Al-Khadr ibn al-Faqih Muhammad ibn al-Hajj Uthman ibn as-Sayyid at-Taalib Sayeed al-Jamani may Allah ta’ala be merciful to all of them.

He, may Allah ta’ala be merciful to him was an erudite Imam, a sagacious jurist, and a fearfully aware leading man of letters who possessed excellent comprehension. His proficiency in knowledge was well known. He, may Allah ta’ala be merciful to him, had the most elegant style of calligraphy.2

He was completely engrossed in the pursuit of knowledge and thoroughly desirous of it. He had abundant transmissions of knowledge until, if you were to examine his books you would find in them margins replete with his own marginal footnotes. You would also find other volumes of papers filled with notes, legal issues, and transmitted benefits from the likes of al-Qastalaani,3 and his own commentaries (sharh) upon issues of jurisprudence.4

1 The author Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Wulaati only made one entry for the scholars whose names begin with the letter ‘kha’ and he was ‘Shaykh al-Khadr’ ibn Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn at-Taalib Sadeeq may Allah be merciful to all of them.

2 The expression ‘khatt’ (calligraphy) takes its origin from the verb ‘khatta’ (to write) and comes from the sound made when the pen moves across a surface. Among the earliest scholars to codify the science of Arabic calligraphy was Abu’l-Faraaj Muhammad ibn Is’haq al-Warraaq, famous as Ibn’n-Nadeem (325-377 A.H./ 937-987 C.E.) who composed his well known work Kitaab’l-Fihrist (385-437 A.H./ 996-1047 C.E.) which modern scholars today call the ‘Mishkat al-Masabih’. In the index Ibn’n-Nadeem informs us that the earliest styles of Arabic calligraphy were the hijazi (or naskhi) and kufic scripts which were used to record the earliest official Qur’ans. The kufic style was brought westward into North Africa and there developed a derivative style called ‘ifriqiyya’ named after the region in which it emerged. This cursive style of kufic spread across North Africa into Morocco and southward into the central Bilad’s-Sudan such as Kanem/Bornu and Hausaland. In Kanem Bornu a new style developed which was used to record official Qur’ans called ‘barawni’ and was similar to that of the ‘ifriqiyya’ but less stylistic. From Morocco the Muslims brought the ifriqiyya style into Andalusia, where a smaller, more cursive style emerged called ‘andalusi’, which modern scholars today call ‘maghribi’. This ‘andalusi’ style spread southward into the western Bilad’s-Sudan in the cities of Walata, Tinbuktu, Kabara, Massina, Aghadez and others and there emerged a unique small cursive style called ‘tinbukti’. In the 19th century in the central Bilad’s-Sudan there emerged a style which was a combination of the western ‘tinbukti’ style and the eastern ‘barawni’ style and was called ‘jihaadi’ named after the ‘jihadist’ of the Sokoto Caliphate such as Shaykh Abdullahi ibn Fuduye’, and Shaykh Muhammad Bello. It is highly likely that the style of calligraphy referred to here that Shaykh al-Khadr had mastered was the ‘andalusi’ script and perhaps its offspring the ‘tinbukti’ script.

3 He was Shihab’d-Deen Abu’l-Abbas Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr al-Khatib al-Qastalaani. He was a jurist of the Shafi’i school of thought, born in Cairo on the 12th of Dhu’l-Qa’ida in the year 851 A.H. (circa 20th January, 1448 C.E.).

4 The expression ‘sharh’ is plural for ‘sharha’ (commentary) and comes from the verb ‘sharah’ (to expose to view, to expand, to lay open and to disclose); like when you say: ‘sharahayi’ (He explained, or expounded on the prophetic tradition.) Allah ta’ala says: “sharahayi Allahu sadrohu li’l-
He was a responsive praise singer (maddaah) of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace following the methodology of Ibn Muheeb. He, may Allah be pleased with him, used to weep often out of fear of Allah ta’ala.

islam” (Allah expanded his breast to Islam). In a famous supplication related by al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of Ali ibn Abi Talib, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “O Allah expand (ashrah) for me my breast.” Technically the expression ‘sharh’ is an infinitive noun (ism fi’l) which means an explanation, expanding and disclosing of the meanings of an entire text as a form of commentary. There are at least nine categories of commentary: [1] an exclusive unqualified commentary (sharh) where the explanation and commentary is interwoven with the text (matin) in such a manner that the two together form an elegant and coherent aggregate text; [2] a ‘haashiyya’ (marginal footnotes or gloss) which explains specific words or passages within a text and is usually written on the margins of the original work being commented upon; [3] a ‘taknima’ (supplement or epilogue), which is a complementary commentary composed as a sequel or continuation of an original text designed to complete its meanings; [4] a ‘bayaan’ (clarification or explanation) which in addition to defining specific words it also explains the deeper meanings of the expressions of the text with reference to its rhetorical style and diction; [5] a ‘mukhtasar’ (abridgment or synopsis) which is a compendium manual or handbook upon a larger text that outlines the key ideas and epitomizes the subject of the text in a succinct exposition; [6] closely associated with the foregoing ‘mukhtasar’ is a ‘talkhees’ (abstraction or recapitulation) which like a ‘mukhtasar’ summarizes the key ideas of a text, but comments upon specific sectors of a text and not the whole; [7] a ‘tas’heeb’ (emendation or correction) which is a kind of commentary specific to the collected works of the prophetic traditions where the entire text is cleared of defects which would occasion doubt in its veracity; [8] following in the same manner is a ‘talidheeb’ (rectification or refinement) which is a kind of commentary which corrects, rectifies and refines the obscure expressions of a text; [9] and finally a ‘tagreeeb’ (approximation or assessment) which is a kind of commentary that generates evidence to clarify the objectifies of the text. In the context of meaning of this text, the kinds of commentaries referred to here were the large numbers of abstraction (talkhees) in which Shaykh al-Khadr ibn Muhammad clarified and explained extracts from earlier original works.

The expression ‘maddaah’ (praise singer) comes from the verb ‘maddala’ (to commend or to eulogize) and it is a kind of poetry which enumerates the generous and virtuous actions and traits of a Prophet, scholar or wali (sage). This kind of poetry is called ‘madeeh’ (praise poetry or panegyric poetry) can be composed in one or two stanzas or can encompass a voluminous epic poem called a qaseeda (song) and can eulogize a deceased pious person or commend the virtues of a person still alive. The expression ‘maddaah’ (praise singer) is subsequently a title given to a professional singer who praises the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace or one who does so habitually out of love for him. In the Bilad’s-Sudan the ‘maddaah’ (praise singer) was highly respected by the Islamic kingdoms, particularly during the Songhay kingdom, where the praise singers of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace were given a stipend by the government and one was appointed in a salaried position at every masjid.

He was the Imam Shaykh Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Muheeb who was famous as ‘Ibn Muheeb’, who composed his renowned ‘takhmees’ on the al-Ishriinyaat of Abu Zayd Ab’d’r-Rahman ibn Yakhlaftan al-Fazaazi (d. 1230 C.E.) in praise of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, which he called Shams’l-Qasa’id wa Durrur’l-Qala’id Fee Asna’l-Maqaasid. A ‘takhmees’ a is poem composed to expand upon an existing poem where the author adds three stanzas to the two existing stanzas of the original. He thus expands on the meaning of the original poem. Ibn Muheeb was argued the most celebrated of the praise singers that the Muslim world has ever produced. He arranged his ‘takhmees’ in alphabetical order and composed twenty stanzas for each of the twenty-eight Arabic letters. His Shams’l-Qasa’id was widely read, memorized and studied in the Bilad’s-Sudan, especially in the city of Tinbuktu, as a standard text for teaching Arabic poetic style and as a means of establishing deep love for the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace in the hearts of the believers. Ibn Muheeb was followed by Western African scholars in his style of eulogizing the Prophet, from the 14th century until the present.
He studied the science of theology (‘ilm ‘l-kalaam) with the bountiful spiritual master, at-Tanwaa‘iyyuwi. He studied the Qur’anic recitation style of Imam Naafî, with the bearer of the banner of the Seven recitations, my master, the jurist...
Shaykh al-Hajj Abdallah at-Tanwaajiyuuwi.\textsuperscript{11} He studied the Mukhtasar of Khalil\textsuperscript{12} with the jurist al-Hajj Abu Bakr ibn al-Hajj `Isa al-Ghulawi. He studied the Alfiyya of Ibn Malik\textsuperscript{13} with my master the jurist al-Hajj Muhammad ibn al-Hajj al-Hassan ibn Aghbad az-Zaidi. He died, may Allah ta`ala be merciful to him, in the year of 1153, 1154 or 1155 A.H. at the age of thirty-three, and Allah knows best.

Abdallah ibn `Aamir al-Yahsubi, Abu Abdallah Naafi` al-Qurayshi al-`Umari, Abu `Amr ibn al-`Alaa ibn `Amaar, Abdallah ibn Kathir ad-Daari, `Aasim ibn Abi'n-Nujuud, Abu `Imara Hamza ibn Habeeb and Abu`l-Hassan Ali ibn Hamza al-Kisaai'. These seven Imams were the key sources from which the seven variants of the canonical Qur`anic recitation have been transmitted throughout the Muslim world.

\textsuperscript{11} He was the spiritual master al-Hajj Abdallah ibn Abu Bakr at-Tanwaajiyuuwi.

\textsuperscript{12} The al-Mukhtasar is arguably the most important work of Maliki jurisprudence ever composed and to this day holds a pre-eminent position as a source of law in the whole of the Bilad's-Sudan. The author of this famous Maliki text was Diya 'd-Deen Khaleel ibn Is'haq al-Jundi (d. 760 A.H./1365 C.E.), a Maliki mufti of Cairo and the main teacher at the college called Shaykhuniyya. There have been composed many commentaries and annotations of this famous work. Among them is the ad-Durrar Fee Tawdeeh'l-Mukhtasar by Kamaal'd-Deen Muhammad ibn an-Naasikh at-Taraab ilisi (d. 913 A.H.). There is the Shifa'l-`Aleel Fee Sharh Mukhtasar as-Shaykh Khaleel by Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Basaati al-Maliki (d. 846 A.H.). There is the famous work called Fath'l-Jaleel Fee Sharh Mukhtasar `l-Khaleel of Shams`d-Deen Muhammad ibn Ibrahim at-Tata`iy (d. 942 A.H.). There is the Mawaahib`l-Jaleel Fee Sharh Mukhtasar`l-Khaleel of Muhammad ibn Muhammad ar-Ra`e`eni al-Maliki (d. 954 A.H.). There is the Mawaahib`l-Khaleel Fee Tahreer Maa Hawaahu Mukhtasar Khaleel of Abu`r-Rashaad Ali ibn Muhammad al-Ujhuuri (d. 1066 A.H.). The most famous commentary upon the al-Mukhtasar and the one most widely used in the Bilad's-Sudan is that of Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn Abdaahi al-Kharashi (d. 1102 A.H.), which is known simply as `al-Kharashi`.

\textsuperscript{13} This is a reference to the renowned Alfiyya Fee `n-Nahwi a fundamental poem on the science of Arabic grammar. It is also called al-Khulaasa`l-Alfiyya, but became well known as the Alfiyya ("the thousand") due to the one thousand line verses used to compose it. Its author was the learned Jamaal`d-Deen Abu Abdallah, Muhammad ibn Abdallah at-Ta`iy `l-Jiyaani. He was known as Ibn Malik `n-Nahwi. He died in the year 672 A.H.