

SANKORE'



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيمًا

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The Biographies of Those Scholars Who's Names Begin with the Letter Kha'¹

Al-Khadr ibn al-Faqih Muhammad ibn al-Hajj Uthman ibn as-Sayyid at-Taalib Sadeeq al-Jamaani 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 (*shuruuh*) 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 him.

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'haaq al-Warraaq, famous as Ibn'n-Nadeem (325-377 A.H./ 937-987 C.E.) who composed his well known work *Kitaab'l-Fihrist*. In this index Ibn'n-Nadeem informs us that the earliest styles of Arabic calligraphy were the *hijaazi* (or *naskh*) 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 '*barnawi*' 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 '*barnawi*' style and was called '*jahaadi*' 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-Khateeb al-Qastalaani. He was a jurist of the *Shafi`* 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 '*shuruuh*' is plural for '*sharh*' (commentary) and comes from the verb '*sharaha*' (to expose to view, to expand, to lay open and to disclose); like when you say: '*sharaha* 'l-hadeeth' (He explained, or expounded on the prophetic tradition.) Allah ta`ala says: "*sharaha* Allahu *sadrahu* li'l-

He was a responsive praise singer (*maddaah*) of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace⁵ following the methodology of Ibn Muheeb.⁶ He, may Allah be pleased with him, used to weep often out of fear of Allah ta'ala.

islami" (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 (*ashraḥ*) for me my breast." Technically the expression '*sharḥ*' 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 (*sharḥ*) 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 '*ḥaashiyya*' (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 '*takmila*' (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 '*mukhtaṣar*' (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 '*mukhtaṣar*' is a '*talkhees*' (abstraction or recapitulation) which like a '*mukhtaṣar*' summarizes the key ideas of a text, but comments upon specific sectors of a text and not the whole; [7] a '*taṣḥeeḥ*' (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 '*tahdheeb*' (rectification or refinement) which is a kind of commentary which corrects, rectifies and refines the obscure expressions of a text; [9] and finally a '*taqreeb*' (approximation or assessment) which is a kind of commentary that generates evidence to clarify the objectives 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.

⁵ The expression '*maddaah*' (praise singer) comes from the verb '*maddaha*' (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*.

⁶ 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-'Ishriniyaat of Abu Zayd Abd'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-Qasaa'id wa Durrur'l-Qalaa'id Fee Asnaa'l-Maqaasid. A '*takhmees*' is a 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 arguable 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-Qasaa'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*)⁷ with the bountiful spiritual master, at-Tanwaajiyuuwi.⁸ He studied the *Qur’anic* recitation style of *Imam Naafi*⁹ with the bearer of the banner of the Seven recitations,¹⁰ my master, the jurist

⁷ The science of scholastic theology (*‘ilm ‘l-kalaam*) is the second of the two divisions of the science of Divine Unity, the first being *‘usuul ‘d-deen*’ (the science of the foundation of the religion). The science of *‘usuul ‘d-deen*’ is apart of the individual obligations (*furuud ‘l-‘ayaan*) which every responsible Muslim must know and believe. Scholastic theology (*kalaam*) is apart of the collective obligations (*furuud ‘l-kifaaya*) and is the discipline of discursive arguments using the proofs of reason to elucidate and defend the doctrines of beliefs of the Muslims.

⁸ See below.

⁹ He was Abu Abdallah Naafi` al-Qurayshi al-Umari, the freedman of Abdallah ibn Umar. He was an *Imam* and a well established *mufti*. He was among the most learned of the scholars of al-Medina. He was veracious and noble in his transmission of many prophetic traditions. He transmitted from Abdallah ibn Umar, his sons: Saalim, Abdallah, `Ubaydallah, and Zayd, A`isha, Abu Hurayra, Abu Sa`id al-Khudri, Umm Salama, Raafi` ibn Khudayj and others. Malik once said: “When Naafi` says something, I then seal my views on that.” Al-Bukhari said: “The soundest chain of authority is: Malik on the authority of Naafi` on the authority of Ibn Umar.” Those who narrated from Naafi` were: Malik ibn Anas, Ayyub as-Sakhtiyaani, `Ubaydallah ibn Abdallah ibn Umar, Yahya ibn Sa`id, Ibn `Awn, Saalih ibn Kaysaan, Musa ibn `Uqba, Ibn Jurayj, Kathir ibn Farqad, al-Layth ibn Sa`d, az-Zuhri, Humayd at-Taweel, Usama ibn Zayd, Handhala ibn Abu Sufyan, al-Awzai`, ad-Duhaak ibn Uthman, `Aasim, and his two sons: Umar ibn Naafi` and Abu Bakr ibn Naafi`, and many more. It has been related by Zayd ibn Abi Unaysa on the authority of Naafi` who said: “I traveled with Ibn Umar for thirty something major and lesser pilgrimages.” Naafi` died in the year 127 A.H.

¹⁰ The author uses the phrase ‘the bearer of the banner of the seven’ to refer to the seven canonical recitations of the *Qur’an*. The science of *Qur’anic* recitation (*‘ilm ‘l-qira’at*) is a science which researches into the form and system of the Speech of Allah ta`ala based upon the perspective of its seven different variants which have been narrated in unbroken chains of transmission. It has been related by Ahmad, Muslim, Abdu ibn Humayd, Abu Dawuud and others on the authority of Ubay ibn Ka`b in a long prophetic tradition where the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Jibreel once came to me and said: ‘Allah has commanded that you recite the *Qur’an* to your community based upon a singular variant.’ I then said: ‘I ask Allah for His pardon and forgiveness, for my community will not be able to bear that.’ Jibreel then came to me another time and said: ‘Allah has commanded you to recite the *Qur’an* to your community based upon two variants.’ I then said: ‘I ask Allah for His pardon and forgiveness, for my community will not be able to bear that.’ Jibreel then came to me a third time and said: ‘Allah has commanded you to recite the *Qur’an* to your community based upon three variants.’ I then said: ‘I ask Allah for His pardon and forgiveness, for my community will not be able to bear that.’ Jibreel then came to me a fourth time and said: ‘Allah has commanded you to recite the *Qur’an* to your community based upon seven variants. Whichever variant they recite it, then it will be accurate.’” Ahmad ibn Hanbal related a prophetic tradition on the authority of Umar who said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Indeed this *Qur’an* descends in seven variants. Therefore, recite whichever one is easiest for you.” It has been related by Ibn Hibban on the authority of `Amr ibn al-`Aas who said that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Recite the *Qur’an* based upon the seven variants. Whichever one you recite, you will have attained accuracy. But do not dispute regarding it, for indeed disputation regarding it is disbelief.” It has been related by an-Nisaai’ on the authority of Ubay ibn Ka`b who said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “O Ubay, indeed the *Qur’an* has been revealed to me in seven variants, each of which is decisive and adequate.” Among the Companions of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace who had memorized the *Qur’an* based upon these seven variants were: Ubay ibn Ka`b, Qays ibn as-Sakr, Zayd ibn Thaabit, Uthman ibn `Affan, Abdallah ibn Mas`ud, Mu`adh ibn Jabal, Saalim, Abu`d-Darda’ `Uwaymir ibn Zayd, Abdallah ibn as-Saa`ib and Ibn Ubayd. From them the recitation of the *Qur’an* based upon the seven variants were transmitted to Abu Dawuud Abdr-Rahman ibn Hurmuz al-`Araj, Abu`l-Hajjaaj Mujaahid ibn Jabr al-Aswad, Abu Abdallah `Ikrima al-Barbari, Abu Shibl `Alqama ibn Qays an-Nakha`i, Abu `Amr al-Aswad ibn Yazeed, Abu Maryum Zirru ibn H**u**baysha al-Asadi, Abu Muhammad `A**t**aa’ ibn Abi Rabaah, Abu Sa`id al-Hassan ibn Abu`l-Hassan Yasaar, Abu Ja`far Yazeed ibn al-Qa`qaai`, `Abayda ibn `Amr as-Salmaani, Abu A`isha Masruuq ibn al-Ajdai` al-Hamdaani and Abu`l-Bakhtari Sa`id ibn Fayruuz at-T**a**ai’. From these notable *Tabi`uun*, the science of the seven variants of the *Qur’an* were transmitted to seven individuals after whom the seven variants are named. They were Abu `Imraan

Shaykh al-Hajj Abdallah at-Tanwaajiyuwi.¹¹ He studied the Mukhtasar of Khalil¹² with the jurist al-Hajj Abu Bakr ibn al-Hajj `Isa al-Ghulawi. He studied the Alfiyya of Ibn Malik¹³ 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.

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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 `Imaara 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.

¹¹ He was the spiritual master al-Hajj Abdallah ibn Abu Bakr at-Tanwaajiyuwi.

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-Taraabilisi (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-Tataa`iy (d. 942 A.H.). There is the Mawaahib`l-Jaleel Fee Sharh Mukhtasar`l-Khaleel of Muhammad ibn Muhammad ar-Ra`eeni 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'.

¹³ This is a reference to the renown Alfiyya Fee `n-Nahw 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-Taa`iy `l-Jiyaani. He was known as Ibn Malik `n-Nahwi. He died in the year 672 A.H.