

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

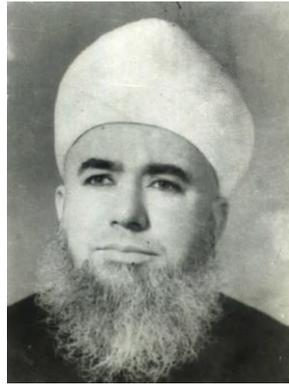
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ALL praise is for Allah the Lord of the worlds, and may the best of prayers and most complete salutations be upon our liege lord, Muḥammad, and upon his family, his Companions, and those who follow them in goodness until the Last Day. All praise is due to Allah ﷻ, for He has safeguarded our religion by making the scholars inheritors of the Prophet ﷺ. He has decreed that this inheritance shall be unceasing until the Last Day, as the beloved of the Lord of the worlds ﷺ said: “There shall never cease to be a group of my Umma victorious upon the truth. They shall not be harmed by those who oppose them, nor by those who abandon them, until the affair of Allah comes (the Last Day) while they are victorious.”

It greatly pleases us to present to you one of these completed inheritors who was among those who relayed the guidance of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to us by way of statement, action, and resultant spiritual state. May Allah reward him with much good on behalf of us and the Muslims.

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR—MAY ALLAH HAVE MERCY UPON HIM

He is the Gnostic, the knower of Allah, the esteemed spiritual trainer, the Sayyid: Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir b. ‘Abdullāh b. Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Ṭsā ‘Azīzī al-Ḥalabī al-Shādhilī. His lineage goes back to Shaykh ‘Umar al-Ba‘āj upwards to the grandson of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī ﷺ. He was born in the city of Aleppo (Syria) in the year 1338 *Hijrī*, corresponding to the year 1920 in the Gregorian calendar. He was born of two righteous parents—having spent a happy childhood with the both of them. In his early youth, the Shaykh was party to many religious and worldly activities. In the course of his youth, he became acquainted with several men of Sufism; men of both the inward and outward realities. During this time, he went back and forth between many different worldly



pursuits, yet his aspirations were not quenched by trade or any other career, and at the same time, he was not satisfied with associating himself with those who were ascribed to Sufism. He decided to place his aspirations in the pursuit of Sacred knowledge. He spent time with many scholars, among them: Shaykh Muḥammad Zammār and Shaykh Aḥmad Mu‘awwad, and afterwards, Shaykh Ḥasan al-Ḥasanī—the Shaykh of the Qādirī order. He entered the way of spiritual wayfaring under the Shaykh’s tutelage and soon after, the Shaykh granted him the permission¹ of the Qādirī order.

During his association with Shaykh al-Ḥasanī, he studied the sciences of Sacred Law in the Sha‘bāniyya school and he took knowledge of the Sacred Law from many major and esteemed scholars in Aleppo such as: Shaykh ‘Abdallāh Sirājuddīn,² Shaykh Aḥmad al-Kurdī, Shaykh Aḥmad Mu‘awwad, Shaykh Muḥammad Mallāḥ, and Shaykh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Tanūjī—may Allah have mercy upon them all. It was during this time of his initial studies that he would begin the first stage of his life that would soon become filled with inviting others to Allah ﷻ. He became the Imām of the Mosque located in the Ḥamad neighbourhood in Aleppo, and in a short time, he was able to transform this neighbourhood Mosque into a *Jāmi‘* (congregational Mosque) wherein the Friday prayers were established and many seeking to draw near to Allah would come together and were able to meet each other during both the Friday prayers and daily congregational prayers.

It was during this time that the Shaykh’s magnetic and captivating personality traits began to shine. Many of his classmates were keen to associate with him and attend his gatherings. His gatherings soon became the ‘place to be’ for a large segment of the youth. This was due mostly to the pleasant countenance he had as well as the pleasant countenance of those who loved him. The youth saw a countenance that caused them to love being religious; a religiousness that was not cause for them to leave their day-to-day lives and go into isolation; unlike what they saw from some religious people who presented religiousness in a limited way.

¹ *Idhn*: referring to the permission granted by the Shaykh to the disciple, allowing him to recite the litanies of that particular spiritual path.—[t]

² For his ﷺ biography, see our publication of the translation of his masterpiece *Our Master Muhammad, The Messenger of Allah ﷺ—His Sublime Character & Exalted Attributes Vol.1 & Vol.2*, first published in 2008 and 2009 resp. —[p]

The Shaykh's aspirations did not stop with his association with Shaykh al-Ḥasanī. He began to search in earnest for one who could show him the realities of Sufism that he found when perusing works such as: *Awakening the Aspirations: the Explanation of the Aphorisms*—the work in which the Sufi, [Aḥmad] Ibn 'Ajība expounded upon the aphorisms of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh al-Sakandarī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ. The Shaykh explained his aspirations: “I used to read the book *Awakening the Aspirations*, and within it, I would see realities and sciences of Sufism that were not to be found within my own soul, so I came to know that it is absolutely necessary to accompany a completed spiritual guide who has reached those realities.”

The Shaykh did not find what he was looking for in Aleppo, so he travelled to Damascus and met with many of its well known scholars. He would often visit [the grave of] al-Shaykh al-Akbar, Muḥyī al-Dīn b. 'Arabī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ in hope that perhaps, Allah might join him with one of the Shaykhs or guide him to one. Not long after that, he was inspired to associate with Shaykh Muḥammad al-Hāshimī, the Shaykh of the Shādhilī order. He met Shaykh al-Hāshimī in the large Umawī Mosque while the latter was teaching a lesson on Divine Oneness [*Tawḥīd*]. Afterwards, he got to know Shaykh al-Hāshimī who said to him: “You came as the last of the people but, with Allah's permission, you shall be the foremost of them. I have been waiting for you for a long time.”

The Shaykh found what he was looking for; he accompanied this major scholar and took such knowledge and gnosis to which he inclined. Once Shaykh al-Hāshimī saw in him readiness and preparation, he gave him permission to recite the general and specific litanies, and also gave him permission to train and guide spiritual aspirants.

The Shaykh continued as the Imām of the Masjid in Ḥamad until Allah facilitated for him to take leadership at the al-'Ādiliyya Mosque in 1973. It came to be that after Allah decreed for the Shaykh to study Sacred Law and caused him to arrive at the realities of gnosis, He prepared him to assume leadership at the expansive al-'Ādiliyya Mosque. It was at this Mosque, the Shaykh spent the most important period of his life in calling others to Allah and guiding them. After assuming leadership of the Mosque, the Shaykh revived it in the most beautiful manner. It became the 'place to be' for students of Sacred Law and followers of the (Shādhilī) order. It was filled with gatherings of knowledge every day of the week, and after the

nightfall prayer on Thursdays and after the mid afternoon prayers on Friday, a gathering dedicated to sending prayers upon the Prophet ﷺ would be held. The Shaykh's popularity spread far and wide and many different people hastened to him.

The truthfulness and sincerity of the Shaykh, along with his magnetic personality and patience in inviting others unto Allah, proved to be a major cause in attracting scores of students (of Sacred knowledge), businessmen, doctors, engineers, and university students. The Shaykh's Mosque soon became a beacon spreading knowledge and light. Sufism began to spread—after the Shaykh presented it in its most splendid raiment based on the principles of the sound doctrine, the noble Sacred Law, and well pleasing manners that were detailed by the people of *ihsān*, the third pillar of the religion.

The Shaykh's book, *Realities of Sufism*, was prepared approximately two years before he assumed leadership at the al-Ādiliyya Mosque, and it proved to be a clear and manifest victory for this science. This book has become one of the best books to express its reality, due in large part to the Shaykh filling it with clear evidence from the Book of Allah ﷻ, the Sunna of His Prophet ﷺ, the statements of the reliable scholars, and the scientific method he employed that made it possible to arrive at certain truth regarding the realities of this important pillar of the religion.

The order of the Shaykh spread to all corners of Syria. One is not apt to find a single town or village, except that the Shaykh has devotees and lovers within it. Nay, his popularity also spread to the neighbouring countries such as: Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon, and Iraq. This book has played a major role in expositing the realities of Sufism; its benefits have even spread to most of the Arab countries, as well as to India and Pakistan, many European and American countries, and other countries around the world. This all illustrates the Shaykh's ability in training, guiding, and gnosis.

The Shaykh would frequently undertake journeys to the Sacred house (Mecca) to fulfil the rites of Ḥajj. Due to that, his strong spiritual state, his good relationship with people, and the patience Allah bestowed upon him in inviting to Him, the Shaykh played a major role in taking his call to other well known scholars. The Shaykh was considered at the vanguard of the revivers of the Sufi

orders in general, and the Shādhilī order in specific. This book of his is a great testimony to that, for it has been published numerous times and has been translated into English³ and Turkish.

Another testimony to the Shaykh's stature is his large number of followers and brethren coming from every social class all over the world. They consider this book to truthfully speak for the Shaykh, who, with the exception of this book, left no other scholarly writings because of the burden of inviting others unto Allah and spreading the correct path based upon the Book and the Sunna.

It can be said that the sum of the Shaykh's methodology and what he wanted to bring to the people, he clarified and placed in this book. In truth, this book is to be considered a manifest victory for the outward Sacred knowledge and the inward knowledge of the spiritual path, and indeed, it has met with wide acceptance by people from all backgrounds.

The Shaykh possessed many miracles and clear spiritual unveilings, however, he would avoid disclosing such things and would not allow anyone to discuss them. He would caution the brethren from inclining too heavily to miracles and unveilings, and he would state that the greatest miracle is upright rectitude upon the Sacred Law of Allah ﷻ. From the greatest of the Shaykh's miracles was that he was able to transform misguided and corrupt personalities into exemplary models who were upright upon the Sacred Law. He would define the spiritual path: "The spiritual path is acting in accordance with the Sacred Law." He would also heavily emphasize Shaykh Aḥmad Zarrūq's definition of Sufism: "Sufism is good character: whoever surpasses you in good character has surpassed you in Sufism."

The Shaykh رحمه الله was honoured to be the Prophet's ﷺ neighbour in Medina for over five years. Afterwards, he settled in Amman, Jordan, inviting unto Allah ﷻ, as is the way of the truthful ones wherever they descend or dwell. His time in Jordan proved to be of much benefit for the people who took advantage of his knowledge, spiritual state, and invitation.

In the year 1412 *Hijrī* (1991), the Shaykh travelled to Turkey to visit some of the brethren. Upon his arrival in Turkey, the Shaykh fell very ill and was taken to a hospital in the city of Maraş, and was afterwards transferred to another hospital in Istanbul. His stay in the

³ Perhaps he is referring to a few chapters that have been translated into English. As far as we are aware, this is the first complete translation of this work.—[t]

hospital proved to be a source of great astonishment and amazement for the doctors and specialists when they witnessed his patience in face of severe pain without him having the slightest complaint. He was absorbed in Allah's remembrance and Divine contemplation with Allah ﷻ. Despite his severe illness, Allah blessed the Shaykh with his faculties completely intact and his presence with his Lord up until he drew his last breaths.

One of his sons wished to assure himself that his father's faculties remained after a long coma. Between the Shaykh and this son of his there were feelings of great amiability, so in order to assure himself that his father's long silence was nothing more than the patient, well pleased, and Gnostic believer's engrossment in (Divine contemplation), his son asked him about a line of poetry that he used to hear from him. He read to him an incomplete stanza of poetry:

*O you who asks me about the Messenger of Allah
and how he could be absent minded...*

The son said to his father: "O master! Please complete this line for me." His father looked at him and read:

*...And absent mindedness comes only from the heart of every heedless one
Whereas his innermost secret was absent from everything
So he was absentminded from everything other than Allah
—and exaltation is for Allah*

He kept on repeating over and over the line: '...and absent mindedness comes only from the heart of every heedless one' until his eyes filled with tears. After that moment he spoke to no one.

The Shaykh moved on to be with his Lord at 6:00 PM on Saturday evening, the twelfth of *Rabī al-Ākhir* 1312 *Hijrī*, (October 26th 1991). His final resting place was near the grave of the noble companion, our liege lord Abū Ayūb al-Anṣārī ؓ in Istanbul. One of the Shaykh's disciples composed a panegyric poem in praise of him. It reads:

*Near Abū Ayūb, the one from us who passed on
Has settled as a guest, having gained the loftiest station
A neighbour to him in whose house the beloved disembarked
And chose by the bounty of the Originating Lord
With his gray hairs he has a firm foundation
And in the ground of Istanbul he has a radiant abode*

*If mention is made of the sun's rays,
then in remembrance of him they are in the east
And if the crescent moon rises
then his brightness appears*

As a result of his death, the Muslims lost a great scholar who acted upon his knowledge. He was a complete guide and a notable of the spiritual path and invitation unto Allah ﷻ. May Allah envelop him in His mercy, raise his station, and settle him in the high expanses of His Paradise with the Prophets, the veracious believers, the martyrs, and the righteous—and what a great company they are!

﴿My Lord, keep me thankful for the blessing You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and keep me acting rightly, pleasing You, and admit me, by Your mercy, among Your slaves who are righteous﴾ [al-Naml: 19].

O Allah! Resurrect us along with him under the banner of the master of the Messengers, our liege lord Muḥammad ﷺ, along with his Companions. Peace be upon all of the Prophets, and all praise is for Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

—the relatives of the author
Shawwāl 23, 1421 Hijrī
January 18th, 2001

