



سیدی الشیخ محمد الهاشمی التلمسانی رحمہ اللہ

1298-1381



The Life of Sīdī Shaykh Muḥammad al-Hāshimī al-Tilmisānī ¹

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¹ Translated from [<http://www.shazly.com/trajem.php?page=sayedhashemi.htm>].

His birth, may Allah have mercy on him:

The great teacher and guide of souls, Sīdī Muḥammad ibn al-Hāshimī (may Allah sanctify his soul) was born to pious parents, both prophetic scions who traced their lineage back to al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ؑ, on Saturday, the 22nd of Shawwāl 1298 A.H. in the town of Sabda, which lies in the vicinity of Tilmisān, one of the main cities of Algeria. His father was one of the city’s scholars, and a judge therein. When he died, he left behind him young children; the Shaykh was the oldest of them.

The Shaykh spent a period of time keeping the company of scholars, eager to increase in knowledge. He then emigrated with his Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Yallis to Syria, fleeing the tyranny of French colonisation, which forbade the Algerian people from attending circles of knowledge, and their being given. They set out to emigrate on the 20th of Ramadan, 1329 A.H. by way of Tangiers and Marseille, intending for Syria. They stayed in Damascus for a few days; the policy of the Turkish rule at the time was to disperse those who had come from North-West Africa throughout the land. The Shaykh’s fate was to go to Turkey and stay in Adana; his Shaykh, Ibn Yallis, remained in Damascus. After two years, he returned to Damascus, and was reunited with his Shaykh, and remained in his company.

In Syria, he continued to seek knowledge from the great scholars: the most renowned of them included the great scholar of Ḥadīth Badruddīn al-Ḥasanī, Shaykh Amin Suwayd, Shaykh Ja‘far al-Kattānī, Shaykh Najib Kīwān, Shaykh Tawfīq al-Ayyūbī, and Shaykh Muḥammad al-‘Aṭṭār, from whom he learned the principles of jurisprudence, and Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Kāfī, from whom he learned Mālikī jurisprudence. His masters authorised him to teach many sciences, both those of theology and those of transmission.

As for Sufism, his Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Yallis authorised him to pass on the general litany (*wird*) of the Tarīqa, when he saw that he surpassed all his other students in knowledge, gnosis, counselling and servitude. When the great guide of souls Shaykh Ahmad ibn Muṣṭafā al-‘Allāwī ؑ came from Algeria to perform Hajj, after the death of Shaykh Ibn al-Yallis in 1350 A.H, he passed through Damascus, and authorised Shaykh al-Hāshimī to transmit the special litany (the Supreme Name), and to give general guidance.

His character, may Allah have mercy on him:

He strove to adorn himself with the characteristics of the Prophet ﷺ, following him in all of his words, states, manners, and deeds; he truly attained the complete legacy of the Prophet ﷺ. He was very humble, to the point where he became renowned for it, and no man of his age could match him in his humility.

He would treat people in the way he would wish to be treated by them. A man came in once and kissed the Shaykh’s hand. The Shaykh wanted to kiss the man’s hand in return, but the man would not allow it, saying: ‘I seek Allah’s forgiveness, Sīdī! I am not worthy of that; I will kiss your feet.’ The Shaykh replied: ‘If you kiss our feet, we will kiss yours.’

He loved to serve his brothers; visitors and students would come to stay the night at his house, and he would present them with food, and spread out their beds for them, despite his physical

weakness. Many a time we went to him in the middle of the night, and knocked on the door, and he would answer the door, wearing the clothes he specially kept for receiving visitors, as though he was a soldier on duty. We never saw him wearing clothes for sleeping.

He was a man of forbearance, never becoming angry except for the sake of Allah. Once, a man from Damascus came to his house and began to verbally attack him, speaking words that would make a Muslim's blood curdle. The Shaykh ﷺ, however, did not say anything more than 'May Allah reward you with goodness, you have revealed our defects, and we will leave them, and adopt more worthy characteristics.' It was not long before the man approached the Shaykh, kissed his hands and feet, and sought his pardon.

He was generous, and never refused a beggar. Many a time we saw people come to him, whom he would feed and give to generously, especially during religious festivals, when people would come to his house. You would see great throngs of people coming and eating the food that was prepared there, and the smile would not leave his face. His generosity reached such bounds that the house he built in the Immigrant's Quarter in Damascus had two sections: one for his family, and one for his students and disciples.

His characteristics, may Allah be pleased with him, included his bigheartedness, and his concern to give people guidance in times of trial, and immense patience, and a cheery countenance; once, I expressed amazement at his patience, and he said to me: 'Sidi, this draught of ours is sweet!' a sinful man would come to him, and nothing would appear from him except a cheerful face, and a kind heart. How many sinners repented by his hand, and by the grace of keeping his company became believers, and knowers of Allah!

Once, he was walking in the street after a lesson, when a drunken person walked past him. The Shaykh did nothing more than alert the fellow to his condition, and pray for him and counsel him. The next day, that same man was the first to arrive at the Shaykh's lesson, and he repented, and made good his repentance.

The Shaykh was always concerned with the affairs of the Muslims, and he would feel their pain. He used to attend the meetings of the scholars held at the Umayyad mosque, seeking out news concerning the affairs of the Muslims, and warning against their division. He produced a treatise in which he explained the causes of division, and its dangers, and the benefit of unity for the sake of Allah, and holding fast to Allah's rope. The treatise was entitled: 'The Last Word: An Explanation of the Meaning of Allah's Commandment'.

He abhorred all forms of colonisation, and would examine, during his lectures, the latest developments concerning it, and the way to be free of it. When the government began military conscription, and popular resistance was organised, the Shaykh rushed to register his name to join the resistance, and undertook military training, despite his physical weakness, frailty and old age. In this way, he showed the people the finest example of strength of faith, and conviction, and striving in Allah's cause. He told us about those spiritual guides who came before him, who struggled and fought against colonisation, such as 'Umar al-Mukhtār, and al-Sanūsī, and 'Abdul Qādir al-Jazā'rī. The *mujāhidūn* who fought to expel colonialism and its henchmen in North-West Africa were Sufis to a man.

The Shaykh (may Allah have mercy on him) was a man of fine character and behaviour, which encouraged people to come to him, and gain knowledge from him of true Sufism, until it was said that al-Hāshimī did not become famous by virtue of his knowledge, though he was knowledgeable; nor did he become famous by virtue of the miracles he was vouchsafed,

though they were many; rather, he became famous because of his character, and his humility, and his knowledge of Allah ﷻ.

If you attended one of his gatherings, you would feel as though you were in one of the meadows of Paradise; for there was nothing present at his gatherings that might tarnish them. He would never allow a man to be mentioned in a negative light in any of his gatherings. He did not approve of any mention of sin or corruption in his gatherings. He would say: ‘Mercy descends when the pious are mentioned.’

The Shaykh remained indefatigable in his striving to guide the Muslims, and to liberate them from the misguidance and deviation that they had fallen into. His circles of knowledge would take place consecutively from morning to evening, especially the study of *tawhīd*, which is the one of the foundations of the religion. He would make clear which convictions were corrupt and heretical, and clarify the true belief of the People of the Sunnah and the Community, and the importance of returning to Allah at all times, and connecting to none but Him.

His work in calling and guiding to Allah, may Allah have mercy on him:

The Shaykh’s house was a focal point for scholars, students and visitors, and he was never sorry to receive them. Despite his physical weakness, he would organise circles of knowledge and dhikr that alternated between mosques and houses. He would go from mosque to mosque in Damascus, gathering with people for the sake of knowledge, dhikr, and the invoking of benedictions upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He did not cease in his activities and preaching until the end of his days.

Select groups of pious scholars, seekers of knowledge and people from all different levels of society became his students, and followed his guidance, and benefited from his knowledge, and took for themselves a portion of his great faith and experiential knowledge, referring to his guidance in all their affairs.

He gave authorisation to those of them that benefited from this to call and guide to Allah themselves, and by means of this, this great spiritual power spread throughout Damascus and Aleppo, and to many other cities, both within Syria, and throughout the Islamic world.

The works he authored included:

1. The Key to Paradise (an explanation of the beliefs of the People of the Sunnah)
2. The Distinguished Treatise (on the beliefs of the People of the Sunnah, set to verse)
3. The Comprehensive Study (on the wonders of creation and the Creator)
4. The Way to Happiness (on the meaning of the testimony of faith, set to verse)
5. The Glittering Pearl
6. The Pertinent Solution (on Sufism)
7. The Last Word (on the unity of the Muslims)
8. A Comfort to the Anxious (a commentary on Muḥyīuddīn ibn ‘Arabī’s ‘Chess-game of the Gnostics’)
9. The Ten Replies
10. A Commentary on the poem ‘The Beliefs of the People of the Sunnah’

He also wrote many other epistles.

Many great scholars and others took the way of Sufism from Sīdī al-Hāshimī, the number of whom is known only to Allah.

In this way, Shaykh al-Hāshimī spent his life striving and teaching, and guiding souls, and purifying hearts that yearned for their Lord; boredom did not slow him, nor did lethargy. He remained upright on the way of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, in word, deed and state. His final counsel, 'Hold fast to the Book and the Sunnah!', is a fine testament to the excellence of his legacy. The great Shaykh passed on to the pleasure of Allah, and closeness to Him, on Tuesday, the 12th of Rajab 1381 A.H, corresponding to the 19th of December, 1961 C.E. He was prayed upon in the Umayyad Mosque, and the all Damascus bade him farewell, bearing him to the cemetery of al-Daḥdāḥ, where he was laid to rest. His grave is well know, and well-visited. Though the grave may have received his pure, noble body, it did not take his knowledge, nor his grace, nor his learning, nor the kindness and generosity he conferred to the people. For the sake of this, let those strive, who would strive. This is part of his noble biography; what we have presented is but a drop in the ocean. The stories of the lives of those who attain knowledge of Allah are concealed within their disciples; how can any person hope to encompass that which their hearts and souls conceal?

*If you ask where the graves of the mighty lie,
They lie upon tongues, or rest within souls.*

These are the living examples for us, and the ones whom we should emulate:

*If you are not like them, then emulate them:
For in emulation of the noble lies success.*

It has been said:

*The death of the pious is life everlasting:
Some have died, yet for the people, they live on.*

May the benedictions and salutations of Allah be upon his blessed Prophet, our Master Muḥammad, and upon his companions, and his family, and upon all those who followed his guidance.

