husayn al-Sibt, bin 'Ali bin Abu Talib and Fatimah al-Zahra', the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

Imam Bahraq said that it is probable that the name "Aydarus" is derived from the word "*aytarus*," one of the names given to a lion in the Arabic language, and just as the lion is "the king of the jungle," likewise Imam al-'Aydarus rose above his peers to become the greatest of the awliya' of his time.

His mother was Maryam, the daughter of al-Shaykh al-Wali Ahmad bin Muhammad Ba Rushayd.

His Life

He was born in Tarim in 811 (1408). When his grandfather Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqaf was given the good news of his birth, he said: "He is the *Sufi* of his time." He was blessed with the nurturing of his grandfather for the first eight years of his life, as well as his father, Shaykh Abu Bakr al-Sakran, for the first ten. During these early years, he took the path of spiritual struggle and study, memorising the Qur'an and delving into the inward and outward sciences. When his father died, his uncle, Shaykh 'Umar al-Mihdar, took him under his wing and closely monitored his every step on the path to Allah. He married him to his daughter, Sayyidah 'A'ishah. Sayyidah 'A'ishah was known for her piety and closeness to Allah and was described as being "the daughter of a Qutb (Shaykh 'Umar al-Mihdar), the wife of a Qutb (Imam al-'Aydarus) and the mother of a Qutb (Imam Abu Bakr al-'Adani)."

Shaykh 'Umar al-Mihdar passed away when Imam al-'Aydarus was around 25 years old, and the 'Alawi scholars of Tarim unanimously recognised him, in spite of his protests, as their leader. From this role he expended great efforts in calling to Allah and rectifying society, often mediating with the tribal rulers of the time to prevent bloodshed. He generously received guests, helped the needy and built several mosques, the most famous of which is Masjid al-'Aydarus, in the heart of the city of Tarim. In it, his place of *khalwah* can be found, where he would seclude himself underground to be with his Creator.

He and his brother Shaykh 'Ali were amongst the first of the 'Alawi scholars to author books. Their predecessors had not done so, as their primary concern was their students. Imam al-'Aydarus's most famous work is *al-Kibrit al-Ahmar* (The Red Sulphur), an explanation of the stations on the path to direct knowledge of Allah. He played a fundamental role in laying down the foundations of the 'Alawi Tariqah. He had the utmost admiration for the works of

Imam al-Ghazali, especially *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, on the greatness of which he wrote a treatise. He said of the *Ihya'*: "In it is the explanation of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The one who reads it and acts upon it is guaranteed the love of Allah, His Messenger, the angels, the Prophets, Messengers and the Awliya'. Were Allah to bring the dead to life, they would only recommend the living to act upon that which is in the *Ihya'*." His daily *wird* was *la ilaha ill'Allah*, *Allah Allah* and *Hu Hu* ("He") twelve thousand times each. This is the *Dhikr al-'Aydarus* mentioned by his son Imam al-'Adani in his famous poem:

وَذَكَّرَ الْعَيْدُرُوسِ الْقُطْبِ أَجَلَى
عَنِ الْقَلْبِ الصَّادَى لِلصَّادِقِينَ

*The remembrance of al-'Aydarus, the Qutb, polishes
Rust from the hearts of the sincere*

Upon taking the path, the seeker is often given this remembrance to complete. *La ilaha ill'Allah* is the remembrance of the heart, the seat of knowledge of Allah (*ma'rifah*); *Allah Allah* is the remembrance of the spirit, the seat of the love of Allah (*mahabbah*); and *Hu Hu* is the remembrance of the *sirr* (the inner secret), the seat of the witnessing of Allah (*mushahadah*).

Imam al-'Aydarus said: "Whoever desires divine purity must be in a state of brokenness in the depths of the night." "Squeeze your body with spiritual struggle until you extract from it the oil of purity."

His Death

The Imam died while returning to Tarim from the town of al-Shihr on 12th Ramadan 865 (1460) and was carried back to Tarim and buried in the Zanbal

IMAM AL-'AYDARUS AL-AKBAR

Cemetery. A dome was later erected over his grave. He left behind four sons – Abu Bakr (al-'Adani), 'Alawi, Shaykh and Husayn – and four daughters – Ruqayyah, Khadijah, Umm Kulthum and Bahiyyah. From his progeny came forth many great imams who carried the name of al-'Aydarus. He thus became known as “al-'Aydarus al-Akbar,” as he was the first and the greatest to be known as al-'Aydarus and to distinguish him from those who came after him. May Allah give us the strongest of attachments to him, an attachment which benefits us in this life and the next.



IMAM AL-'ADANI

His Lineage

He is Imam Abu Bakr al-'Adani bin Imam 'Abdullah al-'Aydarus bin Shaykh Abu Bakr al-Sakran bin Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqaf bin Shaykh Muhammad Mawla al-Dawilah, bin 'Ali Mawla Darak, bin 'Alawi al-Ghuyur, bin al-Faqih al-Muqaddam Muhammad, bin 'Ali, bin Muhammad Sahib Mirbat, bin 'Ali, bin 'Alawi, bin Muhammad Sahib al-Sawma'ah, bin 'Alawi, bin 'Ubaydullah, bin al-Imam al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far al-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, bin Husayn al-Sibt, bin 'Ali, bin Abu Talib and Fatimah al-Zahra', the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

His mother was al-Sayyidah al-Waliyyah 'A'ishah bint Shaykh 'Umar al-Mihdar.

His Life

He was born in Tarim in 851 (1447). His father said before his birth: "I have been given good tidings of a child who will be amongst the people of *wilayah*, who will receive special care (*'inayah*) and who will be someone of noble

character.” His father took care of his upbringing and spiritual progress, along with his uncle Shaykh 'Ali bin Abu Bakr al-Sakran and Shaykh Sa'd bin 'Ali Madhaj. He memorised the Qur'an and mastered the Islamic sciences while still in his youth, such that his father appointed him as a shaykh of the inward and outward sciences at the age of 14. From then on his life was spent teaching and calling to Allah.

In his youth he would worship by night in the valleys outside Tarim, reading ten *ajza'* of the Qur'an in prayer and returning before Fajr. He went for twenty years without sleeping.

On his return from his second Hajj the scholars of the city of Aden heard that he was nearby and resolved to come to meet him. Instead he informed them that he would come to visit them. Thousands of people came to greet him as he entered Aden on 13th Rabi' al-Thani 889. He said: “It is my intention to take all these people to Allah.” The people of Aden continue to celebrate the day of his arrival in the city to this day. He took up residence in Aden, built a mosque and began to teach. Students from far and wide came to learn from him and the religious life of Aden flourished. He had great concern for the common people, especially those not on the straight path. He said: “If I see a believer who Allah has given the ability to perform that which is incumbent upon him and to avoid enormities then I am content. What troubles me is when I see a believer who has fallen into disobedience of Allah and into the traps of the Devil, so I expend my efforts to save him.” Knowing that the night is the time when most acts of disobedience are committed, he would gather the people together every night to remember Allah. The gathering would continue until Fajr, at which point he would lead the people in prayer and then give them a day's wages and tell them to go home and sleep. Their

souls thus became accustomed to obeying Allah, and they had no time to disobey Him.

He was famous for his noble character and immense generosity, which led him to accumulate great debts in order to help the needy. One of his companions rebuked him for accumulating these debts, to which he retorted: “Do not come between me and my Lord, for I have only spent this money seeking His pleasure, and He has promised me that He will pay back these debts before I leave this life.” Every year he set aside money for students of knowledge and visitors and contributed to many charitable projects, such as the repair of the mosques of Tarim and the construction of drainage channels to prevent flooding in Aden and several areas of Hadramawt.

He counselled people to have a good opinion of Allah, which he called “the greatest treasure” and “Allah’s greatest name,” and to have a good opinion of Allah’s slaves. He said: “The one who has a good opinion of someone will not lose out even if his opinion proves to be wrong; the one who has a bad opinion of someone will not benefit even if his opinion proves to be correct.” He gave the following counsels: “Anyone who does not prevent himself from following his caprice will experience abasement;” “two things cause the foolish person the most trouble: greed and getting involved in that which does not concern him.”

He said: “You must visit the *awliya*’ and come to know them. If your intention is correct and your belief is firm, then the spiritual and physical realms are linked just like the spirit and the body are linked. No blessings come from the spiritual realm except by means of movement in the physical realm. The evidence for this is in Allah saying to Maryam: *shake towards yourself the trunk of the palm tree*⁵ and saying to Musa: *strike the sea with your staff*.⁶ Allah thus

5. *Maryam*, 19:25

6. *Al-Shu'ara*’, 26:63

made the shaking and the movement of the staff in the physical realm a cause for the receiving of blessings from the spiritual realm.”

He would often make the following invocation in his gatherings:

اللَّهُمَّ ارْزُقْنَا
مِنَ الْعُقُولِ أَوْفَرَهَا ، وَمِنَ الْأَذْهَانِ أَصْفَاهَا ،
وَمِنَ الْأَعْمَالِ أَرْكَأَهَا ، وَمِنَ الْأَخْلَاقِ أَطْيَبَهَا ،
وَمِنَ الْأَرْزَاقِ أَجْزَلَهَا ، وَمِنَ الْعَافِيَةِ أَكْمَلَهَا ،
وَمِنَ الدُّنْيَا خَيْرَهَا ، وَمِنَ الْآخِرَةِ نَعِيمَهَا

“O Allah, bless us with the most expansive of intellects,
the purest of minds, the purest of actions, the best of character,
the most plentiful provision, complete well-being,
the best of this life and the blessings of the afterlife.”

His Death

He remained in Aden until his death in 914 (1508). He was buried next to the mosque which he established. The sultan of the time erected a great dome over his grave and built a school next to the mosque, Ribat al-'Aydarus. The Ribat continues to flourish to this day, under the directorship of Habib Abu Bakr bin 'Ali al-Mashhur, who has also greatly revived the annual visit in Rabi' al-Thani.



SHAYKH ABU BAKR BIN SALIM

His Lineage

He is Shaykh Abu Bakr bin Salim bin 'Abdullah bin 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Abdullah bin Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqaf bin Shaykh Muhammad Mawla al-Dawilah, bin 'Ali Mawla Darak, bin 'Alawi al-Ghuyur, bin al-Faqih al-Muqaddam, Muhammad bin 'Ali, bin Muhammad Sahib Mirbat, bin 'Ali Khali' Qasam, bin 'Alawi, bin Muhammad Sahib al-Sawma'ah, bin 'Alawi, bin 'Ubaydullah, bin al-Imam al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far al-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, bin Husayn al-Sibt, bin 'Ali bin Abu Talib and Fatimah al-Zahra', the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

His Life

Several of the 'Alawi Imams were given good tidings of the coming of Shaykh Abu Bakr, among them Imam al-'Adani. Shaykh 'Abdullah, the youngest son of Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqaf, was one day wondering how he could ever reach the station and prominence of his two brothers, 'Umar al-Mihdar and Abu Bakr al-Sakran. His father read his thoughts and said to him: "That prominence will be in your progeny." Amongst this blessed progeny was Habib

'Umar bin 'Abd al-Rahman al-'Attas (the ancestor of all the great Imams of the al-'Attas clan) and Shaykh Abu Bakr bin Salim and all his blessed progeny. Shaykh Abu Bakr was born in Tarim in 919 (1513). His father took him to the Imam of Tarim at the time, Shaykh Shihab al-Din, Ahmad bin 'Abd al-Rahman, complaining that his son was having difficulty in memorising the Qur'an. The Shaykh said to his father: "Leave him and do not burden him. He will devote himself to it of his own accord and he will have a great affair." It was as the Shaykh said: Shaykh Abu Bakr devoted himself to the Qur'an and memorised it in around four months. Then he applied himself to learning the inner and outer sciences from, among others, Shaykh Ahmad bin 'Alawi Ba Jahdab, Shaykh 'Umar bin 'Abdullah Ba Makhramah and Shaykh Ma'ruf Ba Jamal, from whom he received his opening.

In his youth, he lived in the village of al-Lisk, south of Tarim, and he would walk several miles by night to Tarim to pray in its mosques and visit its graves. He would fill up the tanks used for ablutions in the mosques and fill up troughs for animals to drink before returning to pray the Fajr prayer in al-Lisk. He later moved to Tarim but decided while still in his mid-twenties to move to the village of 'Aynat in the search of territory where he could spread the call to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. He built a mosque and house there and began teaching and giving spiritual instruction. His fame spread and students started coming from different parts of Yemen and as far afield as India and North Africa. As a result, a new town grew up distinct from the old village of 'Aynat. He would send his students out to different regions to call people to Allah and educate them in the Sacred Law.

He had a great concern, like his predecessors, for the visit of the Prophet Hud ﷺ. Leadership of the visit had passed from father to son since the time of al-Faqih al-Muqaddam until it reached Shaykh Shihab al-Din, who saw

Shaykh Abu Bakr as being the most worthy of leadership. He duly passed it to him, and that leadership has remained in the descendants of Shaykh Abu Bakr until this day. It was Shaykh Abu Bakr who first established the great annual visit in Sha'ban, it being previously arranged according to the date harvest. In his old age he would be carried to the visit and when he was asked to compile a work on the merits of the visit, he said that the fact that he was still making the effort to visit in his old age was sufficient proof of its merit.

Shaykh Abu Bakr was immensely generous. He would supervise the affairs of his famous kitchen and distribute food with his own hands. He would bake a thousand loaves of bread for the poor every day – five hundred for lunch and five hundred for dinner. This was not including food prepared for his numerous guests. A poor dishevelled woman once came to give a small amount of food to the Shaykh. His servant turned her away saying: “Caravans are bringing goods to the Shaykh from far off places and he is not in need of what you have brought.” The Shaykh, however, was listening and he welcomed the woman, graciously accepted her offering and gave her a big reward in exchange. He then chastised his servant, saying: “The one who does not show gratitude for small things will not show gratitude for great things. The one who does not show gratitude to people does not show gratitude to Allah.” Out of his humility in front of his Lord in the last fifteen years of his life, he would sit constantly as one sits in the prayer (*tawarruk*) even when with his family.

He would fast the three hottest months of the year and for fifteen years consumed nothing but milk and coffee. He never left praying the eight *rakats* of the *Duha* prayer and the eleven *rakats* of the *Witr* prayer even while travelling.

He was the author of several works, amongst them *Miftah al-Sara'ir*, a book which every seeker of Allah is in need of on his path. Shaykh Abu Bakr authored it at the age of 17. He expounded on some of his vast knowledge of spiritual

realities in *Mir'raj al-Arwah* and *Fath Bab al-Mawahib*. He also composed a number of litanies and prayers upon the Prophet ﷺ, the most famous of which is *Salat al-Taj* (the Prayer of the Crown) which is widely read in the Indian Sub-continent. One of his supplications was:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعِلْمَ اللَّدْنِيَّ وَالْمَشْرَبَ الصَّافِيَّ الْهَنِيَّ يَا وَهَّابُ يَا غَنِيَّ

“O Allah, I ask You for knowledge direct from Your presence and a pure spring to drink from, O Bestower, O Free of all want!”

His *Diwan* is also a treasure trove of divine knowledge and wisdom. He said: “If you look upon your own self with the eye of discontentment, Allah looks upon you with the eye of contentment; if you look upon your own self with the eye of contentment, Allah looks upon you with the eye of discontentment.” “The *dunya* is the daughter of the *akhirah* (the next life). If someone marries the daughter, the mother becomes forbidden for him.”

He had thirteen sons and four daughters. 'Ali died before him and was the first to be buried in the cemetery which Shaykh Abu Bakr established in 'Aynat. Imam Husayn was Shaykh Abu Bakr's spiritual heir. Other sons included al-Hamid and 'Umar al-Mihdar. Through them, Shaykh Abu Bakr's progeny spread far and wide and great imams emerged in each generation.

Amongst his students was Imam Ahmad bin Muhammad al-Habashi, whose grave lies beneath the grave of Imam Ahmad bin 'Isa al-Muhajr, at al-Husayyisa. Sayyid Ahmad bin Muhammad would come every day from al-Husayyisa to 'Aynat to attend Shaykh Abu Bakr's lesson. He is the ancestor of many great Imams from the Habashi tribe, amongst them Habib Ahmad bin Zayn and Habib 'Ali bin Muhammad. Other students included Sayyid 'Abd al-Rahman

bin Muhammad al-Jifri, Shaykh Hasan bin Ahmad Ba Shu'ayb and Sayyid Yusuf bin 'Abid al-Hasani whose arrival from Fes in the Maghrib was foretold by Shaykh Abu Bakr.

His Death

A year before his death, Shaykh Abu Bakr led the visit to the Prophet Hud ﷺ and thousands crowded around him, almost fighting to kiss and touch him. When he saw this he wept profusely and repeated Allah's words: *He is but a slave upon whom We have bestowed Our blessings.*⁷

Shaykh Abu Bakr finally breathed his last in Dhu'l-Hijjah 992 (1583). He was buried in his cemetery in 'Aynat and a dome was erected over him. He said during his life that he would place secrets in the sand dune in which he is buried, and its blessed sand has been used time and again for healing purposes. Visitors on the way to the Prophet Hud ﷺ traditionally stop to pay their respects to Shaykh Abu Bakr, who contributed so much to the visit. He said:

أَوْ مَا عَلِمْتَ بِأَنَّ أَهْلَ الْوَفَا
وَمُحِبِّنَا مَا زَالَ تَحْتَ لِي وَأَنَا

نَحْنُ الْكِرَامُ فَمَنْ أَتَانَا قَاصِدًا
نَالَ السَّعَادَةَ عِنْدَمَا يَلْقَانَا

*Do you not know that we are people of honour,
and that the one who loves us will always be under our banner?*

*We are generous people so whoever comes to us
seeking will attain felicity when he meets us.*

7. Al-Zukhruf, 42:59



HABIB 'UMAR BIN 'ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-'ATTAS

His Lineage

He is Habib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Aqil al-'Attas bin Salim bin 'Abdullah bin 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Abdullah bin Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqaf bin Shaykh Muhammad Mawla al-Dawilah, bin 'Ali Mawla Darak, bin 'Alawi al-Ghuyur, bin al-Faqih al-Muqaddam, Muhammad bin 'Ali, bin Muhammad Sahib Mirbat, bin 'Ali Khali' Qasam, bin 'Alawi, bin Muhammad Sahib al-Sawma'ah, bin 'Alawi, bin 'Ubaydullah, bin al-Imam al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far al-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, bin Husayn al-Sibt, bin 'Ali bin Abu Talib and Fatimah al-Zahra', the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

The name 'Attas, from the Arabic “*atasa*,” to sneeze, goes back to Imam 'Aqil bin Salim, the twin brother of Shaykh Abu Bakr bin Salim. He used to sneeze and then praise Allah while still in his mother's womb and thus was nick-named “al-'Attas”. It is also mentioned that his grandson Habib 'Umar did the same while also in the womb, and he and his progeny were known by the name “al-'Attas”.

His Life

Habib 'Umar was born in 992 Hijri (1583) in the village of al-Lisk, a few miles East of Tarim. He was raised by his father who was a knower of Allah and had spent much time in the company of his uncle, Shaykh Abu Bakr bin Salim, and was greatly loved by him. Habib 'Umar lost his sight at a young age but one of the pious consoled his mother by giving her good tidings that he would have a great station and have numerous progeny.

He mastered the Islamic sciences and took the spiritual path at the hands of Imam al-Husayn, the son of Shaykh Abu Bakr bin Salim, with whom he spent more than fifteen years. He also received spiritual guidance from Sayyid 'Umar Ba Rakwah al-Samarqandi.

In his youth he left his home and travelled through the Hadramawt Valley. In many of the villages that he came to he was given the warmest of welcomes and the people of the village insisted that he settle there. On each occasion, however, he politely refused and moved on, until he came to the town of Huraydah in the 'Amd Valley South of Hadramawt. The people of Huraydah initially showed him no hospitality but rather refused to open their doors to him and left him outside in the mid-day heat, while their children made fun of him. Seeing the harshness of the people and their need for education, Habib 'Umar decided to make Huraydah his base. He said: "Huraydah is my town and the town of my children and progeny after me." In a relatively short time Huraydah was transformed from a backwater to a place of knowledge. It had been the habit of one of the scholars of the region, Shaykh Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Kabir Ba Qays, to regularly visit the scholars of Tarim. However, when Habib 'Umar settled in Huraydah, he stopped doing this and when he was asked why, he said: "The whole of Tarim moved to our valley with the arrival of this Imam."

Habib 'Umar did not remain only in Huraydah, however. His first concern was to bring peace to an area which had suffered for a long time from tribal conflict. He brokered a number of treaties between conflicting tribes and constantly moved from village to village, calling people to Allah and teaching them their religious duties. It is said for this reason that the Friday prayer was never compulsory for him. This was in spite of his blindness and the fact that he would often travel alone riding on a donkey. One of the first things he would do upon arriving in a village was to ensure that its mosque was in a good state. If there was no mosque he would choose a suitable place and, with the help of his students, he would lay the foundation stones and then ask the people of the village to assist him in completing the building. He would not leave the village until the mosque was complete and he had appointed someone to teach the people. He would then come back to visit the village from time to time to check on its progress.

He never once set foot in the palace of a ruler, but if one of them came to him he would advise him with complete sincerity and remind him of his duties and responsibilities. One of the Sultans once came to him when he was outside Huraydah. It was customary for people to go to great lengths to welcome such rulers, hoping for a portion of their wealth and status, but Habib 'Umar received him in the shade of a tree. He listened to his requests and offered him berries from the tree which he ate. When they had finished, one of the local tribes prepared a feast for the Sultan but he refused to eat anything, saying that he did not wish to put anything in his stomach in which there were berries given to him by Habib 'Umar, berries which were no doubt completely pure and lawful.

When the ruler of San'a sent an army to Hadramawt in the year 1070, Habib 'Umar strongly advised the Sultan not to fight, in spite of the fact that many of

the scholars were encouraging him to do so. Through his wisdom Habib 'Umar prevented blood from being spilled and helped insure a peaceful solution.

He spent what wealth he had on the poor and was greatly concerned for their welfare. He was of the opinion that it was permissible for the owners of date palms to give their *zakat* in the form of fresh dates, instead of waiting for the dates to dry. This gave poor people the opportunity to enjoy the delicacy of fresh dates which they might not have been able to afford. When he was criticised for not following the opinion of the majority of the Shafi'i scholars in this regard, he said that he was capable of coming to a legal judgement just as they were.

Regarding the spiritual rank of Habib 'Umar, it is enough to know that the great Imam 'Abdullah bin 'Alawi al-Haddad was his student. Imam al-Haddad was once asked what works Habib 'Umar had authored. He replied: "I am one of his works." Imam al-Haddad said of Habib 'Umar: "He was purely heart (*qalb*) and truth (*haqq*), with no lower self (*nafs*) and no caprice (*hawa*)."¹ He listed the following as signs of Habib 'Umar having achieved perfection: his patience in dealing with the common folk, mixing with them while remaining safe from being affected by them and his complete denial of his own self, to the point where he only witnessed the rights that others had over it, not its own right. He described him as being a sign (*ayah*) of Allah in humility (*tawadu'*). He said: "His tree has been planted in the earth of humility (*tawadu'*) and gentleness (*lutf*), and this is how his branches grew."²

Habib 'Umar's closest student was Shaykh 'Ali bin 'Abdullah Ba Ras. Shaykh 'Ali complained to Habib 'Umar one day that in spite of the efforts of Habib 'Umar in calling people to Allah only very few people had truly benefited from him. Habib 'Umar replied: "If they looked at me in the way you look at me I would have taken them to Allah in an instant."³

He was once walking on his way to the Friday prayer in his best white clothes. A woman who was cleaning her stove tipped a pile of ash from an upstairs window into the street. The ashes landed on Habib Umar, soiling his clothes. Instead of becoming angry he merely said: "A slave who deserves the Fire is content with being covered in ash." He then returned to his house to change his clothes.

At times he would spend the whole night discussing the Islamic sciences with his students. At other times he would spend the whole night repeating the du'a of *qunut*.⁸

He advised his students to think of the state in which they would like to be in at the point of death and then to remain in that state constantly. He said that the one who prays for a wrongdoer or a tyrant will be safe from his harm. He said: "Allah gives everyone according to their intention and the good that their heart contains." He said that if you see someone that possesses one good trait then assume that he possesses all the good traits that the religion contains.

His *Ratib*, a litany to be read daily, is the only piece of work attributed to him. It contains great secrets and numerous benefits both worldly and spiritual. It is proven to deflect harm from the area in which it is read. Habib 'Ali bin Hasan al-'Attas wrote *al-Qirtas*, a lengthy commentary on the *Ratib*.

His Death

He was staying in the village of Nafhun in Rabi' al-Thani 1072 (1661 CE) when he sensed death approaching. He commanded those present to remember Allah aloud and they heard a sound like the buzzing of bees emanating from

8. The supplication narrated on the authority of Imam Hasan bin 'Ali bin Abi Talib. Imam al-Shafi'i was of the opinion that it is sunnah to read it in the Fajr prayer.

IMAMS OF THE VALLEY

him. Unable to speak, he indicated that he wished someone to make *wudu'* for him. When one of his students duly did so he neglected to run water through the Imam's beard, so Habib 'Umar reminded him not to leave this sunnah in the last moments of his life. Soon after he died he was taken to Huraydah, where he was buried. Shaykh 'Ali Ba Ras later built a dome over his grave.



IMAM AL-HADDAD

His Lineage

He is al-Imam al-Habib 'Abdullah bin 'Alawi bin Muhammad bin Ahmad bin 'Abdullah bin Muhammad bin 'Alawi bin Ahmad bin Abu Bakr bin Ahmad bin Muhammad bin 'Abdullah bin Ahmad bin 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Alawi 'Amm al-Faqih (uncle of al-Faqih al-Muqaddam), bin Muhammad Sahib Mirbat, bin 'Ali Khali' Qasam, bin 'Alawi, bin Muhammad Sahib al-Sawma'ah, bin 'Alawi, bin 'Ubaydullah, bin al-Imam al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far al-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, bin Husayn al-Sibt, bin 'Ali bin Abu Talib and Fatimah al-Zahra', the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

The name "al-Haddad" goes back to one of the ancestors of Habib 'Abdullah, Sayyid Ahmad bin Abu Bakr, who used to spend time with an ironsmith (*haddad* in Arabic) in his shop in Tarim and thus became known by that name to distinguish him from another Sayyid, whose name was also Ahmad.⁹

"Habib" came to be the title of the 'Alawi sayyids from the 11th Century onwards.

9. For the full story and for a more detailed biography of the Imam, see *Sufi Sage of Arabia*, Mostafa al-Badawi.

His Life

Imam al-Haddad was born in Subayr near the city of Tarim in 1044 (1634). He went blind at the age of four but Allah blessed him with the light of inner sight. His father directed him to the pursuit of knowledge and he memorised the Qur'an and the foundational texts of the Islamic sciences at an early age. Among his teachers were Habib 'Abdullah bin Ahmad Balfaqih, Habib 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Rahman al-'Attas and Habib Muhammad bin 'Alawi al-Saqqaf who lived in Mecca and with whom he corresponded by letter. He continued in his studies until he reached the rank of *mujtahid*.

His love of knowledge was accompanied with a love of worship. In his childhood, when his morning lessons had finished, he would perform up to 200 *rakats* of prayer in Masjid Ba Alawi or other mosques. His day was structured around acts of worship, which began long before dawn and ended late at night, interspersed with lessons and time with his family. He compiled a number of litanies, the most famous being the *Ratib* and *al-Wird al-Latif*, which provide spiritual sustenance for the seeker. He had a great attachment to Surah *Ya Sin*, which he read constantly and in which he was given a special opening. The supplication which he would make after it continues to be read widely, as do many of his litanies.

After being given the order by his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the Imam began calling to Allah at every level, such that he became known as the 'Pole of Da'wa and Guidance.' He had a small number of close disciples who he trained in the spiritual path. He said of his technique: "We may train one of our students for a whole year in attaining one attribute." He called the scholars to act according to their knowledge and to become callers themselves. He called the rulers and the common people alike. He established a *mawlid* in the month of Rajab and would feed all those who attended, saying:

“If they do not benefit from our speech then we will place our blessings in the food.”

He authored a number of books which continue to benefit people generation after generation. His works are clear and concise and thus suitable for our times. Several have been translated into English and other languages. He would dictate large sections of his books to his students without any preparation. The Imam's longest work, *al-Nasa'ih al-Diniyya*, contains the essence of Imam al-Ghazali's *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*. In *al-Da'wa al-Tamma* (The Complete Call) he classifies society into eight categories and outlines each category's rights and duties. *Risalat al-Mu'awana* (*The Book of Assistance*), which he authored at the age of 26, is every Muslim's manual of the path to Allah. Other works include *The Lives of Man, Knowledge and Wisdom* and *Good Manners*, all excellently translated by Dr Mostafa al-Badawi.

The Imam also placed his knowledge and his secrets in his collection of poetry (*Diwan*) and used it as a means of calling people to Allah. He said that the one who has the *Diwan* needs no other book. Several of the poems in it contain a complete exposition of the spiritual path and were explained during the lifetime of the Imam by his great student Habib Ahmad bin Zayn al-Habashi. Habib Ahmad bin Zayn also wrote a commentary on the Imam's *'Ayniyya* in which he compiled biographies of many of the great Imams who represent the Imam's chain of spiritual connection back to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. His poetry reached such a degree of acceptance that one of his verses was inscribed on the wall of the enclosure in which lies the grave of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

نَبِيِّ عَظِيمٍ خُلِقَهُ الْخُلُقُ الَّذِي
لَهُ عَظَمَ الرَّحْمَنُ فِي سَيِّدِ الْكُتُبِ

*“An awesome Prophet, whose character
the All-Compassionate has venerated in the Master of all Books”*

Imam al-Haddad's poems continue to bring light and life to gatherings all over the world.

Imam al-Haddad was involved in society at every level. He would write to the sultans warning them of their contravention of the Sacred Law and commanding them to repent and return to Allah. He also advised them in the affairs of government and mediated between conflicting tribes. He advised farmers on agricultural techniques and castigated the wealthy for not using their wealth to help the poor.

He established the village of al-Hawi on the outskirts of Tarim which was self-sufficient and free from the meddling of the rulers of the time – close enough to receive the good of Tarim but far enough away to be safe from the conflict and sedition that plagued the city. The mosque which he built there, Masjid al-Fath, and his house have now been greatly renovated and receive many visitors. He would supervise and fund the raising of orphans in his house and, in spite of his blindness, would take part in the work of the house, feeding the animals and sealing the water vessels.

One of the sultans of India wished to honour him by sending a ship laden with gold but the Imam knew that the arrival of this wealth would have negative effects on Hadramawt and its people. He asked Allah to make the ship sink and that everyone aboard would be saved, which duly happened.

His reliance on Allah was such that he said: “If the sky were to call out, ‘I will not send forth a drop of rain,’ and the earth were to call out, ‘I will not send forth a single shoot,’ and I was responsible for feeding all the people of

Tarim I would not be in the least concerned after my Lord has said: *There is no creature on the earth but that Allah has guaranteed to provide for it.*¹⁰

His constant supplication was to perfect his following of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. In his old age he grew his hair long, saying: “There is not a *sunnah* that was prescribed by the Prophet ﷺ except that I hope I have acted upon it.”

Habib 'Ali al-Habashi said of him:

فَجَمِيعٌ مَّنْ سَلَكَ الطَّرِيقَةَ بَعْدَهُ
 مُسْتَضِيحُونَ بِنُورِهِ الْوَقَّادِ
 فَرَّتْ بِهِ عَيْنُ النَّبِيِّ مُحَمَّدٍ
 فَهُوَ لَهُ مِنْ أَحْسَنِ الْأَوْلَادِ

*Everyone that takes the path after him
 Is guided by his brilliant light*

*He was the cooling of the eye of the Prophet Muhammad
 And he is one of the best of his children*

His Death

It is little surprise that the Imam came to be regarded as the “renewer” (*mu-jaddid*) of the 12th Islamic Century. He died in al-Hawi on 8th Dhu'l-Qa'ida 1132 (1719) and was buried in the Zanbal Graveyard in Tarim. He (may Allah be pleased with him) left behind six sons – Hasan (who became his spiritual heir), Husayn, 'Alawi, Salim, Zayn, Muhammad; and four daughters – 'A'ishah, Salma, Fatimah, and Bahiyah.

10. *Hud*, 11:6

IMAMS OF THE VALLEY

His students were giants in their own right: amongst them Habib Ahmad bin Zayn al-Habashi, Habib 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Abdullah Balfaqih, Habib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-Rahman al-Barr and Habib Muhammad bin Zayn bin Sumayt.



HABIB AHMAD BIN ZAYN AL-HABASHI

His Lineage

He is al-Imam al-Habib Ahmad bin Zayn bin 'Alawi bin Ahmad Sahib al-Shi'b bin Muhammad bin 'Alawi bin Abu Bakr al-Habashi bin 'Ali bin Ahmad bin Muhammad Asad Allah bin Hasan al-Turabi bin 'Ali bin al-Faqih al-Muqaddam Muhammad, bin 'Ali, bin Muhammad Sahib Mirbat, bin 'Ali, bin 'Alawi, bin Muhammad Sahib al-Sawma'ah, bin 'Alawi, bin 'Ubaydullah, bin al-Imam al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far al-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zain al-'Abidin, bin Husayn al-Sibt, bin 'Ali bin Abu Talib and Fatima' al-Zahra, the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

His mother was the pious Sayyidah Sharifah Fatimah bint 'Ali bin 'Aqil Ba Harun Jamal al-Layl.

The name “al-Habashi” was given to Habib Ahmad’s ancestor, Sayyid Abu Bakr bin 'Ali, who spent around 20 years in Habashah or Ethiopia calling to Allah and was thus named after the place in which he resided.

His Life

Habib Ahmad was born in the town of al-Ghurfah, between Seiyun and Shibam in 1069 (1658), and it was there that he grew up. From his early days, his heart was attached to his Lord and he had no leaning towards material things. He memorised the Qur'an at a young age and began the pursuit of knowledge, firstly at the hands of his father, who held him in great respect. His thirst for knowledge next led him to seek out the scholars in the various towns of Hadramawt. He would go on foot to Shibam, Seiyun and Tarim. The only provisions that he would take would be dates, which he would eat for lunch and dinner on his journeys. One of his greatest teachers was Habib Abdullah bin Ahmad Balfaḥ in Tarim, who taught him numerous books in the inward and outward sciences. He also benefited greatly from Habib Ahmad bin 'Umar al-Hindawan and Habib Ahmad bin Hashim al-Habashi. He exchanged letters with the Hanafi scholar, al-'Allamah Hasan bin 'Ali al-'Ujaymi, who gave him permission to narrate hadith through his chains of connection.

Habib Ahmad's greatest teacher, however, was Imam 'Abdullah bin 'Alawi al-Haddad. Habib Ahmad first met Imam al-Haddad while still a child on a visit to Tarim with his father. The Imam placed his hand on Habib Ahmad's head and informed his father that he was a blessed child. From the age of twenty four, Habib Ahmad took the Imam as his shaykh and focused all his efforts on receiving from him. He placed himself completely under the Imam's direction and guidance and exemplified the etiquettes of the seeker with the shaykh. He was, as the saying goes: 'like a dead person in the hands of the one who is washing him.' Habib Ahmad kept his company as much as he could, and could hardly bear to part with him. He complained of this once to Imam al-Haddad, who told him that he also found difficulty in parting with Habib

Ahmad. Imam al-Haddad also told him that his being apart from the Imam strengthened his longing for him and enabled him to receive more from him. Habib Ahmad often accompanied the Imam on his visits to the Prophet Hud ﷺ. When they were on the road he would walk directly behind the Imam “so that his heart would be in line with my heart. I knew that Allah’s gaze was upon his heart so I hoped to receive Allah’s gaze at the same time. I would imagine that my heart was an empty vessel placed under a vessel that was full, ready to receive the spiritual assistance that flowed forth from that vessel.” He had such veneration for his shaykh that he based his words and actions on his example. He said: “We only give preference to the speech of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger over his speech and actions. As for other scholars, if one hundred scholars held one opinion and he (Imam al-Haddad) held another, I would only follow his opinion because he is the Imam and Renewer (*majaddid*) of this time.” He also said: “Were he to bring the dead to life in front of me, this would not increase my belief in him in any way because I see him constantly bringing to life those who have died from ignorance and heedlessness through the light of knowledge and wisdom.” Habib Ahmad studied around seventy books in various sciences at his hands and was studying *al-Muwatta’* of Imam Malik with him when the Imam passed away. In spite of this, Imam al-Haddad said of him that Habib Ahmad did not need to study all these books at his hands but that he did it merely seeking blessings (*tabarruk*).

Imam al-Haddad held him in the highest esteem, and said: “I hope that you will be greater than Imam al-Shafi’i in outward knowledge, not to mention in inward knowledge.” Imam al-Haddad directed people to seek knowledge and spiritual direction from Habib Ahmad. He said to one of his students: “You must go to Sayyid Ahmad bin Zayn al-Habashi, for he is a scholar, an ascetic

(*zahid*) and a *sufi*.” This was indeed great praise from the Imam, for all praiseworthy qualities can be found in these three attributes. When the Imam died in 1132 (1719), many of his students took Habib Ahmad as their shaykh. It was as Imam al-Haddad predicted: “You will see the people of Tarim coming to visit you in your town in droves seeking spiritual assistance from you.” Habib Husayn, the son of Habib 'Umar bin Abd al-Rahman al-'Attas, said of him that everything that Imam al-Haddad possessed can be seen in perfection in Sayyid Ahmad bin Zayn al-Habashi.

Habib Ahmad’s whole time was spent in obtaining knowledge and spreading it. His immense thirst for knowledge did not wane as we grew older, but rather it increased. His great student Habib Muhammad bin Zayn bin Sumayt said: “I read one hundred pages to him in one sitting and he did not become bored, but rather asked me to read more.” Habib Ahmad said of himself: “After I reached the age of seventy, no desire remained in me other than the desire for knowledge.” He was once sitting with around one hundred books around him. He said: “Were all these books to be destroyed, I would have brought out all that is in them from my chest.” His knowledge was not confined to the sciences of the Sacred Law. He was also a master of medicine and people would come to him seeking remedies.

Like his predecessors, his utmost concern was acting upon his knowledge and benefiting others by it. He said: “We do not mention any piece of knowledge except that we have first acted upon it, and everything we say in the way of admonition, we intend addressing ourselves first.”¹¹ He would travel through the villages and towns of Hadramawt calling people to Allah and teaching

11. Many of the pious prefer to use the plural ‘we’ in their speech to avoid using the singular ‘me,’ thus praising the self and falling into the mistake of the Devil, who said: “*I am better than him.*”

them their religion. He preferred to call people away from acts of disobedience in an indirect manner, knowing that this was more likely to find acceptance in people's hearts. On one occasion Imam al-Haddad wrote to him saying that he was extremely happy with his efforts in calling people to Allah and teaching beneficial knowledge.

He authored a number of works. His twenty volume *Safinah* covers a vast array of inward and outward sciences. He authored several commentaries on Imam al-Haddad's poems, which the Imam himself approved and named. The most famous is his commentary on the Imam's '*Ayniyyah*, in which he compiled biographies of many of the great Imams who represent the Imam's chain of spiritual connection back to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He composed a number of small treatises on aspects of the spiritual path. His *al-Risalah al-Jam'iah*¹² covers individually compulsory knowledge from tenets of faith and the five pillars of Islam to the foundations of the spiritual path. No doubt due to the sincerity of its author, this small book found acceptance and continues to be a foundational text in many parts of the Muslim world, and several lengthy commentaries have been written on it. Habib Ahmad says in his introduction that he hopes that anyone that acts upon what is in it will become one of the people of true knowledge inwardly and outwardly. His prayers upon the Prophet ﷺ, poems and some of his letters and speeches have also been collected.

He had a love for the remembrance of Allah and established gatherings of remembrance which continue to this day. Among them are his *hadarah* in Masjid al-Baha' every Thursday night and another *hadarah* on the last Sunday of every month which is read next to his grave. He would read *la ilaha ill'Allah*

12. Literally "The Comprehensive Treatise." Translated into English with notes by Shaykh Abdalaziz Ahmad under the title "The Essentials of Islam."

seventy thousand times a day and loved to listen to the poetry of Imam al-Haddad, Imam Abu Bakr al-'Adani, Imam al-Sudi, Imam Ibn al-Farid and Shaykh 'Umar Ba Makhramah.

He had a strong attachment to the pious and to their places of worship. If he heard of pious people in any place, he would travel great distances to visit them. He would regularly pray in the mosques of Tarim and visit the graves of his ancestors throughout the Hadramawt Valley and beyond, especially Imam al-Muhajir and his great grandfather, Habib Ahmad bin Muhammad al-Habashi, both buried in al- Husayyisah.

Just as Habib Ahmad had a great concern for the slaves of Allah, he had a similar concern for the houses of Allah. He built seventeen mosques, most of them in and around al-Ghurfa and Shibam, and restored several others. This led Imam al-Haddad to say to him: "You are the father of the mosques (*'abu'l-masajid*)." Habib Ahmad insisted on paying those building his mosques the best wages and said that anyone that did not do so was lacking in spiritual ambition (*himmah*) or in sincerity. He also spent large amounts of money on the upkeep of the mosques. All of these mosques are still in active use.

He would spend freely on the poor and needy, not caring whether he had enough for the next day. He said that if he was blessed with a pious intention he would act on it instantly, without looking at the consequences. A *sufi* is 'a man of the moment' and this was his state. He advised seekers that if they were blessed with presence of heart in a specific *dhikr* they should continue reading it, and not be confined to their regular *adhkar*, since this was an opening from Allah which should be capitalised upon.

He had absolutely no attachment to worldly things, and Habib Muhammad bin Zayn bin Sumayt said that in all the years he spent with him he never heard him talk about this ephemeral life and he had no regard for those who were attached to it. He was severe in his condemnation of oppressive rulers

and those that served them. People came to him asking him to intercede for them by writing to such rulers but more often than not he would refuse, saying that he would “write to the heavens,” meaning he would pray for them. He had the utmost faith in the power of prayer, and said that if someone fulfils the conditions and abides by the etiquettes required, then supplicating alone is one of the best paths to Allah. He preferred supplication over all types of worship, both acts of worship of the heart and body. Habib Ahmad’s heart would be filled with hope and a good opinion of Allah when he asked and with the knowledge that nothing is too great to ask for in the sight of Allah. He would always direct people to this path, saying: “If the one asking is not worthy of asking then the One being asked is worthy of answering.” He said: “All good is found in realising that you have no strength or power of your own and in submitting you affairs to Allah.” He taught people that the best means of facilitating their provision was through being content with what they had been apportioned and relying upon Allah and not upon people.

His state was brokenness in front of Allah. When he first became known as a scholar in al-Ghurfa he and some of his students were attacked and abused. After this, sadness could be seen on his face for some time. He said: “Do not think that this is because of what happened to us. Rather we see it as evidence of a lack of truthfulness and a sign that Allah gave these people power over us because of our wrongdoings.” He would always forbid people from asking Allah to take retribution on those that wronged them. Instead, he would encourage them to pray for them.

He said that if someone is unable to find presence (*hudur*) in their prayer, they should witness their weakness and inability while in the prayer. He said: “Perhaps witnessing this weakness is more beneficial than actually being present, and witnessing this weakness is in fact being present with Allah.”

He was extremely scrupulous in his dealings. When he came to pay his zakat he would pay out two or three times more than the compulsory amount. He said of this: "All our wealth and everything we possess belongs to Allah."

His Death

After living most of his life in his home town, al-Ghurfa, he moved to nearby Khala' Rashid. Here he built a house and a mosque known as Masjid al-Baha', established gatherings of knowledge and remembrance and received his students and visitors. As a result of his settling there, the town became a safe haven, and is known to this day as '*al-Hawtah*' or '*Hawat Ahmad bin Zayn*.' In his old age he lost his eyesight and someone would have to lead him from his house to the mosque. People would crowd to kiss his hand on his way back to his house. One day the man leading him, out of sympathy for him, led him a different way to avoid the crowd. Noticing that he had arrived at his house quickly without meeting anyone, Habib Ahmad asked what had happened. When the man explained that he had led him a different way to avoid the people, Habib Ahmad rebuked him and told him not to do it again. He said that he sought spiritual assistance from every person that kissed his hand and he did not wish to be deprived of that assistance.

He continued his life's work until death came to him at 'Asr on Friday, 19th Sha'ban 1144 (1732), while his tongue was moist with the remembrance of Allah. His son, Habib Ja'far al-Sadiq, later built a large dome over his grave to accommodate visitors. Habib 'Umar bin Zayn bin Sumayt said that the one who is unable to visit the Prophet Hud should visit Tarim, and the one who is unable to visit Tarim should visit Habib Ahmad bin Zayn al-Habashi, because everything that those buried in Tarim possess can be found with Habib Ahmad bin Zayn.

Habib Ja'far, known as '*al-Sultan*', continued his father's work in the best way, calling people to Allah, teaching them and gathering them to remember Him. Likewise Habib Ahmad's daughter, Hababah Salma, was famous for her piety and efforts in teaching people and bringing them to Allah.

Among Habib Ahmad's greatest students was Habib Muhammad bin Zayn bin Sumayt, to whom we are indebted for writing his biography and recording his speech. His book, *Qurrat al-'Ayn* is an example of how a student can excel in serving his shaykh by recording his words and states in great detail so that others can continue to benefit from him. Habib Muhammad said that he was not jealous of anyone of the earlier generations because he had kept the company of Imam al-Haddad and Habib Ahmad bin Zayn al-Habashi.



HABIB 'ABD AL-RAHMAN BALFAQIH

His Lineage

He is al-Imam al-'Allamah al-Habib 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Abdullah bin Ahmad bin 'Abdullah bin Ahmad bin 'Abd al-Rahman bin al-Faqih Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Rahman al-Asqa' bin 'Abdullah bin Ahmad bin 'Ali bin Muhammad bin Ahmad bin al-Faqih al-Muqaddam Muhammad, bin 'Ali, bin Muhammad Sahib Mirbat, bin 'Ali, bin 'Alawi, bin Muhammad Sahib al-Sawma'ah, bin 'Alawi, bin 'Ubaydullah, bin al-Imam al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far al-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zain al-'Abidin, bin Husayn al-Sibt, bin 'Ali, bin Abu Talib and Fatimah al-Zahra', the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

His Life

Habib 'Abd al-Rahman was born in Tarim in the year 1089 (1678). He memorised the Qur'an at a young age and set about mastering the Islamic sciences. His genius soon became clear to his teachers. He spent ten years constantly keeping the company of, and learning from, his father, the great scholar Habib 'Abdullah bin Ahmad, who commanded him to take his place teaching and

giving fatwa before the age of twenty. After the death of his father in 1110, he kept the company of his maternal grandfather, Habib Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Rahman al-'Aydarus and then his maternal uncle, Habib 'Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad al-'Aydarus. He also studied at the hands of his brother, Habib Muhammad, and Habib Ahmad bin 'Umar al-Hindawan. He spent a number of years receiving knowledge from Imam 'Abdullah bin 'Alawi al-Haddad. He said of this: "I read numerous famous books to him, and benefited from him greatly. He had special concern for me and pure love for me." Habib 'Abd al-Rahman would carry an umbrella for Imam al-Haddad to shade him from the sun on his visits to the Prophet Hud ﷺ. Imam al-Haddad thought very highly of him. He once sent him some difficult legal questions and when he saw Habib 'Abd al-Rahman's answers to them, he named him '*allamat al-dunya* or 'the greatest scholar on the earth.' He also said about him:

ما في الأكوان مثل عبد الرحمن

"There is no one in the universe like 'Abd al-Rahman."

Habib 'Abd al-Rahman did not only receive knowledge from the scholars of Hadramawt. On his way to perform Hajj, he stopped in the Yemeni city of Zabid, famous for its scholarship. Here he sat in the gathering of one of the scholars, unknown to those present. The shaykh asked his students a particularly difficult question, and said: "I think no one but Sayyid 'Abd al-Rahman Balfaqih would be able to answer this." Habib 'Abd al-Rahman duly answered the question and revealed his identity, saying that the one travelling to Hajj comes to his Lord in dusty, dishevelled attire. The scholars of the city insisted that he teach and he spent days expounding on the meanings of *bismillah*,

astounding them with his knowledge. He took knowledge while in Zabid from, amongst others, Shaykh Ibrahim al-Nashiri and Shaykh al-Zayn Baqi al-Mizjaji.

In Medina he learnt from Shaykh Ibrahim bin Hasan al-Kurdi and Sayyid Muhammad al-Barzanji and in Mecca from Shaykh Hasan bin 'Ali al-'Ujaymi and Shaykh Ahmad al-Nakhli. Through these scholars and others he obtained the strongest chains of connection in all the outward sciences, including the four schools of jurisprudence. He also had chains of connection to over twenty of the spiritual paths, among them the Qadiriyyah, the Rifa'iyyah, the Shadhiliyyah, the Sahrawardiyyah, the Naqshabandiyyah and the Dusuqiyyah.

After describing in depth all his aforementioned teachers he says, in his poem, *Miftah al-Asrar*:

هَذَا اجْتِهَادِي ثُمَّ مَنْ اللَّهُ بِالْفَتْحِ الْعَظِيمِ وَفَوْقَ مَا فِي بَالِي

He then says, in his own commentary on the poem, *Rafa' al-Astar*, after expending all his efforts seeking knowledge and seeking to draw near to Allah that: "When Allah knew the sincerity of my efforts and my complete reliance upon Him, He blessed me with the greatest opening in everything that I sought and gave me more than I could possibly imagine."

Although some of Habib 'Abd al-Rahman's works have been lost over time, we are blessed to have some treasures. Perhaps his most famous composition is his *Rashafat Ahl al-Kamal*. A number of the scholars of Mecca wrote to Habib 'Abd al-Rahman requesting his counsel in travelling the path to Allah. He responded by writing this immense poem, which covers all aspects of the spiritual path and is evidence of his spiritual station as well as poetic gift. In it he says, describing the elect of Allah:

لَهُمْ مِنَ التَّقْوَىٰ أَجَلٌ زِينَةٌ
عِنْدَ لِقَائِهِمْ تَنْزُلُ السَّكِينَةُ
وَ تَحْصُلُ الْجَمْعِيَةُ الْمُبِينَةُ
فَتُجَذَبُ الْأَلْبَابُ بِأَنْفِعَالِ

*They are clothed in the most splendid garments of taqwa,
When one meets them, tranquillity descends,
One's heart becomes fully focused on Allah
And one's mind is pulled towards Him*

He says about Allah's spiritual gifts:

فَلَيْسَ يَخْتَصُّ بِذِي أَنْسَابِ
وَلَا بِأَهْلِ الْجِدِّ وَالْاِكْتِسَابِ
بَلْ فَيُضُّ مُنْعِمٍ وَهَابِ
فِيهِ النِّسَاءُ يُقْسَمْنَ كَالرِّجَالِ

*They are not only for those of noble lineage
Or those who expend great efforts,
But rather it is the outpouring of the Bestower
Of which women receive their fair share like men*

Shaykh 'Abdullah bin Ahmad Ba Sawdan and Shaykh Hasan bin 'Awad Makhdam both wrote commentaries on the *Rashafat*, although it has been said that only a knower of Allah of the station of Ibn 'Arabi could write a commentary on it that would do it justice. Habib 'Abd al-Rahman wrote several

poems on which he himself wrote commentaries, and wrote some treatises on legal issues. His *Fath Basa'ir al-Ikhwan* is a unique work which covers the different spheres of the religion from *Islam* to *Iman* to *Ihsan* to *'Irfan* (knowledge of Allah). He was gifted with being able to put an immense amount of meaning into a few short poetic phrases.

Once a group of scholars who were hostile to the methodology of the scholars of Hadramawt approached Tarim. They pitched their tents near the city, intending to enter Tarim the next day in order to debate with the scholars on theological issues. Habib 'Abd al-Rahman went out to meet them wearing the attire of a farmer. He asked them what had brought them and when they explained, he asked what the questions were that they wished to put to the scholars of Tarim. They replied that they were issues which only the scholars could discuss. He said that he always attended the gatherings of the scholars and perhaps he could answer. They began by asking him basic questions and he replied by saying: "If my masters were asked this, they would respond by saying this." They asked progressively more difficult questions and he would respond in the same way until they had exhausted all their questions. Then he said to them: "Were my masters to answer these questions of yours, they would also wish to ask you some of their own questions. Would you be able to respond?" He began to ask them questions and they were unable to respond. They looked at one another and said: "If this is the knowledge of a servant, how great must the knowledge of the scholars be?" They promptly returned to where they had come from and did not even enter Tarim.

Habib Hamid bin 'Umar Hamid said: "We do not prefer Ibn Hajar over Imam 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Abdullah Balfaqih."¹³ In spite of his greatness, it

13. Referring to Ahmad Ibn Hajar al-Haytami, the great Shafi'i jurist (died 974/1567)

appears that some of the people of his time failed to benefit from him. His student, Habib Saqqaf bin Muhammad al-Saqqaf, would call out at the top of his voice upon entering Tarim: “Why have people neglected 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Abdullah Balfaqih? They should be standing at his door like people stood at the door of Imam Malik in Medina!”

His desire to benefit mankind did not stop at disseminating his vast knowledge. He built seventeen mosques in different parts of Hadramawt. He accumulated large tracts of land, the cultivation of which he directly supervised. He would spend a third of his income on his household, a third on his guests and a third he would re-invest in agriculture. He had no fear of speaking out against the oppressive rulers of the time, which led to his imprisonment. In one of his poems he severely reprimands them for not ruling by the Sacred Law and then proposes practical economic solutions to the problems of the region.

His Death

Habib 'Abd al-Rahman died on 26th Jumad al-Thani 1162 (1749). He said previously that Allah had blessed him with the mastery of thirty sciences but that the people of his time only studied fourteen of these sciences. He said: “I will die and in my chest are sixteen sciences that no one has ever asked me about” and this is what happened. He had reached such a high level of knowledge that very few were able to fully benefit from him.



HABIB 'ABDULLAH BIN HUSAYN BIN TAHIR

His Lineage

He is al-Imam al-Habib 'Abdullah bin Husayn bin Tahir bin Muhammad bin Hashim bin 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Abdullah bin 'Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad Maghfun bin 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ahmad bin 'Alawi bin Ahmad bin 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Alawi 'Amm al-Faqih (uncle of al-Faqih al-Muqaddam), bin Muhammad Sahib Mirbat, bin 'Ali Khali' Qasam, bin 'Alawi, bin Muhammad Sahib al-Sawma'ah, bin 'Alawi, bin 'Ubaydullah, bin al-Imam al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far al-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, bin Husayn al-Sibt, bin 'Ali bin Abu Talib and Fatimah al-Zahra', the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

His Life

Habib 'Abdullah was born in Tarim in 1191 (1777). He received the upbringing that was customary in Tarim founded upon learning the Noble Qur'an and gaining a strong foundation in the sciences of the Sacred Law. His greatest teachers were his older brother, the great Imam Habib Tahir, Imam 'Abd al-Rahman Sahib al-Butayha, Habib Hamid bin 'Umar Hamid and Habib

'Abdullah bin Abu Bakr Mawla 'Aidid. The shaykh from whom he received his opening was Habib 'Umar bin Saqqaf al-Saqqaf. He also spent a period in Mecca and Medina learning from the scholars of the Two Sanctuaries.

Due to political strife in Tarim, he moved with his father and brother and their families to the nearby town of al-Masilah in 1210. The tribal chief who owned the land there saw in a dream the full moon falling and landing in his land. He thus gave them the land for nothing. Upon it they built a house and a mosque. With their arrival, al-Masilah was transformed from a backwater to a place of knowledge and spiritual nurturing.

Habib 'Abdullah held immense respect for his older brother, Habib Tahir. In their childhood, he would never allow himself to defeat him in archery contests. He would always walk behind him and, in their house, he would not go up to a higher storey if Habib Tahir was below. Only after his brother's death in 1241, did he start teaching and calling to Allah openly.

He would not allow an instant to go by unused. Someone once gave him a (recently invented) pocket watch and asked him some time later whether he had benefited from it. He replied that he had used it for a time and then it had stopped. The man told him that the watch had to be wound up every day. Habib 'Abdullah asked him, "Did you give me the watch in order for me to save time or waste time? Where can I find the time to wind it up?" Even the time he spent eating was used to increase in knowledge: his brother would eat and he would read to him and then he would eat and his brother would read. Just before Ramadan he would gather his household together and say to them, "All my time is full and I am unable to perform more acts of worship than I am already performing. Who will sell me some of their time?"

His daily wird was "*La ilaha ill'Allah*" 25,000 times, "*Ya Allah*" 25,000 times and 25,000 prayers upon the Prophet ﷺ. He would recite 10 Juz' of the Qur'an in his prayers at night and 8 Juz' in the *Duha* (midmorning) prayer.

He would make *ghusl* and use perfume for every compulsory prayer. He spent as much of his time as possible in the mosque, about which he said:

وَفِي الْمَسَاجِدِ سِرٌّ مَا جَلَسْتُ بِهَا
إِلَّا تَعَجَّبْتُ مِمَّنْ يَسْكُنُ الدُّورَا

*In mosques there is such a secret that whenever I sit in them,
I marvel at those who spend their time in their houses.*

He authored a number of treatises on different elements of the din, one of which is *Sulam al-Tawfiq*, a primary text covering all compulsory knowledge. He also composed a *Diwan* of poetry which is contained, along with all the treatises, in his *Majmu'*. He used his poetry as a means to call people to Allah and, for that reason, made it as easy as possible for the common people to understand. His *Hadiyat al-Sadiq* comprehensively covers what every person needs on their path to Allah.

He studied, taught and lived by Imam al-Ghazali's *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* to such an extent that his nephew Habib 'Abdullah bin 'Umar bin Yahya said of him: "He purified himself of all destructive traits and attained all praiseworthy traits which save one from destruction. His attributes are those that are contained in the *Ihya'* and more." Habib 'Abdullah said of the *Ihya'*: "Whoever desires to be upright on the Straight Path, to perfect their following of the Noble Prophet, to come to Allah with a sound heart, to attain noble character and to attain everlasting bliss then he must act according to what is contained in *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*."

He said of himself: "I never committed an act which is disliked (*makruh*), nor did I even consider doing such a thing."

His student Habib 'Ali al-Habashi said of him: “He was similar in appearance to the Prophet ﷺ. If I were to read the *Shama'il* of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in his presence, I would have witnessed those attributes in him.” Habib 'Ali also described him as having received complete and perfect inheritance from the Best of Creation ﷺ .

His love for worship did not prevent him from involving himself in the affairs of the community. He took care of the poor and needy and supported his brother Habib Tahir in the struggle against the oppressive Yafi' tribesmen that controlled Tarim. He also lent his support to the Kathiri State, which many of the scholars hoped would bring justice and rectification to Hadramawt. His great poem *Ya Arham al-Rahimin* is a plea to Allah to rectify the Muslims and their leaders and reflects the turbulent time in which he lived. It continues to be read in many gatherings and can be found in the famous *Hadarah* compiled by Habib 'Abdullah's student, Shaykh 'Abdullah bin Ahmad Ba Sawdan.

In spite of all his great works, he saw himself as merely a poor, sinful slave in desperate need of the mercy of his Lord.

إِحْسَانُنَا مَسَاوِي
وَصِدْقُنَا دَعَاوِي

*Our so-called goodness is a catalogue of wrongdoings
and our truthfulness is a false claim*

يَا رَبِّ مَا مَعْنَا عَمَلٌ وَكَسَبْنَا كُلَّهُ زَلَلٌ
لَكِنْ لَنَا فِيكَ أَمَلٌ تُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ الرَّامَةَ

*My Lord we have no (good) actions and all that we have earned are wrongdoings
But in You we have hope which brings decayed bones to life.*

His constant plea was for Allah to bless him with a good ending:

يَا اللَّهُ بِهَا يَا اللَّهُ بِهَا يَا اللَّهُ بِحُسْنِ الْخَاتِمَةِ

Thus, it was no surprise that death came to him while he was in the best of states on 17th Rabi' al-Thani 1272 (1855).

His *hawl*, or annual commemoration of his passing, in al-Masilah is attended by many on the morning of 17th Rabi' al-Thani. It was on this occasion in 1400 that one of Habib 'Umar bin Hafiz's teachers, Habib Muhammad bin 'Alawi bin Shihab al-Din, delivered his final speech. Upon finishing he said, "O Allah bless us with *tawfiq*¹⁴" and sat down and breathed his last breath. He died, as he had lived, calling to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.

We end this brief biography with the final verses of Habib 'Abdullah's poem *Hadiyat al-Sadiq*, which are often sung at the end of the gatherings of knowledge:

يَا رَبَّنَا اعْتَرَفْنَا	بِأَنَّا اقْتَرَفْنَا
وَأَنَّا أَسْرَفْنَا	عَلَى لَظَى أَشْرَفْنَا
فَتُبَّ عَلَيْنَا تَوْبَهُ	تَغْسِلُ كُلَّ حَوْبَهُ
وَاسْتُرْنَا الْعَوْرَاتِ	وَأَمِنَ الرَّوْعَاتِ
وَاعْفِرْ لَوَالِدِينَا	رَبِّ وَمَوْلُودِينَا
وَالْأَهْلِ وَالْإِخْوَانَ	وَسَائِرِ الْخِلَانِ
وَكُلِّ ذِي مَحَبَّةٍ	أَوْ جِيرَةٍ أَوْ صُحْبَةٍ
وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ أَجْمَعِ	آمِينَ رَبِّ اسْمَعِ
فَضْلًا وَجُودًا مِنَّا	لَا يَكْتَسِبُ مِنَّا

14. "Enabling grace"

بِالْمُضْطَفَى الرَّسُولِ نَحْطَى بِكُلِّ سُؤْلِ
صَلَّى وَسَلَّم رَبِّي عَلَيْهِ عَدَّ الْحَبِ
وَالِهِ وَالصَّحْبِ عِدَادَ طَشِّ السُّحْبِ
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فِي الْبَدْيِ وَالتَّنَاهِي

*O Lord, we admit that we have committed sins
And that we have exceeded the bounds
(Such that) we are on the brink of a blazing fire
So turn to us with a repentance
Which washes away every wrongdoing
And conceal our faults
And calm our fears
And forgive our parents and our children
And our family, our brothers and all our friends
And all those we love and our neighbours and companions
And all the Muslims
Amin! O Lord, hear our petition!
Out of Your grace, Your generosity and Your favour
Not because of our own actions
Through the Messenger, the Chosen One
Bless us with all we ask for
My Lord send peace and blessings upon him
The number of every grain
And upon his family and Companions
As much as rain falls from the clouds
And all thanks and praise be to Allah
In the beginning and the end.*



HABIB 'ALI AL-HABASHI

His Lineage

He is al-Imam al-Habib 'Ali bin Muhammad bin Husayn bin 'Abdullah bin Shaykh bin 'Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Husayn bin Ahmad Sahib al-Shi'b bin Muhammad bin 'Alawi bin Abu Bakr al-Habashi bin 'Ali bin Ahmad bin Muhammad Asad Allah bin Hasan al-Turabi bin 'Ali bin al-Faqih al-Muqaddam Muhammad, bin 'Ali, bin Muhammad Sahib Mirbat, bin 'Ali, bin 'Alawi, bin Muhammad Sahib al-Sawma'ah, bin 'Alawi, bin 'Ubaydullah, bin al-Imam al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far as-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zain al-'Abidin, bin Husayn as-Sibt, bin 'Ali, bin Abu Talib and Fatimah al-Zahra', the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

His mother was the knower of Allah and caller to Him, Sayyidah 'Alawiyah bint Husayn al-Jifri.

His Life

Habib 'Ali was born in the town of Qasam in 1259 (1843) at a time when his father Habib Muhammad was calling to Allah in the area at the order of his Shaykh, the great Imam Habib 'Abdullah bin Husayn bin Tahir. It was his

Habib 'Abdullah who named him 'Ali. In 1266, Habib Muhammad moved to Mecca where he became the Mufti of the Shafi'i school. Habib 'Ali remained with his mother in Qasam where he excelled in the study of the Qur'an and the sciences of the Sacred Law until 1271, when they moved to Seiyun. There he studied at the hands of Habib 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Ali al-Saqqaf and Habib Muhsin bin 'Alawi al-Saqqaf and others. He would also attend the gatherings of the great Imams Habib Hasan bin Salih al-Bahr and Habib 'Aydarus bin 'Umar al-Habashi. In 1276, he travelled to Mecca and spent two years in the company of his father taking as much as he could from his knowledge and *adab*. He also took from Shaykh al-Islam Sayyid Ahmad Zayni Dahlan and other great scholars of the time.

He returned to Seiyun in 1278, where he started teaching while still seeking knowledge at the hands of the scholars of Tarim and Seiyun. It was at this time that he was united with the shaykh at whose hand his greatest opening came, the Qutb Habib Abu Bakr bin 'Abdullah al-'Attas. Habib 'Ali spent around two years in his Shaykh's company and said "If I was given the choice between the bliss of Paradise and sitting in the presence of Habib Abu Bakr, I would choose sitting in his presence." Habib 'Ali then broadened his call to Allah and Allah placed love for him in people's hearts. He said: "I do not see a net more effective in capturing immense gifts and divine knowledge than calling to Allah." Out of his sincerity, if he stood up to give a public speech, people would cry before he even opened his mouth. The mercy that he had for creation was such that he would not sleep before making *tawbah* on behalf of the whole Ummah and asking Allah to guide the scholars, teach the ignorant and pardon the wrong-doers. He said: "My hope in Allah is that He will not punish a single person who lives in my time, and this is not a great thing for Allah." His great companion on the path, Habib Ahmad bin Hasan al-'Attas said of Habib 'Ali: "Was he someone who prayed a lot or did not sleep at night or made an

immense amount of *dhikr*? No. Rather, he loved his Lord and his Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his predecessors, so they brought him to them and ordered him to speak with their tongue and to call to Allah as the direct deputy of the Prophet ﷺ.”

Along with his concern for the spiritual nourishment of the people, he also arranged financial support for numerous poor households. He had a great concern for students of knowledge and spent his wealth supporting them and his time educating them. In 1296, he built a *Ribat* or school in Seiyun for students of knowledge, the first of its kind in Hadramawt. Students came from far and wide to study and live in the *Ribat*, which produced a large number of scholars and callers to Allah. A few years later Habib 'Ali built his Mosque, Masjid al-Riyad, as an extension of the *Ribat*.

Habib 'Ali is perhaps best known for his immense connection to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. On one of his visits to him in Medina, the Prophet ﷺ gave him the good tidings that his actions and the actions of his companions had found acceptance with Allah.

He established an annual gathering of mawlid in Seiyun on the last Thursday of the month of Rabi' al-Awwal which up to 40,000 people attended, all of whom Habib 'Ali provided with food and accommodation. The mawlid of Imam al-Diba'i was recited in the gathering until in, 1327, Habib 'Ali composed his masterpiece, *Simt al-Durur*, which he described as a “gift to those of later generations, for in it is an exposition on the state of the Prophet ﷺ.” The fame and popularity of *Simt al-Durur* rapidly spread and it continues to be one of the most popular and widely read of all the mawlid compositions. In 1328, Habib Salih bin 'Alawi Jamal al-Layl wrote to his shaykh Habib 'Ali informing him of the impact *Simt al-Durur* was having in East Africa. On the island of Lamu Habib Salih built his own masjid, Masjid al-Riyad, and gathered great numbers of people to read the Mawlid on the last Thursday of Rabi' al-Awwal, a

gathering which continues to grow to this day. Habib 'Ali's poetry, which reached six volumes, likewise found acceptance throughout the Muslim world. His collected prayers upon the Prophet ﷺ are also evidence of his love and connection to him. One of his well-known formulae is:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ مِفْتَاحِ بَابِ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ، عَدَدَ مَا فِي
عِلْمِ اللَّهِ، صَلَاةً وَسَلَامًا دَائِمِينَ بِدَوَامِ مُلْكِ اللَّهِ، وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ

“O Allah send prayers and peace upon our Master Muhammad, the Key to the door of the mercy of Allah, to the extent of the knowledge of Allah, which continue eternally as the dominion of Allah continues eternally, and upon his family and companions.”

His speech was recorded by his students, amongst them his grandson Habib 'Umar Mawla Khayla, whose compilation reached ten volumes.

His Death

He died in Seiyun on 20th Rabi' al-Thani 1333 (1914). A great dome was erected over his grave to accommodate visitors and gatherings of knowledge and remembrance which continue to this day. His *hawl* or annual commemoration of his passing is a great event in the calendar of Hadramawt and thousands come to connect to and remember this great Imam. A similar *hawl* takes place in Solo in Java where a number of his progeny are buried. He left behind a number of children, the most celebrated being his son Habib Muhammad who succeeded him and his daughter, Hababah Khadijah, one of the most pious women of her day.



HABIB 'ABDULLAH BIN 'UMAR AL-SHATIRI

His Lineage

He is al-Imam Shaykh al-Islam al-Habib 'Abdullah bin 'Umar bin Ahmad bin 'Umar bin Ahmad bin 'Umar bin Ahmad bin 'Ali bin Husayn bin Muhammad bin Ahmad bin 'Umar bin 'Alawi al-Shatiri bin 'Ali bin Ahmad bin Muhammad Asad Allah bin Hasan al-Turabi bin 'Ali bin al-Faqih al-Muqaddam Muhammad, bin 'Ali, bin Muhammad Sahib Mirbat, bin 'Ali, bin 'Alawi, bin Muhammad Sahib al-Sawma'ah, bin 'Alawi, bin 'Ubaydullah, bin al-Imam al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far al-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zain al-'Abidin, bin Husayn al-Sibt, bin 'Ali, bin Abu Talib and Fatimah al-Zahra', the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

His Life

Habib 'Abdullah was born in Tarim in the year 1290 Hijri (1873). After gaining a firm grasp in the foundational Islamic sciences, he studied under the Mufti of Hadramawt, Habib 'Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad al-Mashhur as well as Habib 'Alawi bin 'Abd al-Rahman al-Mashhur and Habib 'Abdullah bin 'Aydarus al-'Aydarus. He spent four months in the Ribat of Habib 'Ali al-

Habashi in Seiyun. During his time in Seiyun, he not only studied under Habib 'Ali, but also under Habib 'Ubaydullah bin Muhsin al-Saqqaf and Habib Ahmad bin 'Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqaf and a number of other scholars. He likewise received knowledge from Habib 'Aydarus bin 'Umar al-Habashi and Habib Ahmad bin Hasan al-'Attas. In 1310, at the age of twenty, he travelled to Mecca. He spent the next four years in the relentless pursuit of knowledge. He would take around thirteen lessons a day from scholars such as Habib Husayn bin Muhammad al-Habashi, Shaykh Muhammad Ba Busayl, Sayyid Abu Bakr Shata and Shaykh 'Umar Ba Junayd. He would prepare for each of these lessons, and only allow himself two hours' sleep every twenty four hours. On one occasion, he pressed himself to the *Multazam* on the wall of the *Ka'bah* and pleaded with Allah to allow the knowledge he had gained to benefit people all across the world. He eventually succumbed to his father's repeated requests to come home and returned to Tarim in 1314.

The Ribat of Tarim, which had been established in 1305, was in need of a head of studies so Habib 'Abdullah took up this post and remained in it for the next forty seven years. He did so sincerely for Allah's sake, and took no wage for his services. He supervised the arrangement of lessons which were in the form of *halaqat* or circles of knowledge and expended all his energies in benefiting the students. He would teach daily from after Fajr until well after sunrise. He would then return after Zuhr and teach until after the *adhan* of 'Asr. He would then occasionally attend the Rawhah¹⁵ of one of his teachers before returning to the Ribat to teach his own Rawhah. He would then teach from after Maghrib until after 'Isha'. He would never leave these lessons unless he was com-

15. The scholars of Hadramawt traditionally used the name *rawhah* for the lessons they would give after 'Asr in which they would focus upon teaching the sciences of the heart and reading the books of the Imams of Tasawwuf.

pletely unable to attend. At times of poor health he would call his students to his house and teach them there. He said that at times he would attend a lesson while in pain, seeking healing through hearing and imparting knowledge.

On Wednesday and Saturday morning was the general lesson or *madras* which was open to all, and people from Tarim and further afield thronged to attend. Habib 'Abdullah only taught in this gathering after the death of his two teachers, Habib 'Abd al-Rahman al-Mashhur and his son Habib 'Ali. He would attend the mawlid in the Jami' Masjid of Tarim every Thursday night and give a speech to those present, and established a number of other weekly lessons outside of the Ribat. He presided over the annual Mawlid in the Ribat on the last Wednesday of Rabi' al-Awwal, which thousands attended. He once said that a spiritual flood came forth from this Mawlid which reached everyone in creation. He had immense concern for the progress of his students. He would constantly encourage them to use their time wisely and to record what they learnt in writing. In his early days he would oversee their memorisation of core texts. He would ask after them if they failed to attend lessons, and in spite of all his duties, he found time to advise them and fulfil their needs. He would often sit in on their lessons and test them on their knowledge, thus increasing their desire to revise and memorise.

He told those who were studying Imam al-Nawawi's *Minhaj al-Talibin* with him that if they did not read through the section they were about to study twenty times at least, they should not attend the lesson. They duly read through the section with all the commentaries and then Habib 'Abdullah would ask them questions which none of the commentaries answered.

In his later life, he preferred to teach children *Surat al-Fatihah* and the basics of the prayer, leaving his top students to teach older students. When asked about this, he said he found comfort in teaching children, because their hearts were completely pure, unlike adults. He also said that he hoped to attain the

reward for all these children's acts of worship and the reward of the acts of worship that these children would go on to teach.

As a result of his efforts the Ribat flourished, and students came from all parts of Yemen, from South East Asia, South India and East Africa. Records show that 13,000 students studied under Habib 'Abdullah in the Ribat. These students then returned to their homelands and spread the knowledge that they had obtained. A number of them opened their schools and Ribats. Habib Hasan bin Ismail bin Shaykh Abu Bakr bin Salim opened a Ribat in 'Aynat, Habib Muhammad al-Haddar opened a Ribat in al-Bayda and Habib 'Abdullah bin 'Abd al-Rahman bin Shaykh Abu Bakr bin Salim opened one in al-Shihr. It has been said that wherever you go in the world, especially in the regions previously mentioned, you will find the students of Habib 'Abdullah, or the students of his students. In this we witness the answering of the prayer he made in Mecca in his youth. This is even more remarkable considering that he lived before the times of modern transport, in which travel between continents took weeks.

The knower of Allah, Habib 'Abdullah bin Muhsin al-'Attas, said of him that he will be resurrected on the Day of Judgement along with his students as a nation (*Ummah*) by himself and he will be met by his grandfather Muhammad ﷺ. We find this meaning in the hadith in which the Messenger of Allah said: "Shall I not inform you of the most generous of the generous? Allah is the Most Generous of the generous, I am the most generous of the children of Adam, and the most generous of people after me is a man who taught people and spread his knowledge – he will be resurrected on the Day of Judgement as a nation (*Ummah*) on his own, as well as a man who generously gave his life for the sake of Allah."¹⁶

16. Narrated by al-Bayhaqi and Abu Ya'la

He said that he wished that he could pray all his prayers in the great Masjid Ba 'Alawi. His wish was answered when the Imam of the Masjid, Habib 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ahmad Hamid asked him to take his place while he spent time in Java. This happened twice and lasted for a total of twelve years.

His thirst for knowledge was never quenched, and he said that had he found someone to take over the running of the Ribat, he would have travelled in search of knowledge. He wished to spend less time teaching and devote some time to authoring works but his shaykh Habib Ahmad bin Hasan al-'Attas forbade him and instructed him to produce scholars who would then author works, and this is what happened.

Perhaps his greatest student was Habib 'Alawi bin 'Abdullah Shihab al-Din, about whom he said: "It is a sufficient honour to the Ribat that the likes of 'Alawi bin 'Abdullah came out of it." Habib 'Alawi would teach alongside Habib 'Abdullah and preside over the *madras* in his absence. His other great students were Habib Ja'far bin Ahmad al-'Aydarus, Habib Muhammad bin Salim bin Hafiz, who authored a biography of Habib 'Abdullah, named *Nafh al-Tayyib al-'Atiri*. Habib 'Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad al-Sirri also compiled some of his speech. Another of his students was Habib Ahmad bin 'Umar al-Shatiri, who at his request authored the great summary of Shafi'i law, *al-Yaqut al-Nafis*. Shaykh Salim Bukayyir Ghaythan, Mufti of Tarim, studied at length under Habib 'Abdullah and also taught in the Ribat, as did Habib 'Umar bin 'Alawi al-Kaf.

Although almost his whole time was spent in the Ribat, he made several excursions calling people to Allah to Daw'an and the Indian Ocean coast. He also called people to Allah through his poems, which are collected in his *Diwan*.

His Death

Habib 'Abdullah passed away after a short illness on the eve of 29th Jumad al-Awwal 1361 (1941). The people of Tarim and other parts of Hadramawt came out to pray over him in the Jabbanah¹⁷ the following day. Habib 'Alawi bin Shihab gave a speech extolling Habib 'Abdullah's virtues before leading the prayer. He was buried in the Zanbal Cemetery, at his request, at the feet of his noble mother, Sharifah Nur bint 'Umar Shihab al-Din, placing his hopes in the narration that "Paradise is beneath your mother's feet."

Habib 'Abdullah's sons continued to oversee the Ribat after his death – firstly his oldest son Habib Muhammad al-Mahdi, then Habib Hasan. During the period of socialist rule in South Yemen, the Ribat was forcibly closed and remained so for twenty five years, until the regime fell and North and South Yemen were reunited in 1411 (1990). At this point Habib Hasan and his brother Habib Salim returned from exile to re-open the Ribat. After the death of Habib Hasan in 1425 (2004), Habib Salim took over the running of the Ribat, and he continues to do so much the same way that his father did. May Allah grant him long life and benefit us by him, his brothers and his father and may the Ribat continue to be a beacon shining the way for the people of this Ummah.

17. The *Jabbanah* is the *musalla* situated near the graveyards of Tarim in which the Janazah prayer and the Eid prayers are performed.



HABIB 'UMAR BIN SUMAYT

His Lineage

He is al-Imam al-Habib 'Umar bin Ahmad bin Abu Bakr bin 'Abdullah bin 'Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad¹⁸ bin Zayn bin 'Alawi bin 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Abdullah bin Muhammad Sumayt bin 'Ali bin 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ahmad bin 'Alawi bin Ahmad bin 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Alawi 'Amm al-Faqih (uncle of al-Faqih al-Muqaddam), bin Muhammad Sahib Mirbat, bin 'Ali Khali' Qasam, bin 'Alawi, bin Muhammad Sahib al-Sawma'ah, bin 'Alawi, bin 'Ubaydullah, bin al-Imam al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far al-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, bin Husayn al-Sibt, bin 'Ali bin Abu Talib and Fatimah al-Zahra', the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

His Life

Habib 'Umar's grandfather, Abu Bakr, left his birthplace in Shibam in Hadramawt and settled in in the Comoros Islands, off the coast of East Africa, and this was where Habib 'Umar was born in the year 1303 (1886). His father, the

18. Great scholar and student of Imam al-Haddad and Habib Ahmad bin Zayn al-Habashi

great scholar Habib Ahmad, was with his shaykh, Habib Fadl bin 'Alawi Mawla al-Dawilah, in Istanbul at the time of the birth. Habib Fadl gave Habib Ahmad good tidings of the birth of his son and named him 'Umar long before any news of the birth reached Istanbul. In fact, the baby was given another name which was Habib Ahmad changed to 'Umar when he returned from his travels. Due to the absence of his father, it was his mother, the pious Fatimah bint al-Muallim Shanzi, who raised him in his early years. When he was six, his father requested that he be sent to him in Zanzibar, where he was a Qadi. There he oversaw his development until, at the age of eight, he sent him to his ancestral home in Shibam.

In Shibam his father's uncle, Habib Tahir bin 'Abdullah bin Sumayt, took over the supervision of his education. During the years he spent studying in Hadramawt, he received knowledge from the masters of the time, among them Habib 'Aydarus bin 'Umar al-Habashi; Habib Ahmad bin Hasan al-'Attas; Habib 'Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad al-Mashhur and his son, Habib 'Ali; Habib 'Ali bin Muhammad al-Habashi; Habib 'Alawi bin 'Abdullah Shihab al-Din; Habib 'Abdullah bin 'Umar al-Shatiri and Habib Salim bin Hafiz.

His father then ordered him to return to Zanzibar. Habib 'Umar kept his father's company constantly and continued his studies at his hands and the hands of the scholars of the island until he emerged as a great teacher and caller to Allah. He saw that the Comoros Islands were more in need of his knowledge than Zanzibar, and thus he returned to his birthplace. His intense concern for spreading knowledge and Prophetic guidance caused him to travel constantly throughout the towns and villages of the islands and also to make excursions to the neighbouring island of Madagascar. He said, "If you want rest in the next life then forsake rest in this life." As a result of his efforts many

people accepted Islam at his hands. He was involved in building a number of mosques and schools, and built tanks to collect rainwater to provide drinking water to those that needed it. In a certain area many people were suffering from malaria but when they drank the water from one of Habib 'Umar's tanks they were all cured.

After his father's death in 1343 (1924), he returned to Zanzibar to divide his inheritance. Three years later, he returned again to the Comoros, where he continued teaching and calling to Allah while engaging in some business to support himself. While being a master of the Ba 'Alawi Way, he was closely connected to the Shadhili and Qadiri orders on the islands. He would attend their gatherings and even composed poems which are still sung in those gatherings.

In 1355 (1936), the Sultan of Zanzibar appointed him Qadi of the island of Pemba and then in 1357 (1938) as one of the Qadis of Zanzibar, as his father had been before him. In 1362 (1942), he was appointed Chief Qadi of the island. He performed his role in the best possible way for around twenty years, constantly mediating between conflicting parties while hardly ever having to issue a judgement. He reorganised the system of religious endowments (*awqaf*) such that their proceeds were spent correctly. As a result old mosques were refurbished, new ones built and a salaried imam was appointed to each mosque.

He held a daily gathering after 'Asr in the Jami' Mosque of Zanzibar. He would teach from *Fath al-Mu'in*, an advanced text in the Shafi'i school. A large number of people would attend, amongst them people of wealth and status. When he saw that the majority of people did not understand the lesson, he told some young boys to read to him *Safinat al-Najah*, a basic text, so that everyone would learn the rulings of purification and prayer.

During these years, he would make annual trips to Hadramawt and the Hijaz. He also visited Egypt and travelled throughout East Africa.

He always had the best opinion of Allah and instilled this in whoever was with him. People would come to him with their problems and leave full of hope in the mercy and grace of Allah. He said, “Seeking to approach Allah (*iqbal*) is the door to acceptance (*qabul*). Even if He only accepts one, everyone else will enter because if people come to the door of the Generous, He will not allow some to enter and turn some away. He will allow them all to enter.” He counselled people every morning to intend the good actions that they wished to perform that day so that they would be guaranteed the reward even if they were unable to perform them.

He had no regard for worldly possessions. He would spend freely from the wealth that came to him and had no regret for anything that he lost. After the revolution in Zanzibar in 1384 (1964), his house and all that it contained were confiscated by the government but he never complained or showed any sign of discontent. He forgave all those that wronged him over the years and treated them in the best way. He said, “If people would stop arranging their own affairs, Allah would arrange them in the best of ways. Look at a young child: he does not arrange his own affairs and as a result he receives love and compassion from his family.”

One would expect a scholar and caller to Allah of his stature to be a great speaker, but Habib 'Umar spoke very little. His call to Allah was with his state (*hal*) rather than his words. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “If you see someone who has been given silence and abstinence, draw close to him, for he receives wisdom.”¹⁹ He kept his gatherings short but his presence had such a strong effect on those in attendance that they would find their souls being raised and their worries removed. They would leave with the desire to do good.

19. Narrated by Ibn Majah

He possessed immense humility and would personally serve his guests. He had a great gift for poetry but he never allowed any of his poems to be published. He was constantly in a state of vigilance of his Lord. Whether alone or in company, he would sit very straight with his head lowered, deep in reflection.

Many great scholars graduated at his hands, such as Habib 'Umar bin 'Abdullah bin Shaykh Abu Bakr bin Salim, who travelled the world calling to Allah. Many others benefited from him, among them Habib Ahmad Mashhur al-Haddad and Habib 'Abd al-Qadir bin Ahmad al-Saqqaf.

His Death

The revolution in Zanzibar caused much turbulence and oppression and caused Habib 'Umar to leave the island with his whole family. He settled for a time in the city of al-Shihr on the South Yemen coast until the president of the Comoros Islands insisted that he return to his birthplace. Habib 'Umar's insight also told him that troubled times were ahead for South Yemen so he moved with his family to the Comoros. There he lived out his days, continually calling to Allah until his death on 9th Safar 1396 (1976) at the age of 92. He was buried in the *qubbah* (dome) of his grandfather, Habib Abu Bakr, in Moroni, Comoros. May Allah have mercy upon him, benefit us by him and grant us a portion of his legacy.



HABIB MUHAMMAD BIN SALIM BIN HAFIZ

His Lineage

He is al-Habib al-'Allamah al-Shahid Muhammad bin Salim bin Hafiz bin 'Abdullah bin Abu Bakr bin 'Aydarus bin 'Umar bin 'Aydarus bin 'Umar bin Abu Bakr bin 'Aydarus bin al-Husayn bin al-Shaykh al-Fakhr Abu Bakr bin Salim bin 'Abdullah bin 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Abdullah bin Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqaf bin Shaykh Muhammad Mawla al-Dawilah, bin 'Ali Mawla Darak, bin 'Alawi al-Ghuyur, bin al-Faqih al-Muqaddam, Muhammad bin 'Ali, bin Muhammad Sahib Mirbat, bin 'Ali Khali' Qasam, bin 'Alawi, bin Muhammad Sahib al-Sawma'ah, bin 'Alawi, bin 'Ubaydullah, bin al-Imam al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far al-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, bin Husayn al-Sibt, bin 'Ali bin Abu Talib and Fatimah al-Zahra', the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

His Life

Habib Muhammad was born in the village of Mishtah near Tarim in the year 1332 (1914) and was brought up under the supervision of his noble father, the great scholar Habib Salim. Habib Salim taught his son the foundational

Islamic sciences and then took him to Tarim to learn from the city's scholars. His teachers were the Imams of the time. Among them were Habib 'Abdullah bin 'Umar al-Shatiri, Habib 'Alawi bin 'Abdullah Shihab al-Din and Habib 'Ali bin 'Abdur-Rahman al-Mashhur, his grandfather on his mother's side. Habib Muhammad also built a strong connection with the knower of Allah, Habib Ja'far bin Ahmad al-'Aydarus. He took knowledge from Habib Muhammad bin Hadi al-Saqqaf in Seiyun and Habib Mustafa bin Ahmad al-Mihdar in al-Gwayra. He travelled on numerous occasions to the Hijaz to take knowledge from its scholars, among them Shaykh Muhammad al-'Arabi al-Tabbani, Sayyid 'Alawi bin 'Abbas al-Maliki, Sayyid Muhammad Amin Kutbi and Shaikh Hasan al-Mashat.

The extensive knowledge which he obtained led to his appointment as Mufti of Hadramawt. His use of his time was legendary. A day and a night would not pass except that he had stood in prayer in the night, recited a large portion of the Qur'an, made abundant dhikr, taught his students, visited someone, wrote something, issued a legal opinion and saw to the needs of a Muslim. He would attend, in one day, up to fourteen gatherings of knowledge and remembrance.

He had a great concern for conveying and preserving sacred knowledge, and authored a number of works in several sciences which are of great benefit to students. Among them are *Takmilah Zubdah al-Hadith* in the law of inheritance, *al-Miftah* and *al-Nuqul al-Sihah* in the law of marriage and *Durus al-Tawhid* in tenets of faith. He wrote small books to help beginners in the sciences of jurisprudence and grammar and *al-Tadhkirah al-Hadramiyyah* which covers all religious knowledge that it is compulsory for women to know. He also recorded in several volumes the speech of Habib 'Alawi bin 'Abdullah Shihab al-Din and wrote a biography of Habib 'Abdullah bin 'Umar al-Shatiri, *Nafh al-Tayyib al-'Atiri*. He composed a number of poems as well as a beautiful

Mawlid, named *Al-Nafhah al-Wardiyyah* which shows his intense love for and connection to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He also put the Mawlid of Imam Ibn Kathir into verse.

He had a passion for calling people to Allah and spreading knowledge, expressed by his constant visits to the towns and villages of Hadramawt. He journeyed to India and Pakistan where he took knowledge from the Hadith scholars there, and to Sudan and East Africa. He also visited Habib 'Umar bin Ahmad bin Sumayt in the Comoros Islands.

In 1387 (1967), a socialist government came to power in South Yemen which attempted to eradicate Islam from society. Scholars were persecuted and religious institutions, such as the famous Ribat of Tarim, where Habib Muhammad himself studied, were forcibly closed. This did not, however, deter him from exerting all his efforts in calling to Allah. On a trip to the Hijaz, he was advised not to return to Hadramawt as it was clear that his life was in danger. He replied that the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had gone out seeking martyrdom and that if it came to his own hometown, he could not flee from it. He duly returned to Tarim and continued his life's work, speaking out fearlessly in the defence of truth. He was required to register with the security forces on a daily basis so that they could check on his whereabouts. Thus, on Friday morning on 29th Dhu'l-Hijjah 1392 (1973) he left his son Habib 'Umar, then only nine years of age, in the mosque before the Friday prayer and went to register. He was never seen again.

His Legacy

The socialist regime thought that by abducting and killing Habib Muhammad bin Salim, they would succeed in their mission; but, in fact, they failed completely. *They wish to extinguish Allah's light (by blowing) with their mouths but*

*Allah will complete His light, even though the disbelievers may detest it.*²⁰ In 1410 (1990), the regime fell and North and South Yemen reunited, paving the way for a revival of the religion. Habib Muhammad's work did not come to an end, but rather was continued by his sons. Habib 'Ali Mashhur remained in Hadramawt throughout this dangerous period, teaching and preserving the way of his forefathers. He is currently the Mufti of Tarim. Habib 'Umar spent ten years in safety in al-Bayda in the North of Yemen under the tutelage of his father's companion, Habib Muhammad bin 'Abdullah al-Haddar. He then returned to Hadramawt to breathe new life into the religious life of the region. His tireless work led to the establishment of Dar al-Mustafa. Dar al-Mustafa is a centre for traditional Islamic learning based upon three foundations: knowledge (*Ilm*), spiritual purification (*Tazkiyah*) and calling to Allah (*Da'wah*). It continues to grow and receive students from all corners of the earth. Dar al-Zahra' was subsequently established, realising Habib Muhammad's goal of improving Islamic education for women. Habib 'Umar, like his father before him, is constantly travelling, spreading the pure methodology of his predecessors. All of the fruits that we now see are the result of the steadfastness and sacrifice of Habib Muhammad bin Salim. Dar al-Mustafa was opened in 1414 (1994) on 29th Dhu'l-Hijjah, the same date on which Habib Muhammad was abducted. Every year on that date, Dar al-Mustafa celebrates its anniversary and, along with it, the life and achievements of this great Imam. May Allah grant him the best of rewards on behalf of this Ummah, benefit us by him and raise him to the highest station in the company of his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

20. *Al-Saff* 61:8



HABIB IBRAHIM BIN 'AQIL BIN YAHYA

His Lineage

He is al-Habib al-'Allamah Ibrahim bin 'Umar bin 'Aqil bin 'Abdullah bin 'Umar bin Abu Bakr bin 'Umar bin Taha bin Muhammad bin Shaykh bin Ahmad bin Yahya bin Hasan bin 'Alawi bin Shaykh Muhammad Mawla al-Dawilah bin 'Ali Mawla Darak, bin 'Alawi al-Ghuyur, bin al-Faqih al-Muqaddam, Muhammad bin 'Ali, bin Muhammad Sahib Mirbat, bin 'Ali Khali' Qasam, bin 'Alawi, bin Muhammad Sahib al-Sawma'ah, bin 'Alawi, bin 'Ubaydullah, bin al-Imam al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far al-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, bin Husayn al-Sibt, bin 'Ali bin Abu Talib and Fatimah al-Zahra', the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

His Life

Habib Ibrahim was born in the town of al-Masilah near Tarim in the year 1327 (1908). He received a righteous upbringing at the hands of his parents and his paternal and maternal grandmothers, Sharifah Zahra' and Sharifah Sayyidah, both the daughters of the great Imam, Habib 'Abdullah bin Husayn bin Tahir. Both women were known for their piety, and Sharifah Sayyidah was known

specifically for her scholarship. Students would come to her to seek knowledge and take *ijazah* from her because of the strength of her *sanad*.²¹ On one occasion, Habib Ahmad bin Hasan al-'Attas came to visit her and Habib Ibrahim, then a young child, was brought in for Habib Ahmad to read over and pray for. He was also taken to Habib 'Ali al-Habashi for the same reason. His mother Sharifah Nur would take him to the mosque before he had reached the age of seven in the middle of the night and not allow him to return to the house until after sunrise. It was in this environment of knowledge and spiritual nurturing that Habib Ibrahim grew up. It is not surprising that by the age of eight he was already composing poetry which demonstrated not only his linguistic genius but also his state with his Lord. Here he incorporates the verses of Imam 'Ali into his own verse:

إِذَا أَرْمَةٌ أَنْشَبَتْ قِبَلِي
 وَضَنْتُ وَضَاقَتْ بِهَا حَيْلِي
 تَذَكَّرْتُ قَوْلَ الْإِمَامِ عَلِيِّ:
 رَضِيتُ بِمَا قَسَمَ اللَّهُ لِي
 وَفَوَّضْتُ أَمْرِي إِلَى خَالِقِي
 فَمَا عَتَمَ الضُّيُوقُ حَتَّى انْقَضَى
 وَجَاءَتْ تَبَاشِيرُ فَيْضِ الرِّضَى
 وَقَدْ أَطْفَأَ اللَّهُ جَمْرَ الْغَضَى
 كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ فِيهَا مَضَى
 كَذَلِكَ يُحْسِنُ فِيهَا بَقِي

21. The *ijazah* is the licence or permission given by the shaykh to the student to transmit knowledge. The *sanad* is the chain of connection through which knowledge is transmitted.

HABIB IBRAHIM BIN 'AQIL BIN YAHYA

*When a calamity comes my way
and I feel anxious and there is no way out
I recall the statement of Imam 'Ali:
"I am content with what Allah has apportioned for me
And I resign my affair to my Creator"*

*No sooner do the storm clouds of calamity gather but they pass
and the good tidings of the outpouring of contentment come
Allah has extinguished the burning embers of anxiety:
"Just as Allah has treated me well in the past
So too will He treat me well in the time I have left."*

He said, "Had I wished to speak to people only in verse, I could have done so." The strength of his memory was such that he said: "I never read a book and was in need of going back to it." It is no surprise that he quickly memorised the Qur'an and many of the core texts of the Islamic sciences.

He was taught first by his uncle, Habib Muhammad bin 'Aqil bin Yahya. Later he mastered the inward and outward sciences at the hands of the Imams of Tarim at the time, Habib 'Abdullah bin 'Aydarus al-'Aydarus, Habib 'Abd al-Bari bin Shaykh al-'Aydarus, Habib 'Abdullah bin 'Umar al-Shatiri and Habib 'Alawi bin 'Abdullah Shihab al-Din. He also took knowledge from masters such as Habib 'Alawi bin Tahir al-Haddad and Habib Salih bin 'Abdullah al-Haddad. These were not his only teachers; he said: "We have a connection to all the people of Allah."

He began teaching in the mosque of Habib 'Abdullah bin Husayn bin Tahir before he reached puberty and later became the imam of the mosque. In his youth, he was involved in a number of scholarly activities, and was constantly

writing, researching and teaching. He inherited great tracts of land around al-Masilah but one of his relatives falsely claimed that the land belonged to him. Habib Ibrahim duly went to Tarim with documentation proving his ownership of the land to present his case to the judge. He was met, however, by his shaykh, Habib 'Abdullah bin 'Umar al-Shatiri, who said to him, "O Ibrahim, if someone contests you in the affairs of your religion, then defend your religion. But if someone disputes with you over something worldly, then throw it in his face." Habib Ibrahim duly left his claim to ownership of the land and in 1354 (1935) left Hadramawt for North Yemen. He first lived in al-Hudaydah on the Red Sea coast where he once again studied with his uncle, Habib Muhammad bin 'Aqil. He also learnt from the great scholar, Sayyid 'Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad al-Ahdal. He went into business and was very successful but subsequently left it, having no desire for ephemeral things. After the death of his uncle he moved to Zabid and then Ta'izz, where he eventually settled. During this period he travelled as part of a government delegation to Iraq, where he graduated from the military academy. When he returned to Yemen he was appointed a minister in the government of Imam Yahya bin Muhammad. He remained in this position until the revolution of 1381 (1962), after which he was appointed the Mufti of the city of Ta'izz.

The door of his house in Ta'izz was never shut, day and night, and all-comers were welcome. In fact it was more of a *zawiyah* than a house – gatherings of remembrance were held, guests were honoured, the poor were fed and their needs answered. Habib Ibrahim would go out early in the morning to buy food for his household and then go out to fulfil people's needs. He would then sit daily from Zuhr until Maghrib and students would come and read books to him in various sciences. He possessed an extremely strong *sanad* in *Sahih al-Bukhari* and the book was constantly read along with its commen-

taries. As soon as it was completed, a new reading would commence. This lesson continued almost uninterrupted for around forty years. Other people would come with their problems or requests for *fatwa* and Habib Ibrahim would help them all with warmth and compassion. He would teach after Fajr and after Maghrib daily in Jami' al-Muzaffar and only suspended the lessons after a failed socialist attempt on his life. The rest of his time would be spent in remembrance of Allah and recitation of the Qur'an. He performed Hajj more than twenty times, renewing his connection to the scholars of the Hijaz on each occasion.

He was extremely humble and his heart had no attachment to worldly things. He said "I am an enemy of the *dunya*." He built houses for several people but never built one for himself. He preferred simplicity in the way he lived, and disliked affected behaviour (*takalluf*). When one of the wealthiest businessmen in Yemen came to visit him, he insisted that he eat from the same plates that the poor people ate from. He said: "I have never sworn an oath by Allah in my life in truth or in falsehood." He was once offered to chair to sit on while teaching but he refused saying: *The abode of the hereafter We shall give to those who do not wish to be raised (above others) in the earth.*²²

Among his many students were Habib Muhammad al-Haddar, Habib Zayn bin Sumayt, Sayyid Muhammad 'Alawi al-Maliki, Habib 'Umar bin Hafiz and Shaykh Muhammad al-Hariri.

His poetic ability has already been mentioned and among his works is a poem detailing the *sanad* of the Alawi path and a mawlid entitled *Dhakhirat al-Adhkiya'*. At the end of each section of the mawlid he says:

22. *Al-Qasas*, 28:83

جَزَا اللهُ عَنَّا الْمُصْطَفَى أَفْضَلَ الْجَزَا
جَزَاءً يُؤَدِّي الْفَرَضَ وَالنَّدْبَ وَالنَّفْلَا

May Allah give the Chosen One the best of rewards on our behalf, a reward which encompasses that which is compulsory, recommended and extra.

He rendered the Prophetic biography in verse but when he had reached 11,000 verses, he sensed in himself some pride in his work and duly burnt the composition. He composed a large number of other poems which are collected in his *diwan*. Upon the death of a mule that he owned, he wrote a poem lamenting its passing, praising it for its sincere service and apologising for his shortcomings in his treatment of it. His students also collected his sermons, fatawa and some of his speech. He composed a number of prayers upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Among them is this beautiful formula:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ الْحَبِيبِ الْمَحْبُوبِ
وَمُحِبِّهِ كَمَا يُرِضِيكَ وَيُرْضِيهِ وَحَبِّبْنَا إِلَيْهِ وَزِدْنَا مَحَبَّةً فِيهِ

O Allah bestow Your prayers and peace upon our Master Muhammad the beloved and upon those who love him to the extent that pleases You and pleases him and make us beloved to him and increase us in love for him.

His Death

Habib Ibrahim lost his sight in his final years and he spent most of his time in silence. He said at this time that the true meaning of well-being (*'afiyah*) is

HABIB IBRAHIM BIN 'AQIL BIN YAHYA

that the heart is free from any opposition to the decree of Allah. He had lived his life in strict adherence to the *Sunnah*, and this did not change even in his last days. When someone helping him to make *wudu'* rolled up his right sleeve before his left in order to wash his right arm, he reminded him that the *Sunnah* when removing clothing is to begin with the left and not the right. He finally departed this life on 14th Jumad al-Awwal 1415 (1995). Vast crowds came out to attend his funeral prayer in Jami' al-Muzaffar, where he had been *khatib* for more than thirty years. He was then carried to his final resting place in the Habil Salman graveyard in Ta'izz. May Allah raise his station and benefit us by him in this life and the next.



HABIB AHMAD MASHHUR AL-HADDAD

His Lineage

He is al-Habib Ahmad Mashhur bin Taha bin 'Ali bin 'Abdullah bin Taha bin 'Abdullah bin Taha bin 'Umar²³ bin 'Alawi bin Muhammad bin Ahmad bin 'Abdullah bin Muhammad bin 'Alawi bin Ahmad bin Abu Bakr bin Ahmad bin Muhammad bin 'Abdullah bin Ahmad bin 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Alawi 'Amm al-Faqih (uncle of al-Faqih al-Muqaddam), bin Muhammad Sahib Mirbat, bin 'Ali Khali' Qasam, bin 'Alawi, bin Muhammad Sahib al-Sawma'ah, bin 'Alawi, bin 'Ubaydullah, bin al-Imam al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far al-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, bin Husayn al-Sibt, bin 'Ali bin Abu Talib and Fatimah al-Zahra', the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

His Life

Habib Ahmad was born in the town of Qaydun in the Daw'an Valley South of Hadramawt in the year 1325 (1907). His father, Sayyid Taha, was one of the

23. Sayyid 'Umar was the brother of the great Imam 'Abdullah bin 'Alawi al-Haddad, who is thus Habib Ahmad's great uncle.

people of Allah. He spent long periods of time in Indonesia and it was his mother, the saintly Hababah Safiyyah, daughter of the Imam Tahir bin 'Umar al-Haddad, who raised him. She had memorised the Qur'an and would recite it while breast-feeding him. She then proceeded to raise him with the recitation of the Qur'an and its teachings. It was her that told him at the age of seven to go and pray the Fajr prayer behind the great Imam Ahmad bin Hasan al-'Attas when he visited Qaydun. He then recited Surat al-Fatihah to Imam Ahmad bin Hasan. This in turn led to further meetings between the two. She also placed him in the Ribat of Qaydun, the religious school founded by his two uncles, Habib 'Abdullah bin Tahir al-Haddad and his brother Habib 'Alawi. It was there that he learnt the Islamic sciences. Habib 'Alawi took him to Tarim where he took knowledge from the great scholars of the time, among them Habib 'Abdullah bin 'Umar al-Shatiri, Habib 'Alawi bin 'Abdullah Shihab al-Din and Habib 'Abd al-Bari bin Shaykh al-'Aydarus. Habib 'Alawi also took Habib Ahmad to Indonesia while he was still in his late teens to connect to scholars such as Habib Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Mihdar and Habib 'Abdullah bin Muhsin al-'Attas. Habib Ahmad then returned to Qaydun to continue his studies with his other uncle, Habib 'Abdullah. He began teaching there at the same time. In Mukalla, he learnt from Habib Ahmad bin Muhsin al-Haddad, who he considered to be the shaykh from whom he received his opening.

He travelled to East Africa for the first time in 1347 (1928). He visited Zanzibar and was asked to teach in the main mosque during Ramadan. He began with a commentary on Surat al-Fatihah and spent 15 days expounding on the meanings of the verse: *You we worship and from You we seek assistance*. On a subsequent trip in 1351 (1932), he visited Habib Salih bin 'Alawi Jamal al-Layl on the island of Lamu, who was one of the great callers to Allah in that region and the founder of Masjid al-Riyad, one of the first institutes of Islamic

learning in East Africa. Habib Salih, then in his eighties, commanded Habib Ahmad to lead the prayer in Masjid al-Riyad.

Seeing the dire need for scholars and callers to Allah in the region, he returned to East Africa after performing Hajj and settled in Mombasa, Kenya's main port. This was his base for around 25 years. His house was always full of students and visitors and he would teach in the mosques of the city. More than once he was asked to take the position of judge but he refused. He ran a small business in order to be financially independent and he would remain so throughout his life, never in need of financial support from individuals or groups. He made many expeditions into rural areas, calling local tribes to Allah. He learnt Swahili, the language of the region, and would use it for communication. However, he always made his speeches in Arabic to emphasise its importance and nobility as language of the Qur'an and the Prophet ﷺ. One of his students would then translate his words into Swahili. In this period, he established a strong connection to Habib 'Umar bin Ahmad bin Sumayt, at times visiting him in Zanzibar and the Comoros Islands. Habib 'Umar also visited him in Mombasa and later in Kampala, the capital of Uganda, where he settled in 1375 (1956).

In Uganda, Habib Ahmad found a number of tribes who were animists worshipping a variety of gods. He also found Muslims who had accepted Christianity at the hands of missionaries, as well as sects such as the Qadianis and the Ismailis. He found Muslims who had moved towards secularism or socialism and those at the other extreme who, claiming to defend the religion, declared many of their brothers outside the fold of Islam. Still others were giving religious judgements and spiritual guidance while being unqualified to do so. Habib Ahmad addressed his call to all these different groups. This call is reflected in his book, *Miftah al-Jannah* (beautifully translated by Dr Mostafa

Badawi under the title “Key to the Garden”) which was first published in 1389 (1969). The Key to the Garden is *la ilaha ill'Allah*, and the book is essentially an explanation of the meanings of this formula and what it entails. The first part of the book deals with the fundamental beliefs of Islam, the second with oft-misunderstood elements of the religion and the third provides direction for those wishing to tread the spiritual path. The book thus comprehensively deals with the constituent parts of the religion – *Islam*, *Iman* and *Ihsan*. The heart of the book is contained in Habib Ahmad’s supplication:

رَبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ يَكُونَ إِيمَانِي بِكَ وَبِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ مُسْتَفَاداً مِنْ فِكْرَةٍ
مَشُوبَةٍ بِالْأَوْصَافِ النَّفْسِيَّةِ أَوْ مُسْتَنِداً إِلَى عَقْلِ مَمْرُوجٍ بِأَمْشَاجِ
مِنَ الطَّيْنَةِ الْبَشَرِيَّةِ بَلْ مِنْ نُورِكَ الْمُبِينِ وَ مَدَدِكَ الْأَعْلَى نُورِ نَبِيِّكَ
الْمُصْطَفَى وَ بَرَكَاتِهِ

“My Lord, I seek refuge in You, lest my faith in You and Your revelation be derived from reflection polluted by the attributes of the lower self or from an intellect that is mixed with the earth from which mankind was created. Rather, I ask that my faith be derived from Your manifest light, Your most exalted assistance, the light and blessings of Your Prophet, the Chosen One.”

Habib Ahmad returned to Mombasa in 1389 (1969). His efforts in Uganda had led tens of thousands of people to convert to Islam. Many Muslims who had accepted Christianity returned once again to Islam and others came back to the straight path after deviation. His expeditions had taken him to the frontiers of Congo, Zaire and Rwanda. He did not merely convey the message and then

move on; rather he left behind teachers in communities that had accepted Islam and built schools and mosques.

He would perform the Hajj every year and meet with the scholars of the Hijaz, with whom he would discuss and attempt to solve the problems of the Ummah. He had a strong bond with Habib 'Abd al-Qadir bin Ahmad al-Saqqaf, and they would often attend gatherings together in Jeddah. He also travelled to Ethiopia, Somalia, Egypt, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

He can be described as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is described: he spoke little and spent much time in reflection; his laugh was a smile; and he spoke to people according to their understanding. There is no doubt that he was amongst those mentioned in the hadith of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: “The best of my nation are those the sight of whom reminds one of Allah.”²⁴ He would answer anyone’s invitation and, in his old age and poor health, he could still be seen going from house to house and gathering to gathering. His gatherings were gatherings of mercy and remembrance of Allah. At the end of his gatherings he would often recite *la ilaha ill'Allah Muhammadan Rasulullah* to those attending and they would then recite it back to him, thus directly receiving these words through an unbroken chain to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He had the utmost concern for the Ummah, and was greatly troubled by conflicts such as the civil war in Somalia, and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the war which followed. Those with him said that he would be in a state of fever at the times that the Muslim Ummah was suffering, in embodiment of the hadith: “The believers in the love, mercy and compassion they show one another are like the body. If one part of it suffers from an ailment, the rest of the body complains of insomnia and fever.”²⁵ He represented Uganda at the conferences of

24. Narrated by al-Tabarani

25. Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim

the Islamic World League, seeking to find solutions and raise awareness of the problems of the region.

He played an important part in the spread of the work of Imam al-Haddad. Due to his influence, Imam's al-Haddad's books were republished and several were translated into foreign languages. He revived the methodology that Imam al-Haddad laid down for those unable to undertake the spiritual strivings of the elite but who nonetheless wished to travel the spiritual path.

Allah says in the Qur'an: *For the one that fears the station of his Lord there are two gardens.*²⁶ Habib Ahmad said about the two gardens that one is in this worldly life and one is in the next. The first is the knowledge of Allah and the Messenger of Allah and the unveiling of the realities of faith and certainty. In this first garden, the heart is filled with light and contentment with the decree of Allah. The second garden is the bliss of Paradise.

Besides *Miftah al-Jannah* he authored a number of essays on important issues. He put *Safinat al-Najah*, the well-known primer in Shafi'i law, into verse. From a young age he had been gifted with great poetic ability and he left behind a *Diwan* of his poems.

Towards the end of his life he would divide his time between Mombasa and Jeddah, until poor health prevented him from travelling to East Africa. Heads of state would come to visit him to pay their respects and ask for his prayers and advice, along with a constant stream of visitors and students. He left an indelible mark on all those with whom he came into contact and many of them went on to call others to Allah in the same merciful way as he did. We are fortunate to have some of these people in our communities around the world.

26. *Al-Rahman*, 55:46

His Death

He finally left this life on 14th Rajab 1416 (1995). The funeral prayer was performed over him first in Jeddah and was led by Sayyid Muhammad 'Alawi al-Maliki, in the presence of Habib 'Abd al-Qadir al-Saqqaf. It was then performed again in the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca before he was placed in the blessed earth of the 'Alawi enclosure in the Ma'la cemetery. May Allah raise him to the highest of ranks and help us to preserve his legacy.



HABIB MUHAMMAD BIN 'ABDULLAH AL-HADDAR

His Lineage

He is al-Habib al-'Allamah Muhammad bin 'Abdullah "al-Haddar" bin Shaykh bin Ahmad bin Muhsin bin 'Ali bin Salih bin Muhammad bin Salih bin Ahmad bin al-Husayn bin al-Shaykh al-Fakhr Abu Bakr bin Salim bin 'Abdullah bin 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Abdullah bin Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqaf bin Shaykh Muhammad Mawla al-Dawilah, bin 'Ali Mawla Darak, bin 'Alawi al-Ghuyur, bin al-Faqih al-Muqaddam, Muhammad bin 'Ali, bin Muhammad Sahib Mirbat, bin 'Ali Khali' Qasam, bin 'Alawi, bin Muhammad Sahib al-Sawma'ah, bin 'Alawi, bin 'Ubaydullah, bin al-Imam al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far al-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, bin Husayn al-Sibt, bin 'Ali bin Abu Talib and Fatimah al-Zahra', the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

His Life

Habib Muhammad was born in the village of 'Azzah near the city of al-Bayda in the North of Yemen in the year 1340 (1921). His great, great grandfather Muhsin had left Hadramawt and settled in al-Bayda around the beginning of

the 13th Hijri century. He was given the best of upbringings by his father, who had devoted him to the service of Allah while he was still in his mother's womb. His father hoped that Allah would in turn make him a scholar. His mother was Nur bint 'Abdullah Ba Sahi, an extremely pious woman known for her worship and charity. She would spend from dawn to dusk in her kitchen cooking for the hungry, especially at the time of famine in Yemen during the Second World War. In his childhood, Habib Muhammad learnt the Qur'an and the foundational Islamic sciences from his father and the scholars of al-Bayda. In one of the last nights of Ramadan while in the mosque, he witnessed a brilliant light. When he informed his father of this, he said to him: "Perhaps it is Laylat al-Qadr, so ask Allah to make you one of the scholars that act according to their knowledge."

His thirst for knowledge then led him to attempt to travel to Tarim at the age of seventeen. After travelling by sailboat from Aden to al-Mukalla, he was unable to go any further due to political strife and thus returned home. Not deterred, he then travelled by land. His father accompanied him on the first leg of the journey. When the time came for them to part company his father faced the *qiblah* with tears in his eyes and said: "O Allah, people are sending their children to America and other places to earn them money and I am sending him to learn, so give him an opening and make him one of the scholars that act according to their knowledge." In spite of almost dying of thirst on a mountain path between Seiyun and Tarim, Habib Muhammad finally arrived safely in Tarim, and headed straight for its famous Ribat, where he was met by its shaykh, Habib 'Abdullah bin 'Umar al-Shatiri.

Habib Muhammad spent the next four years in the Ribat in the pursuit of knowledge. His efforts were immense. He would prepare for each lesson by reading the subject material at least eighteen times and would only sleep around

two hours in the day and night. So engaged was he in his studies that he did not once enter the room of the student in the room next door to him and did not open letters that were sent to him from al-Bayda. Habib 'Abdullah recognised his ability and gave him special attention and responsibility, leaving the Ribat in his hands when he left Tarim. He studied at the hands of, among others, Habib 'Alawi bin 'Abdullah Shihab al-Din, Habib Ja'far bin Ahmad al-'Aydarus and Shaykh Mahfuz bin Salim al-Zubaydi. After the death of Habib 'Abdullah in 1361 (1941), Habib Muhammad returned home, his heart full with desire to spread his knowledge and guide people to the path of Allah. In 1362 (1942), he established a school in his birthplace 'Azzah. He would also go out to the people, travelling from village to village reminding people of their duties. He would address the crowds that gathered for the weekly market in the city of al-Bayda and played an important role in resolving tribal conflicts.

He travelled on foot to perform Hajj in 1365 (1945). On his return, he spent some time in Ta'izz studying at the hands of Habib Ibrahim bin 'Aqil bin Yahya. In 1375 (1955) he performed Hajj for the second time and from that year on, he would make Hajj almost every year – while, at the same time, taking knowledge from the scholars of the Hijaz, among them Sayyid 'Alawi bin 'Abbas al-Maliki.

In 1370 (1950), he travelled to Somalia and was made Imam of Masjid Mirwas in Mogadishu. He remained there for a year and a half. He taught constantly and oversaw the establishment of a Ribat in the town of Bidua. It was here that his Shaykh, the great caller to Allah Habib Ahmad Mashur al-Haddad visited him.

Habib Muhammad had long wished to establish a ribat in the city of al-Bayda. He sought financial support in Aden and Ethiopia and preliminary construction was completed in 1380 (1960). Many people saw the Messenger

of Allah ﷻ in dream visions giving good tidings of the success of the Ribat. Someone saw him planting his blessed foot in the Ribat saying: “This will remain as long as my Ummah remains.” Habib Muhammad was in need of a teacher so he requested that Habib Muhammad bin Salim bin Hafiz send someone from Tarim. Habib Muhammad bin Salim selected Habib Zayn bin Ibrahim bin Sumayt, who became the Ribat’s greatest teacher and remained in al-Bayda for around twenty years. In 1402 (1981) Habib 'Umar bin Muhammad bin Salim bin Hafiz left a troubled Hadramawt and came to al-Bayda. He spent ten years taking knowledge from Habib Muhammad, who married his daughter to him. Habib 'Umar also taught in the Ribat and expended great efforts calling the people of the region to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. All of this was the best preparation for his return to Hadramawt after the fall of the socialist regime and his eventual establishment of his own ribat, Dar al-Mustafa.

Habib Muhammad was staunch in his opposition to the socialist government that came into power in South Yemen in 1387 (1967). This led to his imprisonment in al-Mukalla on a visit to Hadramawt in 1390 (1970). But this did not prevent him from calling to Allah and, in his time there, the prison was transformed. The five prayers were established in congregation and Habib Muhammad delivered lectures and lessons to the inmates. Due in part to the intercession of Habib 'Abd al-Qadir bin Ahmad al-Saqqaf and Habib Ja'far al-'Aydarus, he was eventually released and he returned to al-Bayda. He thanked them for their efforts and warned the scholars of Tarim and Seiyun of the danger of remaining in Hadramawt.

In 1395 (1974), he went to the Comoros Islands to visit the great Imam, Habib 'Umar bin Ahmad bin Sumayt and then to Kenya to visit Habib Ahmad Mashur al-Haddad. Habib Muhammad had established a close bond with Habib 'Abd al-Qadir al-Saqqaf and they travelled together to Iraq and Syria in 1396 (1975).

Habib 'Abd al-Qadir also twice visited al-Bayda and Habib Muhammad's Ribat. Habib Muhammad had great respect for the Tabligh movement and, in 1402 (1981), he headed to Pakistan, Bangladesh, Thailand and Malaysia to visit the movement's scholars and attend their gatherings.

From the time he rose for the night prayer, his waking moments were filled with the remembrance of Allah. He would complete the recitation of the Qur'an every week. He would teach daily from books such as *Sahih al-Bukhari*, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, *al-Shifa* and *Minhaj al-Talibin* of Imam al-Nawawi. He never left the congregational prayer from his childhood to his old age. He would sit daily to resolve people's problems and receive their questions. Due to his immense legal knowledge, he was appointed mufti of the province of al-Bayda.

He compiled a number of collections of adhkar to be read during the day and night (*al-Fawa'id al-Ithna 'Ashar*, *Nashi'at al-Layl*) and on journeys (*Jawahir al-Jawahir*). The many adhkar that are read today in Dar al-Mustafa are merely a selection of some of his daily awrad. He also compiled collections of adhkar and duas for Ramadan (*al-Nafahat al-Ramadaniyya*) and for Hajj (*Miftah al-Hajj*). He wrote a treatise on the attainment of noble character (*'Ajalat al-Sibaq*), a treatise on the performance of Hajj (*Risalat al-Hajj al-Mabrur*) and compiled a selection of hadith entitled *Shifa al-Saqim*. Through his numerous poems, many written in colloquial Arabic, he called people to fulfil their duties towards Allah and warned them against disobeying Him.

Habib Muhammad suffered for many years from serious illness and towards the end of his life he moved to Mecca, where the climate suited his condition. He would travel regularly to visit his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, where he would stand for hours in front of the Blessed Chamber. He would also go often to Jeddah to attend the gatherings of Habib 'Abd al-Qadir al-Saqqaf and would likewise attend the gatherings of Habib 'Attas al-Habashi in

Mecca. His son said of him that he did not waste a moment of his life. Due to his incapacity as death approached, he had one of his relatives make *tayammum* for him. His last words were the words he would repeat frequently throughout his life:

لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ أَفْنِي بِهَا عُمْرِي
 لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ أَدْخُلُ بِهَا قَبْرِي
 لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ أَخْلُو بِهَا وَحْدِي
 لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ أَلْقَى بِهَا رَبِّي

la ilaha ill'Allah - with it I end my life

la ilaha ill'Allah - with it I enter my grave

la ilaha ill'Allah - with it alone I isolate myself

la ilaha ill'Allah - with it I meet my Lord²⁷

He then fell into prostration and his soul departed from his body. It was the 8th Rabi' al-Thani 1418 (1997). As his body was carried to its resting place in the Ma'la Cemetery, Mecca was filled with the loud recitation of *la ilaha ill'Allah*, a fitting end to a man who had said: "Our flesh and blood is infused with *la ilaha ill'Allah*." He was buried in the proximity of his mother, the Mother of the Believers, al-Sayyidah Khadijah al-Kubra and Habib Ahmad Mashur al-Haddad. May Allah continue to benefit us by him and may his memory live on.

He would end his gatherings and prayers in the last portion of the night with these words:

27. From the Aqida of Shaykh Ali bin Abu Bakr al-Sakran

وَأْمُنْزِ إِيَّاهِ بِالْقَبُولِ لِأَعْمَالِنَا وَالِدَعَوَاتِ ،
نَدْخُلْ مَعَهُ طَهً وَآلِهِ فِي الصُّفُوفِ الْأَوَّلَاتِ ،
مَعَهُمْ وَفِيهِمْ دَائِمًا فِي الدَّارِ ذِهِ وَالْآخِرَاتِ ،
وَاعْفِرْ لِنَاظِمِهَا وَلِلْقَارِئِينَ هُمْ وَالْقَارِيَاتِ ،
وَمَنْ سَمِعَهَا أَوْ نَشَرَهَا وَكَاتِبِينَ وَكَاتِبَاتِ ،
وَأَرْحَمَ وَوَفَّقَ أُمَّةَ أَحْمَدٍ وَاهْدِ وَأَصْلِحْ لِلنِّيَّاتِ ،
عَلَيْهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ وَسَلَّمَ عَدَدَ ذُرِّ الْكَائِنَاتِ ،
وَآلِهِ وَكُلِّ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَالصَّالِحَاتِ ،
فِي كُلِّ لَحْظَةٍ أَبَدًا عَلَى عِدَادِ اللَّحْظَاتِ ،
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَمَا يُحِبُّ عَدَدَ النِّعَمَاتِ ،

*My Lord grant our actions and supplications acceptance
Let us enter (paradise) along with Ta Ha and his family in the first row
Let us be with them always in this abode and in the next
Forgive the poet and those reading this poem, male and female
And anyone that hears it and spreads it and those that write it male and female
Have mercy and grant grace to the Ummah of Ahmad,
guide its members and rectify our intentions
May peace and blessings be upon him, the number of atoms in creation
And upon his family and all the Prophets and the pious men and women
In every instant, forevermore, the sum of all innumerable moments
And all praise belongs to Allah, equal to His infinite grace and bounty,
as He loves to be praised.*



HABIB 'ABD AL-QADIR AL-SAQQAF

His Lineage

He is Habib 'Abd al-Qadir bin Ahmad bin 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Ali bin 'Umar bin Saqqaf bin Muhammad bin 'Umar bin Taha bin 'Umar bin Taha bin 'Umar bin 'Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad bin 'Ali bin bin Shaykh Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqaf bin Shaykh Muhammad Mawla al-Dawilah, bin 'Ali, bin 'Alawi, bin al-Faqih al-Muqaddam Muhammad, bin 'Ali, bin Muhammad Sahib Mirbat, bin 'Ali, bin 'Alawi, bin Muhammad Sahib al-Sawma'ah, bin 'Alawi, bin 'Ubaydullah, bin al-Imam al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far as-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zain al-'Abidin, bin Husayn as-Sibt, bin 'Ali, bin Abu Talib and Fatimah al-Zahra', the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

His mother was al-Sayyidah 'Alawiyah bint Habib Ahmad bin Muhammad al-Jifri.

His Life

He was born in Seiyun, Hadramawt in 1331 (1912). Habib 'Ali bin Muhammad al-Habashi, in the final years of his life, named him and gave good tidings of the future that was awaiting this child. He was given the best of upbringings

by his father, the great scholar and caller to Allah, Habib Ahmad. If he was late even by a few minutes for the *hizb* of Qur'an after Maghrib in Masjid Taha²⁸, his father would give him a hard time that night. "How can you prefer anything over your Lord, His Book and His House?" he would ask him. "The thing which delayed you – will it be of any benefit to you in the throes of death or in the next life? Will it be with you in your grave?" He memorized the Qur'an in his early years and began the pursuit of knowledge at the hands of his father and the Mufti of Hadramawt, Habib 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Ubaydullah al-Saqqaf, as well as Habib Muhammad bin Hadi al-Saqqaf. Amongst his teachers were the Imams of his time, Habib 'Alawi bin 'Abdullah Bin Shihab, Habib Ja'far bin Ahmad al-'Aydarus and Habib 'Abdullah bin 'Umar al-Shatiri.

He began teaching publicly in Seiyun while still in his youth and students of knowledge flocked to benefit from him. However, due to the mounting persecution that scholars received at the hands of the socialist regime in South Yemen, he left the country in 1393 (1973), going first to Singapore and then Indonesia. He then headed to the Hijaz, and settled in Jeddah. He established gatherings of knowledge and remembrance in his house in Jeddah attended by numerous scholars and visitors.

He made trips to various countries calling to Allah and visiting the scholars and Muslims in those places. Amongst the places he visited were Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, the Comoros Islands (where he visited Habib 'Umar bin Ahmad bin Sumayt in the company of Habib Ahmad Mashhur al-Haddad) and East Africa. He visited North Yemen and returned to visit Hadramawt after the unification of North and South Yemen but did not resettle there.

28. It is the tradition in the mosques of Hadramawt for people to gather after Maghrib to read a portion of the Qur'an together in a group.

He was loved by all those that came into contact with him. He had immense concern for every member of this Ummah, regardless of their race or rank and he would stop at nothing to attend to people's needs and deal with their requests. Countless people benefited from his knowledge and from his gatherings, which were gatherings of connection to Allah, His Messenger ﷺ and his inheritors. It is a great blessing that a number of those gatherings were video recorded.

In his call to Allah, he became the target of much abuse but in every situation he only responded by doing that which Allah loved. He harmed and abused no-one in response. He relived the way of Imam al-Bukhari, who said: "I hope to leave this life without Allah taking me to account for back-biting a single Muslim." Those who had harmed him in the past would visit him in Jeddah and be treated in the same way as old friends and brothers – he would honour them and fulfil their needs.

He said, "If someone comes to me in need, I cannot relax until I have done everything I can to fulfil his need."

He advised people to read the following formula in times of difficulty:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْقَائِمِ بِحُقُوقِ اللَّهِ
مَا صَاقَتْ إِلَّا فَرَّجَهَا اللَّهُ

"O Allah, send prayers and peace upon our Master Muhammad the son of 'Abdullah, the one who fulfils the rights of Allah. No difficulty arises except that Allah removes it"

People renowned for their hatred of Habib 'Abd al-Qadir and his methodology could not help falling in love with him and becoming his staunch supporters.

On numerous occasions, people openly abused him but never once did he respond or defend himself. He would fulfil the right of every single person; the only right he would ignore was his own. As Allah says: *Repel (evil) with that which is better. Then he who was an enemy to you will be like an intimate friend.*²⁹

One day, a businessman gave Habib 'Abd al-Qadir a bag containing a million Saudi Rials. He took the bag and drove around Jeddah distributing the money. He would say to his driver: “In that apartment there are a group of widows – give them this.” Within a few hours, he had distributed it all. He shook the bag to make sure that it was empty and then said: “O Allah, bear witness.”

His contemporaries were in agreement that he was truly their Imam. The great scholar Habib Ibrahim bin 'Aqil bin Yahya said of him:

جَمَعَ الْإِلَهُ مَحَاسِنَ الْأَوْصَافِ
 فِي الْغَوْثِ عَبْدِ الْقَادِرِ السَّقَّافِ
 أَحْيَا بِهِ الْمَوْلَى عُلُومَ كِتَابِهِ
 وَبِهِ اسْتَقَامَتْ سِيرَةُ الْأَسْلَافِ
 لَقَدْ تَرَبَّعَ فِي رِبْعِ مَقَامِهِمْ
 فَهُوَ الْخَلِيفَةُ دُونَ أَيِّ خِلَافِ

*Allah gathered all praiseworthy qualities
 in the ghawth 'Abd al-Qadir al-Saqqaf*

29. *Fussilat*, 41:34

*Through him, the Lord gave life to the knowledge of His Book;
through him, the way of the predecessors remained upright*

*He was firmly established in the stations that they held,
so he is thus the Khalifah, (their successor), without any debate.*

When al-Sayyid Salim bin 'Abdullah al-Hamid requested counsel from Habib 'Abd al-Qadir, he wrote the following:

After praising Allah and sending blessings upon the Messenger of Allah, he advised him to hold fast to *taqwa* of Allah. He said that, "The people of *taqwa* are of varying levels and *taqwa* itself has no end, since it is in reality a divine outpouring which people receive according to the readiness of their hearts. Those who have attained these stations are with the people with their physical bodies but with Allah with their hearts and souls.

So be avid, my brother, to reach these realms in which you witness the greatness of Allah's signs. This is to be achieved through inward and outward purity and protecting one's limbs from committing acts of disobedience. If the slave uses his limbs in the service of his Lord, Allah will protect him from Shaytan: *Truly you (Iblis) have no power over My slaves.*³⁰

Fulfil the rights of your parents, your relatives, your spouse, your children, your neighbours and all the people of *la ilaha ill'Allah*. Observe the prayer, for in the prayer you give greetings to all the pious slaves of Allah. Thus, whoever neglects the prayer neglects the rights of all the people of *la ilaha ill'Allah*. Perform the *sunnahs* and the *adhkar* pertaining to the prayer, because every pious action en-

30. *Al-Hijr*, 15:42

tails a specific reward and a specific divine gift and connection. Whoever pleases his Lord through serving Him, seeks to draw close to Him by obeying His commands and realises that he is a slave whose role it is to stand at the door, Allah will enshroud him with the cloak of His love and bring him close until [Allah says] “I become the hearing with which he hears, the vision with which he sees...”

Seek constantly the descent of Allah’s mercy through calling upon Him in a state of brokenness and lowliness, as nothing is more conducive to bringing forth His mercy than the slave’s recognition of his own weakness, and Allah is more merciful to His slaves than a mother is to her child.

You are required to fulfil the rights of Allah and the rights of His slaves and this is only possible, firstly, by seeking the assistance of Allah and, secondly, by organising your time so that you give every individual his or her right. Fulfil the rights of the people of *la ilaha ill'Allah* by attending funerals, visiting the sick and assisting the helpless. Treat them in the best possible way, as you would love to be treated, because mercy entails mercy and “those who show mercy are shown mercy by the All-Merciful.”

Habib 'Abd al-Qadir continued calling to Allah in the Hijaz, travelling between Jeddah and the Sacred Sanctuaries, spreading the knowledge and mercy that he had inherited from his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Towards the end of his life, illness confined him to his house but did not prevent him from receiving numerous visitors. In spite of the immense amount of work he would perform, he would never allow the week to pass without completing the recitation of the Qur’an. This was because the love of the Qur’an had been so deeply infused in him from his childhood.

His Death

He finally responded to the call of his Lord before Fajr on 19th Rabi' al-Thani 1431/4th April 2010, a month short of his hundredth birthday. The funeral prayer was the same night in the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca and he was buried in the Ma'la Cemetery in the proximity of his mother, the Mother of the Believers, al-Sayyidah Khadijah al-Kubra and his companions on the path, Habib Ahmad Mashur al-Haddad and Habib Muhammad bin 'Abdullah al Haddar. May Allah shower him with mercy and raise him to the highest of ranks in Paradise. May we continue to benefit by this great Imam.



HABIB “SA'D” AL-'AYDARUS

His Lineage

He is al-Habib “Sa'd” Muhammad bin 'Alawi bin 'Umar bin 'Aydarus bin 'Alawi bin 'Abdullah bin 'Alawi bin 'Abdullah bin al-Hasan bin 'Alawi bin 'Abdullah bin Ahmad bin Shaykh Husayn bin Imam 'Abdullah al-'Aydarus bin Shaykh Abu Bakr al-Sakran bin Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqaf bin Shaykh Muhammad Mawla al-Dawilah, bin 'Ali Mawla Darak, bin 'Alawi al-Ghuyur, bin al-Faqih al-Muqaddam, Muhammad bin 'Ali, bin Muhammad Sahib Mirbat, bin 'Ali Khali' Qasam, bin 'Alawi, bin Muhammad Sahib al-Sawma'ah, bin 'Alawi, bin 'Ubaydullah, bin al-Imam al-Muhajir il-Allah Ahmad, bin 'Isa, bin Muhammad al-Naqib, bin 'Ali al-'Uraydi, bin Ja'far al-Sadiq, bin Muhammad al-Baqir, bin 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, bin Husayn al-Sibt, bin 'Ali bin Abu Talib and Fatimah al-Zahra', the daughter of our Master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ.

His Life

Habib Muhammad, known by all as “Sa'd”, was born in Tarim in 1351 AH (1932 CE). He was raised, nurtured and schooled under the watchful gaze of his father, Habib 'Alawi, one of the foremost scholars of Tarim at the time, and his pious

mother, Sharifah Fatimah bint Hasan al-Junayd. She was also the mother of two great scholars: Muhammad and 'Awad, sons of Habib Hamid bin Muhammad Ba 'Alawi, who were both imams of the great Masjid Ba 'Alawi. Habib Sa'd was assiduous in his care for his mother and later she lived with him in his house in al-Nuwaydirah until she passed away in 1410 AH (1989 CE) at the age of nearly one hundred. Habib Sa'd thus grew up in an environment of scholarship and virtuousness. He studied under many scholars in Tarim and elsewhere. He spent six years at the Ribat of Tarim under the tutelage of Habib 'Abdullah bin 'Umar al-Shatiri. He received knowledge and spiritual guidance from Habib 'Alawi bin 'Abdullah Shihab al-Din and later from his son, Habib Muhammad. Likewise, he learnt from Habib Salim bin Hafiz and after him his son Habib Muhammad. Habib 'Umar bin 'Alawi al-Kaf was another of his many teachers.

In 1371 AH (1951 CE), he travelled to Aden to earn a living and study at the hands of the city's scholars. In 1391 AH (1971 CE), however, he was jailed by the socialist government of the time, which in its vain attempts to suppress Islam imprisoned and killed a number of scholars. He spent three and a half years in prison enduring the most severe types of torture. Yet in spite of these circumstances, he was able to memorise the Qur'an. After his release, he returned to Tarim in the year 1395 AH (1975 CE), where he was made the imam of the famous Masjid al-Saqqaf. The *hadarah* of *dhikr* established in the mosque by Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqaf more than six hundred years previously had been suspended by the socialist authorities. However, through the efforts of Habib Sa'd, it was resumed.

In 1397 AH (1976 CE), he reopened the renowned school of Abu Murayyam for the memorisation of the Qur'an, which had been closed by the authorities. It was founded by the great Imam, Muhammad bin 'Umar Abu Murayyam in

822 AH (1419 CE). Thousands of great scholars have graduated from it over the centuries. The school is known for being a place where people attain spiritual openings and a place where memorisation of the Qur’an is made easy and prayers are accepted. Habib ‘Umar bin Hafiz was one of the first students to complete his memorisation of the Qur’an after the school reopened. Habib Kadhim bin Ja’far al-Saqqaf also graduated at the hands of Habib Sa’d, along with many other scholars and callers to Allah. The school has since gone from strength to strength and has opened sixteen branches in and around Tarim.

In his service of sacred knowledge, he presided over a number of gatherings and lessons. One was the lesson inside the *Qubbah* (dome) of his ancestor, Imam ‘Abd Allah al-’Aydarus, in which the *Ihya’ ‘Ulum al-Dīn* of Imam al-Ghazali is read. He also revived the weekly reading of *Sahih al-Bukhārī* in Masjid Ba ‘Alawī which is concluded in the month of Rajab.

Out of his desire to benefit people, he compiled over one hundred small books on numerous subjects. He believed that a book should be short, beneficial and affordable and this is how his books are. The first of them was *Kitab al-Ayat al-Mutashabihat*, which assists anyone who wishes to memorise the Qur’an by mentioning verses in different parts of the Book that are either similar or the same. It was revised and published by Habib Salim al-Shatiri in 1409 (1988) and was well received by Habib ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Saqqaf. Habib Sa’d compiled several other books on aspects of the Qur’an as well as biographies and pieces of wisdom of many of the Imams of Hadramawt. His *Kitab al-Niyat* (Book of Intentions) delves deep into the science of intentions and due to its practical benefit was translated into English and several other languages. He also compiled books on subjects as diverse as remedies for forgetfulness and depression, neglected elements of the Sunnah, water, mountains, cats, ants, coffee, vinegar, apples, the heart and special attributes of the number seven.

Habib Sa'd's door was always open for visitors, who came in their droves. Hardly a single visitor left without first drinking tea and being presented with his latest book. His heart was filled with mercy and compassion for all those that came to him, especially students of knowledge, whom he would assist and encourage in whatever way he could. He saw all his students as his children. He severely counseled people to respect papers on which the name of Allah or one of His Prophets was written, and not to waste food or water.

He constantly was in a state of remembrance of Allah and a substantial portion of his life was spent with the *mushaf* or *masbahah* (prayer beads) in his hands. He would spend most of the night writing and researching, would go in the second half of the night to pray in Masjid Ba 'Alawi and then go to Masjid al-Saqqaf to read the Qur'an with the group before Fajr.

In his final years, it was only old age and poor health that prevented him from leading the prayer in Masjid al-Saqqaf and presiding over the Hadarah and gatherings of knowledge. When he found the strength he would come, and he attended the great khatm of Masjid al-Saqqaf on the 21st night of Ramadan in the last year of his life, as well as the Hadarah only a few days before his death.

He often advised his students to read a portion of the *Ihya'* every day and it is fitting that just days before his death he was given copies of a new print of the book and he spent his last hours with this great work in his hand.

His Death

He was finally reunited with his Lord on Thursday, 8th Dhu'l-Qa'dah 1432/6th October 2011 at the age of 82. Thousands of the people of Tarim and Hadramawt came out at 'Asr on Friday for his funeral prayer. Before the prayer, Habib Umar bin Hafiz and Habib Salim al-Shatiri addressed the crowd, re-

HABIB “SA'D” AL-'AYDARUS

counting the exploits of this great Imam and calling the people to return to Allah and hold fast to the inheritance of the their predecessors. He was then buried in the Zambal graveyard just outside the *Qubba* of Imam al-'Aydarus at the top of the path which leads down to the grave of Imam al-Haddad. May Allah have mercy upon Habib Sa'd and benefit it us by him.



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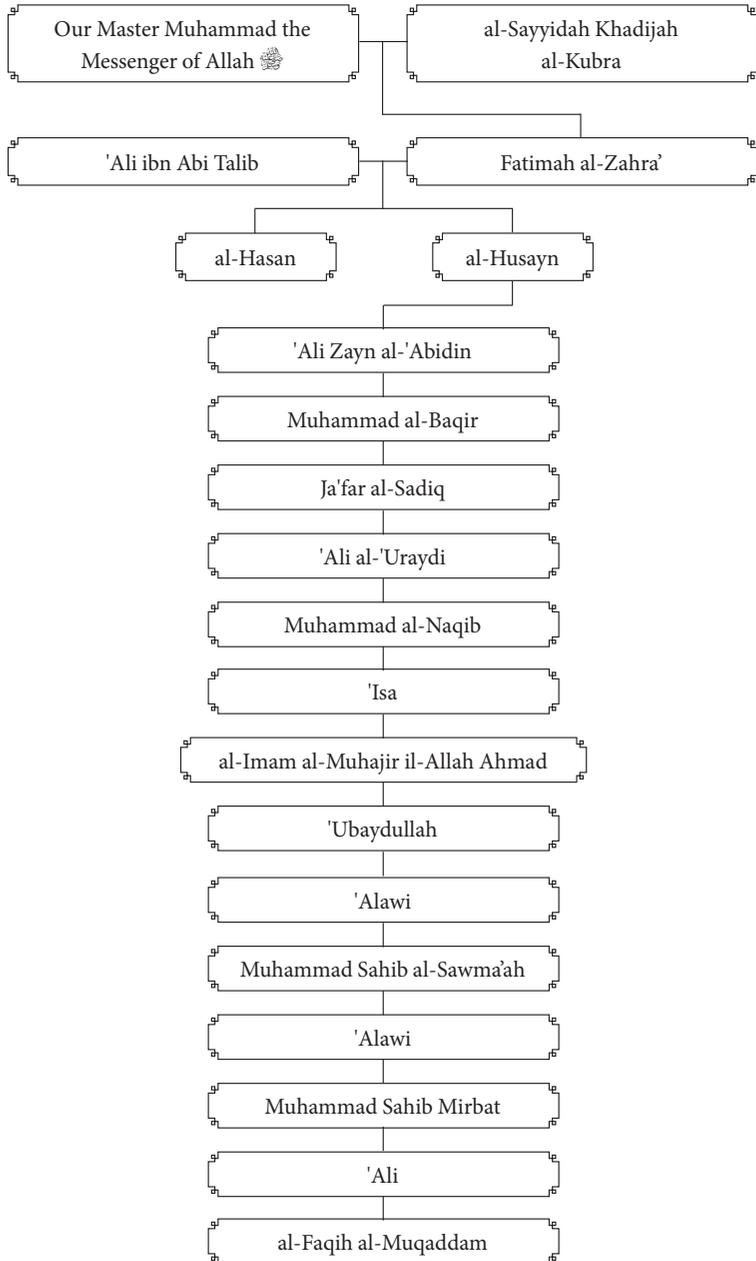


Fig 1. The Lineage of the 'Alawi Sayyids from the Messenger of Allah to al-Faqih al-Muqaddam

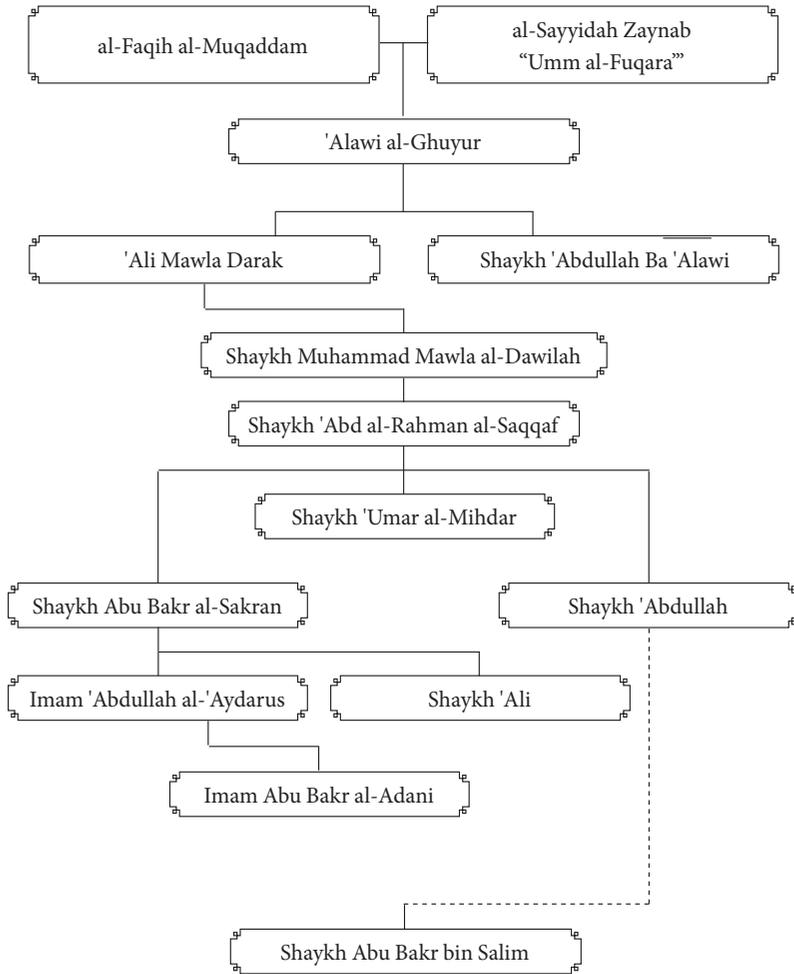


Fig 2 The Descendants of al-Faqih al-Muqaddam

1. Graves of the Sahabah
2. Qubbah of Shaykh Abu Bakr Ba Shamayla
3. Saqifah of al-Faqih al-Muqaddam
4. Qubbah of Imam `Abdullah al-`Aydarus
5. Grave of Imam al-Haddad
6. Qubbah of Imam `Abdullah bin Shaykh al-`Aydarus
7. Habib `Abdullah bin `Umar al-Shatiri
8. Habib Hasan bin `Abdullah bin `Umar al-Shatiri

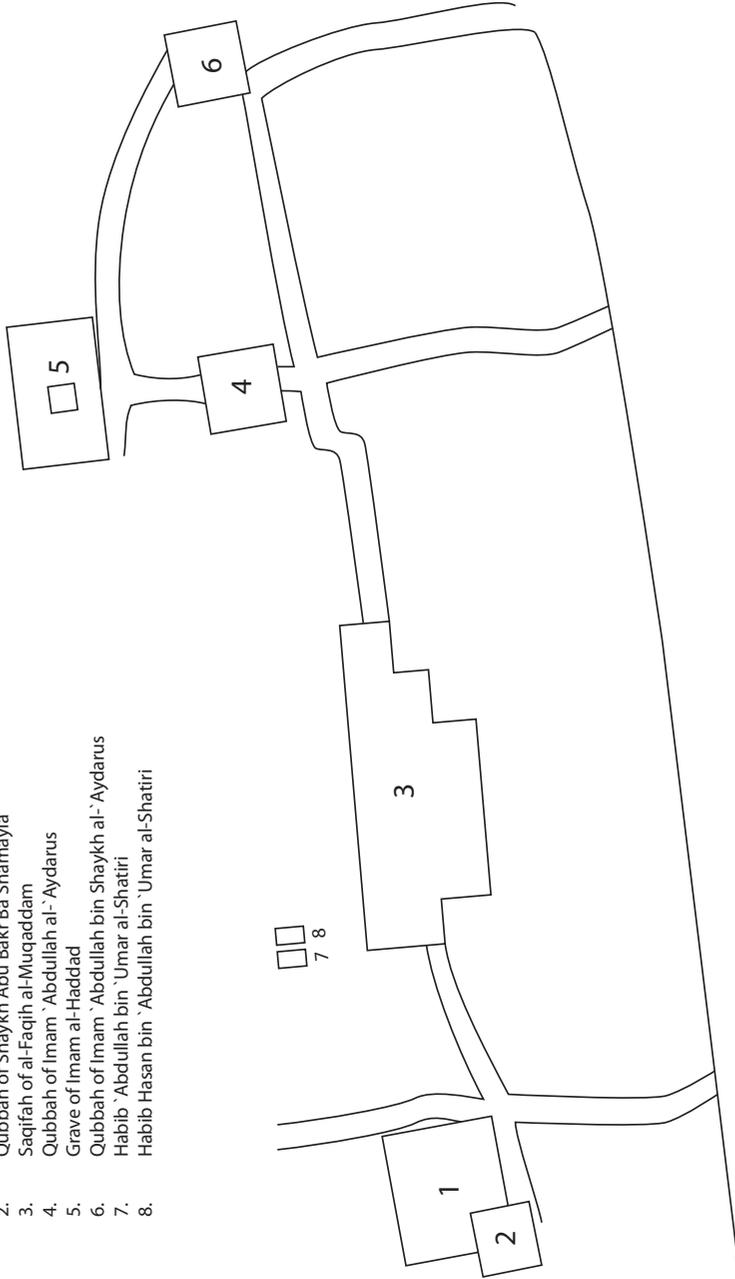


Fig. 3 General Map of Zanbal Cemetery

1. al-Faqih al-Muqaddam
2. `Alawi al-Ghuyur
3. al-Sayyidah Zaynab "Umm al-Fuqara"
4. Shaykh `Abdullah Ba `Alawi
5. Shaykh Muhammad Mawla al-Dawilah
6. Shaykh `Abd al-Rahman al-Saqqa
7. Shaykh `Ali bin `Alawi `Ali Khali` Qasam
8. Shaykh Abu Bakr al-Sakran
9. Shaykh `Umar al-Mihdar
10. Shaykh `Ali bin Abu Bakr al-Sakran
11. Habib `Abd al-Rahman Balfaqih

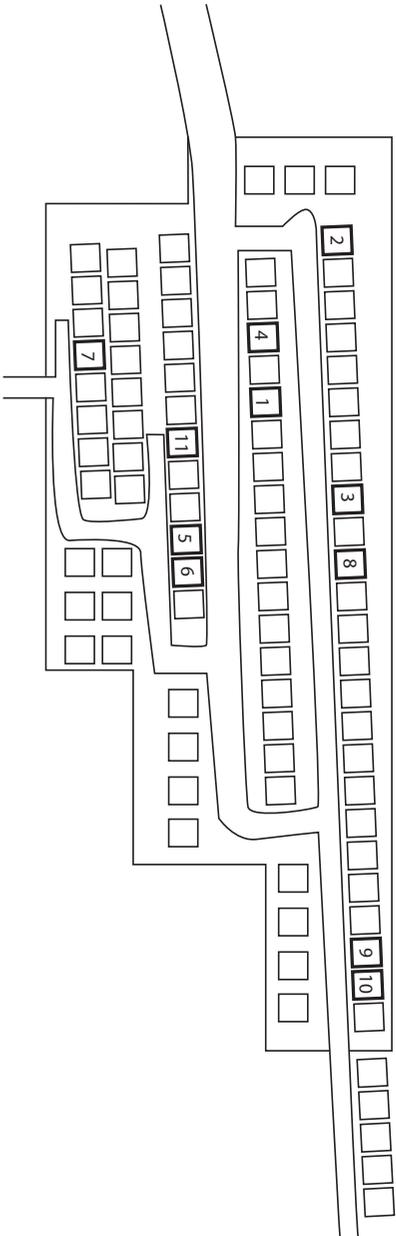


Fig. 4 Diagram of Saqifah of al-Faqih al-Muqaddam



FINAL WORD

Imam al-Haddad said:

أَهْلُ بَيْتِ الْمُصْطَفَى الطُّهْرُ
هُمُ أَمَانُ الْأَرْضِ فَادْكِرِ
شُبَّهُوا بِالْأَنْجَمِ الزُّهْرِ
مِثْلَ مَا قَدْ جَاءَ فِي السُّنَنِ

*The pure people of the household of al-Mustafa
They are a source of safety for the people of the earth, so reflect*

*They have been likened to radiant stars
As it has been mentioned in the Sunnah*

IMAMS OF THE VALLEY

رَبِّ فَانْفَعْنَا بِبَرَكَتِهِمْ
وَأَهْدِنَا الْحُسْنَى بِحُرْمَتِهِمْ
وَأَمْتَنَا فِي طَرِيقَتِهِمْ
وَمُعَافَاةٍ مِنَ الْفِتَنِ

*My Lord benefit us by their blessings
And by their sanctity show us the path to goodness*

*And make us die upon their path
Safe from tribulation.*



