

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**PART C: MY HAPPY DAYS OF BEING TOGETHER WITH MY SHAYKH
AL-HABIB AHMAD MASHHUR AL-HADDAD** تفعنا به

C1. Ta'alluq (attachment) with my shaykh al-Habib

- (a) What al-Habib said about ta'alluq, takhalluq and tahaquq
- (b) Ta'alluq, takhalluq and tahaquq of al-Habib
- (c) The reciprocal attachment of al-Habib with his ancestors
- (d) Attachment with al-Habib by one and all
- (e) My attachment with al-Habib
- (f) Some of the fruits of attachment with al-Habib

With my shaykh in Nairobi

This consists of three chapters: C2, C3, and C4

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- (a) Salat al-Fajr with al-Habib
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C9. Al-Habib introduced gatherings for the recitation of Qasida al-Burda

- (a) These gatherings have flourished
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C10. What al-Habib did as ash-Shaykh al-kamil compared to what he did not do

C1. Ta'alluq (attachment) with my shaykh al-Habib نفعنا به الله

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ Al-Hamdu Lillah! All Praise is for Allah ﷻ and His blessings and peace are forever upon our Beloved Prophet Sayyidina wa Mawlana Muhammad al-Mustafa ﷺ.

This chapter is in five parts:

- (a) What al-Habib نفعنا به الله said about ta'alluq, takhalluq and tahaququq.
- (b) Ta'alluq, takhalluq and tahaququq of al-Habib.
- (c) The reciprocal attachment of al-Habib with his ancestors.
- (d) Attachment with al-Habib by one and all.
- (e) My attachment with al-Habib.
- (f) Some of the fruits of attachment with al-Habib.

(a) What al-Habib نفعنا به الله said about ta'alluq, takhalluq and tahaququq

This is what al-Habib said about ta'alluq (attachment), takhalluq (acquiring good character), and tahaququq (realizing the truth of spiritual realities). (Manba' u'l-Imdad, A Fountain of Help, p. 138).

“It is necessary for a person to have **ta'alluq**: attachment with his Lord, and with the Prophetic Messenger ﷺ and with his pious predecessors. And (it is also necessary) to acquire good character (**takhalluq**) after the attachment; following the Commands of Allah and His Prophetic Messenger, and to keep away from His Prohibitions; and to follow the pious predecessors in their character, and their worship, and their way of life. So if someone has with him the attachment (**ta'alluq**) and the good character (**takhalluq**), he tastes what he gets to taste, and that is the realization of the truth (**tahaququq**), so he realizes the truth of spiritual realities with the truth of their spiritual realities (that is, of his pious predecessors)”.

(b) Ta'alluq, takhalluq and tahaququq of al-Habib نفعنا به الله

Having listened to al-Habib, we are in a better situation to understand these matters more clearly.

Allah ﷻ loved al-Habib نفعنا به الله and appointed him as ash-Shaykh al-kamil (a Shaykh perfected by Him) and ad-Da'i al-kamil (an accomplished inviter to Islam). Al-Habib loved Allah ﷻ and was deeply attached to Him, and devoted his whole life in the service of Allah ﷻ as His selfless devotee.

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ! (Glorified is Allah ﷻ)!

We saw in Part B of this tadhkira that our Beloved Prophet Muhammad al-Mustafa ﷺ loved al-Habib نفعنا به الله as his own son. Al-Habib also had a special attachment with our Prophet ﷺ. The following example, from Manba' u'l-Imdad (A Fountain of Help, p. 197), illustrates this.

Al-Habib al-‘Arif Billah Muhammad bin Adnan al-Ahdal نفعنا الله, Sahib Lamu, said that al-Habib al-Haddad نفعنا الله does not leave Hadhramaut for the Coast of Kenya except with the permission of the Beloved Prophet ﷺ. After some years, our Beloved Prophet ﷺ told him that he did not need to take his permission anymore and that he was free to go on his own.

صَلُّوا عَلَى النَّبِيِّ
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ

Invoke Allah’s blessings on the Prophet ﷺ!
May Allah ﷻ bless him and grant him peace!

Al-Habib had great attachment with his shaykhs and loved them as father figures. He loved as his brothers all those of similar age who were attached to him. He loved and treated as his own children those younger than him who were attached to him.

Al-Habib composed poems in honour of his shaykhs and they composed poems in his praise. He composed poems in appreciation of other shaykhs and his hosts in various cities which he visited in his work of da‘wah Ilallah (inviting people to Allah ﷻ), and they composed poems in his honour. There was deep attachment all round.

As far as attachment with one’s shaykh is concerned, al-Habib نفعنا الله gave a practical demonstration. Ash-Shaykh Muhammad bin Abubakr Ba Shu‘ayb of Zanzibar, then of U.K, informed us when he visited Toronto that al-Habib had his head bowed down in respect of his shaykh al-Habib ‘Umar bin Sumayt نفعنا الله even if he was in another room. He did not go upstairs if his shaykh was downstairs, as he did not want to be above his shaykh.

As far as takhalluq (acquiring good character) is concerned, all those who saw al-Habib testified that he had Mustafawi akhlaq (Prophetic character). Al-Habib had also surely realized the truth of spiritual realities (tahaqquq). So many examples of his spiritual openings have been given throughout this tadhkira that it is obvious that he saw many spiritual mysteries as living reality with his ‘ayn al-yaqin (eye of certainty) which Allah ﷻ had bestowed on him in his heart.

At the beginning of this chapter, we saw that al-Habib said, “he tastes what he gets to taste, and that is tahaqquq (the realization of truth)”. We believe that Paradise is true and al-Habib has explained to us in detail what happens in Paradise as if he is seeing it in front of his eyes. (Manba’ u’l-Imdad, A Fountain of Help, p. 6-7). This was explained at the end of Part B of this memoriam.

اللَّحْمْدُ لِلَّهِ (All Praise is for Allah)!

(c) The reciprocal attachment of al-Habib نفعنا الله with his ancestors نفعنا الله

We learn about the reciprocal attachment of al-Habib with his ancestors from an anecdote in Manba’ u’l-Imdad (A Fountain of Help, p. 198). Al-Habib narrated this incident.

“When I was in the hospital (in Mombasa as a result of a car accident in 1381 A.H.), the doctor told me that I would have to stay (in the hospital) for six months as my foot had become like a fish. It would never be able to move, and so it had to be kept suspended.

‘Abdallah al-Jahdhamy stayed overnight with me. So, ‘Abdallah said to me, ‘O Habib Ahmad! Can’t your ancestors and forefathers help you while you are in this state?’

What he said settled down in my heart, until at night I saw in waking vision that a group of predecessors came to the hospital and entered through the window into my room and stood surrounding the bed. Then one of them stepped forward, stroked my foot and recited something on it. Then, they left.

So, in the morning, I informed ‘Abdallah about this. He said, ‘O Habib! And I saw them in the same way’.

Then the doctor came after that and untied my foot and said to me, ‘Move it’. So I moved it and it moved, and he was surprised. So he asked me, ‘What did you do?’ I replied to him, ‘Nothing’. So he called the nurses and asked them, ‘What did you do to Shareef (Haddad)?’ They said, ‘Nothing’. So the doctor said, ‘Amazing! Now it has become better, and you have to stay for only two months’”.

This was faith healing in the spiritual realm through spiritual help (madad).

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ (Glorified is Allah ﷻ)!

(d) Attachment with al-Habib نفعنا به ﷻ by one and all

Al-Habib نفعنا به ﷻ loved those who were attached to him. For example, he wrote very movingly in memory of as-Sayyid Omar Abdallah (Mwenye Baraka رضى الله عنه) of Comoro Islands when he passed ahead in 1408 A.H., 1988.

When al-Habib travelled from Nairobi to Mombasa, an entourage of cars accompanied him up to Mackinnon Road which is about 400 km. (250 miles) away, while another entourage of cars came to fetch him from Mombasa which is about 90 km. (50 miles) away.

People wanted to have attachment with al-Habib because he was the greatest shaykh (spiritual master) they had met. Many examples have been mentioned in this memoriam to illustrate this.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ (All Praise is for Allah ﷻ)!

Dr. Mostafa al-Badawi حفظه الله had great attachment with al-Habib نفعنا به ﷻ. This is what he wrote for the Special Issue on al-Habib by Q-News of U.K. in his memoriam. I quote:

“Allah’s solicitude had granted the Habib the gift of following the Sunnah of his ancestor the Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him and his family, with such sincerity and tenacity that like him, he became the Qur’an lived and ‘realized’. He was such a man that his loss will reverberate across large tracts of this planet. He is irreplaceable and those who have known him, even briefly have been shown such Divine generosity that nothing they can do to express their gratitude will ever be sufficient”.

Al-Habib’s spiritual attachment with Muslims in western countries shall be elaborated upon in the following Part D of this memoriam.

(e) My attachment with al-Habib نفعنا به الله

I met my majestic Shaykh Sayyidi wa Murshidi al-Habib Ahmad Mashhur bin Taha al-Haddad نفعنا به الله for the first time in Masjid Birikau (Memon Masjid) in Mombasa, Kenya, my home town, perhaps in the year 1961. In Kenya, many people know him as Shareef Haddad, as all descendants of the Prophet ﷺ are referred to in East Africa as “shareef”. Four of us youngsters had gathered to spend the night of ‘Eid al-Fitr at the back of the masjid in the verandah. We were reciting the Qur’an Karim either individually or on a rotation basis, one ruku’ each. It was past midnight when I heard the recitation of the Qur’an Karim by other people inside the masjid. So I asked leave of my companions and went to sit with the group inside. They were reciting from Juz ‘Amma, one Surah each on a rotation basis. I also got a Surah to recite. When I finished, the shaykh smiled and asked my name. I came to know later that he was al-Habib Ahmad Mashhur نفعنا به الله. That was the first time I met him and what a blessed occasion.

The second time I met him was again in Masjid Birikau. I was doing my undergraduate degree at the University of Nairobi and had come to Mombasa for a visit. After Salat az-Zuhr, al-Habib نفعنا به الله gave a talk which was translated into Kiswahili by as-Sayyid Muhammad ‘Abdallah ash-Shatiry رحمته الله. We were given permission to ask questions. I asked a question about the interest which the banks give. I said I could not understand that what the banks give can be called riba (usury). If a poor man goes to a rich man to borrow money and if he charges him a high rate of interest, exploiting his weak situation, that can be called riba. We keep our money in the bank for safe keeping. The bank is not in a weak situation, we do not demand from the bank a certain rate of interest, it gives us a rate of interest of its choice, and so we are not exploiting the bank. So how can this be called riba (usury)? Al-Habib said that he smelled riba in this as well, and he appreciated that I had asked the question. My question had been answered to my satisfaction.

These were brief meetings with al-Habib.

First, people come to know of a shaykh or meet him, then they associate with him. Those who associate with him sincerely, develop ta‘alluq (attachment) with him.

The only period of time when I associated with, and became attached to my shaykh was after I came back to Kenya in 1401 A.H. / 1981 from my studies in Australia, up to 1409 A.H. / 1989 when I left Kenya for Canada. I am very grateful to Allah ﷻ for giving me this opportunity to be with my shaykh. This memoriam is mainly about my attachment with al-Habib in that time period.

I believe it was the du‘a’ (supplication) of my parents which helped me to get such a great shaykh as al-Habib. I have written something about them too in the annex to this memoriam.

It is essential to note at the outset that people want to have attachment with a shaykh because they see him, or hear of him, as a saintly person. When they associate with him, they may also get to know of his karaamaat (miracles). The piety of the sufi saint is his main attraction, knowledge about his miracles is incidental. “The truth of spiritual realities” which al-Habib has mentioned relates to high spiritual stations (maqamaat) which are of the essence.

(f) Some of the fruits of attachment with al-Habib نفعنا به الله

Some of the thamarat (fruits) of attachment with al-Habib as ash-Shaykh al-kamil are the following:

- (i) Al-Habib نفعنا به الله developed in us love for Allah سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ, our Beloved Prophet ﷺ, the Qur’an and the Ahadith (Sayings of the Prophet ﷺ).
- (ii) We had an opportunity to pray the five times daily Salah with him.
- (iii) We were blessed to observe the fast of the month of Ramadhan with him and to break the fast with him.
- (iv) Some got the opportunity of performing the Hajj, ‘Umrah and Ziyarah (visiting the Beloved Prophet ﷺ in Madina al-Munawwarah) with him.
- (v) We got a chance to do Dhikrullah (Remembrance of Allah ﷻ), and recite Salawaat ala’r-Rasul ﷺ with him.
- (vi) Some participated in many other good deeds he performed.
- (vii) We learned everything about Islam from him in a wholesome, comprehensive way, both the outward and the inward aspects, based on the Qur’an Karim, Ahadith and their interpretation by the pious predecessors.
- (viii) Some who were attached to him over a longer period of time, learned about some of the deep spiritual mysteries, and informally graduated at his hands to informally join his post-graduate class to understand more about spiritual realities. Those who were fortunate had religious and spiritual experiences in his gatherings which they shall remember for the rest of their lives.
- (ix) We were nurtured by him by just observing his Mustafawi akhlaq (Prophetic character). He was humble, gentle and generous. He slept very little and talked only

when necessary. His majestic personality filled the gathering. We were just content to see him smile. We are thankful to Allah ﷻ for making us among his loving disciples.

- (x) We realized that the most effective way to teach is to practice what you preach, as al-Habib practiced more than what he advised.
- (xi) We benefited from his du‘a’ (supplication to Allah ﷻ) for us, our family and all Muslims. Allah ﷻ had appointed him to provide madad (spiritual help). As a result of his du‘a’, many of those who were attached to him surely acquired higher darajaat (spiritual ranks).
- (xii) We were happy to see the many noble personalities whom he nurtured so that they became ‘ulama’ (scholars) and shaykhs, and those whose lives he transformed. As a result of the efforts and the blessings of al-Habib and the efforts of those who had attachment with him, many teachers and scholars of the second and third generation have been produced in Kenya and in other countries who teach and propagate Islam.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ (All Praise is for Allah ﷻ)!

With my shaykh al-Habib نفعنا به الله in Nairobi, Kenya

This consists of three chapters:

C2. Gatherings of Dhikrullah (Zikrullah, remembrance of Allah رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ) with my shaykh in Nairobi.

C3. My shaykh laid the foundation stone of Masjid Ridhwan in Dandora and officially opened the zawiya (sufi retreat).

C4. With my shaykh in his trip from Nairobi to Mombasa.

C2. Gatherings of Dhikrullah with my shaykh نفعنا به الله in Nairobi

This chapter consists of five parts:

- (a) Salat al-Fajr with my shaykh.
- (b) Dhikrullah with my shaykh.
- (c) Some other memorable incidents about my shaykh.
- (d) The zawiya (sufi retreat) in Dandora.
- (e) The presence of my shaykh in the zawiya in Dandora while he was physically in Mombasa.

(a) Salat al-Fajr with my shaykh

My shaykh al-Habib نفعنا به الله would come to Nairobi from his home in Jeddah before the month of Ramadhan and leave in time to go to Makkah al-Mukarramah and Madina al-Munawwarah for the annual Hajj Pilgrimage. Blessed are those who performed the Hajj, ‘Umra and Ziyarah with him.

In Nairobi, he stayed at the house of Shareef Taha bin ‘Ali al-Haddad رحمته الله for about a week and then went to Mombasa, the coastal town of Kenya. Once, I went to pray Salat al-Fajr with al-Habib نفعنا به الله. After the du‘a’ (supplication) on the completion of Salat al-Fajr, we recited Surah al-Fatiha, Surah Yaaseen and Al-Wird al-Latif compiled by Qutb u’l-Irshaad Imam ‘Abdallah bin ‘Alawi al-Haddad نفعنا به الله.

We completed the recitations with the tasbihaat (Glorification and Praise of Allah سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا) at the end of Al-Wird al-Latif. Some of those who did Dhikrullah with al-Habib had religious and spiritual experiences which they shall remember for the rest of their lives.

(b) Dhikrullah with my shaykh نفعنا به الله in Nairobi

Al-Habib نفعنا به الله had given ijaza (authorization) to ash-Shaykh ‘Abdallah Salim Zabidi رحمته الله to have a weekly program for the recitation of Qasida al-Burda in Nairobi. These programs began to be conducted at the home of ash-Shaykh Said Aboud رحمته الله from 1980, after which they were

conducted at the homes of the loving disciples of al-Habib on a rotation basis. All of them had great attachment with al-Habib as they knew him as ash-Shaykh al-kamil.

One such family that held this program and invited this Burda group was that of two brothers, Haji Ghulam Muhyuddin Chanan Din رحمته الله and Haji Ziauddin Chanan Din رحمته الله. They were simple, pious folk. Other families that had strong attachment with al-Habib were the family of Haji Ebrahim Naqshbandi, the Awan family, the Laldin family and the Saroya family.

In such a gathering of dhikr, there was the recitation from memory of Surah al-Fatiha and Surah YaaSeen in congregation. Then we would recite Ratib al-‘Attas of Qutb u’l-Anfaas Imam ‘Umar bin ‘Abdar-Rahman al-‘Attas رحمته الله, and Qasida al-Burda and Qasida al-Mudariyyah of Imam al-Busiri ash-Shadhili رحمته الله. The recitation of Qasida al-Burda was shared out among those who knew how to recite it, one chapter each. Sometimes, there was the recitation of other qasidas as well. Once, Haji Muhyuddin told me in confidence that he had seen (of spiritual mysteries) what no one else had seen! It was said that he concealed his spiritual station! Attachment with al-Habib رحمته الله and the du‘a’ of al-Habib had definitely benefited him.

سبحان الله (Glorified is Allah رحمته الله)!

Qasida al-Mudariyyah is recited from memory in congregation. It consists of salawaat ala’r-Rasul (invocation of blessings on Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم). It concludes by mentioning the names of the Khulafa’ ar-Rashidun, that is, Sayyidina Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, Sayyidina ‘Umar al-Faruq, Sayyidina ‘Uthman Dhu’n-Nurayn, and Sayyidina ‘Ali al-Murtada رحمته الله. Then follow the names of the remaining ‘Asharatu’l Mubashsharah, that is, (Hadhrat) Talha bin ‘Ubaydillah, (Hadhrat) Zubayr bin al-‘Awwam, (Hadhrat) ‘Abdar-Rahman bin ‘Awf, (Hadhrat) Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqas, (Hadhrat) Sa‘id ibn Zayd, and (Hadhrat) Abu ‘Ubayda ibn al-Jarrah رحمته الله. These are followed by the names of the uncles of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, that is, Sayyidina Hamza رحمته الله, and Sayyidina ‘Abbas رحمته الله. Al-Habib رحمته الله said that if someone is reciting salawaat, you cannot accuse him of showing off, as there is no show-off in salawaat.

At such gatherings, al-Habib رحمته الله would give a talk, which he preferred to be translated by as-Sayyid ‘Umar ‘Abdallah رحمته الله (Mwenye Baraka) of Zanzibar, if he was present. The youngsters applied musk (perfume) to everyone in the gathering.

There was a Dhikrullah group of the ladies in Tariqa al-Qaadiriyah led by ‘Aisha maa bint Esmail Khamisa رحمته الله. Her father, ash-Shaykh Haji Esmail Essa Khamisa رحمته الله, was a Khalifa in Tariqa ar-Rifa‘iyyah. Kullu tariqin salaka ilallah (all spiritual paths lead to Allah رحمته الله). She would hold the hand of Maaji Fatima رحمته الله, daughter of ash-Shaykh Habibullah Dar رحمته الله to help her walk. Maaji Fatima was the mother of my friend Sayyidi Sirshar Dar ash-Shahid رحمته الله. These two ladies were regular in reciting the Qur’an Karim. They were fluent in Urdu, Punjabi and Kiswahili, and recited Muslim religious poetry in Arabic and Urdu. They were at the forefront in mobilizing the ladies. Aisha maa told me that Maaji Fatima was “hidden”. The names of the ladies besides these two who were in this blessed dhikr group are:

Aunt Fatima Begum رحمته الله, Aunt Zubeda Gulamrasul رحمته الله, Aunt Munawwar Yakub رحمته الله,

Aunt Khursheed Hanif رَحْمَتُهَا اللهُ,

Sister Shehzadi Dar ash-Shahida رَحْمَتُهَا اللهُ, Sister Kaneez Bashir رَحْمَتُهَا اللهُ, Sister Zarina Ilyas رَحْمَتُهَا اللهُ,
Sister Khalda Nazir رَحْمَتُهَا اللهُ,

Aunt Maqbul Mughal حَفْظُهَا اللهُ, Sister Shamsad Ziauddin حَفْظُهَا اللهُ, Sister Sadiqa Yunus حَفْظُهَا اللهُ,
Sister Naseem Qureshi حَفْظُهَا اللهُ, Sister Parveen Mughal حَفْظُهَا اللهُ,
Sister Rashda حَفْظُهَا اللهُ, wife of Brother Shafiq رَحْمَتُهَا اللهُ,
Sister Safina Mughal حَفْظُهَا اللهُ, Sister Zahida Qureshi حَفْظُهَا اللهُ, Sister Shabina Mahmud حَفْظُهَا اللهُ,
Sister Ambreen Mughal حَفْظُهَا اللهُ, Sister Amreen Qureshi حَفْظُهَا اللهُ,
Sister Nabila Rashid حَفْظُهَا اللهُ and her daughter Sidhra Yakub حَفْظُهَا اللهُ.

This dhikr group of the ladies would come to the majlis (gathering) of Qasida al-Burda at the house of Haji Muhyuddin رَحْمَتُهَا اللهُ and Haji Ziauddin رَحْمَتُهَا اللهُ. The ladies would be in a separate room. They conducted their own Dhikrullah and Mawlid u'n-Nabi programs to celebrate the birth of the Prophet ﷺ at the house of 'Aisha maa Khamisa رَحْمَتُهَا اللهُ.

We also had formed a group with our families to hold monthly gatherings of Dhikrullah and Mawlid u'n-Nabi celebrations. Mu'allim 'Ali Awaz حَفْظُهَا اللهُ suggested that we should work together. So we began to hold Zikrullah and Mawlid programs together in Tariqa al-Qadiriyyah, in various homes, led by Khalifa 'Abbas 'Athman حَفْظُهَا اللهُ.

For the Mawlid u'n-Nabi celebrations, we used to recite the kitab of Mawlid composed by Imam Ja'far al-Barzanji رَحْمَتُهَا اللهُ. After a few years, 'Aisha maa introduced the kitab of Imam 'Ali bin Muhammad al-Habashi رَحْمَتُهَا اللهُ titled Simtu'd Durar (A Necklace of Pearls) for the Mawlid program, and for that purpose she invited a busload of reciters of Mawlid from Amu (Lamu).

صَلُّوا عَلَى النَّبِيِّ
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ

Invoke Allah's blessings on the Prophet ﷺ!
May Allah bless him and grant him peace!

Aisha maa was a great supporter of Sufi institutions in both Lamu and Mambrii.

We were invited to attend the Dhikrullah programs of al-Habib رَحْمَتُهَا اللهُ. At one such gathering, I requested al-Habib to make du'a' for me that may Allah ﷻ bestow upon me taqwa (reverential awe for Him), sabr (patient endurance), and istiqamah (steadfastness).

Brother Hasan Bagha حَفْظُهَا اللهُ, who later on became Kenya's ambassador to Canada was a staunch supporter of all the dhikr groups all over Kenya. He was deeply attached to al-Habib رَحْمَتُهَا اللهُ and

other shaykhs, and so was Brother Kassam Essak Bharadia رحمته الله who worked towards promoting Islamic Religious Education (IRE) as a subject in schools.

My wife Roshanbanu رحمها الله informed me that al-Habib نفعنا الله had advised ‘Aisha maa رحمها الله to wash her own clothes and not to give them to anyone else for washing. At that time, people did not have washing machines. She had identified al-Habib as ash-Shaykh al-kamil (a shaykh perfected by Allah سبحان الله), so she followed each advice of al-Habib, and, as a result, Allah سبحان الله raised her darajaat (spiritual ranks).

She once told me that such and such a person had been made a WaliyyAllah (Friend of Allah), as in her dream she had heard his name announced in the heavens.

سبحان الله (Glorified is Allah سبحان الله)!

At another time she told me that someone is going to be appointed a WaliyyAllah soon. If she knew about spiritual mysteries such as these, then how high must be the spiritual knowledge of our shaykh, al-Habib himself? She knew his spiritual stations, that is why she had her head bowed down in his respect even if she was in another room. Mawlana Shah Ahmad Noorani Siddiqui نفعنا الله once told me that she was a pious lady.

(c) Some other memorable incidents about my shaykh نفعنا الله in Nairobi

The daughter of Haji Ebrahim Naqshbandi was getting married. Mawlana Noorani نفعنا الله recited the khutbah (sermon) for the nikah, and al-Habib نفعنا الله recited the du‘a’. Those who attended the nikah ceremony had a rare opportunity to be together with these two sufi giants. Haji Ebrahim Naqshbandi رحمها الله was a loving disciple of Mawlana Noorani. His family built a masjid and a madrasa in Makindu with the help of other families. Al-Habib laid the foundation stone for this masjid. Makindu is a town about a third of the way between Nairobi and Mombasa. They also built a musafirkhana (accommodation) where travellers can stay over-night. Meals are also provided free. After Haji Ebrahim Naqshbandi and his son passed ahead, the management and the running of this Islamic Centre was taken over by the Ba Jaber family who are loving disciples of al-Habib.

سبحان الله (All Praise is for Allah سبحان الله)!

Al-Habib نفعنا الله once referred to Mawlana Noorani نفعنا الله as “Imam”. On another occasion, I mentioned al-Habib to Mawlana Noorani. He referred to him by a title which I did not understand. Perhaps only the spiritual elite can understand the meaning of such a title. Both were men of Allah سبحان الله, not competing with one another.

Once I prayed Salat al-Jumu‘ah with al-Habib نفعنا الله in Masjid Noor in South C. After the Prayer, the headmaster of the school of the Islamic Foundation who was there told me that when you see al-Habib نفعنا الله, you remember Allah سبحان الله. This reminded me of the Hadith of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم:

When you see a WaliyyAllah, you remember Allah.

(Narrated by (Hadhrat) ‘Ubadah bin as-Samit رضي الله عنه, and compiled by Imam at-Tabarani رحمتهما الله).

Everyone recognized al-Habib as a WaliyyAllah (Friend of Allah).

Once we were at the Nairobi airport with al-Habib رضي الله عنه. Suddenly, he became angry as a result of something and he closed his eyes. As-Sayyid Hasan ‘Alawi al-Ahdal رحمتهما الله noticed this and held the hand of al-Habib firmly in his own hand. In a minute, I saw al-Habib open his eyes and smile. He gave a practical demonstration of how his mercy prevailed over his wrath. Allah سبحانه وتعالى had made him ash-Shaykh al-kamil.

الله أكبر (Allah سبحانه وتعالى is Supremely Great)!

My daughter Nurjehan حفظها الله had malaria and was hospitalized. The treatment at the hospital was not helping. So I went to al-Habib رضي الله عنه who was in Nairobi at that time. He told me to put my hand on her head and recite a particular Surah seven times and blow on her head. He gave me idhan (authorization) for that. Now I was confident she would be cured and she was. Al-Habib was a faith-healer as well as a physician who cured diseases of the heart to make it wholesome and pious.

الله أكبر (All Praise is for Allah سبحانه وتعالى)!

I am eternally grateful to al-Habib for that idhan.

(d) The zawiya (sufi retreat) in Dandora

An elderly lady named Mama Hawa ‘Abdallah Jailani رضي الله عنها in Tariqa al-Qadiriyyah was allocated a plot of land in the Government’s Sites and Services housing project in Dandora, a poor suburb on the outskirts of Nairobi. The Government has not yet tarmacked the roads leading up to it so they are rocky with lots of potholes. Mama Jailani donated the land Lillah (for the sake of Allah سبحانه وتعالى) for a zawiya (sufi retreat/masjid/madrasa/room for Dhikrullah) to be built. She passed ahead before the zawiya could be built. May Allah سبحانه وتعالى give her a high place in Jannah (Paradise) and raise her darajaat (spiritual ranks). Amin!

‘Aisha maa رضي الله عنها took on the momentous responsibility of getting the zawiya built, together with a house for the resident ustadh. Her Dhikrullah group as well as their family members helped in all the ways possible. Muslims of all races, that is, Africans, Arabs, Swahili and Asians helped. Once, Aisha maa took me to someone from her Kumbhar community. He donated lorry loads of sand and stone. The ladies resident in Dandora as well as in the adjacent suburb of Huruma such as Zaynabu mama Amina حفظها الله also helped. It was a project of the ladies. The men helped out.

The zawiya had been built but not yet officially opened by al-Habib رضي الله عنه. I shall talk about its official opening later. Here I shall narrate some incidents that took place earlier.

As-Sayyid Husein Ahmad Badawi رحمته الله and as-Sayyid Ahmad Ahmad Badawi رحمته الله of Lamu came on different occasions and conducted programs of Mawlid u'n-Nabi to celebrate the birth of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.

On another occasion, Al-'Allamah Ustadh Muhammad Shareef Saeed al-Beidh رحمته الله (henceforth referred to as al-'Allamah Ustadh Muhammad) visited the zawiya for a Mawlid u'n-Nabi صلى الله عليه وسلم program and recited the ruba'iyyaat (quatrains) of Imam al-Haddad رحمته الله whose opening line is:

إِلْزَمْ بَابَ رَبِّكَ وَاتْرُكْ كُلَّ دُونِ
وَأَسْأَلُهُ السَّلَامَةَ مِنْ دَارِ الْفُتُونِ

Cling to the door of your Lord, leave everything else
Ask Him for safety from the land of trials and tribulations

Those who have done a sharh (commentary) on this qasida have said that Baab Rabbik (the Door of your Lord) is Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم.

صَلُّوا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ

Invoke Allah's blessings on the Prophetic Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم!
May Allah رحمته الله bless him and grant him peace.

Once the chief of Dandora visited the zawiya while Zaynabu mama Amina was there. I said to the chief that this lady does the work of religion in Dandora and Huruma, as well as all the adjacent suburbs. She confidently said to the chief, "wewe utakuja ku silimu" (you shall come to accept Islam). Amin!

(e) The presence of my shaykh in the zawiya in Dandora while he was physically in Mombasa

On yet another occasion, we had Dhikrullah in Tariqa al-Qaadiriyyah in the zawiya. A Naqshbandi shaykh from south India, resident in an Arab country had come. During the recitation of Dhikrullah, a young man was overcome by jadhba (spiritual ecstasy) and fell down unconscious. After a while he recovered. Mu'allim 'Ali Awaz رحمته الله told me he knew what had happened, meaning he knew why it happened.

After the Dhikrullah, Ustadh 'Umar 'bin 'Ali bin 'Umar رحمته الله who later became the Imam of Masjid Bilal in Memon Villa, Nairobi, South C, asked me whether I knew what had happened. I said, "no". He said that al-Habib رحمته الله was present. I asked him, "Where was he"? He pointed to the middle of the zawiya. I asked him, "then?" He said that al-Habib asked him to introduce the Shaykh to the audience in Arabic, which he did. I wanted to get to the bottom of this, so the next day I called 'Aisha maa رحمته الله to ask her who was present. She knew who was present through the

eye in the heart (‘ayn al-yaqin) which Allah ﷻ had bestowed upon her. She said that those who were present were Ghawth al-A‘zam ash-Shaykh ‘Abdal Qadir al-Jilani, Mujaddid Alfi Thani ash-Shaykh Ahmad as-Sirhindi al-Faruqi, Pir Khizr Hayat (Khadir) and al-Habib ﷻ, who had personally come from Mombasa which is about 500 km. (300 miles) away. So, all of them are rijal u‘l-ghayb (men of the unseen)!

Since al-Habib ﷻ was physically in Mombasa but was perceived to be in Nairobi, he was in a spiritual state (hal) of ghayba (absence) in Mombasa, and in the spiritual state of hadhra (presence) in Nairobi. Since he had not used any means of transport, we conclude that he was sahib u‘l-khatwa (a man of the step), who puts his right foot forward, recites Bismillah (in the Name of Allah) and something else, and is transported in an instant to another place far away. This is what is meant by the statement, “Allah ﷻ gives the WaliyyAllah some powers”. Allah ﷻ had made al-Habib ash-Shaykh al-kamil and had obviously bestowed upon him some powers.

ﷻ (Allah ﷻ is Supremely Great)!

C3. My shaykh ﷻ laid the foundation stone of Masjid Ridhwan in Dandora and officially opened the zawiya

This chapter has three parts:

- (a) My shaykh laid the foundation stone of Masjid Ridhwan in Dandora.
- (b) He officially opened the zawiya (sufi retreat in Dandora).
- (c) The construction of Masjid Ridhwan.

(a) My shaykh laid the foundation stone of Masjid Ridhwan

When I was in Mombasa in 1409 A.H. / 1989, my shaykh al-Habib ﷻ told me he was going for the opening of the masjid of mama ‘Aisha رتيها.

I went with uncle ‘Abdal Rahman Haji Khamisa Bagha رتيها for the occasion. He had basira (inner-sight) and he followed all the proceedings there with keen interest. Al-Habib ﷻ had come with some loving disciples from Mombasa. Haji Husein Sheyaba رتيها, an elder of the Dandora community, was there to greet him.

Two important events took place on that day of Dhu‘l Qa‘dah 1409 / July 1989:

- (i) the foundation stone laying ceremony of Masjid Ridhwan by al-Habib, and
- (ii) the official opening of the zawiya (sufi retreat) by al-Habib.

First, al-Habib ﷻ laid the foundation stone of Masjid Ridhwan that was to be built adjacent to the zawiya. Sayyidi Sirshar Ahmad Dar ash-Shahid رتيها, guided by ‘Aisha maa رتيها, would take the lead in getting that beautiful masjid constructed. I shall talk more about it in the third part of this chapter.

Brother as-Sayyid Tahseen Hussein رحمته الله was getting another masjid built somewhere else. So he had brought a foundation stone for it. Al-Habib laid his blessed hand on it and recited a du'a' (supplication to Allah ﷻ) so Brother Tahseen could take it as a foundation stone.

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ الْأَعْظَمِ
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ

Invoke Allah's blessings on the Most Beloved Prophet ﷺ!
May Allah ﷻ bless him and grant him peace!

How many are the masjid and the madaris (Islamic schools) that al-Habib نفعنا الله helped to build, re-furbish and/or lay the foundation stone for, in Kenya and in other countries! He fulfilled his responsibilities as ash-Shaykh al-kamil (a Shaykh perfected by Allah ﷻ).

Before he laid the foundation stone of Masjid Ridhwan, al-Habib recited these verses of the Qur'an Karim.

فِي بُيُوتٍ أُذِنَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ تَرْفَعَ وَيُذَكَّرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ ۖ ٣٦ رَجَالًا لَا تُلْهِهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ ۗ ٣٧ لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَيَزِيدَهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَن يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ٣٨

In houses (masajid) which Allah has ordered to be raised up, and in which His Name is remembered; He is glorified there in the mornings and evenings.

(By) men whom neither trade nor business diverts from the Remembrance of Allah and from establishing the Prayer, and paying of the obligatory charity; they fear the Day (of Judgement) when hearts and eyes shall be overturned.

So that Allah may reward them out of His Bounty, and Allah provides whomever He Wills without measure. (24:36-38)

I was wondering which part of the Qur'an these verses came from, so al-Habib, who was obviously sitting in my heart, set my mind at rest by reciting the verse about the Nur (Light) of Allah ﷻ which comes just before the verses he had recited.

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. (24:35)

When, al-Habib was reciting the verses of the Qur'an, I saw that Haji Ziauddin Chanandin رحمته الله was weeping with joy. Sayyidi Sirshar Dar ash-Shahid رحمته الله, an active supporter of the zawiya, also witnessed this blessed historical occasion. Haji Ghulam Muhyuddin رحمته الله was not there as he had already passed ahead.

(b) Al-Habib نفعنا به officially opened the zawiya

We formed a guard of honour for al-Habib to officially open the zawiya. We greeted him congregationally.

سَلَامٌ سَلَامٌ عَلَى شَيْخِنَا وَ طَيْبِ الْقُلُوبِ وَ أُسْتَاذِنَا

Salutation, peace on our Shaykh
who is a healing for the hearts, and our teacher

(Glorified is Allah سبحانه)!

Then we sat down in the zawiya. No one was taking the lead, and al-Habib knew through kashf (spiritual unveiling) that we wished him to conduct the program. He requested one of the loving disciples who had accompanied him from Mombasa, to recite a qasida. So he recited the qasida of Imam al-Haddad نفعنا به whose reply is:

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ يَا رَفِيعَ الشَّانِ وَالذَّرَجِ

Salutation to you, O Prophetic Messenger of Allah
O the one with the exalted high honour and the spiritual rank

The concluding ruba‘i (quatrain) of this qasida is a du‘a’ (supplication):

رَبِّ فَانْفَعْنَا بِبَرَكَتِهِمْ وَاهِدِنَا الْحُسْنَى بِحُرْمَتِهِمْ
وَ أَمْتَنَا فِي طَرِيقَتِهِمْ وَ مُعَافَاةٍ مِّنَ الْفِتَنِ

O Lord! Make us benefit from their blessings
(that is, the blessings of the Prophet ﷺ, his Family ﷺ, and his descendants ﷺ)
and guide us to the best for the sake of their sanctity
and make us pass ahead in their spiritual path
and be saved from sedition

Then, al-Habib نفعنا به asked whether there was anyone else who wanted to recite something, so Mu‘allim ‘Ali Awaz نفعنا به recited the qasida Muhammadiyyah in Tariqa al-Qaadiriyyah which has been attributed to as-Sayyid Swaleh ‘Izz ad-Din al-Jailani نفعنا به of Moshi, Tanzania, who, incidentally was a friend of al-Habib. Its opening line is:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ صَلِّ عَلَى الشَّفِيعِ لَنَا مُحَمَّدٍ

O Allah! Bless Prophet Muhammad
Bless Prophet Muhammad who is our Intercessor

Then, in his talk, al-Habib explained that a zawiya like this gathers people together.

The ladies' group had prepared gifts for distribution. Shaykh 'Abdallah bin Salim Zabidi رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ put on a shawl on al-Habib رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ amidst resounding takbeeraat.

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ
اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ وَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ

Allah is Supremely Great! Allah is Supremely Great! Allah is Supremely Great!
None to be worshipped but Allah and Allah is Supremely Great.
Allah is Supremely Great and for Allah is all Praise.

Among those who received gifts were mama Khadija 'Ali رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا, the wife of Mu'allim Ali Awaz رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.

'Aisha maa رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا had told me the ladies would prepare sherbat (sweet drink) with milk. When milk was served, al-Habib رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ took the glass of milk with both hands to show his appreciation.

I had requested Mu'allim 'Ali that when al-Habib stood up to leave, he should recite the opening lines of a qasida in Tariqa al-Qaadiriyyah and a qasida in Tariqa al-'Alawiyyah, which he did. He had such a melodious voice that he came to be called bulbul Qaadiriyyah (the nightingale of the Qaadiriyyah), became a Khalifa (deputy) in Tariqa al-Qaadiriyyah, and finally a shaykh.

The opening lines of the qasida in Tariqa al-Qaadiriyya are:

بِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَالْجَيْلَانِ وَرِجَالٍ مِّنْ بَنِي عَدْنَانَ
سَلَكُوا فِي مَنْهَجِ الرَّحْمَنِ بِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَالْجَيْلَانِ

For the sake of the Prophetic Messenger of Allah, and Shaykh 'Abdal Qadir al-Jaylani رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and the men (of Allah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) in Bani 'Adnan (ancestor of the Prophet رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ)
They have travelled in the path of the Compassionate (Allah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ)
For the sake of the Prophetic Messenger of Allah, and Shaykh 'Abdal Qadir al-Jaylani
(O Allah! Hear our supplications!)

The opening lines of the qasida in Tariqa al-'Alawiyyah are:

وَرَجَالٍ مِّنْ بَنِي عَلَوِي

بِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَالْبَدَوِي

بِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَالْبَدَوِي

سَلَكُوا فِي مَنَهْجِ النَّبَوِي

For the sake of the Prophetic Messenger of Allah, and as-Sayyid Badawi نفعنا الله
and the men (of Allah ﷺ) in Bani ‘Alawi

They have travelled in the path of the Prophet ﷺ

For the sake of the Prophetic Messenger of Allah and as-Sayyid Badawi

(O Allah! Hear our supplications!)

Then, Brother Mohamed Hussein Ayoob Harunany رحمته الله brought copies of the book on Hajj printed by Iqra Islamic Publications of Memon Jamat Nairobi. So, we went out and gave these to al-Habib نفعنا الله for distribution.

Outside the zawiya, I saw uncle Mohamed Hussein Haji Ibrahim Noorani رحمته الله who proudly told al-Habib نفعنا الله that he had met him in Uganda.

This was one of the greatest days of my life, and the crowning of all my achievements in Kenya, as I left with my family for Canada only one month after the official opening of the zawiya (sufi retreat).

I shall narrate one more incident about the zawiya. When we had gathered to offer our first Salat al-Jumu‘ah in the zawiya, Khalifa Abbas Athman رحمته الله was delayed in coming so I was blessed to give the khutbah (sermon) for the Prayer.

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ (All Praise is for Allah)!

The barakaat (blessings) that flow from such a zawiya are obvious. Once, when I was sitting in the zawiya, someone came to me and said that he wanted to become a Muslim, as his son had become a Muslim. So, he recited the Kalima Shahadah and accepted Islam.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

I bear witness that none is to be worshipped but Allah ﷻ
and I bear witness that Muhammad ﷺ is the Prophetic Messenger of Allah

I advised him to go to the masjid his son went to, or come to the zawiya, learn about Islam and become a practicing Muslim.

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ (All Praise is for Allah ﷻ)!

(c) The construction of Masjid Ridhwan in Dandora

The foundation stone that al-Habib نفعنا به الله laid for masjid Ridhwan in Dandora next to the zawiya bore fruit (thamaraat). Sayyidi Sirshar Ahmad Dar ash-Shahid رحمته الله took the lead, guided by ‘Aisha maa رحمته الله to have a big and beautiful masjid built. It has a bed of flowers and plants all around. All the personalities and families in Nairobi that have been mentioned in this tadhkira so far, helped morally, financially and materially. Among the foremost donors was as-Sayyid Tahseen Hussein رحمته الله. New donors have come up such as ash-Shaykh Salim Abubakar Ba Jaber رحمته الله who provides invaluable support in Dandora and in many other places. Brother Hasan Bagha رحمته الله helped in various specific ways as he is versatile in these matters. Brother Yusuf Abdallah Bagha رحمته الله took on the responsibility of paying the monthly water bill, and so on. The supporters of the masjid are too numerous to mention. May Allah سبحانه reward from His unlimited treasuries all those who work in His Cause. Amin!

After Masjid Ridhwan was successfully built, Sayyidi Sirshar Ahmad Dar ash-Shahid, his wife Shehzadi ash-Shahida, and his two sons Ahmad Kamal ash-Shahid and Hamid Jamal ash-Shahid رحمته الله were murdered on 20 Muharram 1419 A.H. / 17 May 1998. Inna Lillahi wa inna Ilayhi raaji’un (To Allah we belong and to Him we shall return). They became shuhada’ (martyrs). Every year, Sayyidi Sirshar went to the Annual Mawlid un-Nabi celebration in Lamu, sometimes alone, sometime with his family. I still weep for them when I recall them.

Al-‘Allamah Ustadh Muhammad نفعنا به الله was the first spiritual advisor in Dandora. Since he passed ahead, the Shaykh of the masjid has been ash-Shaykh Said About رحمته الله. The first Imam was Khalifa ‘Abbas ‘Athman رحمته الله, and then Khalifa ‘Ali Awaz رحمته الله. Now the Imam is Mu‘allim Hasan Kilele رحمته الله who graduated in Mambroi at the hands of al-‘Allamah Ustadh Muhammad نفعنا به الله. The masjid is full for Salat u’l-Jumu‘ah.

Iftar to break the fast is provided in the month of Ramadhan. Also a sadaqah program, consisting of food distribution, is held in the month of Ramadhan. At the forefront to organize and manage this is Brother Mohamed Hussein Ayoub رحمته الله, the first secretary of the masjid. A committee has been established of residents of Dandora to manage the masjid and all the related projects.

Masjid Ridhwan is in the sufi tradition with gatherings of Dhikrullah and Mawlid un-Nabi سبحانه to which students of many other madrasas and masajid are invited. There is good unity, co-operation and leadership shown by the Imams and teachers so that the masjid is packed to capacity for such programs. Masjid Ridhwan attracts ‘ulama’ (scholars) and the sufiyyah (spiritual masters) from many countries. سبحانه (Glorified is Allah سبحانه)!

The zawiya (sufi retreat) that was built earlier continues to be used as a part-time madrasa (school) for both boys and girls to teach them the Qur’an Karim and Hadith, and about Islam so that they grow up to become pious Muslims. It keeps on expanding with more students.

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ (All Praise is for Allah سبحانه)!

C4. With my shaykh رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ in his trip from Nairobi to Mombasa

My shaykh al-Habib رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ would stay for about a week in Nairobi and then go to Mombasa which he called his second home. His first home was in Jeddah.

I wanted to visit al-Habib رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ at the house of Shareef Taha bin ‘Ali al-Haddad رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ but before that, I decided to visit ‘Aisha maa رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا. She told me that al-Habib had said that a car will come to fetch her and she will have breakfast with him, so she hadn’t had breakfast yet. She said that she expected another car to come but since I had come, she said, “let us go”. We reached just in time as al-Habib was about to leave. As he was leaving, the thought crossed my mind that when he was young, al-Habib must have performed tawaf (circumambulation) of the Ka‘ba many times when he went for Hajj. I thought that he must be sad that now in his old age, he could not do as much. Al-Habib had obviously read my thoughts through kashf (spiritual unveiling) and at once spontaneously and fervently embraced me. This was one of the greatest moments of my life.

أَحْمَدُ لِلَّهِ (All Praise is for Allah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ)!

Many people had decided to accompany al-Habib as far as Mackinnon Road, and then come back. Among them were Shareef Taha bin Ali al-Haddad رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and Brother Hasan Bagha رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. Other loving disciples would come from Mombasa to Mackinnon Road to fetch him. My car was not good enough to go all the way to Mackinnon Road, so Sayyidi Sirshar Ahmad Dar Ash-Shahid رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ gave me a ride, although his car was already full with his three sons Ahmad Jamal رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, Ahmad Kamal ash-Shahid رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and Hamid Jalal ash-Shahid رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, and with Ustadh ‘Umar bin ‘Ali bin ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. We prayed Salat az-Zuhr en-route to Mackinnon Road.

An entourage with many cars had come from Mombasa to Mackinnon Road to fetch al-Habib رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, with many personalities including ash-Shaykh Swaleh bin Salim Eleyyan رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and Shareef Abdal Qadir Hasan al-Hamed رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ (henceforth referred to as Shareef Abdal Qadir). Mackinnon Road is famous for having the grave of as-Sayyid Bagh ‘Ali Shah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, a WaliyyAllah (Friend of Allah) who had come with many others from India to help lay the Mombasa-Nairobi railway line. He is attributed with many miracles. Many people regularly go there to recite al-Fatiha. Al-Habib sat together with all of us in front of the grave of as-Sayyid Bagh ‘Ali Shah and recited Surah al-Fatiha, Surah Yaaseen and du‘a (supplication to Allah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ). Such a great shaykh as al-Habib could never be parochial. Brother Musa Ahmad Musa رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, the caretaker of the masjid there, told me that al-Habib knew his family for four generations. He had set aside a room in his house for al-Habib to rest when he came to Mackinnon Road.

After the Fatiha at the maqam (station) of as-Sayyid Bagh ‘Ali Shah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, lunch was served. Then those who had come from Mombasa, took al-Habib رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ to Mombasa and we returned to Nairobi. This was another great day for me.

أَحْمَدُ لِلَّهِ (All Praise is for Allah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ)!

With my shaykh al-Habib نفعنا الله in Mombasa

This consists of five chapters:

- C5. At the home of my shaykh in Mombasa.
- C6. Talks and study sessions of my shaykh in Masjid Shaykh Jundan, Mombasa.
- C7. With my shaykh in the month of Ramadhan in Masjid Birikau, Mombasa.
- C8. Gatherings with my shaykh in other masajid and at homes.
- C9. My shaykh introduced gatherings for the recitation of Qasida al-Burda.

C5. At the home of my shaykh نفعنا الله in Mombasa

At his home, there was adab (proper etiquette, courtesy, respect) and proper decorum. Everyone knew they were in the august presence of “a man of Allah”. His house was open for everyone. People of all races, and of all tribes and communities visited him to gain barakaat (blessings). The loving disciples who came, kissed his hand and sat down. Once, a Shaykh from the Comoro Islands said when al-Habib was not there in the living room, but he was in the room inside, that “the eyes of all the Awliya’ Allah (Friends of Allah) are on this house.”

As-Sayyid Hasan bin ‘Alawi al-Ahdal حفظه الله was always with him, and so was as-Sayyid Muhammad bin Mustafa Abu Numay رضي الله عنه, al-Habib’s grandson, who used to hold his hand to help him to walk as al-Habib نفعنا الله had been injured from a car accident he had many years earlier. Once, neither as-Sayyid Hasan al-Ahdal nor as-Sayyid Muhammad bin Mustafa were there, so when al-Habib came from the room inside, he extended his hand in my direction. So, I held his hand and took him to the place where he used to sit. This was a rare honour for me.

لِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ (All praise is for Allah سُبْحَانَكَ)!

As-Sayyid Muhammad bin Mustafa رضي الله عنه set an example of service to a grandfather and to one’s shaykh. He was born naturally good, being the grandson of al-Habib. Ta‘alluq (attachment) with al-Habib نفعنا الله had transformed his life, and he had become attached to Allah سُبْحَانَكَ, and to His Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. He had also acquired takhalluq (good character) as he was nurtured by al-Habib. He followed the Commands of Allah سُبْحَانَكَ and His Prophetic Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, and kept away from His Prohibitions. He grew up to become pious, and humble; an exemplary ustadh (teacher) and an outstanding khaadim (servant) of the Muslim community. He recorded all the talks, study sessions and anecdotes of al-Habib in Mombasa, had them typed and compiled them over a period of four years, 1407 to 1410 A.H. / 1987 to 1990 in Manba‘ u’l-Imdad (A Fountain of Help) which is the second spiritual masterpiece of al-Habib. When we recite Manba‘ u’l-Imdad, we conclude that perhaps he had realized the truth of at least some of the spiritual realities (tahaqquq). In this way, he acquired ta‘alluq, takhalluq and tahaqquq as explained by al-Habib and quoted in Chapter C1 at the beginning of this Part C.

He established Madrasa al-Faqih al-Muqaddam al-Islamiyyah in Mombasa after al-Habib passed ahead. It was obvious to those who knew him that as a result of the du‘a’ of al-Habib, he had attained high darajaat (spiritual ranks). Those who wished to see one of the habaib (the beloved ‘Alawi shaykhs) in his youth, they did not have to go far, as as-Sayyid Muhammad bin Mustafa was in front of them. He passed ahead only six years after al-Habib.

Al-Habib lived frugally. His house was small, with two living rooms, one where men who visited him would sit and another where ladies would sit, and two rooms inside, one for his private study and one for the family. After the gatherings at night and early in the morning, before he came out to meet people, al-Habib prayed Salah, did Dhikrullah and fikr (contemplation) and recited books in his room, but we do not have details about that.

Haji Ziauddin Chanandin رحمته الله told me that he was amazed at the respect that a Naqshbandi shaykh from South India gave to al-Habib نفعنا الله when they visited him at his home in Mombasa. He said that the shaykh knocked on the door, said that he was such and such a person and that he wanted permission from al-Habib to enter. When he was told that he had the permission of al-Habib, he entered. He had surely identified al-Habib as ash-Shaykh al-kamil.

We made a seal in the name of al-Habib نفعنا الله on a ring designed by Brother Mahmud Laldin رحمته الله of Nairobi, which he could wear and seal books or documents with. Al-Habib was happy to receive it but turned the seal in his name to the name of Imam al-Haddad نفعنا الله by just saying “Mawlana al-Haddad”.

I had gone with Noormuhammad Ayoob Harunany رحمته الله, who had printed 500 copies of the English translation of the book of Imam al-Haddad نفعنا الله, Risalah Aadaab Suluk al-Murid (The Book of the Murid) in memory of his father. This book was translated by Dr. Mostafa al-Badawi رحمته الله. Al-Habib نفعنا الله was very happy to receive these for distribution. I have not seen anyone else more appreciative of the gifts he received. He told Noormuhammad, “you are Noor (light) and from you is Noor”.

Al-Habib was also very generous. He once told us that we should also give to the needy non-Muslims to help them.

Two young boys had accepted Islam in Nairobi. ‘Aisha maa رحمته الله was taking care of them. I took one of them, Ilyas, to be admitted to a madrasa in Kilifi, a town about 65 km. (40 miles) from Mombasa. First, I took him to al-Habib نفعنا الله who asked him his name and was very happy to see him. Al-Habib blessed me by serving me food with his own blessed hands. On other occasions, I was blessed to eat some of his left overs.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (All Praise is for Allah رحمته الله)! الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ

I photocopied some material which contained biographies of al-Habib Ahmad bin Abu Bakr bin Sumayt نفعنا الله, al-Habib’s grand Shaykh; and of al-Habib ‘Umar bin Sumayt نفعنا الله, al-Habib’s Shaykh. These biographies were written in Kiswahili by ash-Shaykh Mohamed Mlamali Adam

of U.K. Al-Habib نفعنا الله was overjoyed to receive them. He held his grand Shaykh and his Shaykh in great esteem. Once in a while, he would go to Zanzibar to (do the ziyara) visit his grand Shaykh, and he would go to the Comoro Islands to (do the ziyara) visit his Shaykh.

I took Iqra': The Islamic Journal, which we published quarterly in Nairobi, to al-Habib نفعنا الله. He asked me who were the advisors for this journal. I told him they were al-'Allamah Ustadh Muhammad Shareef Saeed al-Beidh نفعنا الله and al-'Allamah Ustadh Harith Swaleh نفعنا الله. He said both were 'alims (scholars) and he put his thumb on it, which indicated his seal of approval.

He opened Iqra' on the page for the students and looked at it. After a little while, he closed the fingers of his right hand and then opened them wide, indicating that these buds are going to flower. He talked little. Whenever possible, his communication was by indication.

The first book that we reprinted in the Iqra' Islamic Publications is the classic of Islamic spirituality written by al-Habib titled Miftah u'l-Jannah which had been translated as The Key to Paradise by ash-Shaykh Mohamed Mlamali Adam نفعنا الله of U.K.

Iqra' Islamic Publications published a book of more than 100 Ahadith (Sayings of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ), selected from Riyadh u's-Salihin (The Gardens of the Righteous) of Imam an-Nawawi نفعنا الله. This was translated by al-'Allamah Ustadh Harith Swaleh نفعنا الله in Kiswahili for which we are grateful to him. Uncle Ahmad 'Ali Muhammad Khandwala نفعنا الله took this book to al-Habib نفعنا الله and asked him whether the Ahadith in it were authentic. Al-Habib told him he had checked each and every Hadith in it and he found them all to be authentic. Blessings flowed from this approval of al-Habib. This book was used in schools in Kenya to supplement the text for the IRE (Islamic Religious Education) classes. Nine students of our Madrasa al-Hidaya in Toronto memorized forty selected Ahadith from it and two students, Hafiz Usman Munawwar حفظه الله and Ahmad Syed حفظه الله memorized the whole of it.

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ (All praise is for Allah ﷻ)!

Once, when I went to Mombasa, I said to al-Habib that I wished to become his murid (disciple). He took my hand in his hand and said to me, "Welcome to the work of the Prophets عليهم السلام". Then, he gave me Ratib al-Haddad as wazifa to be recited every night. I had finally informally graduated at his hands to informally join his post-graduate class.

Once, when I went to visit al-Habib نفعنا الله, there was an English translation of a religious book lying on the table. He told me to read what was on the cover page and to translate it in Kiswahili, which I did. He told me this is your wazifa. Did you hear of such an amazing thing like this before? Shareef Hasan al-Ahdal حفظه الله asked me whether I understood what al-Habib was saying. I said "no". He said you will understand later. After many years, when I was in Canada, I understood what he meant. I also began to understand the meaning of the title "Ash-Shaykh al-kamil" (a shaykh perfected by Allah ﷻ). That was al-Habib! This is al-Habib!

نفعنا الله (May Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him)! Amin!

One day, many of the muridin (disciples) of al-Habib نفعنا به الله were at his home, including ash-Shaykh Said Aboud حفظه الله of Nairobi. One of the muridin said that al-Habib is always mentioning Said Aboud. Al-Habib smiled. After that, once when I met him, al-Habib told me, “Said Aboud mtu mzuri” (Said Aboud is a good man).

One day, uncle Ayoob Ahmad Noorani رضي الله عنه gave a ring to al-Habib نفعنا به الله, and when he put it on, uncle Ayoob was overcome with emotion, such was his love for al-Habib!

Many people were close to al-Habib, foremost among whom was uncle Mohamed Yusuf Mithoo Mithwani رضي الله عنه whose Hussein Bakery is adjacent to the home of al-Habib. Others whom I know who were close to him are Brother ‘Abdul Majid Haji Musa Laving الذم له, Brother ‘Abdal Razzaq Essak Bharadia رضي الله عنه, and Brother Muhammad Ibrahim Mohamed Hussein Jin رضي الله عنه of Malindi.

When I was moving to Canada, ‘Aisha maa رضي الله عنها suggested that I should have two flags made according to the design and the writing on it which she suggested. My cousin, Brother Muhammad Bashir Ahmad Muhammad الذم له made these two flags for me to take. ‘Aisha maa told me that these two flags have the approval of Ghawth al-A‘zam ash-Shaykh ‘Abdal Qadir al-Jilani نفعنا به الله and of al-Habib نفعنا به الله.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ (All Praise is for Allah سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ)!

On the flags is written:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
None is to be worshipped but Allah
Muhammad is the Prophetic Messenger of Allah.

We carry these flags on special occasions of our gatherings in masjid in Toronto.

When I was moving to Canada, uncle Haji ‘Abdal Shakur Haji Abdallah Hobaya رضي الله عنه gave me two volumes of qasidas in tariqa al-Qaadiriyyah. He was the Aba’l-murid (a father figure) in Tariqa ar-Rifa‘iyyah whose job was to get the food prepared in big cauldrons for all those who came for the gatherings of Dhikrullah. I am grateful to him for giving me this precious gift. I photocopied them, had them bound and returned to him the originals. These two volumes of qasidas helped me to establish the monthly gatherings of Dhikrullah in Tariqa al-Qaadiriyyah as well as the annual whole night anniversary celebration of Ghawth al-A‘zam ash-Shaykh ‘Abdal Qadir al-Jilani نفعنا به الله in Toronto.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ (All Praise is for Allah سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ)!

The last time I met al-Habib نفعنا الله was at the house of Shareef Taha bin ‘Ali al-Haddad رحمته عليه in Nairobi. Al-Habib was to fly to Jeddah that day. One person was sitting between me and al-Habib. After a while, that person left so I was sitting next to al-Habib, for the first and the last time. Those who were present smiled indicating that they were happy to see that.

لله الْحَمْدُ (All Praise is for Allah سبحانه)!

C6. Talks and study sessions of my shaykh al-Habib رحمته الله in Masjid ash-Shaykh Jundan

Al-Habib رحمته الله would hold a dars (study session) after Salat al-‘Asr, in the right hand corner of masjid ash-Shaykh Jundan in Mombasa. It would be from Ihya’ ‘Ulum i’ d-Deen (The Revival of Religious Knowledge) of Imam al-Ghazali رحمته الله, Riyadh u’s-Salihin (the Gardens of the Righteous) of Imam an-Nawawi رحمته الله, the books of Imam ‘Abdallah bin ‘Alawi al-Haddad رحمته الله such as An-Nasaih i’ d-Diniyyah (Counsels of Religion) and Risalat u’l-Mu‘awanah (The Book of Assistance), or from Miftah u’s-Sarair (The Key to Spiritual Mysteries) of ash-Shaykh Abu Bakr bin Salim رحمته الله. The dars would be for about 15 to 20 minutes. It was translated into Kiswahili by al-‘Allamah Muhammad bin Hasan an-Nadhiri رحمته الله. He is popularly known as Shareef Mwenye Karama رحمته الله as he was the miracle child who was saved from their house when it caught fire and got completely burnt down.

There was adab (respect). When al-Habib رحمته الله entered, everyone stood up in respect for him. All the questions that were on my mind were answered during the course of the dars without me asking them. Once, there was a question in my mind before I went to Mombasa whether what ash-Shaykh Muhyuddin ibn al-‘Arabi رحمته الله wrote was reliable or not. Al-Habib knew through kashf (spiritual unveiling) what was in my mind, so in the middle of the dars, he said, “Ibn al-‘Arabi mu‘tabar (reliable)”. Shareef ‘Abdal Qadir رحمته الله who used to sit to the right of al-Habib, repeated it because he considered this statement to be significant, since it came spontaneously.

Once, al-Habib رحمته الله said in the course of the study session, that we should remain in the state in which Allah سبحانه وتعالى keeps us, and if after sometime, He keeps us in another state, we should be content to remain in that state, and if later, He keeps us in yet a third state, we should remain in that state. Shareef ‘Abdal Qadir رحمته الله considered this statement to be significant so he repeated it.

Al-Habib رحمته الله would go to recite al-Fatiha at the qabr (grave) of ash-Shaykh Jundan رحمته الله at the back of the masjid. His du‘a (supplication) was that may Allah سبحانه وتعالى forgive all the Muslims and raise the darajaat (spiritual ranks) of the shaykh. After al-Habib رحمته الله passed ahead, the grave of ash-Shaykh Jundan was destroyed after mid-night by sectarians who are opposed to supplicating to Allah سبحانه وتعالى for the dead at their graves. However, it is well-known that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم used to go to the graveyard to supplicate to Allah سبحانه وتعالى to forgive the dead, and he greeted the inmates of the graves with: As-salamu ‘alaykum yaa ahla’l-qubur (Peace be upon you, O the inmates of the graves). He also advised us to visit graveyards as it reminds us of the Hereafter.

There was a suggestion that the committee of the masjid should go to court and lay charges against these sectarians. Shareef ‘Abdal Qadir and the committee members of the masjid refused to do that as it would divide the Muslims further. Instead the grave was covered up. How magnanimous!

The grave destroyers are a very small minority sect but they are vocal, aggressive and well-funded. The good news is that now they have been discredited and have become very weak.

Let us then benefit from what al-Habib نفعنا به ﷺ said in Masjid ash-Shaykh Jundan in the course of one of his study sessions from Riyadh u's-Salihin (The Gardens of the Righteous). I quote from what has been reported in Manba' u'l-Imdad (A Fountain of Help, p. 114).

“Know O brothers that when the secret of the remembrance of the Prophet, may Allah bless him, is unfolded, it expands the heart and excites the mind. So when he is remembered and blessing is invoked for him, and his Sayings are heard, faith is excited, and faith is increased in your heart, and spiritual light shines in it. For this reason, books of Ahadith (Sayings of the Prophet ﷺ) and his biography with which faith is strengthened, are recited. And the best gatherings are those in which his noble attributes and biography are mentioned, may Allah bless him and bestow peace upon him. And all these books that are in our hands are about his Prophethood and his Message, and his Wisdom, as Allah ﷻ says:

وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ

... and purifies them and teaches them the Book (the Qur'an) and the Wisdom (Sunnah)". (3:164, 62:2)

صَلُّوا عَلَى النَّبِيِّ
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ

Invoke Allah's blessings on the Prophet ﷺ!
May Allah ﷻ bless him and grant him peace!

C7. With my Shaykh al-Habib نفعنا الله in the month of Ramadhan in Masjid Birikau, Mombasa

This chapter is in two parts:

- (a) Salat al-‘Isha’ and Salat at-Tarawih with my shaykh.
- (b) The talk of my shaykh about the merits of Laylatu’l Qadr (the Night of Destiny).

(a) Salat al-‘Isha’ and Salat at-Tarawih with my shaykh

In the month of Ramadhan, al-Habib نفعنا الله led the Salat al-‘Isha’ in Masjid Birikau (Memon Masjid), Mombasa. He also led 10 raka‘at of Salat at-Tarawih. Al-‘Allamah Shareef Mwenye Karama نفعنا الله led the other 10 raka‘at. Al-Habib’s majestic presence filled the masjid and any gathering.

After the Salat at-Tarawih, there was recitation from the Qur’an Karim. This was followed by the du‘a’ (supplication) written by al-Habib al-Imam Ahmad bin Hasan al-‘Attas نفعنا الله, one of the shaykhs of al-Habib نفعنا الله. He specifically wrote it to be recited after Salat at-Tarawih. It continues to be recited in congregation till to-day. It ends with these verses of the Qur’an Karim:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ۝ ۱۸۰ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ ۝ ۱۸۱ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Glorified is your Lord, the Lord of Honour

(Who is free) from what they (the non-believers) ascribe (as partners) to Him.

And peace be upon the Prophetic Messengers (of Allah).

And all Praise is for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. (37:180-182)

Then, al-Habib gave a talk or held a dars (study session), followed by the recitation of one or more qasidas.

The recitation of this du‘a’ (supplication) which is popularly recited in the month of Ramadhan, brought the majlis (gathering) to a resounding close.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ نَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ نَسَأَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَنَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ
اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُوفٌ مُجِيبٌ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنَّا
يَا كَرِيمَ الْعَفْوَ

I bear witness that none is to be worshipped but Allah.

We beg forgiveness from Allah.

We ask of You (O Allah) for Paradise

and seek Your protection from hell-fire. (3 times)

O Allah! Indeed You are Forgiving, You love forgiveness, so forgive us. (3 times)

O The Generous in forgiveness. (once)

To greet al-Habib رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ as he entered the masjid was al-‘Allamah uncle Abdallah Haji Muhammad Zizimawalla رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, a Khalifa in Tariqa ar-Rafa‘iyyah. He stood to attention outside the masjid to welcome al-Habib, as he knew that al-Habib was ash-Shaykh al-kamil. He used to conduct the annual whole night dhikr in Tariqa al-Qaadiriyyah, Tariqa ar-Rifa‘iyyah and Tariqa ash-Shadhiliyyah in Memon Villa, Mombasa. Al-Habib referred to him as the ‘alim (scholar) of the Memons.

Two Qadiri Somali shaykhs from Nairobi used to come to Mombasa to spend the month of Ramadhan with al-Habib and to pray Salah with him. Some, like Haji Ayoob Abdal Sattar Sonara رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ of Mombasa brought their children so that they could also benefit from the blessings of such blissful gatherings. As-Sayyid ‘Ali bin Ahmad Qullatain رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ of Zanzibar, when he was resident in Mombasa, attended with his relatives. Elder Sidik Sumar Noorani رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ of S.S. Noorani Store who lived in the neighbourhood of the masjid, was highly impressed by all the many recitations after Salat at-Tarawih. Most of those who were attached to al-Habib such as those who visited him at his home or who participated in gatherings for the recitation of Qasida al-Burda also came, even though they lived far. I shall not repeat their names here as they have been mentioned elsewhere in this tadhkira (memoriam), and I wish to avoid repetition as far as possible.

Everyone kissed the hand of al-Habib رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ at the end. Shareef Abdal-Rahman Khitami رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ once wanted to kiss his feet as well. Al-Habib would not let him, he tucked them in. When you prayed Salah behind him, you felt as if al-Habib had immersed you in the river of Kawthar of Paradise of Rasulullah ﷺ.

صَلُّوا عَلَى النَّبِيِّ
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ

Invoke Allah’s blessings on the Prophet ﷺ!
May Allah ﷻ bless him and grant him peace!

When someone recites this, I am reminded of Brother Mahmud al-Jahdhamy رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ who recites it in his booming voice in such gatherings.

Before he left, al-Habib recited al-Fatiha for the deceased who have been laid to rest in the cemetery there, among whom are many Awliya’Allah (Friends of Allah).

Someone told me that he once met an unknown person in Masjid Birikau who he had not met since then. Obviously, he had met one of the rijal u’l-ghayb (men of the unseen). If a muhibb (loving disciple) of al-Habib meets one of the rijal u’l-ghayb, he should be rest assured that it is al-Habib رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ who has sent him.

رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ (May Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him)! Amin!

(b) The talk of my shaykh about the merits of Laylatu'l Qadr (the Night of Destiny)

In concluding this chapter, let us benefit from a talk that al-Habib نفعنا به الله gave about some of the merits of Laylatu'l Qadr (the Night of Destiny) in the month of Ramadhan as given in Surah al-Qadr (Chapter 97 of the Qur'an). This talk has been included in Manba' u'l-Imdad (A Fountain of Help, p. 14-15). This is what al-Habib said:

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ١

Surely, We revealed it (the Qur'an) in the Night of Destiny.

(97:1)

Our Lord named it the Night of Destiny. (It is) the Night of Nobility, and Esteem and Destiny.

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ٢

And what will convey to you what the Night of Destiny is? (97:2)

He said to the Prophet ﷺ informing him about its virtues that it is indeed better than a thousand months.

So, He said:

لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ٣

The Night of Destiny is better than a thousand months. (97:3)

In it (the reward for) good deeds are increased, our various deeds that are inadequate and our deeds that are delayed. So our Lord made for us a night in which (the reward for) our deeds are multiplied. All Praise is for You O Lord for this blessing, that You appointed for us a night in which (the reward for) our deeds are multiplied equivalent to doing good deeds for eighty three years.

تَنْزَلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ٤

The angels descend. (97:4)

The angels descend from the great heavenly world to us, we who are the followers of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. It is required of us to properly esteem these matters and see how The Omnipotent (Allah ﷻ) deals with us, and how our Lord deals with us while we are asleep in heedless forgetfulness.

Angels descend, Jibrail and Mika'il, and with them are greetings for us from their Lord and they go around us.

And it has been reported in other narrations that they raise the flag in the Ka'ba, and a herald proclaims about the security and the forgiveness (from Allah ﷻ) and the Acceptance by Allah, and about magnificent manifestations.

وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا

And the Spirit therein. (97:4)

It has been said: (the Spirit referred to is) a great angel, all the angels stand in awe of him, of his greatness, and of his noble attribute. And it has been said: he is Sayyidina Jibrail because he is the leader of the angels.

Be as it may, it is a great matter. They descend, seeking from our Lord to mingle with the followers of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. All Praise is for Allah ﷻ Who made us among the followers of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, so that we can partake of these virtues and privileges. All Praise is for Allah ﷻ Who guided us to Islam even before we knew about it.

بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ

By the permission of their Lord. (97:4)

By the permission of their Lord. He commands them to ennoble the community of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. And the one who the angels mingle with and greet (with the greeting of peace) is a pious person, a Friend of Allah (Waliyyallah). Some Friends of Allah (awliya') have said that in these nights they have indeed seen the angels descend among those present. Those who have open inner-sight and radiant hearts see the angels because they are from the unseen world, and the unseen world cannot be seen with these eyes but it can be seen by the eye of the heart.

مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ۚ

With all Decrees. (97:4)

Decrees about provision and victory and help and support and learning and knowledge, and the answering of prayers, and the fulfillment of needs, and the raising of spiritual stations. And how many more are such Decrees! And the destined time of death and the deeds that have been decreed! These are its virtues (virtues of this night). And among its virtues is what He (Allah ﷻ) said:

سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطَلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ۝

It is peace until the rising of the dawn. (97:5)

Peace (salam) and security and Acceptance (by Allah ﷻ), and tranquility for the followers of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. And safety (salam) against calamities. (Greeting of) Peace (salam) for us from Allah, and (greetings of) peace from the angels, and (greetings of) peace from us for others, and safety (salam) from falling short in religion, and security (salam) against disease, and safeguard (salam) against the changing of conditions. The word **salam** is a comprehensive word. If a person plunges into it, he will find in it great meanings.

Until the rising of the dawn. (97:5)

This night is a blissful night with abundant blessings of all types”.

C8. Gatherings with my shaykh نفعنا الله in other masajid and at homes

- (a) In other masajid and at homes in Mombasa.
- (b) In other towns.
- (c) Breaking the fast in the month of Ramadhan.
- (d) An example of one of his gatherings.
- (e) More information about his gatherings given in Manba‘ u’l-Imdad (A Fountain of Help).

(a) In other masajid and at homes in Mombasa

The Anniversary (Hawl) of Shaykh al-Islam al-‘Allamah ‘Abdal-Rahman bin Ahmad as-Saqqaf نفعنا الله, who was the Chief Kadhi (Chief jurist for Muslim Personal Law) at the Coast in Kenya, takes place in Masjid Mbaruk, Makadara, Mombasa on 23rd Ramadhan after Salat al-‘Asr. He passed ahead in 1340 A.H., about a hundred years ago. His grave is adjacent to the masjid. People visit the grave to recite al-Fatiha. Al-Habib نفعنا الله took part in the Anniversary every year. I got an opportunity to be with him in 1408 A.H, 1988.

اللَّهُمَّ! الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ

Now we come to another narration. Shareef ‘Abdal Qadir نفعنا الله informed some people that together with al-Habib نفعنا الله, he used to visit the gatherings of Mawlana Shah Muhammad ‘Abdul ‘Alim Siddiqui نفعنا الله in Mombasa. The Mawlana was Hanafi shari‘atan (in sacred Muslim law), Maturidi ‘aqidatan (in creed), and Qaadiri mashraban (in drinking at the spiritual fount). Al-Habib told Shareef ‘Abdal Qadir that in those gatherings, he felt as if he was in Jannah (Paradise). He was ash-Shaykh al-kamil (a Shaykh perfected by Allah نفعنا الله) in company with another ash-Shaykh al-kamil.

Once I was at the home of al-Habib نفعنا الله in Mombasa in Dhu’l Qa‘dah 1407 A.H. / July 1987. I told him that I was going to the opening of the new Madrasa of Masjid Hidayah. He told me, “go”. When I reached there, I was informed that al-Habib was the guest of honour to lay the foundation stone for Daru’l ‘Ulum Barkatu’l-Mustafa of the Sunni Muslim Anjuman. Shareef Abdal Qadir نفعنا الله was present. Shareef Taha al-Haddad نفعنا الله and as-Sayyid Muhammad bin Mustafa Abu Numay نفعنا الله accompanied al-Habib as usual.

Ash-Shaykh Mahmood ‘Essa نفعنا الله who conducted the program said he was in awe as he introduced al-Habib. Al-Habib was of course the keynote speaker. In his talk, al-Habib gave the tafsir of verses (14:24-27) of the Qur’an. Before he translated al-Habib’s talk, al-‘Allamah Shareef Mwenye Karama نفعنا الله said we are all children of al-Habib in knowledge. All the scholars and eminent personalities who were present smiled, indicating their approval of this statement. Before al-Habib came, those who gave talks were al-‘Allamah Ustadh Muhammad Shareef Sa‘id al-Beidh نفعنا الله; Mawlana Muhammad Shafiq ar-Rahman Misbahi Noorani نفعنا الله, the Imam of Masjid Hidayah; and myself. Elder Haji Salehmohamed Haji Ya‘qub Harunany نفعنا الله, a Khalifa in Tariqa ar-Rifa‘iyyah was also present, together with Mawlana Esmail Essa Siddiq نفعنا الله, the Imam of Sunni masjid Badala. This was another great day for me.

This is one example of the foundation stone laying ceremony of a Madrasa by al-Habib in Mombasa. As-Sayyid Muhammad bin Mustafa Abu Numay رحمته الله wrote in his biography of al-Habib نفعنا به الله that al-Habib helped to build six masjid in the south Coast of Kenya. Brother Abdulalim Essa رحمته الله of U.K. informed me that al-Habib either initiated and/or funded, or helped to build, or refurbish, or lay the foundation stone of ten or more masjid and madaris north of the Island of Mombasa, the most well-known of which are Markaz al-Haddad in Watamu, Madrasa al-Ghanna' in Mambrui, and Masjid as-Salihin in Kisauni. Brother Abdulalim Essa had great ta'alluq (attachment) with al-Habib. He loves him, and knows and loves his entire extended family. He used to take him to many places including the lighthouse in Mombasa where al-Habib admired the Indian Ocean and the breeze as creations of Allah وعلى الله.

Once, al-Habib was invited to someone's home to recite the kitab of Mawlid u'n-Nabi عليه السلام written by Imam Ja'far al-Barzanji نفعنا به الله. We were blessed to accompany him to that gathering.

In one of the last ten nights of the month of Ramadhan, there was a gathering in Masjid Shibu in Mwembe Tayari. The Qur'an reciter began to recite this verse of the Qur'an Karim:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَيُنزِلُ الْغَيْثَ

Indeed, with Allah is the Knowledge of the Hour (which will establish the Day of Judgement) and He causes the rain to come down. (31:34)

When the reciter reached, “wa Yunazzilu'l ghayth” (and He causes the rain to come down), it began to rain heavily, and we could all hear the sound of the downpour. All the people laughed happily. Al-Habib نفعنا به الله smiled. This was an open 'ishara (indication) as well as a bishara (glad news) that it was Laylatu'l Qadr (the Night of Power). So al-Habib advised us, “when you go home, do not waste time, recite your wazifa, go to sleep and wake up for Salat at-Tahajjud”.

نفعنا به الله (May Allah تعالى make us benefit from him)! Amin!

(b) In other towns

Al-'Allamah Ustadh Muhammad نفعنا به الله said that when his father Shareef Saeed al-Beidh نفعنا به الله was alive, those who delivered the khutba (talk) at the annual Mawlid u'n-Nabi celebrations in Mambrui were luminaries such as al-Habib 'Umar bin Sumayt نفعنا به الله and al-Habib Ahmad Mashhur bin Taha al-Haddad نفعنا به الله.

Al-Habib نفعنا به الله would also go to towns such as Dar-es-Salam in Tanzania if he was invited, as he was in 1410 A.H, 1990, for example, for the Hawl (Anniversary) of Imam al-Haddad نفعنا به الله as we learned in Part A of this tadhkira.

He visited his muhibb (loving disciple) ash-Shaykh Habib bin Abu Bakar al-Hatimi رحمته الله in Watamu on a regular basis. Ash-Shaykh Habib al-Hatimi built a markaz (centre) in Watamu and named it after al-Habib نفعنا به الله in his honour. He also built a house for al-Habib adjacent to his

house where al-Habib could rest when he visited him. I prayed Salat al-Jumu'a in the masjid of the markaz when I visited ash-Shaykh Habib al-Hatimi in Watamu. Ash-Shaykh Abdal Qadir bin Ali (known as Shaykh Abagada) رحمته الله was also there that day with his muridin (loving disciples). Ash-Shaykh Abagada is well-known as the sufi shaykh from Ethiopia who received the walking stick of al-Habib Swaleh bin 'Alawi Jamal al-Layl نفعنا الله as his gift. Al-Habib Swaleh Jamal al-Layl, the grand-shaykh of Kenya had informed his family that after he passes ahead, a shaykh of such and such a description will visit Lamu and that they should gift him with his walking stick. When ash-Shaykh Abagada visited Lamu, he matched the description, so he received that walking stick which he cherishes as his treasure. He is the greatest shaykh in Tariqa al-Qadiriyyah in Kenya at present.

لِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ (All Praise is for Allah سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ)!

After Salat al-Jumu'a at the masjid, ash-Shaykh al-Hatimi served food to all of us at his home as was his tradition.

(c) Breaking the fast with my shaykh نفعنا الله

Al-Habib نفعنا الله used to be invited to different homes to break the fast. There was always lots of food. Once al-Habib suggested that they should not bring so much food, rather, it should be moderate.

Al-Habib نفعنا الله would recite a du'a' before breaking the fast. Everyone would break their fast with dates and water as it is Sunnah (the Prophetic tradition). Al-Habib would then recite the du'a' for breaking the fast.

This was followed by the adhan and the du'a' after the adhan, after which we would perform the Salat al-Maghrib.

What is done in almost all masajid is that when the adhan is given for Salat al-Maghrib, everyone breaks the fast. In this way, there is no opportunity to say the du'a' after the adhan, and sometimes the du'a' to break the fast is also missed.

Al-Habib demonstrated that the adhan is to call people to Prayer. The fast can be completed at its time before that and we have to make sure that we do not miss the du'a' for breaking the fast.

(d) An example of one of his gatherings

Once Shareef Taha bin 'Ali al-Haddad رحمته الله had a program in the month of Ramadhan on the occasion of the opening of his house in Port Reitz, Mombasa. These programs were always conducted by Shareef 'Abdal Qadir نفعنا الله. Haji Khamis Mirjangi رحمته الله, a close companion of al-Habib نفعنا الله in Uganda who used to take him all the way to the Congo in his car in his work of da'wa (propagation of Islam), sat in the front row together with other 'ulama' and elders.

There were two well-known Egyptian Qur'an reciters who recited from the Qur'an Karim in their melodious voices. One of them was ash-Shaykh 'Abdallah 'Imran رحمته الله, the Imam of Masjid Quba in Mombasa. He recited verses 7:42-49 as well as the famous qasida with which the children of Madina al-Munawwarah greeted the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم when he reached there. Its opening couplet is:

طَلَعَ الْبَدْرُ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ ثَنِيَّاتِ الْوَدَاعِ وَجَبَ الشُّكْرُ عَلَيْنَا مَا دَعَا لِلَّهِ دَاعٍ

The full moon has risen upon us
from the mountain trail of Wadaa‘

And it is compulsory on us to express thanks
Whenever called upon for the sake of Allah

There were many munshidin (qasida reciters). As-Sayyid Muhammad Baqir bin 'Abdar-Rahman Khitami رحمته الله recited the qasida of al-Habib Ahmad bin Abubakr bin Sumayt نفعنا الله whose opening line is:

نَدْعُوكَ لَا نَدْعُو سِوَاكَ إِلَهَنَا

We are calling upon You (O Allah). We do not call on anyone else except our God.

Ash-Shaykh 'Umar Swaleh Eleyyan رحمته الله recited the qasida of Imam al-Haddad نفعنا الله whose opening line is:

لَجِيرَانِ لَنَا بِالْأَبْطَحِيَّةِ بَعَثْتُ مَعَ النُّسَيْمَاتِ التَّحِيَّةِ

For our neighbours in the basin-shaped valley
I send my greetings with fragrant breezes

Al-Habib نفعنا الله explained the meaning of this qasida. In doing so, he explained about what happened when Allah تعالى created all the souls and asked them,

أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ

“Am I not your Lord?”

قَالُوا بَلَىٰ

They replied, “Yes, You are”. (7:172)

Ash-Shaykh Ali bin Muhammad Mwinzagu رحمته الله, a student of the illustrious ash-Shaykh Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Bereki al-Laamy رحمته الله, also recited a qasida in Kiswahili with the same rhyme and rhythm (dhamn) as the qasida of Imam al-Haddad نفعنا الله whose opening line is:

يَا رَاحِلًا إِنْ جِئْتَ وَادِي الْمُنْحَنَى فَاحْطُظْ بِهِ وَأَنْزِلْ عَلَيَّ كَنْزَ الْغِنَى

O traveller! If you come to the valley of Munhana
Halt and descend on the rich treasure

Commentators on this qasida have said that the valley of Munhana is in Madina al-Munawwarah and the rich treasure refers to Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم.

صَلُّوا عَلَى النَّبِيِّ
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ

Invoke the blessings of Allah on the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم!
May Allah تعالى bless him and grant him peace!

In the month of Ramadhan, the majalis (gatherings) would end at about 11 p.m. By the time al-Habib نفعنا الله reached home, it would be past mid-night. By the end of the day, he would be exhausted but he fulfilled all his duties, however much incapacitated he might be because of ill-health. And he would wake up again at around 4 a.m. for Salat u't-Tahajjud. So he slept very little even in his old age. And like a great sufi shaykh, he talked very little and only when necessary.

(e) More information about his gatherings given in Manba' u'l-Imdad

As mentioned earlier, as-Sayyid Muhammad bin Mustafa Abu Numay رحمته الله compiled the talks and teachings of al-Habib in his gatherings and in his study sessions in Mombasa in Manba' u'l-Imdad (A Fountain of Help). In this spiritual masterpiece, he mentions some of the places where al-Habib gave his talks and the names of some of the eminent personalities who were present. I shall mention these here for historical purposes as they supplement what I have mentioned before. (Page numbers of the book are given in brackets).

- (i) A gathering for the recitation of Al-Ihda 'Ashariyyah at the home of as-Sayyid Hasan bin 'Alawi al-Ahdal رحمته الله on 11 Shawwal 1407 A.H. Al-Ihda 'Ashariyyah consists of eleven qasaaid composed by al-Habib Ahmad bin Muhammad al-Mihdhar نفعنا الله in honour of the mother of faithful believers Sayyidatina Khadija al-Kubra رحمها الله. (p. 79)

The last qasida is a du'a' (supplication to Allah سبحانه) through the mediation of

Sayyidina Rasulillah Muhammad ibn 'Abdillah صلى الله عليه وسلم,

Sayyidina ‘Ali al-Murtada عليه السلام,
Sayyidina al-Imam al-Hasan ibn ‘Ali عليه السلام,
Sayyidina al-Imam al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali عليه السلام,

Sayyidatina Fatima az-Zahra عليها السلام, the beloved daughter of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم,
Sayyidatina Khadija al-Kubra عليها السلام, the mother of Faithful believers,
Sayyidatina ‘Aisha Siddiqah عليها السلام, the mother of Faithful believers,
Sayyidatina Maryam bint ‘Imran عليها السلام, the mother of Nabi ‘Isa عليه السلام,
Sayyidatina Asiya عليها السلام, who adopted Nabi Musa عليه السلام, and brought him up from
childhood, and
Sayyidina Jibrail عليه السلام, the Archangel.

Al-Habib said at this gathering that many arwah (souls) are present.

- (ii) A gathering on the night of the fifteenth of Sha‘ban 1408 A.H. in Mombasa at which the Du‘a’ Nisf Sha‘ban was recited, and al-Habib gave a talk about it. (p. 88)
- (iii) At another gathering, as-Sayyid Ahmad Mansab al-Ahdal رحمته الله of Masjid Rawdha of Lamu recited the qasida of al-Habib ‘Ali bin Muhammad al-Habashi نفعنا الله. (p. 89)
- (iv) A gathering with as-Sayyid Muhammad bin Adnan al-Ahdal رحمته الله in Lamu, a student of as-Sayyid Ahmad Badawi bin al-Habib Swaleh Jamal al-Layl نفعنا الله. (p. 89)
- (v) At the home of ash-Shaykh Muhammad bin ‘Ali al-Amudi رحمته الله, on 23 Sha‘ban 1408 A.H. in Malindi. (p. 93)
- (vi) At the home of one of the loving disciples of al-Habib, Mas‘ud Musa رحمته الله at the end of Sha‘ban 1408 A.H, when As-Salatu’l Mudariyyah of Imam al-Busiri نفعنا الله was recited. (He used to drive al-Habib from place to place and provided **kahawa tangawizi** {coffee with ginger} in Masjid Birikau after Salat at-Tarawih). (p. 93)
- (vii) At the home of his muhibb, ash-Shaykh Habib bin Abu Bakr al-Hatimi رحمته الله of Watamu in 1409 A.H. (p. 109)
- (viii) At a gathering of sama‘ (audition) in Dar-es-Salam, Tanzania at the home of as-Sayyid ‘Ali bin ‘Alawi Abu Numay on 12 Dhi’l Qa‘dah 1410 A.H. (p. 144)
- (ix) In the Comoro Islands on 16 Dhi’l Qa‘dah 1410 A.H, where al-Habib’s son, as-Sayyid ‘Ali رحمته الله, recited a qasida of Imam al-Haddad نفعنا الله. (p. 146)
- (x) In the Comoro Islands on the same day, where a qasida of al-Habib ‘Ali bin Muhammad al-Habashi نفعنا الله was recited. (p. 147)

- (xi) At a gathering where ash-Shaykh Muhammad bin Abubakr Ba Shu‘ayb رحمته الله, of Zanzibar, then of U.K. recited a qasida of al-Habib ‘Ali bin Muhammad al-Habashi رحمته الله. (p. 149)
- (xii) In this talk, al-Habib gives details about his visit to al-Habib Swaleh bin ‘Alawi Jamal al-Layl رحمته الله in Dhi’l Qa’dah 1351 A.H. (p. 189)
- (xiii) Al-Habib says that when he first began his gatherings in Mombasa, his brothers as-Sayyid Muhammad ash-Shatiry, ash-Shaykh ‘Abbas al-Jahdhamy, ash-Shaykh Muhammad al-Jahdhamy, ash-Shaykh Swaleh Eleyyan, ash-Shaykh Mbarak Washo and others رحمهم الله used to stay with him at his home till 12 mid-night. (p. 197)
- (xiv) We are informed in this narration that al-Habib al-‘Arif Billah Muhammad bin Adnan al-Ahdal رحمته الله, Sahib Lamu, said that al-Habib al-Haddad does not leave Hadhramaut for the Coast of Kenya except with the permission of al-Habib al-A‘zam Muhammad al-Mustafa رحمته الله. Al-Habib said that is so. (p. 197) This shows the loving attachment (ta‘alluq) of al-Habib رحمته الله with our Beloved Prophet رحمته الله.

It has also been reported that our Beloved Prophet رحمته الله told al-Habib after some years that he should not take his permission anymore but that he was free to go on his own.

الله أكبر (Allah رحمته الله is Supremely Great)!

C9. My shaykh نفعنا به الله introduced gatherings for the recitation of Qasida al-Burda

- (a) These gatherings have flourished.
- (b) The talk of my shaykh نفعنا به الله about the merits of Qasida al-Burda.

(a) These gatherings have flourished

Al-Habib نفعنا به الله introduced gatherings for the recitation of Qasida al-Burda of Imam al-Busiri ash-Shazili نفعنا به الله in Mombasa in the early 1960's. At that time there were about ten people who participated. The gatherings to recite it were first held for many years at the home of ash-Shaykh Swaleh bin Salim Eleyyan رحمته الله. Other pioneers of this were as-Sayyid Muhammad 'Abdallah ash-Shatiri, ash-Shaykh 'Abbas bin Ahmad al-Jahdhamy, ash-Shaykh Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Jahdhamy, as-Sayyid 'Abdallah Taib (pronounced Tayyib) Basakut and ash-Shaykh Mbarak Washo رحمته الله. Ash-Shaykh Washo's son, Dr. Abdul Majid Washo رحمته الله would become al-Habib's physician in Nairobi. Al-Habib was always very happy to see him. You could tell that from the way he continuously smiled as he looked at him.

In the 1970's, gatherings to recite Qasida al-Burda began to be held on a rotation basis. Brother 'Abdulim Essa رحمته الله, now a resident of U.K., informed me, for example, that once in a year, it used to be held at their home when he and his three brothers lived together as an extended family. Al-Habib نفعنا به الله gifted a prayer mat to one of his brothers, ash-Shaykh Mahmood 'Essa رحمته الله while As-Sayyid Muhammad bin Mustafa Abu Numay رحمته الله gave him one of the imamah of al-Habib which he preserved with great love and respect. We are eagerly waiting for the book on al-Habib which Brother 'Abdulim is writing with the help of his son Ahmad. May Allah سبحانه give them all the success, Amin!

After al-Habib نفعنا به الله passed ahead, the gatherings of Qasida al-Burda continued, conducted by Shareef 'Abdal Qadir نفعنا به الله in Mombasa. The gatherings have increased in size, with students of many madrasas attending, so that the hall where the gathering is held is filled to capacity. In the time of al-Habib نفعنا به الله, in the beginning, there used to be enough reciters for each reciter to get a chapter of the ten chapters to recite. Now the blessings have increased and there are so many reciters that each reciter gets at most two couplets to recite.

سبحان الله (Glorified is Allah سبحانه)!

Now so many people want to hold gatherings of Qasida al-Burda that people have to book in advance to hold them and all the weeks in the year are booked. These gatherings are held for ten months in a year, not in the month of Ramadhan or Rabi' ul-Awwal when other types of gatherings of Dhikrullah and Mawlid un-Nabi celebrations are held.

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, al-Habib نفعنا به الله also gave ijaza (authorization) to ash-Shaykh 'Abdallah Salim Zabidi رحمته الله to hold such gatherings in Nairobi. They began to be held from 1980 at the home of ash-Shaykh Said About رحمته الله. Brother Muhammad رحمته الله, the son of ash-Shaykh Said About informed me that besides these two shaykhs, the pioneering participants were ash-Shaykh

Muhammad Swaleh Eleyyan رحمته الله, ash-Shaykh Abdi Ramadhan رحمته الله and Shareef Husein Omar رحمته الله. After a few years, participants increased and gatherings began to be held at people's homes on a rotation basis. After ash-Shaykh 'Abdallah Zabidi passed ahead, ash-Shaykh Said Aboud conducts these programs every week which are now held in Madrasa Bagidu in South C, and these gatherings are also flourishing.

اللَّهُمَّ (All Praise is for Allah رحمته الله).

Among the prominent personalities who have been at the forefront in participating in these gatherings in Mombasa are:

Al-'Allamah Ustadh Muhammad Shareef Saeed al-Beidh رحمته الله,
Shareef Taha bin 'Ali al-Haddad رحمته الله,
As-Sayyid Hasan 'Alawi al-Ahdal رحمته الله,
As-Sayyid Muhammad bin Mustafa Abu Numay رحمته الله,
Ash-Shaykh Haji Khamis Suleiman Mirjangi رحمته الله.
Ash-Shaykh Ahmad bin Taib Bajabar رحمته الله, and
As-Sayyid Swaleh bin 'Abdallah Taib Basakut رحمته الله.

Since then, their sons (Hafizahumullah) have continued the good work, among whom are:

Shaykh Said Swaleh Eleyyan,
Shaykh Omar Swaleh Eleyyan,
Shaykh Ahmad Eleyyan; and

Shaykh Fadhil 'Abbas al-Jahdhamy,
Shaykh Said Muhammad al-Jahdhamy,
Shaykh Salim al-Jahdhamy,
Shaykh 'Abdal Rahman al-Jahdhamy, and
Shaykh Ahmad al-Jahdhamy;

As-Sayyid Haydar رحمته الله, the son of Shareef 'Abdal Qadir رحمته الله,

the sons of Shareef Abdal-Rahman Khitamy رحمته الله, that is
As-Sayyid Muhdhar and
As-Sayyid Dr. Ahmad Binsumeit (from Muscat);

the sons of al-'Allamah Ustadh Muhammad رحمته الله, that is,
As-Sayyid Jafar Sadiq,
As-Sayyid Abdallah Shabih,
As-Sayyid Moutaman, and
As-Sayyid Arif;

the son-in-law of Ustadh Muhammad, as-Sayyid Khattwab Khalifa an-Nadhiri رحمته الله; and

the sons of Shareef Taha bin ‘Ali al-Haddad رحمته الله, that is, as-Sayyid Hussein رحمته الله, and as-Sayyid Ja‘far رحمته الله; and

As-Sayyid Muhammad bin Muhammad Abu Numay رحمته الله.

The annual list for each week is prepared by ash-Shaykh Said Eleyyan رحمته الله and ash-Shaykh Fadhil ‘Abbas al-Jahdhamy رحمته الله and distributed by Brother Mohamed Abdulshakur Hobaya رحمته الله and Brother Abdulgani Abdulshakur Hobaya رحمته الله, the sons of uncle Haji Abdulshakur Haji Abdallah Hobaya رحمته الله. Their shop in Mombasa is a meeting place for the shaykhs, the ‘ulama’ and the ustadhs of Mombasa and other towns of Kenya as well as from other countries who come and relax there, and are served a refreshing cup of tea. These two brothers gave me the list for 1989. Among those who are also mentioned in this list are:

Shareef Husein A. Saqqaf,
Shaykh Sultan Abdul Majid Haji Musa Laving (al-Habib himself gave him the title of “Sultan”),
Shaykh Mahmud M. al-Jahdhamy,
Shaykh Abdallah Faraj,
Shaykh Mohamad Osman (of Husseini Bakery),

Shaykh ‘Abdal-Razzaq Essak Bharadia,
Shaykh ‘Abdullatif Haji Khamisa,
Shaykh Adam Jarad,
Shaykh ‘Ali al-Jahdhamy,
Shaykh Fuad M. Washo,
Shaykh Masoud Musa, and
Brother Ahmad Salehmohamed Bagha.

Khalifa Muhammad Sheyba رحمته الله is prominent in organising the students of madrasas to participate in such gatherings. Also at the forefront in supporting and attending these gatherings and gatherings of all zikr groups, in Mombasa, Nairobi and other towns is Ambassador Hasan Bagha رحمته الله. He held gatherings of Dhirkullah and Mawlid u’n-Nabi صلى الله عليه وسلم celebrations at his home in Ottawa when he was appointed as Kenya’s ambassador to Canada. In this way, goodness spreads all over the world.

Besides these, others who associated with al-Habib نفعنا الله and who have since passed ahead are:

Shareef Ahmad bin Shareef Said al-Beidh,
Shareef Umar Qullatain an-Nadhiri,
Essa Esmail Khamisa and his brother Kassim (of Mohammadan Bakery),
Ustadh Sha‘ban Musa,
Abdallah Muhammad (of Recoda),
Haji Abdallah Haji Mohamed Jin,
Mansur Mohamed Husein Jin,

Shamshuddin Alimohamed Mithwani, and
Abdulmajid Essa (who was a naat reciter in Urdu) رحمتهما اللہ علیہما.

May Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَبِحَمْدِهِ have mercy on those who have passed ahead, and preserve those who are alive with good health. Amin.

The blessings keep on increasing. Now Hababa Sayyidah Nur bint Hussein Shatiri حفظها اللہ organises the recitation of Qasida al-Burda in Masjid Konzi every Friday after Salat al-Fajr.

Beyond that, as a result of the blessings of al-Habib نفعنا اللہ به, and of his shaykhs نفعنا اللہ بهم and the efforts of those who had ta'alluq (attachment) with him, many ustadhhs (teachers) and 'ulama' (scholars) of the second and third generation have been produced who teach and propagate Islam in Kenya and elsewhere. They have been active in participating in gatherings for the recitation of Qasida al-Burda and other gatherings of Dhikrullah and the celebration of Mawlid an-Nabi ﷺ. I am mentioning this in general terms as I do not have all their names.

(b) The talk of my shaykh نفعنا اللہ به about the merits of Qasida al-Burda

At this juncture, let us benefit from the talk that al-Habib نفعنا اللہ به gave on the merits of the recitation of Qasida al-Burda after it was recited at his home on the last Thursday of Sha'ban 1407 A.H. (Manba' u'l-Imdad, A Fountain of Help, p. 77-79). I shall quote its translation in full.

“The whole of this Burda is in praise of the Prophet ﷺ from its beginning to its end, chapter by chapter. Each chapter is complete knowledge. Its beginning awakens eagerness for his love, may Allah bless him and his Family, and grant him peace; and for (the love of) his city in which he was born, may Allah bless him and his Family, and grant him peace. Then there are things in it which if a Muslim hopes for, he can understand many things, like his saying:

وَالْحُبُّ يَعْتَرِضُ اللَّذَاتِ بِالْأَلَمِ نَعَمَ سَرَى طَيْفٌ مِّنْ أَهْوَى فَأَرَقَنِي

Yes, thoughts of the beloved came to me at night and kept me awake
and love transforms pleasure into pain

What is meant by this is the presence of the soul of the Chosen Prophet, may Allah's blessings and salutations be upon him, to the extent that the commentator on the Burda said: ‘Whoever recites this couplet ten times every night and after it recites **salat 'ala'n-Nabi** ﷺ, he sees the Prophet ﷺ. And each letter in this Burda is light from the light of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his Family and grant him peace. In it there are great specialities by the consensus of Muslims, from his miracles and his noble attributes ﷺ. It is a great, tremendous thing. It is not possible for a Muslim to fully mention the wonders and the marvels in it, from his noble character and his noble attributes. And we recite the Burda. That is by the Grace of Allah. He gives to whoever He wishes. This Burda is recited all over the world. This Burda is recited in the west. This Burda is recited in the east. This Burda is recited in Java. This Burda is recited in China. This Burda is recited as

far as the land of Russia. It is famous and universal with the blessing of al-Habib al-A'zam (the Most Beloved Prophet), may Allah's blessings and His salutations be upon him.

It has been said that ash-Shaykh al-Busiri, may Allah be pleased with him, was afflicted with semi-paralysis. And he came to the sea shore and got down and fanned himself and composed this Qasida al-Burda until he reached to his saying.

فَمَبْلَغُ الْعِلْمِ فِيهِ أَنَّهُ بَشَرٌ

So the knowledge about him is that he is a man.

However, he could not complete it. Whenever he strived, he could not do it. So he fell into a slumber and saw the Prophet ﷺ who first touched on his illness, then said: 'Say!

وَأَنَّهُ خَيْرُ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ كُلِّهِمْ

and that he is the best of all the creation of Allah.

So when this Burda was completed by the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his Family, and grant him peace; why can't we believe in it and make it like a refuge for us? It is a wonder that there are those who deny the Burda. These are the enemies of the Prophet ﷺ. All Praise is for Allah ﷻ who has chosen us for it. If a person was to explain a line from it, it would take him an hour, if only you could understand its meaning, but if Allah Wills, it will fill your hearts with grace. Like his saying;

وَلَا التَّمَسُّتُ غِنَى الدَّارَيْنِ مِنْ يَدِهِ إِلَّا اسْتَلَمْتُ التَّدَى مِنْ خَيْرِ مُسْتَلِمٍ

I did not seek the wealth of the two worlds (this world and the Hereafter) from his hand
However, I received my share from the best of all givers

What is the wealth of this world? Allah made him al-Qasim (the Distributor), on him be blessing and salutation. (He said): "Indeed, I am the Distributor, and Allah is the Giver." He is the banner for those who came first and those who came later. And there is nothing except from his Spiritual Path. He is the Door of Allah and you do not get anything except from his door, it is the same whether done openly or secretly. And there are many proofs for that in his life as well as after he passed ahead to the Exalted Friend (Allah ﷻ). And though he is alive, not in the sense of a full life, but with his awareness at all times and occasions. That is why we look for him and seek his mediation. This most certainly takes place as he is the father of the souls, and the father of the spirits, and the key of goodness, and the key to everything for the Prophets and their followers and for generations of people and their followers. For this reason, he said, 'My life is better for you and my passing ahead is better for you', may Allah bless him and his Family".

C10. What al- Habib نفعنا به الله did as ash-Shaykh al-kamil compared to what he did not do

As ash-Shaykh al-kamil (a shaykh perfected by Allah سبحانه وتعالى), al-Habib نفعنا به الله followed the easy going path of his pious predecessor Imam al-Haddad نفعنا به الله. His teaching was to try to become among the as-habu'l yamin (the people of the Right Hand) so that we become among the fortunate ones to go to Paradise in the Hereafter. Many of his disciples not only became among the as-habu'l yamin, but they went on to become among the muqarrabun (those drawn near to Allah سبحانه وتعالى in a qualitative sense). They developed ta'alluq (attachment) with Allah سبحانه وتعالى.

سبحانه وتعالى (Glorified is Allah سبحانه وتعالى)!

Al-Habib was very scrupulous in following the Sunnah (tradition) of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. A few examples suffice to illustrate this. He was gentle and easy going. His study session lasted for at most twenty minutes. He never burdened people or overwhelmed them with his knowledge. He never recited long Surahs in Prayer. He never laughed out loud. He only smiled. He was very appreciative of the gifts he received and profuse in thanking people. Everyone admired his Mustafawi akhlaq (Prophetic character). He knew from childhood all about takhalluq (acquiring good character), and everyone learned about good character through his example.

He was very generous. He personally gave donations for the construction of masjid and madaris. He never collected donations himself. He gifted his overcoats and imamahs (turbans) to some people. He remained with what was absolutely necessary. The copy of Ratib al-Haddad he gave me as wazifa (daily recitation) was the last copy he had remaining. He said that we should also help needy Christians. He was detached from the world, not wanting to have anything of it. He was not in need of anything. He was needy before Allah سبحانه وتعالى.

In his gatherings, the recommended recitations like Surah YaaSeen, Ratib al-Haddad, Al-Wird al-Latif, the du'a' after Salat at-Tarawih, and various other recitations were recited by heart in congregation.

Al-Habib's work of propagating and spreading Islam was very well organized. It fell automatically for those who associated with him to take on various responsibilities according to their capacities and specializations. His family in Jeddah took care of the guests and arranged his study sessions and his gatherings. His family and those who helped at his home in Mombasa did the same. Someone translated his talks. Someone also recorded them. Some people accompanied him for his gatherings. Someone gave him a ride. Some people took him to far off places for da'wah (propagation of Islam). Someone conducted the program of Dhikrullah which he led. Someone arranged for the distribution of coffee after the du'a' at the conclusion of the gathering. The ladies lovingly prepared delicious foods and drinks. Those who hosted large gatherings catered for food. Some people served the guests after the gathering. Someone in Mombasa was his confidant who was with him all the time. His sons in various cities represented him. They did not want to have any positions, but they, as well as those who were attached to al-Habib, continued to carry out their responsibilities as before after he passed ahead.

Al-Habib did not establish any organization. However, Allah ﷻ appointed him as a means to establish and solidify Iman (Faith) in the hearts of people. Allah ﷻ helped him all the time.

Al-Habib helped to build many masajid and madaris in various towns and/or refurbished them, and he established a library in Kampala. He personally gave donations and supported many organizations and institutions, especially those in the sufi tradition.

Al-Habib did not seek disciples. People of many countries sought him out when they heard of him as a great WaliyyAllah (Friend of Allah). Caravans headed for him from all directions as we shall see in detail in the next Part D of this tadhkira.

Al-Habib was an intellectual at a very high level who was content to quote the Qur'an and the Ahadith (Sayings of the Prophet ﷺ) as well as what the pious predecessors have said or written, and speak about the spiritual realities which Allah ﷻ unveiled to his eyes and his heart. He talked at the level of people in simple words that reached home directly to their hearts.

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ (All Praise is for Allah ﷻ)!

At the same time, he was also at such a high spiritual level that all the people could not possibly understand some of the deep spiritual realities he explained, and when he sensed that, he put a full stop at that point.

There were very few formalities in his gatherings. There were no formalities as to when he would give his talk. He just delivered his talk at the time he considered to be appropriate. Like most Muslim scholars, he gave his talks extempore, never prepared for them. He conducted his own study sessions after Salah (Prayer) but not other programs which were conducted by other mashayikh.

Spiritual ranks were raised and honours were bestowed by Allah ﷻ through the mediation of the Beloved Prophet Muhammad al-Mustafa ﷺ, and the mediation of al-Habib ^{لله}تفعنا به, in the spiritual realm, on the disciples of al-Habib who made spiritual progress.

صَلُّوا عَلَيَّ النَّبِيِّ
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ

Invoke Allah's blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ!
May Allah ﷻ bless him and grant him peace!

There was protocol. The shaykhs, the scholars, and the elders sat alongside the wall on the carpeted floor. The Qur'an reciters and the Qasida reciters sat in the front row facing them. Others sat wherever they preferred, according to their comfort level. Al-Habib's presence filled the gathering.

I never heard al-Habib talk about politics in his gatherings. However, he wrote about matters affecting Muslims. He wrote in Miftah u'l-Jannah (Key to the Garden, The Key to Paradise)

condemning Israeli injustices against Palestinians. He wrote against Muslims who wage battle against other Muslims. He was against sectarians and opposed sects with deviant creeds. He opposed the Qadianis who have been declared as non-Muslims.

Al-Habib was not into politics, however, even at the international level, he was at the forefront together with other scholars in trying to solve problems which Muslims faced. He was a shaykh for the whole world. For example, during the Suez Issue of 1956, he warned the British, the French and the Israelis not to wage war against Egypt as they would be unsuccessful. On another occasion, he wrote to the Nizam of Hyderabad in India encouraging him in his struggle against the Hindus who opposed him.

I did not see al-Habib point out mistakes of anyone in a gathering unless it was absolutely necessary. Also, he did not voice a negative opinion. Instead of criticizing others, he would ask you a question to make you think about that matter. For example, instead of saying, “I do not think that group is well-organized”, he would ask you: “Are they well organized?”

He strictly followed the Ahlu’s-Sunnah wa’l-Jama‘ah tradition and did not compromise with modernising tendencies. The ladies were always in a separate room.

He was all embracing and not parochial. He said that the Qadiriyyah, the Shaziliyyah, the Naqshbandiyyah, and the ‘Alawiyyah are all tariqas of Dhikrullah, only the names are different. People of all races, tribes and communities flocked to him. He was known and recognized as a great WaliyyAllah (Friend of Allah). He could not hide his stature, neither did he ever want to. As a majestic Shaykh, he was as clear as broad daylight.

He was a father figure who allowed anyone who wished, to kiss his hand and to eat his leftovers. He was jovial and smiling most of the time, while deep inside, he was intoxicated with the love of Allah ﷻ.

It is appropriate to conclude this Part C of the tadhkira of al-Habib تفصيلاً with the first salat (invocation of blessing) of his seven salawaat upon our Beloved Prophet Muhammad al-Mustafa ﷺ. Al-Habib said that these salawaat are “min al-waaridaat al-Ilahiyyah”, that is, Allah ﷻ bestowed them on his heart.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ حَبِيبِ الرَّحْمَنِ وَدُرَّةِ الْأَكْوَانِ الْحَاضِرِ مَعَ مَنْ صَلَّى عَلَيْهِ فِي كُلِّ زَمَانٍ وَمَكَانٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَتَابِعِيهِمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ

O Allah! Bless and bestow peace on our master Sayyidina Muhammad ﷺ, the Beloved of the Beneficent (Allah ﷻ), and the most precious in all creation who is present with whoever sends blessings on him in every age and place, and (bless and bestow peace as well) on his Family and Companions and those who follow them with spiritual excellence.

Al-Fatiha!