

**PAGES FROM CAPE MUSLIM  
HISTORY**

**Yusuf da Costa and Achmat Davids**

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**Published and distributed by:**

Naqshbandi-Muhammad South Africa

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First Edition: 1994

Second impression: 2005

Third impression: 2022 (retyped manuscript)

ISBN: 0-7960-0622-9

This book is dedicated to the memory of the late Dr Muhammad Ajam who, at the time of his death, was an associate professor at the University of the Western Cape.

It was he who originally suggested that this work should be written.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Al hamdu lillāh*

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the following for permission to reprint previously published material:

*Journal for Islamic Studies*: for The spatial origins of the early Cape Muslims, and the diffusion of Islam to the Cape by Y. da Costa, no. 10, 1990, pp. 45-67; From social cohesion to religious discord: the life and times of *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih Hendricks by Y. da Costa, no.12, 1992, pp. 125-144; and The *hifz* tradition at the Cape: the contribution of *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih Solomon by Y. da Costa, no. 13, pp. 145-172.

*Department of Islamic Studies, University of Durbn-Westville*: for Zubdah al-Asrar by *Shaykh* Yusuf.

*Kronos*: for “My religion is superior to the law” – the survival of Islam at the Cape of Good Hope by Achmat Davids, vol. 12. 1987, pp. 57-71.

Special thanks must go to a number of people whose support and encouragement helped considerably to let this book see the light of day. In this regard we want to especially mention our wives, Karimah Davids and Waradeya da Costa, for their patience and understanding, Farouk Salie for his contribution to the design of the cover, Uthman Majiet for the sketches of the shrines in Constantia, Achmat da Costa for keeping in contact with us at all times of the day and night to make sure that we met deadlines, the large number of persons who volunteered to be interviewed, and those people, such as Khadija Edwards, Moreldia Abrahams and Bahiyyah Achmat of Salt River, Farid Effendi of Southfield, Achmat Basir of Cape Town, Shariefa Hababa Futoom bint *Sayyid* Muhsin *ibn* Salim of Athlone, *Shaykh* Sa’dullah Khan, and *Shaykh* Siraj Hendricks, who gave us photographs.

Special thanks are due to Susan Lawrence for editing and preparing the manuscript for publication.

The authors wish to express their most sincere appreciation to all these people. Without them the task of having this edition printed would have been extremely difficult.

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## INTRODUCTION

The marginalisation of the colonised people within the socio-political systems imposed upon them has been one of the most destructive weapons of control to have been used by the European countries in most parts of the colonial and semi-colonial worlds during the last few centuries. Such marginalisation has involved far more than simply excluding the colonised peoples from the major decision-making processes in the countries concerned, or pushing them aside to the margins of society. There has been another devastating aspect, and that has been the silencing of the voices of the colonised. The significance of their contribution to world civilisation and the course of history has been largely ignored and substantially reduced.

For example, in South Africa, all history has been largely the history of the white colonists who were, and still are, largely portrayed as having been the standard-bearers of civilisation. Those not classified as “white” have been deliberately excluded from consideration as major role players in any of the major urban areas and therefore “out of sight”, the colonised people were not considered to have been part of the general society, nor as part of the political system. In this sense, the colonised people did not “exist”. They were just there (except, of course, when they had to satisfy the labour needs of the country), and when they were mentioned in any official historical accounts, or documents, this was done in general terms (unless such documents were court records).

The colonised people never produced (and in terms of the perception of the colonists, and even sometimes in terms of their own perception because of marginalisation, were also incapable of producing) any of their own, or national, heroes, or other important historical figures – except for the occasional sportsman who went overseas for recognition.

Their “heroes” were the “heroes” from among the ranks of the ruling class. In this country the colonised people, despite their second class status, cheered and identified with the sporting teams and heroes of the white ruling class (stadiums had special stands for “non-white” supporters of such sporting teams, and at the Newlands Rugby Ground a special “Malay” stand was even erected to accommodate such supporters). Our children learnt in schools (and are still learning) all about the contributions made to the country’s history by Van Riebeeck, Van der Stel, Hofmeyr and Smuts. They recite the poetry and read as set works all the major works of literature from the writers of the colonising countries – *En ons het saam gehuil oor die tragedie in Totius se lewe, en saam met Piet Pompies gelag* (And we cried together over the tragedy in the life of Totius, and we laughed with Piet Pompies). Where people from the colonised countries were mentioned, they were usually portrayed as having been villains who had stood in the way of the white person’s destiny, which was to civilise and to bring religion to the “backward hordes” in the country.

The Muslim community at the Cape has been marginalised both racially and religiously, and its contribution to the development and history of this country has been reduced in the media to “Malay” and “Indian” food recipes, “gamatjie anecdotes” (with “Gamat” being a distortion of the name of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.)), inane little songs that were originally written to entertain the slave masters (some of which subtly poke fun at Islamic levels of decorum, and “Daar Kom die Aliebama”), “khalifah displays”, and, of course, the coon carnivals and choir competitions in which they still fill the role of entertainers and jesters for the colonist. The real history of the Muslim community – its struggles, its tears and sacrifices – has remained hidden, and the voices of its people have been almost completely unheard. And when any history of them has been written (by writers such as I.D. du Plessis), it has been done to support the racial policies of the colonial governments in power rather than as an attempt to give these people their rightful place in the events of this country. And the silence has been intensified by a subtle campaign of historical distortion as the views of the white writers have become part of the school history textbooks.

One of the co-authors of this book, Achmat Davids, was one of the first people to break this silence. Virtually on his own, he delved into the past of his community and discovered the most astonishing information, not least of which was the considerable evidence to show that the development of Afrikaans (and this first writings in this language) had had its origins in the Muslim community. This sent a shock wave through the Afrikaans academic establishment. He also found information on “resistance education” in the Muslim community, and on a large number of eminent figures (such as *Shaykh* Yusuf and Tuan Guru) who had made telling contributions to this country’s history. Davids was the person who started the painstaking and very courageous rewriting of the history of the Muslim community. In the process he has helped to give the Muslims a new vision of their past, which has given new meaning to their lives and has contributed considerably to their regaining their dignity as human beings. Davids was later joined in this research, but to a considerably lesser degree by the late Muhammad Ajam. It was Ajam who suggested in 1991 that the three of us should write this book, and it is for this reason that we are dedicating the work to him.

There are a number of other matters about this work that need to be mentioned here.

We have attempted, where possible, to restore the actual Arabic names of the Muslims who have been mentioned in this work, in order to break deliberately with the manner in which people’s name have been pronounced and spelt in the past. The almost uncontrollable distortion of Muslim names is part of this country’s colonial heritage and illustrates, at another level, the dehumanising aspect of slavery and subjugation. In many instances this distortion has given rise to names that bear no resemblance to the original Arabic. Thus, for example, Jamal al-Din became Gamiel dien, Talib became Taliep, Salih became Salie, Abd al-Hamid became Gamiet, and Abdullah became Abdol. In some cases Muslims were given non-Muslim names and it is these non-Muslim names which are to be found in the official records. Jan van Boughies, for example, wrote his name as Asnoun after his emancipation, and the correct name of Frans van

Bengal, a respected *imam* at the Cape, is not known at all. Using people's correct names is part of the process of correcting history and of counteracting the colonial discourse which gave rise to this distortion of names.

The underlying aim of this book is to give recognition to those persons who have tried to enrich the religious life of the community. There have been others from the community who appear to have been primarily concerned with obtaining positions in the colonial ruling structures, but they have made almost no contribution to the quality of the religious life of the Muslims. They may go down in history for various reasons, but definitely not because they enhanced the Islamic development of the Muslim community.

This book is not a chronological account of the community's past. The authors have selected certain themes (or eminent personalities) around which they have written aspects of the history of the Cape Muslims. In this way they have hoped to concentrate on those aspects of the past which have real meaning and relevance for the community.

It is our wish that this work will add to the resurrection of the community's past, and that it will contribute in a very meaningful way to making their history a part of the history of all the peoples of this country.

**Yusuf da Costa**  
**March 1994**



## Chapter 1

# THE EARLY CAPE MUSLIMS: VICTIMS OF EUROPEAN COLONISING ACTIVITIES IN ASIA AND AFRICA

**Yusuf da Costa**

European colonising activities in both Asia and Africa between the latter half of the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries led to almost total European control over virtually the whole of these two continents. To a great extent this control was brought about by the gradual military conquest of the various countries of Africa and Asia and the total domination by European nations of the major economic activities in those countries.

The enslavement of millions of Afro-Asian peoples and the subsequent international slave trade was to be essential part of this conquest and domination. To demonstrate the extent of this trade, it has been estimated that Africa alone supplied some 20 million slaves over three centuries in order to satisfy the American demand for labour.<sup>1</sup>

This slave trade was therefore responsible for the involuntary migration to different parts of the world of large numbers of African and Asian people, including many political exiles and prisoners, most of whom were people who had opposed the colonisation of their countries. One such stream of Afro-Asian migration came to the Cape, with the first such immigrants arriving in the latter half of the seventeenth century and the last at the beginning of the nineteenth century. They came primarily from the Dutch and British “possessions” in Africa and Asia, and their numbers included many Muslims.

Thus the earliest Cape Muslims were part of the involuntary migration of slaves, political prisoners and criminals from Africa and Asia that lasted from 1652 to 1834. Included in these people were the “Mardykers”, the Malay servants of Dutch officials who were on their way back to the Netherlands from the East. Many of these servants opted to remain at the Cape.<sup>2</sup>

The “Free Blacks” also came as part of these original groups. These were:

“the descendants of criminals from the East ... others ... were descended from political prisoners ... or from the people who formed the retinues of such prisoners. To the same class belonged the Prize Negroes after they had served their terms of apprenticeship, as well as slaves liberated before 1834 and their descendants.”<sup>3</sup>

The main group of African immigrants came from East Africa (Mozambique, the East African coast to the north, and Zanzibar), Madagascar, and West Africa; while the Asian immigrants came from India, Ceylon and the East Indies.<sup>4, 5</sup> There were also cases of immigrants coming from the Philippines, Japan, Macau, Malacca, the area that now consists of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, the West Indies, Brazil, and possibly New Guinea.<sup>6</sup> Many were also bought or captured from English, French and Portuguese ships.<sup>7</sup>

Table 1.1 shows the places of origin of a number of immigrant slaves who arrived at the Cape before 1818. These statistics are based on a group of 4 890 slaves and are extracted from various sources.<sup>8</sup>

***Table 1.1: Immigrant slaves: Places of origin, 1652-1818.***

<b>Places of origin</b>	<b>Percentage from each place</b>
Africa	26,65
Ceylon	3,10
India	36,40
East Indies	31,47
Mauritius	0,18
Malaya	0,49
Others	0,40
Unidentified	1,31

This table reflects the predominantly Afro-Asian origins of the immigrants, and it can be seen that some 72 per cent of them were of Asian origin. It seems that India, and not the East Indies, was the major source of such migrants to the Cape during that period.

## **AFRICAN ORIGINS OF EARLY CAPE MUSLIMS**

Table 1.2 lists the African countries and regions that supplied slaves for the Cape Colony, showing the approximate percentage from each one.

***Table 1.2: Immigrant slaves: Places of origin in Africa, 1652-1818<sup>9</sup>***

<b>Places of origin</b>	<b>Percentage from each place</b>
Angola	3,20
Cape Verde Islands	0,92
East Africa	41,00
Guinea	1,37
Madagascar	53,04
Mauritius	0,46

There were a number of reasons why the majority of the immigrants should have come from the island of Madagascar and from East Africa. These included the facts that these regions were relatively close to the Cape, there were no great navigational problems to be overcome in reaching these areas, and that the Dutch had experience with slave trading in both areas.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the east coast of Africa had long been a source of slaves for the Arabs, while the Cape was on the slave route from East Africa to the Americas.<sup>11</sup>

### **East African origins**

During the latter half of the seventeenth and the whole of the eighteenth century, East Africa was to be a source of slaves for the Cape. The slaves destined for the Cape were traded primarily at Zanzibar, the island of Ibo, and Mozambique.<sup>12</sup>

The Mozambique slaves came mainly from the Yao-operated trade route to Lake Malawi, the hinterland of Inhambane, Quilimane, the town of Mozambique, and Tete.<sup>13</sup> It is interesting to note that Muslims in East Africa were deeply involved in the slave trade as raiders and traders. The Yao people, for example, were:

“the only major people south of the Somali to have adopted Islam before the colonial period. Living then midway between Lake Malawi and the Indian Ocean, the Yao were by the late eighteenth century sending caravans to the coast, part of a trading network stretching from the ocean to Katanga. By the late nineteenth century, with firearms they had become a major slave-raiding people.”<sup>14</sup>

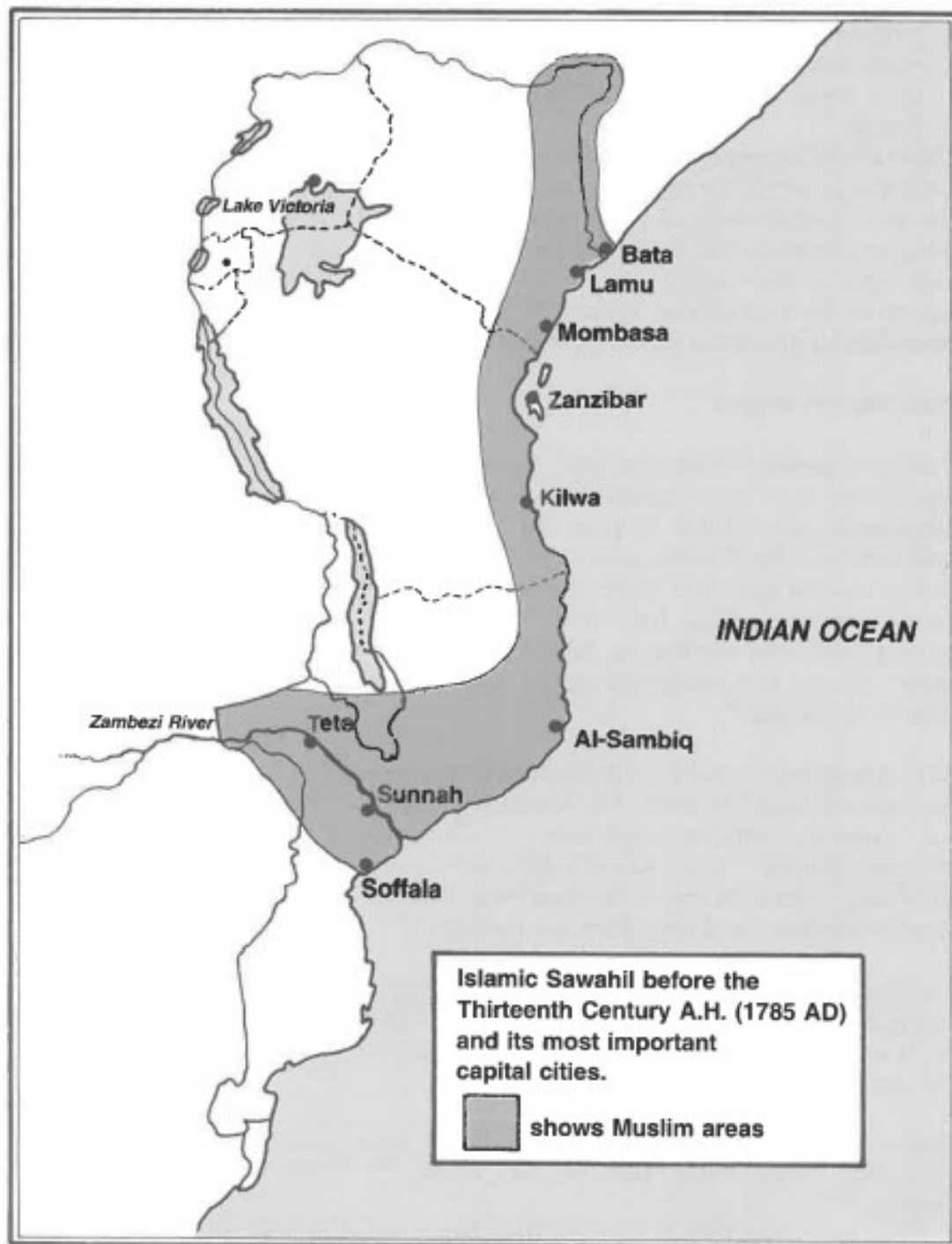
The East African environment from which the slaves came was far from being totally primitive. The period prior to the fifteenth century saw the development of a flourishing Swahili civilization, and the records show very clearly that there were states in existence that dated as far back as the tenth century.<sup>15</sup> According to Trimingham:<sup>16</sup>

“the Swahili community was characterized by a distinct Islamic-Bantu language and sub-culture, [and stretched] from Lamu to Mozambique ... They consisted of Shirazi (the inhabitants of Zanzibar and Pemba islands and a series of remnant families of along the coast), Afro-Arabs who distinguished themselves on racial grounds from Africans, slaves, and detribalized groups from the interior.” (See Maps 1.1 and 1.2)

This community was predominantly a coastal one which had made considerable strides in urban development, agriculture, maritime trade, architecture, and administration by the time that the Portuguese arrived in the sixteenth century and destroyed their civilization. Towards the end of the seventeenth century a force from Oman expelled the Portuguese from the whole region apart from Mozambique.<sup>17, 18</sup>



*Map 1.1: Location of peoples in East Africa prior to the seventeenth century.*



*Map 1.2: Spread of Islam in East Africa prior to the slave trade.*



In the interior of East Africa,

“the fertile area of the inter-lacustrine region was a natural centre of African civilization ... [with] the discovery of ancient earthworks [showing] that powerful states existed there in remote times. In more recent periods the area saw the rise of a series of related kingdoms; Bunyoro, Nkore, Buganda, Toro, and Busoga”.<sup>19</sup>

This area and the region to the south were occupied by various peoples, some of whom had come as part of the migratory waves from the north and the west. These kingdoms and these peoples were all drawn into the international slave trade network that was being conducted by the Arabs and later by some European nations. As some of this trade went to the Cape Colony, it was directly responsible for the spread of some aspects of the East African cultures to that territory. This applied particularly to the Islamic-Bantu sub-culture of the Swahili community.

### **West Africa origins**

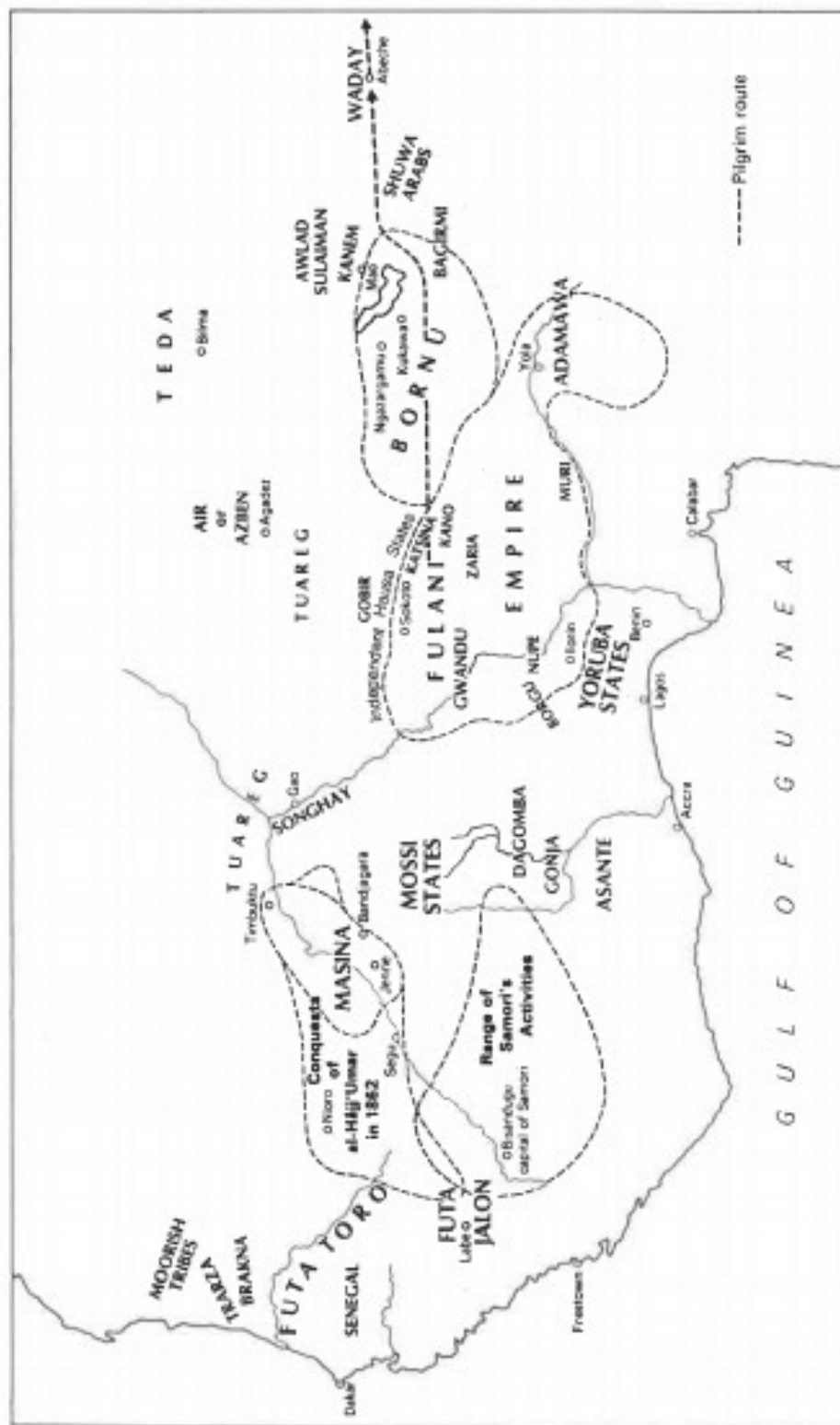
During the period that the slave trade flourished, one of the major sources, West Africa, was divided into three regions – Senegambia, Upper Guinea and Lower Guinea. Senegambia was situated between the Senegal and Gambia rivers, Upper Guinea stretched from the Gambia south and then east to the Bight of Benin, and Lower Guinea reached from the Calabar to the Namib Desert.<sup>20</sup> According to Bradlow,<sup>21</sup> the slaves from West Africa had come from “Guinea” and “Angola”, but this is not geographically very accurate as Angola was, in fact, part of Lower Guinea, and the name “Angola” was sometimes applied to all the Portuguese trading stations on both sides of the Congo.<sup>22</sup>

What is important, however, is that before the Europeans first made their appearance in the area, the local inhabitants had already established a significant number of empires and Muslim theocratic states (see Map 1.3). There were three major empires – Ghana, Mali and Songhay. Ghana was already in existence at the end of the first millennium (1000 AD), and by the time of the slave trade “had fine buildings, a code of laws, and an advanced knowledge of agriculture and medicine”.<sup>23</sup>

The empire of Mali replaced that of Ghana during the thirteenth century, and it was during the time of this empire that Timbuktu with its Islamic university became famous for its advances in knowledge. In turn Mali was replaced during the fifteenth century by the empire of Songhay.<sup>24</sup>

Muslim theocratic states of this period included, among others, Bornu-Kanem, Futa-Jalon, the Hausa states, Bagirmi, and Waday.<sup>25, 26</sup> According to Mannix and Crowley,<sup>27</sup>

“The west-coast nations were far from being naked savages living in primitive squalor. Several towns near the west coast were more populous at the time than any but the largest European cities. There were kingdoms and commonwealths



Map 1.3: West Africa during the international slave trade

comparable in size with many European nations, and even the smaller tribes had definite and often complex cultures. The West Africans had invented their own forms of architecture and their own methods of weaving. Many of them possessed flocks of donkeys and great herds of cattle, sheep and goats. They were skilled workers in wood, brass, and iron, which last they had learnt to smelt long before the white man came. Many of their communities had highly involved religions, well-organised economic systems, efficient agricultural practices, and admirable codes of law.”

West Africa, of course, provided most of the slaves for Europe and the Americas as well as a small number for the Cape. Because Islam was the dominant religion in West Africa, many of the slaves from this area who turned up at export markets were Muslims.<sup>28</sup>

### **Madagascan origins**

Shortly before the Europeans began to participate in the Madagascar slave trade, the island underwent a major political transformation when strong monarchical dynasties were established in three major parts of the island.

Around 1550 ... in three geographically distinct areas of this huge island, royal lineages came into being more or less concurrently and gradually imposed a larger political organization on the pre-existing political chiefdoms which were centred mainly on the village.”<sup>29</sup>

Thus the slave trade on this island was at its peak at a time when the nature of the government was undergoing a gradual change from small chiefdoms to nation states that were controlled by strong monarchies. Some of the major centres on the island which were used in this trade, and from which the Cape also obtained its slaves, were Massailly at Boina, St Augustine, Tulear, Maningaara, Morondava, Foulpoint, and St Dauphin.<sup>30</sup>

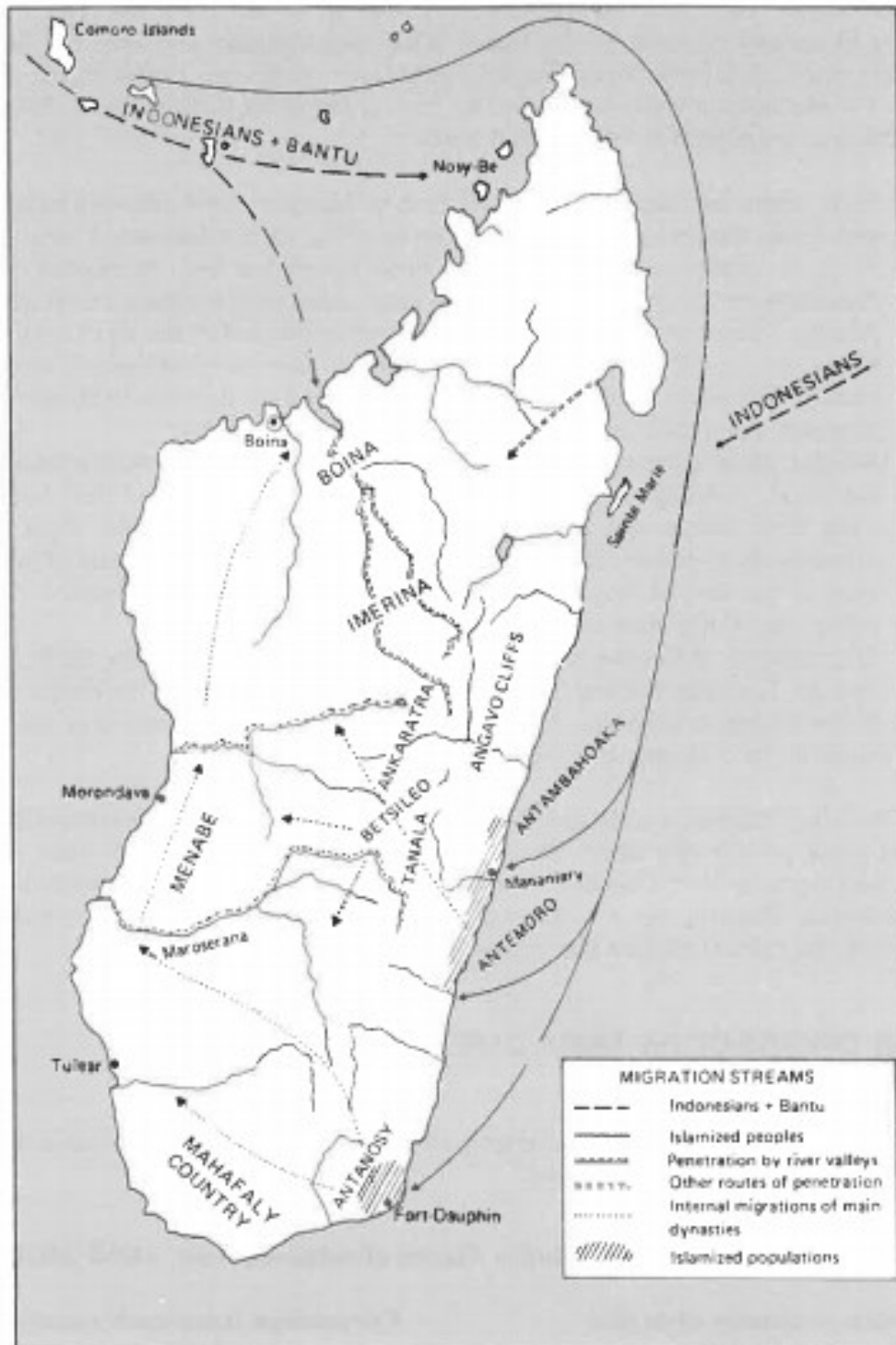
It seems that the people from whom these slaves were taken had originally migrated to the east coast of Africa from the general direction of Indonesia during the early centuries of the first millennium. From there, after there had been some intermingling between them and the indigenous African people, they had migrated in two separate waves to the island of Madagascar. The second wave had completed its migration by the end of the thirteenth century, at the latest.<sup>31, 32</sup>

It therefore follows that at the time of the slave trade, the people of the island were:

“an admixture of Indonesian and African (although at that stage the Indonesian element was probably still dominant) and speaking an essentially Indonesian language with the addition of some African vocabulary.”<sup>33</sup>

In the light of this knowledge, and also recognizing that more than half the African slaves in the Cape had come from Madagascar, there can be little doubt that a very

significant mixture of Indonesian-African cultural elements must have diffused to the Cape from Madagascar during the slave trade.



*Map 1.4: Madagascar: Migration streams and peopling*

Another aspect that has to be considered is whether or not Islam was part of this mixture of cultural elements on the island. When one considers the extent of Islamic activity and influence in the Indian Ocean, it would seem not to be possible that an island the size of Madagascar could have failed to come under some such influence. Brown<sup>34</sup> provides ample evidence to confirm that it did:

- (i) Today there are numerous traces of Arab or Islamic cultural influence along the east coast, but no local knowledge of some of the central features of Islam.
- (ii) Along the north-west coast a series of trading posts had been established by the Antalaotra or “people from across the seas”, who were a mixture of Arab and African. These had probably been established by the end of the tenth century.
- (iii) Relics of a flourishing Muslim community have been found at Iharana near the town of Vohemar on the north-east coast. It appears that this civilization had extended along the north-east coast as far south as Antalaha.
- (iv) Another group of immigrants, the Zafi-Raminia (descendants of Ramini) came to the island, probably early in the fourteenth century. They claimed that they had come from Mecca and were descendants of Muhammad’s uncle. They were subsequently to provide the ruling families for the Antandroy, a group of people living to the west of Anosy, and they also played a part in the formation of the ruling class of the Imerina on the central plateau.
- (v) The ancestors of the Antemoro came to Madagascar near the end of the fifteenth century. They also claimed descent from Meccans, and adapted the Arabic script to the Malagasy language. They provided the Arabic loan words that are now found in the Malagasy language.

From Brown’s evidence, it seems that Islam formed an integral part of the cultural life on at least some parts of the island. Because the slaves were taken from all parts of the island and because Fort Dauphin, one of the major slave ports, was situated in a predominantly Muslim area, it is therefore quite feasible that Islam may have been an element in the cultural mixture that diffused to the Cape from the island.

## ASIAN ORIGINS OF EARLY CAPE MUSLIMS

Table 1.3 gives some idea of the countries of origin of those slaves who came to the Cape from the different parts of Asia.

***Table 1.3: Slaves and free blacks: Places of origin in Asia, 1652-1818<sup>9</sup>***

Asian countries of origin	Percentage from each country
Ceylon	4,26
India	51,36
East Indies	44,38

These three countries were all drawn into the orbit of the international slave trade as a result of the military and mercantile ascendancy of the Dutch in the East, and the establishment of the Dutch Empire there during the eighteenth century.

### **Indian origins**

The people who were taken as slaves from India by the different European nations came from an environment in which some very important and lasting historical and cultural developments had taken place. Vasco da Gama's 1498 arrival in Calicut along the Malabar Coast of India set in motion a series of events which were to lead to the eventual control by the European countries of the commercial activities of those countries that bordered the eastern part of the Indian Ocean.<sup>36</sup> (See Maps 1.5 and 1.6.)

The slave trade was at its height during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. At the same time European penetration into the southern and western parts of India meant that these areas became an important source of slaves for the international market, while an extensive empire was being simultaneously established by the Moghuls in the northern part of the country. These historical developments were to have an important bearing on the later imperialist control of the country.<sup>37</sup>

The substantial cultural development which had been so characteristic of India continued under the Moghul Empire, with unprecedented strides being taken in the fields of architecture, painting, literature, science and education.<sup>38</sup> However, despite its cultural growth, wealth and magnificence, the empire was also characterized by extreme poverty, persecution, and despotism.<sup>39</sup> During the eighteenth century, the Moghul imperial edifice started to collapse. This was the result of the disintegration of its feudal structures,<sup>40</sup> the growth of Hindu power, Persian and Afghan attacks, and Sikh revolts.<sup>41</sup>

By the end of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese had already penetrated into India and had gained control of Goa. They had established trading posts along the Malabar and Coromandel coasts and in Bengal.<sup>42</sup> As the power of the Portuguese declined, so the Dutch gained the advantage in the struggle for control in India. They established trading factories at Chinsura in Bengal and at Surat in Gujarat. In 1658 they took the Coromandel coast, while the major portion of the Malabar coast came under their control in 1661 when they captured Cochin and Cranganore.<sup>43</sup> Further penetration into Bengal took place when the Dutch destroyed the Portuguese settlement there.<sup>44</sup> It was these areas – the Malabar and Coromandel Coasts and Bengal – that were to provide the majority of the Indian slaves for the Cape.

Bradlow<sup>45</sup> is of the opinion that very many of the slaves who came to the Cape from these parts of India were Muslim. He writes that the Coromandel Coast and Bengal were strongholds of "orthodox Islam" and that, between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, at least half the population of the Malabar Coast was Muslim.



*Map 1.5: India and Ceylon (seventeenth century): European forts and factories*



*Map 1.6: India in the eighteenth century*

However, Hardy<sup>46</sup> describes the situation quite differently. Basing his information on the 1870 and 1880 census reports, he states that at the time of the British colonization of India:

- (i) About half the population of Bengal was Muslim, although two out of every three persons in its eastern divisions adhered to Islam. This is confirmed by Moreland and Chatterjee.<sup>47</sup>
- (ii) One person in four was a Muslim in the western coastal districts of Malabar, but probably less than one in twenty was Muslim in the eastern districts of the Carnatic, which is on the Coromandel coast.

### **East Indian origins**

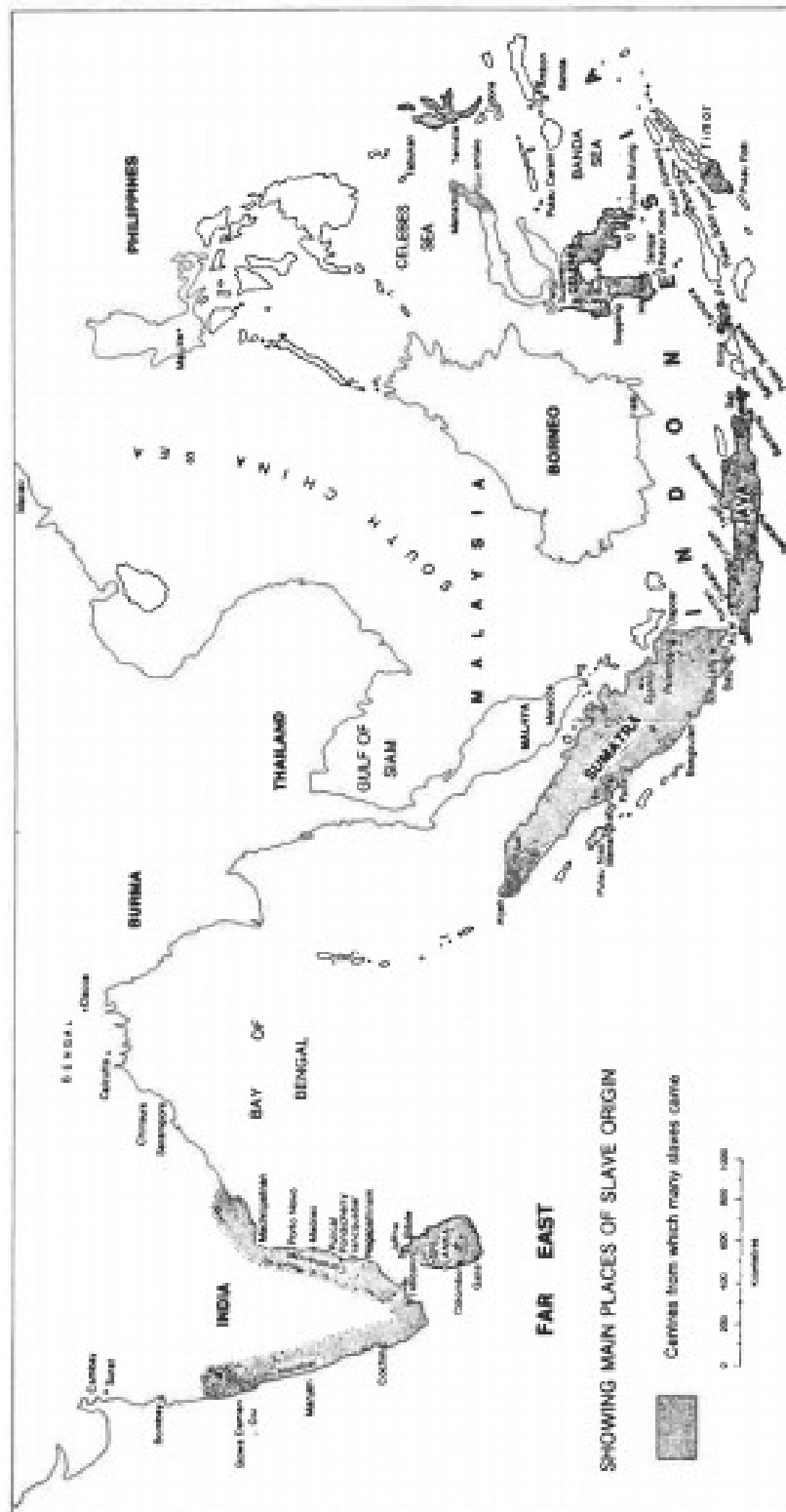
At the time of European penetration into the East Indies, the archipelago was coming to the end of an historical period that had seen extensive kingdoms being formed in major parts of the territory. The last of these kingdoms was the empire of Majapahit which had extended its authority over most of the archipelago and the Malay peninsula by the end of the fourteenth century. This empire was a major centre of world commerce and had an efficient system of administration with a code of laws.<sup>48</sup>

The kingdom was already in decline when the Portuguese (and later the Dutch) came to the archipelago. There were a number of reasons for this, including the rivalries for the throne, the penetration of Islam, the ascendancy of Malacca, and the formation of independent states in Java. Only vestiges of the original kingdom remained in Java by the early sixteenth century.<sup>49, 50</sup> It therefore happened that the peoples of the East Indies found themselves in an environment that was characterized by a disintegrating feudal society at the same time as the European military-commercial forces were penetrating the area.

This penetration was accompanied by anti-Islamic religious persecution which caused the people of the islands to resist even more strongly the occupation by the Dutch. The Dutch “originally legislated against the public performance of Islamic rites just as they did against the Church of Rome ...”<sup>51</sup> When they realized that they had no chance of converting large numbers of Muslims, they slowly “relaxed the rigour with which they had formerly treated Muslims in their Indonesian possessions. [However] ... the anti-Islamic laws remained on the Batavia Statute Book”.<sup>52</sup> When the Dutch defeated the Balinese guerrillas in East Java in 1774, they succeeded in rushing most of the resistance.<sup>53</sup>

It was this resistance that led the Dutch to exile their political opponents on the islands to the Cape. This exile of political opponents was one of the factors, apart from the export of these people as slaves, that contributed to the diffusion of Islam and a mixture of other cultural elements from the East Indies to the Cape Colony.





Map 1.7: The Far East: Major sources of Asian immigration to the Cape Colony prior to 1834

Map 1.7: The Far East: Major source of Asian migration to the Cape colony prior to 1834

It is also important to assess the degree to which Islam had spread in the archipelago at this time, as it helps to determine the possible percentage of Indonesian slaves who might have been Muslim when they arrived at the Cape. This will help to gauge the strength of Islam at the Cape during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

According to Woodcroft-Lee:<sup>54</sup>

Before the Europeans arrived in the world of South-East Asia, Islam was well established in a number of states, with communities as far north as southern Thailand, and as far east as what is today called the Philippines.”

Even before 1282, North Sumatra had already come under the influence of Islam<sup>55</sup>, and from there Islam spread to Malacca. By the end of the fifteenth century Malaya had become a Muslim region.<sup>56</sup> The conversion of Aceh in Sumatra dates back to the middle of the fourteenth century, from where Islam spread to Minangkabau.<sup>57</sup> From Malacca Islam spread further to eastern Sumatra, and by the end of the fifteenth century large portions of Sumatra had become Islamised.<sup>58</sup>

It is generally agreed that Java was not finally Islamised until late in the eighteenth century.<sup>59, 60, 61</sup> However, historians disagree as to the history of the Islamisation process. Hall<sup>62</sup> writes that most of the interior of the island was still outside the influence of Islam when the Dutch first arrived there in 1597, but this point of view is not supported by others. Holt *et al*,<sup>63</sup> provides evidence that a Muslim community existed in east Java between 1415 and 1432, and that there was active Muslim missionary activity and initiative throughout Java during the third quarter of the fifteenth century. Kahane<sup>64</sup> agrees with them, stating that the Javanese had first begun the Islamisation process in the eleventh century, and that during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries most of the people of the islands, and especially the Javanese, had opted “to convert, at least nominally, to Islam.”

Islam reached the Moluccas in the latter half of the fifteenth century and then spread well on certain of the islands, such as Ternate and Ambon.<sup>65</sup> However, in contrast, only some parts of the Borneo had been converted by the eighteenth century,<sup>66</sup> while Macassar, the chief town in the south, became the champion of Islam in east Indonesia.<sup>68</sup> Bali resisted all attempts to introduce Islam.<sup>69</sup>

The spread of Islam was given further impetus when first the Portuguese and later the Dutch arrived in the East Indies. This spread was a reaction to the militant Roman Catholicism that was propagated by the Portuguese and the Calvinism of the Dutch.<sup>70</sup> From this it can be seen that, during the period of the international slave trade, almost the whole of the archipelago (except for Bali and Nias) was predominantly under the influence of Islam; and the movement of people from these islands to the Cape caused the diffusion of aspects of east Indian culture to that colony. Islam must have played a major part in that culture by that time.

## **Sinhalese origins**

The island of Ceylon was experiencing a period of political and social disintegration when the Portuguese arrived on the west coast in 1552. According to a chronicler quoted by Rawlinson,<sup>71</sup> “the whole island resembled a dwelling in flames, or a house darkened by funeral rites.” Just before this, the island had gone through a golden age of its culture. The capital city of Polanurawa was adorned with statues, temples, schools, debating halls and hospitals. Vast irrigation schemes had been undertaken, and the island was important link in the commercial activities of the Indian Ocean.<sup>72</sup>

The Dutch captured the major cities of the island between 1638 and 1658 – Batticaloa, Galle, Negombo, Colombo, and Jaffnapan – and expelled the Portuguese.<sup>73</sup> They then made the island an important link their Indian Ocean network of commercial activities of which the slave trade was an important part.

The number of Muslims on the island was very small during this period, but, despite this, the Dutch intolerance of Islam was especially conspicuous during the eighteenth century, and they were far more severe against the Muslims than they were against the Buddhists and the Hindus.<sup>74</sup> They also passed a number of regulations that restricted Muslim economic activity and movement.<sup>75</sup>

## **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

A general overview of the environments from which the Afro-Asian immigrants came will show that there are a number of important factors.

- (i) The environments were penetrated at a time when some of the major European nations, such as Portugal, England and the Netherlands, were becoming active participants in the slave trade as part of their mercantile activities across a large part of the globe.
- (ii) The countries which had to provide the human cargoes had each made significant progress within their own feudalistic socio-economic structures. As is normal with historical growth generally, all these countries were at different stages of feudal development or decay as the case may be. India, Ceylon, and the East Indies were in the final stages of feudal decay, while West Africa, East Africa, and Madagascar were all characterized by developing feudal societies with strong tribal features.
- (iii) By the time that European penetration took place, Islam had reached all these territories or countries, and had become the religion of the majority of the people in large parts of West Africa, the northern coastal plains of East Africa, Bengal and most of the East Indies. Muslims formed minorities along the Malabar and Coromandel coasts, in Ceylon, Madagascar, some of the East Indian islands,

and the southern portion of East Africa. It may, therefore, be concluded that there is a great possibility that most (or at least many) of the migrants who came from the Afro-Asian Islamically-dominant regions were Muslim rather than non-Muslim, and that most of those who came from regions where Islam did not dominate were non-Muslim.

It may be further concluded that Islam had diffused to the Cape as part of the cultural diffusion which had taken place primarily from parts of East Africa, Bengal and the East Indies. This, of course, does not exclude the possibility that Islam might have spread to some extent from one or more of the other areas involved in the slave trade to the Cape. This trade and, to a lesser extent, the use by the Dutch of the Cape as a penal colony and a place of exile for political prisoners, were the major factors which were directly responsible for this cultural diffusion from parts of Africa and Asia, and for the introduction of Afro-Asian cultural elements into the Cape Colony.

- (iv) Each of the areas from which Islam had spread to the Cape was characterized by a dominant school of Islamic religious jurisprudence called a *madh-hab*, and certain special orders of Islamic mysticism, known as *sufi* orders. The social impact of these orders

“was so important that no study of Islamic society ought to ignore them. In traditional life, religion was the synthesis of human activity; all society was religious society. The orders, binding together individuals under a supernatural bond, were themselves a social power.”<sup>76</sup>

If the Islam that was practiced in these territories during the slave trade was expressed primarily in the form of schools of jurisprudence and the *sufi* orders already mentioned, then it can safely be concluded that the Islam which spread to the Cape was characterized, even if only to a limited extent, by some of these schools and orders.

Finally, it is one of the ironies of history that the colonial barbarism that swept Africa and Asia between the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries, and which brought largely unrecorded suffering to the peoples of these continents, was the direct cause of the earliest migration of Muslim peoples to the Cape. They came mainly against their will, forcibly removed from their families and their communities, and with nothing to their names but the cultural elements that they brought with them. One of these elements was the religion of Islam which they kept alive in spite of the hostile environment into which they came. It is through the courage and grit of these early Muslims that Islam was able to survive and later to become one of the important religions of this country.



## Chapter 2

### IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE COMPANIONS: SHAYKH YUSUF OF MACASSAR (1626-1699)<sup>1</sup>

S. Dangor<sup>1</sup>

On 2 April 1694 a ship, the *de Voetboeg*, arrived at the Cape from Ceylon. On board was a large group of Muslim exiles from the East Indies, 49 in all, who had kept closely together throughout the voyage. The main reason for their being on board was that one of them had dared to raise his voice and his weapons against the Dutch invasion of their country. His name was *Shaykh Yusuf al-taj al-Khalwati al-Maqasari*;<sup>2</sup> a person so feared by the Dutch that they sent him to the colony that was the furthest from the East Indies in order to break his resistance and to reduce his influence on his fellow countrymen. One can only imagine the contempt in the hearts of these people when he was “welcomed” to the Cape by Governor Simon van der Stel, the major official of Dutch colonisation there.

Apart from *Shaykh Yusuf*, the group consisted of his two wives, two slave girls, twelve children, twelve religious scholars, and several friends with their families. Many of them had joined in the resistance to the Dutch and had also been initiated into the *Khalwatiyyah*<sup>2</sup> *tasawwuf* order, of which *Shaykh Yusuf* was the “taj” (the crown), or paramount spiritual director. The whole group was eventually settled on the farm Zandvliet at the mouth of the Eerste River, and it is ironical that this farm should have belonged to a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, the Rev. Petrus Kalden.

Under the leadership of *Shaykh Yusuf*, who was 68 years of age when he arrived here, the group at Zandvliet formed one of the first very elementary structures of a Muslim community, and they came to represent the first area of resistance to colonisation at the Cape.

#### SHAYKH YUSUF: THE SCHOLAR AND SUFI SAINT

*Shaykh Yusuf* was born in 1626 at Goa on the island of Celebes (the present day Sulawesi in Indonesia). His parents, Abdullah and Aminah, were both of noble rank. His mother was related to the kings of Goa, and his father was related by marriage to Sultan ‘Ala al-Din, one of the rulers in the southern part of the Celebes at the time.

At the age of eighteen years, in 1644, *Shaykh Yusuf* left for Mecca on pilgrimage and to study. He remained in the city for a long time while he studied Arabic and the traditional religious science such as *Tafsir al-Quran*, *Ahadith* and *Fiqh*. It is highly likely that he had also memorized the *Quran* because it was required at that time that

all students should be, or should become, *hafiz*. Whether or not he had done so, by the time he had completed his studies, he had already developed for himself a reputation as a scholar of Islam. It is also probable that during this stay in Mecca he was initiated into the *Khalwatiyyah* order, within which he practiced stringent spiritual exercises. It was for this reason that, in addition to his reputation as a scholar, he had also developed a reputation for being a deeply pious individual.

While in Mecca he married the daughter of one of his teachers. The girl initially refused to enter into the marriage but eventually agreed, on the insistence of her father. This marriage produced one daughter, Poetiri Samang. Just before he left for home, he took another wife, whose title, Daente Kare Sitaba, suggests that she was originally from Macassar in the Celebes. The marriage took place in Jeddah. He then left for the East Indies.

Instead of returning to the Celebes, *Shaykh* Yusuf went to Bantam in western Java, where he established himself in the court of Sultan Ageng and commenced his duties as a teacher and spiritual guide. Well versed in the *Shari'ah* and deeply involved in the spiritual aspects of Islam, his reputation as an individual who embodied scholarship and piety quickly spread on the island. He had reached the highest position in the order to which he belonged, as indicated by the appellation granted to him by his peers in the order. He was then known as *Shaykh Yusuf al-taj al-Khalwati al-Maqasari*, which means "the crown of the *Magasariyyah* line of the *Khalwatiyyah* order." The line was named after Macassar where he had come from. As a consequence of his inspiration, Bantam became a centre of Islamic scholarship.

### **SHAYKH YUSUF: THE MUJAHID**

As commercial capitalism in Europe developed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the major European nations, such as the English, Portuguese and the Dutch, descended on Africa and Asia in order to extend their commercial enterprises. By the middle of the seventeenth century the Dutch had established virtually complete political and commercial hegemony in the East Indies. Only three Sultanates stood in the way of their having complete control, and these were Mataram (covering most of Java), Atjeh in Sumatra, and Ternate.

Although the Dutch eventually managed to monopolise the trade in these territories, Bantam in western Java and southern Sumatra continued to flourish independently under the leadership of Sultan Ageng. This led to the breaking of the Dutch commercial monopoly, and they then blockaded the trade routes of Bantam so that in 1659 Sultan Ageng was compelled to conclude a humiliating peace with the Dutch. This did not change his attitude towards them, and as part of his strategy to undermine Dutch influence he sided with the other European nations who were active in the commercial activities of the East Indies.

The Dutch, on the other hand, generated discord amongst the Sultanates to such an extent that war broke out between Mataram and Macassar, and they also took control of the Sultanate of Tjirebon in western Java. When the brother-Sultans of Tjirebon refused to take an anti-Dutch stance in the Mataram-Macassar conflict, Sultan Ageng took them captive. Even worse was the fact that dissension was created within the family of Sultan Ageng. His elder son, Abd al-Qahar (commonly known as Sultan Haji), sided with the Dutch and in response Sultan Ageng appointed his other son, Poerbaya, to succeed him. Shaykh Yusuf came out in support of Sultan Ageng against the Dutch.

A number of factors favoured the Dutch in the East Indies at this time:

- Their military strength;
- Their gradual military occupancy of parts of the East Indies;
- The collaboration with the Dutch by certain of the rulers on the islands such as the brother-Sultans of Tjirebon, and Sultan Haji; and
- The overthrow of Sultan Ageng by his son, Sultan Haji, in 1680.

Gathering whatever forces he could, Sultan Ageng led a rebellion against the Dutch and his son. When he found that he could not deal directly with the military might of the Dutch, Sultan Ageng resorted to guerrilla warfare against his enemies, and took refuge in the mountains in southern Bantam. Sultan Haji then offered a reward of 1 000 rixdollars for the capture of his father, Sultan Ageng, his brother, Poerbaya, and Shaykh Yusuf. Eventually Sultan Ageng surrendered in 1683 when large numbers of his forces deserted. He was later sent to Batavia, the present-day Djakarta, where he died in 1692. With the surrender of Sultan Ageng, Sultan Haji established himself as Sultan of Bantam, and opened the territory's political and commercial doors to the Dutch.

However, Shaykh Yusuf refused to surrender and continued to encourage resistance to the Dutch and their East Indian lackeys. He took refuge with about 4 000 followers (of Islam whom about 1 000 were able-bodied men) in the mountains of Fatsijara in Bantam hoping to go eastwards from there to Mataram. Many of his followers fled while *en route*, and especially after two ferocious Dutch battles. They were followed by the Dutch troops and routed in a fierce battle in September 1683. Shaykh Yusuf retreated to a small village near Soccapoera where he was captured in 1686.

### **SHAYKH YUSUF: THE EXILE**

After his capture, Shaykh Yusuf was brought to Batavia, accompanied by his wives and twelve religious scholars. Unable to curb his influence in Batavia because of his piety and his reputation as the last champion of Bantamese independence, the Dutch eventually exiled him to Ceylon. Persistent appeals by the princes of Goa that he be released combined with his growing reputation to force the Dutch to send him to the Cape in 1693. He arrived there on 2 April 1694. Those who came with him were:

- twelve imams (religious scholars)
- two wives – Carecontoe and Carepane
- two slave girls – Mu'minah and Na'imah
- twelve children – Muhhamad Rajah, Muhammad Hayy, Muhammad Jalani, Redeeng Boerne, Roemalangk, 'Isa, Jahamath, Care Sangie, Sanda, Sity Caeaty, Sieto Romia, and Siety Labibah. An entry in the journals of 24 December 1683 names another daughter, Asma' and two sons, Kare Mamo and Kare Mami.
- Others who came with him were – Pia, Boeleengh, Care nanangk, Abidah, Hamidah, Sari, Bibi A'ishah, Dayeengh Maniko, Qasim, Kentol Saip, Ragoena, Abu Bahar, Abd al-Ra'uf, and Abd al-Ja'far."

*Shaykh* Yusuf was placed with his whole retinue in an isolated spot on the farm Zandvliet. The Dutch east India Company was responsible for their upkeep, and for this purpose they were granted a monthly stipend of twelve rixdollars.

The Dutch attempts to isolate the group backfired, and Zandvliet became a rallying point for slaves and other exiles from the east. The group grew as *Shaykh* Yusuf's reputation spread, and the elementary structures of one of the first Muslim communities in the country were gradually established. There can be little doubt that as the paramount spiritual director of the *Khalwatiyyah* order, *Shaykh* Yusuf must have used the practices of that order as the social glue with which to keep these structures intact, and he must have used all possible opportunities to teach and spread the religion of Islam at the Cape.

Meanwhile there were repeated calls from the people and from the king of Goa, Abd al-Jalil, that *Shaykh* Yusuf be released and sent home. The Dutch were not prepared to accede to this request and in 1698 the Council of Batavia issued a definite refusal to even consider the request. A year later, on 23 May 1699, *Shaykh* Yusuf passed away. His death must have been a further traumatic experience for the growing Muslim community at the Cape.

In any case, when the news of his death reached the East Indies, the Rajah of Goa and some of the important residents of Macassar petitioned the Dutch for the return of those who had accompanied *Shaykh* Yusuf to the Cape. Eventually the Dutch agreed that his wives, daughters and sons below the age of six would be allowed to return home, but that the others would have to stay at the Cape. They left in 1704, travelling on two ships, the *de Spiegel* and *de Liefde*, for Batavia. The group on board *de Spiegel* reached Batavia in December 1704 and were dispatched to Macassar. Those on board *de Liefde* did not reach Macassar until April 1705.

It appears that the Dutch later allowed many of the rest of *Shaykh* Yusuf's retinue to return home, as two of the members of the retinue asked the Dutch authorities if they could remain at the Cape, and this was permitted. The one daughter who had married



the exiled King of Tambora at the Cape also remained behind to be with her husband, and they did not return home until 1710.

*Shaykh* Yusuf was buried where he had died; among the rolling sand dunes of the False Bay coast<sup>3</sup> where his shrine is still to be found.

## **HIS IMPACT ON THE CAPE**

If one considers that *Shaykh* Yusuf, even before his exile to the Cape, had embodied three of the most fundamental aspects of the Islamic perspective (scholarship, spiritual striving, and fighting in the cause of Allah), then it is not difficult to understand the impact that he would have had on both Muslim and non-Muslim at the Cape during his very brief stay here. This impact would have been intensified by the fact that the vast majority of Muslims at the time were social outcasts.

Thus, he became the focus of a gradually growing Muslim population. Zandvliet became the meeting place for the slaves and exiles who rallied around him. And, even though it was illegal for the Muslims to hold private meetings, *Shaykh* Yusuf, together with the other religious scholars with him, conducted religious services wherever they could find a venue. They also did a considerable amount of missionary work amongst the Khoi-Khoi and slaves at the Cape. As a result the authorities eventually complained that the Muslims “are multiplying rapidly and increasing in numbers”.

If one looks at an overview of his impact, it can be seen that this impact was of a three-fold nature. Firstly, by strengthening and encouraging the Islam of the Muslims at the Cape he contributed to the rebuilding of their dignity as human beings in a society which, having enslaved and exiled them, had virtually destroyed that dignity. This psychological impact was perhaps his most important contribution. Secondly, by encouraging the creation of socio-religious structures amongst the Muslims he laid the foundations for the establishment of what was possibly one of the first socially responsible Muslim communities in the country. And thirdly, by his missionary work and the winning-over of people to Islam, he gradually gave the community the numerical strength and the “fresh blood” it needed for stabilization and growth.

## **HIS LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS**

The literary works of *Shaykh* Yusuf express, to a large degree, his deep involvement in *tasawwuf* as a *Shaykh* in the *Khalwatiyyah* order. He wrote in three languages, Malaysian, Bughanese and Arabic, and there are many which have been preserved, especially in the archives of the Royal Batavian Society and the Library of Leiden University in the Netherlands.

In the library of Leiden University, the following fifteen Arabic works appear under the name of “Yusuf al-Tag (Abu’l Mahasin) Saikh Yusuf Makasar”:

1. *Al-barakah al sayalaniyyah* (Flowing Blessings)
2. *Balaya al-mubtadi* (Afflictions of the Beginner)
3. *Al-fawa'id al-Yusufiyya fi bayan tahqiq al-Sufiyyah* (The Benefits Obtained by Explaining the Accomplishments of the Sufis, according to Yusuf)
4. *Inba' al-anba'* (Imparting Information)
5. *Kayfiyya al-munajji* (The Condition of One Discoursing Secretly)
6. *Matalib al-Salikin* (The Endeavours of the Seekers)
7. *Al-nafha al-sayalaniyyah* (The Flowing Fragrance)
8. *Qurrah al-ayn* (Coolness of the Eye)
9. *Sir al-asrar* (The Secret of Secrets)
10. *Sirah Shaykh Yusuf al-taj* (The Biography of Shaykh Yusuf, the Crown)
11. *Taj al-asrar* (The Crown of Secrets)
12. *Zubdah al-asrar* (The Essence of Secrets)
- 13-15. Untitled manuscripts.

The Royal Batavian Society also has a collection of Bughanese writings in which the name of *Shaykh* Yusuf appears a number of times. There are two treatises introduced by the inscription (in Arabic): “This is the work of *Shaykh* Yusuf, the crown of the *Khalwati*”. Another treatise commences with the words “Makkedai Sjaich Jusuf” (*Shaykh* Yusuf says). It appears that some of his Bughanese writings have been preserved by the writings of a prince of Nobe (in the Celebes), Ahmad al-Salih Matinroeri-Rompegading (1775-1812). Ahmad al-Salih wrote a discourse called *Al-Nur al-Hadi*, for which he had partly obtained the material from “our master Sjaich al-Hadjdj Yusuf al-Tadj al-Khalwati”. Ahmad’s work is virtually identical to a work by *Shaykh* Yusuf bearing the same name which is indicated in the Bughanese manuscripts as “the words of our master Saehe Jusufu Petta to Salam’e ri Goa”.

As far as his Malaysian writings are concerned, there is a collection of notes on *tasawwuf* ascribed to him in the Malaysian manuscripts of the Royal Batavian Society. There is also a Malay manuscript in the museum of the Batavian Society of Culture and Science which bears an Arabic title similar to that of some of *Shaykh* Yusuf’s writings. The rest of this chapter is a translation of one of *Shaykh* Yusuf’s works.

#### **ZUBDAH AL-ASRAR (THE ESSENCE OF SECRETS) by SHAYKH YUSUF<sup>4</sup>**

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful, and blessings and peace upon our Master, Muhammad, and his family. We seek (Allah’s) help to obtain complete providence and general guidance, *Amin*. O Lord of the Worlds, *Amin*.

This is an eloquent treatise and subtle discourse which I have named *Zubdah al-Asrar* (The essence of secrets); explaining some of the sources from which the “choice ones” (the *akhyar*) drank. We pray to Allah (the Exalted), that this (treatise) would be of benefit, if Allah (the Exalted) so wills, to the traveller (the *salik*) along the path to the

King of Kings. May Allah make him attain his goal, and make him one of his choicest servants, *Amin*. Know O my brother for the sake of Allah and my companion to Allah, that Allah will teach you about Himself and will make you understand about Himself. I say: Confirm, declare and bear witness to yourselves, O people of Islam, outwardly and inwardly, the declaration:

“*La ilaha illala, Muhammad Rasul Allah* (There is no god other than Allah, [and] Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah).

I believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and that the decree, good and bad, is from Allah (the Exalted). Allah is my Lord, Muhammad is my Prophet, Islam is my religion, the Ka’bah is my direction of prayer, the *Quran* is my *imam*, and the Muslims are my brothers.

I have set my face, true in faith and in submission, towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth, and I am not of the polytheists (vi: 79).

I am indeed free from what you associate with Him (vi: 78).

I turn to my Lord, He will surely guide me (xxxvii: 99).

To Allah we belong, and to Him we return (ii: 156).

There is nothing whatever like Him, and he is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing (xl: 11).

Say: He is Allah, the One and Only; the Eternal, the Absolute; He begetteth not neither is he begotten; and there is none like unto Him (cxii: 1-4).

But Allah has created you and whatever you make (xxxvii: 96).

But you will not, except as Allah wills (lxxvi: 30).

Allah has power over all things (ii: 20).

Say: All things are from Allah (iv: 78).”

Thus, “There is no power and no strength except with Allah (the Supreme, the Exalted)”. We also say that the time has come to move towards the goal, and there is no lord to be worshipped other than Him. It is incumbent on the perfect servant (*al-abd al-kamil*), the gnostic (*al-‘arif*) who had attained the ultimate goal (*al-wasil*), after affirming his faith in these above-mentioned verses, confirming his belief in the Prophet’s (s.a.w.s.) saying:

“No one harms and benefits except Allah.”

and affirming the statement of the people of knowledge from amongst the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* (the people of the Prophetic path and of the community) that He (free of imperfection is He and Exalted), is Existent, Absolute, Eternal, Beginningless, Everlasting, Existent by Himself, bringing into existence everything other than Him; (after all this) to recognize and know always, at all times, under all circumstances, and during difficulties in one's affairs, that Allah (the Exalted), is with one wherever one might be; according to the saying of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.):

“The most excellent faith of the servant is to know that Allah is with one wherever one is.”

And, according to the statement of Allah:

“And He is with you wheresoever you may be (lvii: 4).”

And His statement:

There is not a secret consultation among three but He is the fourth among them, nor between five but He is the sixth, nor between fewer or more but He is in their midst wheresoever they be ... (iv: 126).”

Likewise, it is also one of the prerequisites for one to recognize and know that Allah (free of all imperfection is He and Exalted), encompasses everything; in accordance with the words of Allah (the Exalted):

“And Allah it is that encompasseth all things (iv: 126)” and His words:

“And that He encompasseth all things with (His) knowledge (lxv: 12)”

and other similar verses.

It is said (that) this accompaniment (*ma'iyya*) is the accompaniment of encompassing just as this encompassing is the encompassing of accompaniment. However, this implication of the meaning of these two verses is the submission of oneself to the Speaker (free of imperfection is He and Exalted). We have expanded on the discussion of this, even if it is just in a sentence, in some of our treatises. In fact, we cannot have mere faith alone, according to other allegorical verses (of the Quran) and Traditions of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Allah (the Exalted) says:

“No one knows its hidden meanings except Allah. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: “We believe in the Book; the whole of it is from our Lord’: and none will grasp the Message except men of understanding (iii: 7)”

And according to the statement of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.):

“And believe in their allegorical meaning.”

Thus, the direct knowledge of this Divine companionship for the servant is [a reflection of] the reality of his faith in Allah, according to the text of the abovementioned tradition. So know that.

It is also incumbent upon one [the traveler] to constantly engage one's tongue in the *dhikr* of *La ilaha illallah*, in accordance of the words of Allah (the Exalted):

Remember Allah, and do this often. And glorify Him morning and evening (xxxiii: 41-42).”

And His words:

Remember Allah, standing, sitting down, or lying down on your sides ... (iv: 103)”  
and other similar eminent verses. And also according to the (following) statements of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.):

“When Allah desires good for a servant He causes him to increase His remembrance.”

When Allah desires to make His servant one of His *auliya*, He inspires him to mention His name.

The best *dhikr* is *La ilaha illallah*.

The best thing which the Prophets before me and I have uttered is the expression *La ilaha illallah La ilaha illallah* is my fortress; so whoever enters my fortress is secure from my punishment.

Nothing is more effective in protecting [one] from the punishment of Allah than the expression *La ilaha illallah*.”  
and other similar traditions.

It is also incumbent on the servant when he is engaged in the above mentioned *dhikr* to understand the meaning of the phrase; that there is no object to be worshipped, nor sought, nor aspired to, nor desired, nor loved, nor beloved, nor causer, nor existing except Allah, and whatever exists besides Him is a shadow of His (the Exalted). And a shadow is something non-existent. In actuality, it has absolutely no existence even if it is visible to the naked eye. So understand [this] because [in terms of] the terminology [used] by the people of Allah (the Exalted), is that anyone whose existence is dependent on someone else, such existence is for someone else and not for that person. If that is the case, it is clear that everything besides Allah does not exist in reality. It is said that with respect to Him that He is the manifestation of true, absolute existence, disposed to all manifestation of images and non-images, existent by Himself, while all else exists through Him. [This is] like the shadow of a person, for example. [The shadow] is not said to exist by itself but it is said [that] it is a manifestation of the existence of the person; for only the person exists in reality even if the shadow is visible, as has been stated above. So understand that.

Then the abovementioned *dhakir* repeats the *dhikr* “Allah, Allah” in his “heart”, in accordance with the verse:

“Say: “Allah”; then leave them to plunge in vain discourse and trifling (vi: 91)” and other sublime verses. The *dhakir* understands at the time of his chanting of “Allah, Allah” that the objective of this chanting is the One who has perfect existence; the universe does not restrict Him, and He is in possession of all the outer and inner attributes of perfection which befit the Majesty of His existence and perfection of His attributes. So know that.

Then the abovementioned *dhakir* engages in the invocation “*Huwa, Huwa*” (He, He) in his innermost consciousness, according to the verse:

“And He is Allah in the heavens and on earth (vi: 3)”

and the verse:

“... and He has the power over all things (lvii: 2)”

and other verses.

The abovementioned *dhakir* should understand when he repeats “*Huwa, Huwa*”, that the intention of this symbolic expression is [the realisation] that the nature of the Exalted One flows through [all] existing manifestations and external objects of existence, or that He alone is manifested in everything and through everything, and none else. So understand [this].

One of the people of knowledge (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “‘*La ilaha illallah*’ is the *dhikr* of the tongue, ‘Allah, Allah’ is the *dhikr* of the heart, and ‘*Huwa, Huwa*’ is the *dhikr* of the innermost consciousness.” He also said: “‘*La ilaha illallah*’ is the *dhikr* of the common people, ‘Allah, Allah’ is the *dhikr* of the elect, and ‘*Huwa, Huwa*’ is the *dhikr* of the superlatively elect.” So know that.

Among the things which are also incumbent upon one is the need for attentive observation (*muraqabah*) of one’s soul; and that is that one knows and recognizes that Allah is present with one and sees one and observes one, according to the tradition:

“Worship Allah as if you can see Him, for though you cannot see Him, he certainly sees you.”

It is said that this attentive observation is *muraqabah ihsaniyyah*, according to the text of the tradition.

One of the people of intuitive perception among the *Sufis* (may Allah sanctify their secret) said that the stage of “worshipping Allah as if you see Him” is the stage of the common people among the travelers on the *Sufi* path, and that the stage of “although you cannot see Him, He certainly sees you” is the stage of the elect amongst them. So understand that.

Among the things incumbent upon one is to think good of all people although, in outward appearance, they always fall into acts contrary (to Shari’ah), obtaining [in the process] benefit [for this] from others; for verily the Mercy of Allah is more extensive than that [benefit]. Allah [Exalted is He] says:

“But My Mercy extendeth to all things (vii: 156).”

The Prophet (s.a.w.s) has reported from Allah (the Exalted):

“Verily, My Mercy precedes My Anger.”

There is no doubt that all sins are part of the totality of things and His Mercy encompasses the totality of things, according to the Divine text. So know that. Furthermore, that this is on the basis of the verse:

“God forgiveth not [the sin] joining other gods with Him; but He forgiveth whom He pleaseth other sins than this (iv: 116) and other blessed verses.

People do not know that this disobedient servant, for example, who acts contrary to all the commandments [of Allah] may repent and return to his Lord after his disobedience. He (s.a.w.s.) had said:

“The one who repents from sin is like the one who has no sin.”

And the Noble Kind, the Endower, the Wise, the Forgiving, the Merciful has also said in His Noble Book, His Sublime Message:

“For Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean (ii: 222).”

It is clear to the intelligent, reflective mind that the word “*Al-tauwwab*” (one of the *sifat* of Allah) is an intensive epithet. And it is understood by that that the servant appeals for abundant forgiveness from Him because of the considerable sins which afflict him all the time. The increase in repentance on the part of the above-mentioned servant is due to the sins which he has committed. So know that.

We now declare outwardly and inwardly: “I seek forgiveness from Allah the Mighty, from every sin I have committed intentionally or in error, secretly or openly, big or small, from sin which I am aware of and from sin which I am not aware of, and I turn to him in repentance.”

“To Allah we belong and to Him is our return (ii: 156)”

There is no power or strength except with Allah, Most High, Supreme. And according to the tradition:

“I prepared my intercession for the great sinners of my community.”

There are many noble verses and sublime traditions in relation to this stage. It is not necessary to mention all [of these] in this treatise because the intention in the treatise is to be brief.

This stage, i.e. the stage of thinking good of people, leads to the stage of thinking good of Allah (the Exalted). This is more incumbent than the first stage according to the verse:

“Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most merciful (xxxix: 53)”

and other sublime verses. And, according to the tradition:

“Everyone of my community will be forgiven except those who openly declare their sins.”

Someone (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

“Among those who openly commit [sins] is the one who confesses to the people the commission of a sin, whether it is small or big.”

What is required in confession is confession to Allah (the Exalted) Himself; and that is to acknowledge sin to him, the Exalted One, and not to people. So understand that. One of the *Sufis* (may Allah sanctify their secrets) said to his disciple:

“Conceal your good deeds, and you conceal your evil deeds.”

He (s.a.w.s) also said:

“Be of the people of the night, and do not be of the people of the day.”

This shows that what is meant by concealing deeds from the people is that there should be no ostentatious behavior (*riya'*) and other matters related to such deeds. So understand (this). If this statement was reversed, it would have another meaning. So know that.

There is no doubt that all people do not wish to expose what they do of what is bad or what reflects a shortcoming; either out of fear or embarrassment, or for both reasons. This [is the case] when that involves only what is bad or what reflects a shortcoming; then it is all the more reason to be ashamed] if one commits sins and acts of disobedience. Understand all that I have discussed if you are a person of intellect, for I have opened to you one of the secrets of the Wisdom of Allah (the Exalted) with regard to His servant.

Then why should it not be so since the Ultimate truth (*al-Haqq*) (the Exalted) possessing the attributes of Forgiveness, all-encompassing Mercy and other attributes is more loving and more merciful to His servant than parents are to their children. So understand and contemplate.

Likewise, as far as the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is concerned, it is not said with regard to him that he is the intercessor for the pious. The intercession of Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) as you have come to know previously, has been reserved on the Day of Resurrection for His (s.a.w.s.) community. Have you not known and heard that it has been said that all Prophets (may Allah bless and grant them peace), except our Prophet, will say on the Day of Resurrection, which is the day on which there will be no Judge except the Glorious Lord and no shade except His shade, “Myself, myself” but He will say “My community, my community.” All of this has been mentioned already. So know that.

If this is the case, then on the basis of that, we have no choice but to think good of Allah (the Exalted), and we have to think good of all people on the basis of the noble verses and sublime traditions; as an act of wisdom from Allah (the Exalted) and as a favour from Him (free of imperfection is He). So understand (that).

At this stage it is also imperative for the perfect servant, the *arif*, and the *wasil* not to find objections with any creature because to do so in regard to anything which they do, openly and secretly, will be the greatest act of disrespect toward Allah (the Exalted), the Creator of everything, with regard to [both] essence and attribute(s). So understand [this].

It is reported regarding *Al-Shaykh Al-Imam* Abu al-Najib al-Suhrawardi<sup>5</sup> that he had a brother for the sake of Allah (the Exalted), [who] was his companion and happened to be one of the greatest “*auliya*” of Baghdad. It happened one day that he was very cheerful in regard to his condition while [at the same time] he was an object of a little



anger from his Lord (the Exalted) because of something he had committed which he was unaware of. *Al-Shaykh* Abu al-Najib sent him his nephew, *Shihab al-Din al Suhrawardi*<sup>6</sup> to warn the man about the matter. He was made aware of it and exclaimed, “Yes, by Allah! Yes, by Allah!” The man signalled for a rope and fastened it around his neck. He then ordered Shihab al-Din to mount his mule, hold the other end of the rope and drag him through all the alleys of Baghdad. Shihab al-Din said, in regard to this, “This is the recompense of one who had found fault with Allah (the Exalted).” All the people was amazed and wondered about the matter as the man was well-known to all the people and was held in high esteem, and they recognized him as one of the *auliya* (of Allah).

Then Shihab al-Din asked the man, “O uncle, what is your sin that [has caused] you to put yourself in this grave situation?” The man answered: “O my son, I have committed a grave sin which is greater than all my previous sins. One day I was standing on the seashore and it was raining on the sea only. The situation was that people were in need of rain; the crops had turned yellow and the land had dried up that year (the author does not complete the anecdote)”. Keep that in mind, that the creation is in the hands of Allah, and:

“You will not, except as God wills (lxxvi: 30).”

What Allah wills will be and what he does not will, will not be; everything is under His Fate and Divine Decree, and under His Power and his Divine Will (free of imperfection is He, and Exalted). Have you not heard or know the verse:

“O ye who believe! Guard your own souls; if ye follow [right] guidance, no hurt can come to you from those who stray (v: 108).”

and the traditions:

“There will surely come upon you a time when the best of you will be that person who will not command that which is good, nor prevent what is evil.

When you find avarice being submitted to and desire being followed, and everyone with an opinion acting according to his opinion, then you should mind your own business and leave alone matters that do not concern you.”

All of this is happening without doubt or uncertainty in this time of ours. So contemplate if you are one of the people of sound intellect and correct disposition.

“Let him who will, believe, and let him who will, reject [it] (xviii: 29).”

One of the things also incumbent upon [the *salik*] is goodness of disposition towards all creatures because when He (s.a.w.s.) was asked, “Which person will be closest to you on the Day of Resurrection, O Messenger of Allah?” He (s.a.w.s.) answered with [the] words: “The best of them in conduct.”

This is also on the basis of the tradition:

“I have not been sent except to perfect noble character.”

Because of this, one *Sufi* (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “*Tasawwuf* is good character. There is no *tasawwuf* for one who does not have a good character.” Understand [this].

Furthermore, the expression *husn al-khaliq* (showing goodness to the creation) is also implied in the following traditions:

“Treat people according to their nature.

Honour the guest, even if he is a disbeliever.

He who believes in Allah and His Messenger must honour the neighbor.

Do not turn away the beggar, for he is the gift of Allah to His creature.

All of mankind is the family of Allah, so the dearest to Allah (the Exalted) is the one who is the most beneficial among them to his family”

There is also an indication of this in the *Hadith Qudsi* (Holy tradition):

“I feel embarrassed about punishing the old people among My servants.”

In this regard, the [following] verse says:

“Nor repulse the petitioner [unheard] (xcii: 10)”

And the verse:

“Kind words and the covering of faults are better than charity followed by injury (ii: 263)

Understand [this]. There are numerous traditions explaining good conduct towards all of creation. It is not necessary to mention all of them in this short treatise, following the wisdom of Allah (the Exalted) because prolonged speech in the best situation causes boredom and weariness. So know that.

[The people of knowledge and wisdom] said: “The essential feature of good conduct towards all of creation is to bring comfort to them and to be cordial with them and not to be estranged from them.” For that reason, the Commander of the Faithful (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “The best deed is to bring joy to the hearts of brothers.” So know that.

At this stage the matter requires imbuing [oneself] with the attributes of Allah (free of all perfection is He and Exalted), in accordance with the tradition:

“Verily Allah has many attributes; whoever imbues himself with one of them will enter Paradise.”

That is why one of the *Sufis* (may his secrets be sanctified) has also said: “The beginning of *tasawwuf* is absolute identification of intention with Allah (the Exalted), and its last is imbuing itself with the attributes of Allah (free of imperfection is He).” Yet another

one said: “The beginning of *tasawwuf* is learning, its middle (stage) is praxis, and its end is grace.” So know that.

One of the things also incumbent upon [the *salik*] is to be satisfied with divine fate and decree (*al-qada’ wa’l-qadr*), in accordance with the verse:

“And the command of God is a decree determined (xxxiii: 38)”

And in accordance with the tradition:

“I believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and that the decree of good and evil is from Allah (the Exalted).”

Satisfaction with the divine decree is absolutely necessary but not satisfaction with what a person accomplishes of acts of disobedience, for example. Satisfaction with disobedience is an act of disbelief. So examine and contemplate. We have discussed this subject in detail in one of our treatises. Understand the whole issue, and you will reach your goal, if Allah (the Exalted) so wills.

If the servant does all that and carries out everything that we have mentioned with complete sincerity (*ikhlas*) of intention for the sake of Allah (the Exalted) making *dhikr* abundantly, not being forgetful (*ghaflah*) of Him (free of all imperfection is He) following completely the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.), outwardly and inwardly, with knowledge that all this is only due to the Grace of Allah (the Exalted) on him, not by virtue of his [own] knowledge and deeds. [All these acts should continue] until they become like a habit to him with the consciousness of his being in the presence of [*hudur*] of Allah (the Exalted) and his continuous witnessing (*shuhud*) of Him (free of all imperfection is He), and his constant *muraqabah* of Him at all time; then he will become the master of the people of his time and will be called by the title of *wali* of Allah (the Exalted), and an ‘*arif*’ of Him (free of all imperfection is He). Thus he will be worthy of Him (the Exalted) and be his *khalifah*. Free of all imperfection is He. Only at that point will he be called *al-insan al-kamil*, ‘*arif*’, and *wasil*, without doubt or uncertainty. He will be known and also unknown like Uways al-Qarani.<sup>7</sup> Verily He (s.a.w.s) had said with regard to him that he was unknown on earth, known in the Heavens.

“Nor is that for Allah any great matter (xiv: 20)”

With regard to this stage, the *Hadith Qudsi* states:

“Verily, my friends are under my tent.”

and in another report:

“Under my dome, none knows them other than Me.”

With regard to this stage, the tradition also states:

“Verily, I am a human being like you. I eat as you eat, and drink as you drink.”

The one who has attained this position is called *malamiyah* from among whom only the greatest *walis* among the Poles (*agtab*) emerge. Thus said our *Shaykh*, and the *Shaykh* of our *Shaykh*, the king of mystics, my master Muhyi al-Din ibn al-‘Arabi<sup>8</sup> (may Allah sanctify his soul and illuminate his grave, and may we benefit from him, *Amin*).

One of the intrinsic qualities of men at this stage is that they do not abandon the external aspect of the *Shari'ah* and the *Haqiqah* but they combine the two because they are inheritors of the spiritual status of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) If one does not do that, then one is not yet of the inheritors [of this status] and one is not *kamil*. Understand [that].

According to the tradition:

I was sent with the *Shari'ah* and the *Haqiqah*, whilst all the [other] Prophets were sent only with the *Shari'ah*.”

Those with knowledge of Allah (the Exalted) agree that to adhere to the external aspect of *Shari'ah* is one of the conditions of sainthood, in addition to adhering to the inner aspect of Reality. Otherwise, the servant cannot become one of the *auliya* in any respect, even if extraordinary things emanate from him. Verily, performing extraordinary things in his case is regarded only as gradual ascending (towards attaining *karamah*, and not as a *karamah*). So know that.

It is obvious to the intelligent servant and to the perfect gnostic that if an extraordinary act emanates from a disbeliever and a corrupt person it is called *istidraj*, if it emanates from a virtuous man who adheres to the externals of *Shari'ah* it is called *karamah*, and if it emanates from a prophet it is called *mu'jizah*. If it occurs before his prophethood it is called *ilham*. So know that.

Do not move away from the status of combining the *Shari'ah* and the *Haqiqah* by virtue of the Prophet's text mentioned above in this regard. We have discussed the subject of *Shari'ah* and *Haqiqah* in detail in one of our treatises.

Furthermore, after the abovementioned servant has accomplished all the stages discussed above, he becomes a servant devoted to Allah (the Exalted) alone; to the exclusion of all else apart from Him (free of all imperfection is He). That is the supreme goal and foremost desire. This stage is called absolute servanthood (*'ubudiya*) which is the highest of all the stages for the servant. Regarding this stage a verse states:

“Free of all imperfection is He who did take His servant (xvii: 1).”

He (free of all imperfection is He) does not say, “... with His Messenger”, nor “... with His Prophet”, nor “... with His beloved”; since there is no stage above *'ubudiyyah* for the servant. There is only the stage of Lordship (*rububiyyah*) which is left, and this is reserved for Allah (the Exalted). So understand all [this], and greetings.

At this stage, also, the invoker becomes the invoked, the knower becomes the known, the observer becomes the observed, the witnesser becomes the witnessed, the disciple becomes the object, the lover becomes the beloved, the Lord becomes the essence of the servant and the servant the essence of the Lord due to his annihilation (*fana*) in Allah (the Exalted), and his subsistence (*baqa*) with Him (free of all imperfection is He), and his absorption in the Majestic Illumination (*tajalli*) through his continuous vision of Him in a state of annihilation, self-effacement, obliteration and unconsciousness; due to his having reached the stage of Musa. Then after restoration

to consciousness, he becomes *khalifah* of His (free of all imperfection is He). He is then imbued with the attributes of his Lord after attaining the state described by the tradition:

“I become his hearing and his sight ...”

except that the servant remains a servant although he has ascended (spiritually), and the Lord remains the Lord although he has descended. That is why one of those with knowledge of Allah (the Exalted) has said in a poem: “The sea is the sea despite what happened during the past and the events are the waves and the rivers.”

Understand the matter and do not err, else you may slip up. No one can escape from this dreadful predicament except people having (divine) providence and perfect happiness, encompassing their outer and inner being. With regard to this stage also the poet has said:

“The glass becomes clear and the wine becomes clear and they look alike and the matter becomes ambiguous as if it is wine and not the cup and as if it is the cup and not the wine.”

One of them said: “The colour of the water is the colour of its vessel.”

Another said:

“Everything is He, O young man,  
If you remove its restrictions  
And everything becomes Us, O young man,  
Because we are His boundary.”

And other sayings of this nature corresponding to the stage after attaining the goal. Then perhaps the servant, through his continuous vision of multiplicity in unity and unity in multiplicity, is at the stage where spiritual ecstasy (*hal*) overwhelms him at the manifestation to him of the Majesty of His Beauty and the Beauty of His Majesty by the Real One (may He be Exalted). Then what he sees in existence does not exist (in reality) but is manifested in the forms of all things through his esoteric knowledge and intuition. Consequently he reaches the stage of the individual ego free from dualism, alluded to at the stage of Absolute Unity. So understand [this]. Regarding this stage, a tradition states:

“The believer is a mirror of [another] believer.”

i.e. the new believer is the mirror of the old believer, and whatever is required for the latter, is required for him. There then proceeds from this servant who is annihilated (in Allah), immersed in witnessing of the Absolute, such expressions over which he has no control:

“”I am the Absolute Truth”, uttered by al-Hallaj al Bahdadi.<sup>9</sup>

“I am Allah”, by al-Sayyid Nasim al-Halabi.<sup>10</sup>

“Under my garment there is nothing but Allah”, by al-Shibli.<sup>11</sup>

“It is as if I have gained power over everything”, by Abu al-Mughith ibn Jamil al-Jamani.<sup>13</sup>

and other similar expressions emanating from people in an ecstatic condition (may Allah sanctify the secrets of all of them). Verily, in reality it is Allah (the Exalted) Who manifests and speaks through the tongue of His servant, and not the servant [speaking].

So know that. Do not commit an error; you will achieve your goal if Allah (the Exalted) so wills. Have you not understood the words of the Exalted in the *Hadith Qudsi*?

“My servant continues to come closer to Me through supererogatory acts until I love him. When I love him, I become his hearing through which he hears and his sight with which he sees and his hand with which he grasps and his feet with which he walks and his tongue with which he speaks and his mind with which he thinks.”

Regarding this stage Allah, the Exalted, also says to one of the inerrant ones (upon whom be peace):

“Whoever seeks Me, finds Me; and whoever finds Me, I love him; and whomever I love, I love intensely; and whoever I love intensely, I cause him to die; and he whom I cause to die, his blood-money is incumbent upon Me; and he whose blood-money is incumbent upon Me, I am his blood-money.”

And then at this point the Reality takes the place of the entire servant who has gained close proximity to Him (free of all imperfection is He), after rendering the trust to those to whom they are due; according to the verse:

“Allah doth command you to render back your trusts to those to whom they are due (iv: 58).”

At this stage the servant is also called “the perfect man”. Then he becomes one of the secrets (*sirr*) of Allah (the Exalted):

“Man (*insan*) is My secret, and I am his secret.”

One of the people with intuitive perception among the *Sufis* (may Allah sanctify is secret) said: “What is meant by *insan* here is the “perfect man”, the gnostic who has reached this stage, not the imperfect man who is an animal appearing in the form of this man.” So know that.

The meaning of the tradition is that it is a quality of the perfect man that he is not unmindful (*ghaflah*) of Allah (the exalted) even for a moment. Therefore, in all his affairs and all his circumstances, he will become as being from Allah, to Allah, towards Allah, in Allah, with Allah, for Allah, by Allah, near Allah; for the Reality (may He be Exalted) is ever present in the heart of this person because of his not being heedless of Him (the Exalted) and his not being forgetful in respect of Him. And from this viewpoint, Allah (the Exalted) becomes the *sirr* of this person.

When He (the Exalted) also finds that His abovementioned servant is capable of [receiving] special illumination, He bestows on him various kinds of attributes and qualities from among His attributes and qualities. Then he [the servant] becomes like Him [in qualities]. Then after imbuing himself with His attributes, he becomes a *khalifah* of His (free of imperfection is He), and his image is the image in which He had created Adam as His *khalifah*. [This is] because the *khalifah* is in the image of the one who had appointed him. When he beholds Him in a state of the most intense bliss, he is brought by him to the furthest rank, he takes his place completely. Consequently, he attains this [rank]. Thus from this point of view, it is said about him that he is the secret of Allah (the Exalted). So know that.

One of the *Sufis* (may Allah (the Exalted) support and help him) said: “What is meant by the tradition [containing the words] ‘man is my secret’ is with respect to his being in the eternal, pre-existent, divine Knowledge before his existence externally. And the meaning of ‘I am his secret’ is with regard to the time after his appearance in [existence] because Allah (the Exalted) is always in the heart of this servant. Therefore, his heart is called ‘the throne of Allah’ which is interpreted as ‘man’, just as the mosque is called ‘the house of Allah’”. Regarding this stage, one of those inerrant ones (upon him be peace) said: “Where do I seek you, O Lord?” or he says: “Where do I find you?” and He (free of imperfection is He) replies:

“Seek Me or find Me in the heart of the *faqir* who is distressed for my sake.”

And Allah (the Exalted) revealed to David (peace be upon him):

“O David! Empty your heart [so that] I may reside in it.”

For the servant is the doorman in the house of his Lord, and the house is none else than his heart. It is incumbent upon the intelligent, trustworthy servant to be a man of trust (*amanah*). So he does not let anyone other than the owner of the house enter the house which is known as “the much frequented house” (cii: 4) from the perspective of the gnostic who has attained the goal. So know that.

It can be said that the reason for the servant’s secrecy to Him (the Exalted), and the secrecy of Allah, Glory be to Him, to His servant is in accordance with what is alluded to in the verse:

“[Then] do remember Me; I will remember you (ii: 52)”

and the tradition:

“Whoever remembers Me by himself, I shall remember him by myself; and whoever remembers me in an assembly, I shall remember him in an assembly better than that.”

Now after the long discussion and elegant account, we return to what we had intended to expound, and that is precisely this goal. Therefore, we will give valuable, beneficial, spiritual cautions, if Allah (the Exalted) so wills, to some seekers of the Way among the friends and to the people of the Path. May Allah (the Exalted) help him attain his goal and make him, if Allah, the Exalted, so wills, among the choicest of His servants, *Amin*.

We say now, know O brother, friend of Allah, His representative, shadow and *khalifah*, may Allah make me and you firm with the fully established Word that stands firm and make my end and yours to be good. Verily every *wali* of Allah (the Exalted) and every ‘*arif*’ of His (free of all imperfection is He) has some form of activity and some kind of customary speech. The best of activities is that of companionship with Allah as mentioned at the beginning of the treatise. Likewise, the best of customary speech is [invoking] the Name of Allah, the Omniscient, as the two are in the position of the mother and the father in respect of all activities and all customary speech. For even the great saints and gnostics did not become saints and gnostics except by engaging in some activity of the people and adhering to some of their customary speech; provided that he learnt them from the most perfect of the *shaykhs* from among those bestowed with the knowledge of Allah (the Exalted), and His (free of all imperfection is He) people (may

Allah sanctify their secrets). Otherwise, he would never be correct. For this reason, he (s.a.w.s.) had said:

“Whoever died without having taken the pledge, has died the death of the days of ignorance.”

He has also said in a tradition:

“Whoever does not have a spiritual guide, Satan is his spiritual guide.”

If Satan is his spiritual guide the result would be that he would be the most misguided [person] even though he may possess abundance of knowledge and [good] deeds. So know that. The Prophet (s.a.w.s.), alluded to this in his words:

“Verily, knowledge [comes] through learning.”

Furthermore, what is meant by *Shaykh* here is the *Shaykh* of initiation and instruction [in *tasawwuf*], not the *Shaykh* of reading and teaching. For the *Shaykh* of initiation and instruction is the *khalifah* of Allah (the Exalted) or shall I say the *khalifah* of the Messenger, and his representative. In fact, he is identical to him (in certain respects), not different from him; according to the text because the *khalifah* is in the image of the one who has appointed him, as mentioned earlier. So this has been established.

Now when the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) was taking the oath of allegiance from people among the Companions, Allah unveiled to him the Manifestation of [His] Essential Being and the individualisation of the divine Oneness in such a way that the one illuminated cannot be distinguished from the One Who Illuminates when witnessed by the true gnostic among the people of true intuition. That act will serve as caution and instruction for the above-mentioned people who took the *bay'ah* (oath of allegiance), who will now be at the stage of the disciples learning from spiritual guides once they have given their pledges to their guides. And the spiritual guides are the successors of the Messenger (s.a.w.s.). He (s.a.w.s.) said:

“You must follow the rightly-guided *khalifah*.”

They assume the position of the Messenger (may Allah bless and grant him peace) during their time; if you have understood the secret of the verse:

“Verily those who grant their fealty to thee do no less than grant their fealty to Allah (xlvi: 10).”

Therefore, it is incumbent upon the perfect disciple who has understanding to be conscious in his heart and to imagine, at the time of initiation by his spiritual guide, that he is not giving allegiance to anyone but Allah. That is necessary, otherwise he would not reach the stage of true initiation. So know that.

With the entry of the disciple into initiation by his spiritual guide, he reaches the stage of those who know by Allah (the Exalted), if he understood the matter as it is. As for the benefit of the disciple's entrance into initiation by spiritual guides, he will not know the truth of the matter except till after death.

“Let him who will, believe, and let him who will reject [it] (xviii: 29).”

Hearing [something] is not the same as beholding [it] with the eye. And Allah knows best. As for the results of all these deeds and actions, they are only attained, procured and accomplished by persevering with truthfulness in all matters and sincerity (*ikhlas*) of intention in pursuing them, for the sake (*wajh*) of Allah (the Exalted) and not for



anyone else, and endurance (*sabr*) during all adversities, and serious effort in seeking the goal; Is it not [the case], as has been said, that he who strives earnestly finds it. So understand and contemplate.

In regard to this stage, it was said about *Shaykh* al-Junayd,<sup>14</sup> the master of the [*Sufi*] group (may his secret be sanctified): “By what means did you arrive at this stage?” He replied, pointing with his hand to his cheek: “By placing this on the doorstep of my *Shaykh* for forty years.”

For this reason, the *Sufis* (may Allah be pleased with them) agree when they say that one will never traverse this [*Sufi*] path easily. So know that.

It was also said to *Shaykh al-Iman*, the Sultan of the *auliya*, Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani,<sup>15</sup> “By what means did you reach Allah (the exalted)?” He answered: “I did not reach him (the Exalted) by means of abundant *salah* or fasting, but I reached him only through endurance (*sabr*), humility, generosity and peace of heart.”

Regarding this stage also he (s.a.w.s.) said with respect to Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him):

“Abu Bakr has not excelled you by virtue of abundance of prayer and fasting, but [because of] something settled in his heart.”

In another similar report on him, the word *sirr* (a secret) instead of *shay*’ (something) [is used]. This is confirmed in the tradition:

“Whatever Allah poured into my heart, I poured into the heart of Abu Bakr.”

So know that.

One of the *‘arifs* eliminated the problem which the words of *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Qadir (may Allah be pleased with him) and the Messenger of God (s.a.w.s.) pose with regard to their statements about the abundance of prayer and fasting by saying: “Do not think that the two spiritual guides mentioned above did not pray or fast at all, but they prayed and fasted in addition to engaging frequently in supererogatory prayers and fasting (at the same time).”

Verily, what is intended by the words of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and of *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Qadir Jilani (may his secret be sanctified) is that they did not reach him (free of imperfection is He and Exalted) merely by means of abundant prayers and abundant fasting. So understand that.

It is said that the words of the Messenger (s.a.w.s.) and of *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Qadir Jilani (may Allah be pleased with him)” ... by means of abundant prayer(s) and fasting” mean [that there should be] an increase in supererogatory acts over and above the obligatory ones. So understand that.

Some of the freethinkers and heretics (may Allah protect us from their understanding) have a notion that a person will reach Allah (the Exalted) even without prayer and

fasting, on the basis of [the misunderstanding of] the text of the abovementioned tradition and the text of the words of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qadir referred to above. The position is that the matter is not so. And Allah (the Exalted) is responsible for guiding everyone and in His Hand (free of imperfection is He) is complete success and best realisation.

At this point we return to the original goal – and that is, no lord is to be worshipped besides Him – and this will happen only if the result of all the issues mentioned above has been attained practically and actually by the perfect servant and gnostic who has reached the goal in acquiring complete awareness and general perfection. Then he knows and recognizes through [his] knowledge and intuition that there is no existence in reality except that of Allah (the Exalted), and that if it were not for his manifestation in the totality of things, nothing would have existed.

For this reason one of those to whom the Divine truth has been manifested (may their secrets be sanctified) said that the perfect act of devotion of the servant is knowing that the object of worship is manifested in the worshipper. Otherwise, he cannot be a worshipper in reality due to [his] entry into covert polytheism. How can it be not so when he is the worshipper as well as the object of worship. He is the worshipper by virtue of the fact that the act emanates from him, and he is the object of worship by virtue of the fact that the origin of that act is referred to him. So understand that and do not err because in that are things which may cause one to slip.

Furthermore, it is also necessary for him to know and recognize that whenever he directs his attention to something – whatever it may be – he will find the Reality (Exalted be He) manifested, individuated and illuminated upon him, to him, and in him through the illumination of procreation and creation generally, and with special illumination [bestowed] on everyone according to his [own] special capacity. So understand that.

Furthermore, it is also incumbent upon one to know and recognize that there are four *qiblas* according to what one of the people with intuition from among the people of knowledge and gnosis had said. The first of these is called the *qiblah al-‘amal*, meaning the *qiblah* of knowledge. The third I called the *qiblah al-sirr*, meaning the *qiblah* of secrecy. The fourth is called the *qiblah al-tawajjuh*, meaning the *qiblah* of contemplation.

As for the *qiblah* of action, He (Allah) explains it in the verse:

“Turn then thy face in the direction of the sacred mosque (ii: 144).”:

So the *salah* will not be valid except by turning one’s face towards it literally, whether the worshipper is knowledgeable or ignorant. This *qiblah* is known as the *qiblah* of the common people. This *qiblah* could be far from the worshipper or close to him depending on his position. And it could be from a specific direction, whether from the east or west, or from the south or the north. And every one of the common people knows this *qiblah*. So understand [this].

As for the *qiblah* of knowledge, the [following] verse points to it:

“Wheresoever ye turn, there is the presence of Allah (ii: 115)”

This is known as the *qiblah* of the elect. The person when turning his face towards this transcendental *qiblah* is close to it in one respect and distant from it in another respect. In fact, in another respect he could be the *qiblah* himself at the same time and in the same position. Not everyone knows the secret of this abovementioned *qiblah* except the elect. So know that.

As for the *qiblah* of secrecy, it encompasses everything, and is manifest with everything in everything, upon everything, by everything, to everything, and everything emanates from it, and everything returns to it. It is the essence of everything, and it is itself everything. It is the first and the last, and the evident and the hidden, and it is closest to you but you do not perceive [it].

“And He is nearer to you ‘than the jugular vein’ (1: 16).

And He is with you wherever you may be. (lvii: 4).

There is nothing whatever like unto Him (xl: 11).”

and everything belongs to Him. So know that, for it is one of the hidden Divine Secrets and one of the essences of Divine Gnosis. Only the people of complete providence and perfect general happiness, encompassing their outer and inner [beings], accomplish this and attain success in this due to their following the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.). So establish that.

As for the *qiblah* of contemplation, it is an expression denoting the pineal heart in contract to the true heart referred to in the tradition:

“The heart of the servant is the throne of Allah.”

One of them (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

“The heart is unseen and the Reality is unseen therefore the unseen is more suitably related to the unseen.”

However, it is incumbent on the one who turns towards this *qiblah* to perceive the Real (free of all imperfection is he and Exalted) manifest in it with complete presence [of Allah] always, in all his circumstances and [at all] times. This activity was what the most eminent *shaykhs* of the *Naqshbandiyyah* (may Allah sanctify their secrets) used to depend upon.

As for us, we have obtained many benefits the blessings of which cannot be enumerated when we embarked upon this Way, and we occupied ourselves with this activity and were raised under the tutelage of our *shaykh*, the leader, the model of mankind; and he is the *shaykh*, the *wali*, in the Seen and the Unseen world without doubt or uncertainty – our master, *Shaykh* Muhammad Baqi al-Naqshbandi al-Yamanai<sup>16</sup> (may Allah sanctify his soul and illuminate his grave and may we benefit through him) Amin. May Allah benefit us in abundance beyond measure. So know that.

Now, no one will experience all that we have discussed nor accomplish it except the one who is us and we are he, externally and internally, in the world and the Hereafter. And Allah has taken it upon Himself to guide all mankind, and with Him (free of all imperfection is He) is the means of success, and He has the Kingdom of Divine Unity (*tawhid*). And Allah knows best.

Then after the abovementioned servant [who is] totally absorbed in Allah (the Exalted), and subsistent in Him, reaches [the stage of] absolute Unity of Being (*wahdah al-wujud*), free from otherness, eliminating duality, far removed from smelling the odour of hidden polytheism in addition to open polytheism, seeing everything as one of His manifestations, one of His illuminations and one of His individualisations. In fact, everything is identical with Him as a result of his having reached the stage of true nearness (*qurbah*) [to Allah] in which there can be no distinction.

Regarding this stage, *Shaykh* Abu Yazid al-Bistami said:

“I am from the Divine Essence  
and from the Divine Essence am I.”

The verses quoted above refer to this stage, i.e. the verses dealing with ‘encompassing’, ‘accompaniment’, ‘individualisation’, ‘nearness’, ‘selves’ etc.

One of the gnostics said by way of caution and instruction to the common people of the [Sufi] path: “Your nearness to Him (the Exalted) means that you personally feel his nearness to you. If not how will you be able to feel his nearness?”

Regarding the stage of “encompassing”, the [following] tradition also refers to it:

“If you are lowered with a rope, it will descend on Allah.”

Then he (s.a.w.s.) recited to [whom he was speaking]:

“He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Imminent and He has power over everything (lvii: 3).”

Why should it not be so when he is nearer to you than your soul, as already mentioned. For you are near Allah (the Exalted) by virtue of His accompanying you and His encompassing you in aspects and stages of all affairs related to this world and the Hereafter. In fact, He (free of all imperfection is He) was with you and encompassed you before your appearance in external existence; then you were in the phase of His qualities and His attributes, at the level of your non-existent state established in the eternal Divine Knowledge. Allah existed and nothing existed simultaneously with Him, and He is now in the state that he used to be then. Although one of the people of knowledge stated that the companionship (*ma’iyyah*) of Allah (the Exalted) with His servant is a reality, another one of them said that Allah is with you, but [*ma’iyyah*] is not with Him, according to the text. So comprehend and contemplate.

With regard to this stage also it is said that knowledge, the knower and the known are one, not different, as otherness here will be according to one’s understanding and outlook only. So look deep into the inner meaning of his words (s.a.w.s.):

“Those who know Allah best among you are those who know themselves best.”

and also his words:

“He who knows himself, knows his Lord.”

One of them has added to this the words:

“He who knows his Lord, ignores himself, and he who ignores himself, restrains his tongue.”

and also said:

“He who knows his Lord, restrains his tongue.”

So know and contemplate [this], for it is one of the finer points of knowledge and success.

Regarding this stage also, Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) stated:

“This inability to attain awareness is in [itself] awareness.”

And ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) added to it by saying:

“Persisting in pursuing the Reality is an act of polytheism.”

With regard to this stage, he (s.a.w.s.) alluded to it in his supplication:

“O Allah, increase my bewilderment of thee.”

because bewilderment is the goal of mystical intuition.

“O Allah, show us the truth as truth is an actuality, and bless us with complying with it, and show us falsehood as falsehood is likewise, and bless us with avoiding it.”

So understand that fully.

With regard to the verse, “He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Imminent”, and other allegorical verses; Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

“Whatever I looked at, I only saw Allah in front of it.”

And ‘Umar al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

“Whatever I looked at, I only saw Allah behind it.”

And ‘Uthman ibn Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

“Whatever I looked at, I only saw Allah with it.”

And ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

“Whatever I looked at, I only saw Allah therein.”

The theme of the utterances of the respected *imams* (may Allah be pleased with them) is one. As for the disparity, it is only with regard to their personal experience – each one according to [his] stage. So know that. Shaykh Abu Yazid al-Bistami also said:

“I performed pilgrimage in the first year, but I did not see the House nor the Lord of the House. Then I performed pilgrimage in the second year, and I saw the House but I did not see the Lord of the House. Then I performed pilgrimage in the third year, and I saw only the Lord of the House.”

It has been recorded that Shaykh Dhu al-Nun al-Misri<sup>17</sup> (may his secret be sanctified) met with one of the men of this stage while he was waking on the water of the Nile of Egypt. So Dhu al-Nun asked him:

““From where did you come, O man?””

“The man answered by saying: “He”.  
Then Dhu al-Nun said: “To where are you going?”  
The man said: “He”.  
Then Dhu al-Nun said: “What is your name?”  
The man said: “He”.  
Then Dhu al-Nun said: “Are you a human being or a *jinn*?”  
The man said: “He”.

He left him, and let him go his way, saying: “This is one of the wonderful strange things.”

It has been narrated on the authority of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) that he said:

“Do not give preference to me over Yunus ibn Matta.”

One of the people of knowledge said that the meaning of this tradition of not giving preference to him (s.a.w.s.) over Yunus (peace be with him) is only with respect to the ascension, not in general. So understand [that]. Likewise, just as he (s.a.w.s.) mounted the Buraq and ascended to the uppermost heaven until he reached his Lord, so Yunus (may peace be upon him) mounted the large fish to the lowest level until he reached his Lord. This tradition supports the tradition mentioned earlier (“If you were lowered with a rope...”).

It has also been reported from him (s.a.w.s.), in words [conveying] the meaning, that he said:

“Six angels gathered at Makkah, the noble [city]; one of them came from the top direction, another from the bottom direction, another from the east, another from the west, another from the south, and another from the north. Each of them enquired of his companion with the words: “From where did you come?” And each answered with the words: “From the presence of our Lord”.”

So understand [this].

It has also been reported in the tradition that he (s.a.w.s.) said:

“Verily, the highest assembly certainly seek Him with your presence as you seek Him with them.”

So understand that.

Now if it is so, then the essence of the whole discussion is the witnessing of His Absolute Unity and His manifestation and His individualization through it, and the knowledge that none exists in reality except Allah (the Exalted) and His Attributes. Therefore the *shaykh* of our spiritual master, the *wali*, the ‘*arif*’ of Allah (the Exalted), *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Fadl Allah al-Burhafuri<sup>18</sup> (may his secret be sanctified) said:

“Verily everything in existence is identical with the Divine Reality (Exalted is He), with respect to existence, and different from Him with respect to individualisation.”

The reality i.e. the reality of the matter, meaning the essence of the matter, is that everything is the Real (free of all imperfection is He and Exalted). How can it be not

so when “He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Imminent” (lvii: 13) and “He is the one to whom nothing can be compared” (xl: 42), and everything belongs to Him. This is one of the most amazing things that He combines (in Himself) two contrary aspects.

It was said to Abu Sai’d al-Kharraz<sup>19</sup> (may Allah sanctify his secret): “How did you come to now Allah?” He said: “Through His combining of two contrary things”. So understand the truth of the matter, because one may slip with regard to that, and success is through Allah. In spite of this, He (free of all imperfection is He) is described as:

“Say, He is Allah, the One and Only;  
Allah, the Eternal, Absolute;  
He begetteth not, nor is He begotten;  
And there is none like unto Him (cxii: 1-4).”

So, O my beloved and coolness of my eye, if you desire peace in the world and the Hereafter, do not depart from the stage of this chapter and from these verses; and you will be bestowed with eternal happiness and peace. Furthermore, the essence of the discussion also is that it is incumbent on the perfect servant not to attach his heart to anything but Allah (the Exalted), as whosoever attaches his heart to anyone other than Him is veiled (*mahjub*) and distant from him (the Exalted). Verily whosoever is veiled and distant from Allah (the Exalted) will neither become a perfect man, nor a gnostic who has reached the Goal even though the whole of existence may be one of his manifestations, one of his individualisations, and so on. The pursued, intended and desired object in reality is nothing but the individualised, illumined manifestation whose existence is the existence of the Absolute which is not subject to any limitations. So understand and establish that.

As for the “*qull*”, it is one of the intricate mysteries, emanating from one of the [divine] lights. And success is due to Allah, and it is in His power to grant [this] realisation. So I seek refuge in Allah from the veil which cannot be lifted and the distance after which there is no proximity, nor return to Him (free of all imperfection is He and Exalted).

Therefore, *al-Sayyid* Abu Bakr ibn Salim al-‘Aynati, famous in Hadramawt (may his secret be sanctified), said:

“My punishment is my veiling from You  
even when I am in Paradise;  
but if You are pleased with me  
I do not mind being in the fire.”

Verily, the highest goal and foremost pursuit is [attaining] the pleasure of Allah (the Exalted) and reaching Him (free of all imperfection is He and Exalted). The intention of the gnostic who has reached the Goal and the distinguished disciple, is to have no desire except Him (the Exalted) in the world and the Hereafter. Even though his eternal self may be preoccupied with the world, his heart is attached to Allah, not to anyone else. Regarding this stage, the tradition states:

“Place the world in the palm of your hand and do not place it in your hearts.”

One of the gnostics said:

“The world is forbidden to the people of the Hereafter and the Hereafter is forbidden to the people of the world and they are both forbidden to the people of Allah.”

He (s.a.w.s.) also said:

“The people of the world are served by male and female slaves, the people of the Hereafter are served by free men and distinguished men, and the people of Allah (the Exalted) are served by kings and sultans.”

So know that. Consider what is said and do not be concerned about who said it. Acquire wisdom from Luqman and “enter the homes through the doors” (ii: 189).

The writer of these words has made his declaration. May Allah (the Exalted) endow him with complete success and make him, if Allah (the Exalted) wills, among the people who have accomplished the Goal. This is the last of what he could accomplish in writing this blessed treatise with the grace of Allah, Amin, O Lord of the Worlds.





### Chapter 3

## ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION: *TUAN GURU* AND THE FORMATION OF THE CAPE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Achmat Davids

### INTRODUCTION

Islam, though present at the Cape since the arrival of the first slaves, never became a vibrant binding force between slave and free black, except for a short period around *Shaykh* Yusuf's settlement at Faure at the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>1</sup> From the description of two religious functions of the Cape Muslims of the 1770's,<sup>2</sup> we get the impression of a ceremonial, rather than a resistant, Islam being practised. This would have been in conformity with the needs of both the slaves and the free blacks – both of whom needed religion as a cultural expression.

The ceremonial approach still dominates the cultural-religious practices of the Cape Muslim, and is seen in such activities as *rampie-sny*, *doopmal* (the naming ceremony of the new-born baby with all its trimmings: with crow-foot-like insignia drawn on the forehead, the baby being carried on a tray decorated with flowers) and the *kersopstiek* (the ceremonial lighting of candles on the twenty-seventh night of the month of *Ramadan*). These practices show how strongly the syncretic mysticism of the eighteenth century has made an impact on the cultural life of the community.

The syncretic mysticism resulted from acculturation. The adaption accommodated cultural traits from the Hinduism and animistic forms of worship into the religious practice of Islam by the newly converted slaves. It was through *madrasah* education at the Cape that the new cultural traits, together with the religion of Islam, were perpetuated.

The *madaris* (plural of *madrasah*), by virtue of their uniform educational approach<sup>3</sup> and its attractiveness to vast sections of the slave and free black population in Cape Town,<sup>4</sup> provided the ideal ecological base for the transmission of cultural and religious ideas. As a result of their transmission and perpetuation in the *madaris* and enactment through the mosques, these cultural traits became assimilated and formed an intrinsic part of the communal social life of the slaves and free blacks living in Cape Town during the early years of the nineteenth century.

Such an important role did the *madaris* play as a cementing force in their communal relatedness, that in 1838, the Reverend James Willis Sanders, a Christian missionary at Stellenboasch, was moved to admiration for the educational efforts of the Cape Muslim community, especially the role of their *imams*. He writes:

“... they have always deeply sympathized with their brethren in slavery. They have raised a fund to make as many as they could free, and have opened schools for the instruction of the coloured children ... the black man as no desire to enter into the Christian church whose gates have been so long shut against him, he prefers joining with those who have been his friends in his distress, who invited and encouraged him to bring his children to the same school, to attend the same mosque, and to look forward to meeting again in the same paradise.”<sup>5</sup>

Shell argues that Muslim education encouraged conversions in many ways. The *madaris* were opened to all, irrespective of race, and thereby drawing otherwise excluded children into the field of Islam. Islam provided an alternative education for those suspicious of the Christianity of the State. But, most important, he said, was the fact that the *imams* were conducting lessons in Afrikaans, which appealed to the largest linguistic pool at the time.<sup>6</sup> The *madaris*, therefore, played an important role as institutions of assimilation and as vehicles for the transmission of religious and cultural ideas. It was through the *madrassah* system that the matrix of the slave world was maintained.

That the followers of Islam remained a small group during the eighteenth century is evident from a statement of Abd al-Bari, one of the first students of the Dorp Street *Madrassah*. He stated that the school had been established in 1793 with very few students, but that the number had increased so rapidly that soon – in 1795 – a mosque was required.<sup>7</sup> This school and mosque were the first institutions of the Cape Muslims providing them with a vehicle and cultural ecological base for the transmission of their cultural-religious ideas. The phenomenal success could be ascribed to the theological-philosophical base provided by the founder, *Tuan Guru*. His theological philosophy provided the matrix for the slaves and the free blacks to function together as a cultural-religious entity without threatening their respective stations in life. At the same time, this theological philosophy provided for the slaves a possibility of social mobility and a fair degree of protection from the harsh treatment of their free-black slave-masters. From this embryo, Islam at the Cape developed to become the religion of a third of the population in Cape Town in 1842.

The basic elements in this matrix were drawn from the rational traditional philosophy of *Sunnism*, of which *Tuan Guru* was a follower. He expounds this philosophy extensively in the *Ma'rifah al-Islam wa al-Iman*, the manuscript he compiled in 1781 while still incarcerated on Robben Island. The manuscript became the main textbook of the school, and greatly stimulated writing amongst the slaves as parts were copied as student note-books. Through over 600 pages, the *Ash'arite* concepts of *taqdir* (predetermination), *iradah* (the Will of God), *taqwah* (piety, attained through fearing God, and being submissive to His commands) and *iktisab* (acquisition – in the sense that God created the acts of man, and man acquires them) – all linked to *Qada* (the Judgement of God) and *Qadar* (the Decree of God) – *Tuan Guru* manages to weave a system of social relations in which the slaves and their free-black slave owners could

coexist harmoniously. In terms of this system of social relations, it was possible for a slave to be appointed as *imam* of a congregation or an assistant *imam* of a mosque, for differences between men were not measured in terms of social station or material possession, but differences in the acquisition of degrees of piety (*taqwah*).<sup>8</sup>

Tuan Guru appointed Achmat of Bengal as the assistant *imam* at the Dorp Street Mosque<sup>9</sup> in 1806, the year before he died, though Achmat was still a slave.<sup>10</sup> The Simon's Town Muslims appointed the slave Abdolgaviel (probably Abd al-Hafeez) as *imam* of their congregation in 1823.<sup>11</sup> It was in terms of this appointment that Abdolgaviel applied for a piece of burial ground for his congregation becoming the first slave ever in whose favour a land grant was made.<sup>12</sup>

The point is that being slaves would not have prevented them from asserting their authority, for such authority would be in *iradah*, i.e. the Will of God, as was determined for a person. This is substantiated by the *Quran*; "Obey God, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you."<sup>13</sup> In terms of Islamic jurisprudence or *Fiqh*, slaves would not be able to lead the Friday congregational or *Juma'ah* prayers, for which freedom from slavery was a prerequisite.<sup>14, 15</sup> It was argued that the slave, being exempted from paying the compulsory poor rate (*zakah*), even though he has a *nisab* (the minimum property on which *zakah* is due),<sup>16</sup> is "incomplete" (the communal word is *onvolkoem*) with regard to expressing the four basic principles of faith – belief, prayer, paying *zakah*, and fasting – required from the person who leads the *Juma'ah* prayers. This explains why Achmat of Bengal, who was still a slave, and though a very pious man, was not immediately appointed to the position of *imam*, and why Jan of Boughies in 1836 disputed that he was ever appointed as *imam*.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, within the system of social relations suggested by *Tuan Guru*, there was sufficient space for the social mobility of the slaves within the Islamic social structure.

The *Ma'rifah al-Islam wa al-Iman* had a profound influence on the social life of the Cape Muslims during the nineteenth century. It was their basic reference on religious issues, even cited as such in a Cape Supreme Court litigation in 1873.<sup>18</sup> Its basic philosophical position still forms the approach to *aqida* (the Islamic belief system), and became the subject of several Arabic-Afrikaans and Afrikaans (in Roman script) publications in the late nineteenth and throughout the twentieth centuries. The most recent of these publications is the *Akiedatoel Moesliem – 'n Kietaab oor Tougied* by M.A. Fakier, published in Afrikaans in Roman script in 1983.<sup>19</sup>

I shall look more intensely at the Ash'arite theological philosophy, and *Tuan Guru's* exposition of it, further on. At this point it is sufficient to note that this philosophy provided the matrix of the milieu of the Cape slave world, and explains the Cape Muslims' determinism with regard to calamities or even politics, articulated in terms of "*Alles is in die takdier van Allah*" (Everything is determined by Allah); or every happening being articulated in terms of this perception of predetermination – "*Alles is in die kadaa-kadar van Allah*" (Everything is according to the general and particular decrees of Allah).

## THE CAPE MUSLIM EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

### An institution of assimilation and cultural transmission

It was also through the *madrassah* that the distinctive cultural traits of the community, some directly from the religion of Islam, others from the processes of acculturation and accommodation in a new social milieu, were reinforced and transmitted.

### Reading and writing – the rote learning modes

Organised *madrassah* education at the Cape seems to have emerged only in 1793, with the establishment of a religious school in the warehouse of the home of Coridon of Ceylon in Dorp Street. The same premises two years later doubled up as the first mosque in the Southern hemisphere, the *Auwal* (the First) Mosque. Prior to this, religious education had probably been conducted in the homes of the free blacks, with the only possibility of an organized system having been at *Shaykh* Yusuf's sanctuary at Faure in 1694. It was at Faure during *Shaykh* Yusuf's time, according to oral tradition, that the *Quran* was first recited in South Africa.<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, like most aspects of their socio-cultural life, their system of education, as first developed at the *madrassah* in Dorp Street, also remained fairly static. The educational method was essentially a rote learning process, and the Melayu rhythmic mnemonics – imported from the South-East Asian Archipelago during their days of slavery, and used for the teaching of the consonant and vowel sounds of the Arabic alphabet – was until recently still used in Cape Town. There is thus hardly a Cape Muslim, over the age of thirty years, who has not been taught Arabic reading in this manner, and does not remember these rhythmic mnemonics. Here is a part of one of them (read in Afrikaans):

“*Alief dettis ‘a’; alief bouwa ‘ie’; alief dappan ‘oe’; ‘a’, ‘ie’, ‘oe’*

*Ba dettis ‘ba’; ba bouwa ‘bie’; Ba dappan ‘boe’; ‘ba’, ‘bie’, ‘boe’*

*Ta dettis ‘ta’; ta bouwa ‘tie’; ta dappan ‘toe’; ‘ta’, ‘tie’, ‘toe’*

*Tha dettis ‘tha’; tha bouwa ‘thie’; tha dappan ‘thoe’; ‘tha’, ‘thie’, ‘thoe’*

(and so on until the end of the Arabic alphabet).

The rote learning approach is amplified more clearly in the method of the *koples boek*. In terms of this method the student is required to transcribe a lesson, either from a chalkboard or dictation by a teacher, in a book called a *koples boek*. The student is then required to memorise it at home (getting the lesson into his head or *kop* in the literal sense) and recite it to the teacher on the next occasion. If his or her retention is good, the student is given a new lesson and the process is repeated.

It was these student notebooks, or *koples boeke*, which survived that we are able to gain some knowledge of the teaching method used during the early days of *madrassah* education at the Cape. The author has two such notebooks, dated 1806 and 1808, and

several others from various times in the nineteenth century, in his possession. These student notebooks show the continuity of the educational method which existed in the nineteenth century. From them we can also trace the changes in the medium of instruction, from Melayu to Afrikaans, in nineteenth century Cape *madrassah* education.

Although Islamic education today is terribly fragmented and disorganized, there was a time in their nineteenth century Cape history that the Cape Muslims had a highly organised system of education.<sup>21</sup> It was through this system of education that the Afrikaans language variety of the Cape Muslim community was perpetuated, and as noted earlier, the matrix of the slave world maintained. Then too through the education concepts and the basic philosophy of this system of education, the needs of the slaves and the needs of the free black slave-owners were held in equilibrium.

### **Madrassah education – its organization in the nineteenth century**

The Cape Muslim Islamic education system started with the establishment of the Dorp Street *Madrassah* in 1793. As the first institution of the Cape Muslims, it proved tremendously successful. By 1807, this *madrassah* or school had a student population of 372 slave and free black students,<sup>22</sup> a number which was to increase to 491 by 1825.<sup>23</sup> If we consider that, despite the intense Christian missionary activity, only 86 slaves out of a possibility of 35 698 in the Cape Colony were baptized between 1810 and 1824, approximately six per year,<sup>24</sup> the tremendous influence of the school on the slave and free black community becomes evident. We can thus understand the concern of the Earl of Caledon about the activities of the *imams* who were teaching the slaves precepts from the *Quran* and to read and to write Arabic.<sup>25</sup>

By 1825 there were two major Islamic schools in Cape Town and one or two smaller ones. It would appear from the available evidence<sup>26</sup> that, though these schools were rivals of each other, they offered basically the same education, and from a perusal of a student notebook used at the school at Simon's Town, pursued the same method of education. Nevertheless *madaris* – in the homes of several *imams* – continued to emerge in Cape Town and by 1832 no less than 12 Muslim schools existed in the mother city.<sup>27, 28</sup>

This proliferation of *madaris* necessitated some sort of coordination of the education system. Such coordination seems to have taken place, for by 1854, Islamic education at the Cape was exceptionally well organized and under the control of a single *imam mooti*,<sup>29</sup> or a “superintendent general of education” in today's parlance. Not only was it the responsibility of the *imam mooti* to look after the *madaris*, but it was also his responsibility to coordinate the educational activities of the schools which had been started by white converts to Islam, and which, apart from their Islamic component, were giving “instruction in English and Dutch, writing and ‘accounts’”, and which was, “perhaps equal to that of the Christian schools.”<sup>30</sup>

This organised system of education started to disintegrate by the time of the coming of Abu Bakr Effendi in 1862. The Ottoman Theological School, which he established in 1863<sup>31</sup> never became part of the mainstream educational system and possibly started the rivalry between Abu Bakr Effendi and Achmat Sadik Achmat, who was the *imam mootaa* at the time.<sup>32</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century the organisation of *madrassah* education no longer existed as a single system, and Islamic education was provided by several independent *madaris*, operated mainly from the mosques in Cape Town. The method of the *koples boek* and the Melayu rhythmic mnemonics were still in use. An innovation was the production of printed readers in Arabic-Afrikaans for the students. Thus, for example, in 1894, Hisham Ni'mah-Allah Effendi caused three Arabic-Afrikaans publications,<sup>33</sup> as children's readers, to be printed in Turkey. In 1907 *Imam* Abd al-Rahman Qasim Jamal al-Din, who was the principal of both the *Habibiyah Madrassah* in Athlone and the Al Azhar Mosque School in District Six, published readers for his students.<sup>34</sup> *Madrassah* education in the nineteenth century left the Cape Muslim Islamic education with three distinctive Melayu terms used even to this day. These terms are: *toellies* = to write; *ai-yah* = to spell; and *batcha* = to read.

### The educational philosophy

The tremendous success of the Dorp Street *Madrassah*, as the very first educational institution of the Cape Muslims, is attributed to the verve and enthusiasm of the founding *imams*. Most of them were slave-owners, and all of them under the leadership of *Imam* Abdullah ibn Qadi Abd al-Salam. His efforts to establish the school earned for him the nickname *Tuan Guru*, meaning "Mister Teacher". It was also his theological philosophy which formed the basis of Islamic education at the Cape, a philosophy still pursued even to this day.

*Tuan Guru* was, according to his will,<sup>35</sup> a *geweesent prins vant' landschap Tidore in Ternaten* (a former prince of the principality of Tidore in the Ternate Islands). It is difficult to ascertain why he was brought to the Cape. From the few details thus far discovered in the Cape Archives, he and three others were banished to the Cape for conspiring with the British against the Dutch. They arrived here on 6 April 1780, and were incarcerated on Robben Island.<sup>36</sup> While in prison, *Tuan Guru* wrote the *Ma'rifah al-Islam wa al-Iman* (Manifestations of Islam and Faith), an extensive and comprehensive exposition of the Ash'ari dogmatic creed of Sunnism which he completed in 1781. On his release from prison, *Tuan Guru* went to settle in Dorp Street, Cape Town, where he established the *madrassah*.<sup>37</sup>

*Tuan Guru's* theological philosophy, which formed the matrix of the Cape slave world, and the basic philosophy of the educational approach at the Dorp Street *Madrassah*, is extensively discussed in the *Ma'rifah al-Islam wa al-Iman*. In this book, *Tuan Guru* declares that he is a *Shafi'i* in theology and an *Ash'ari* in dogmatics. By this he implied

that in the ritual practice (*Fiqh* or jurisprudence), he was a follower of *Imam* Shafi, one of the four imams of the *Ahli Sunni wa al-Jama'ah* or Traditionalists. In dogma of belief (*aqida*) he was a follower of Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn Isma'il al-Ash'ari. This makes *Tuan Guru* a rational-traditionalist. To understand the rational philosophical-theological arguments of the dogma of belief, as expounded in the *Ma'rifah al-Islam wa al-Iman*, and which in turn influenced the socio-religious life of the slaves and free blacks, it is useful to look briefly at the historical arguments from which these theological-philosophical arguments emerged.

The founder of *Tuan Guru's* rational-traditional dogmatic school, Abu 'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn Isma'il al-Ash'ari, was born in Basra in 873. He was originally a *Mu'atazili*, and thus an Islamic theological philosopher who – with others in this philosophical mould – combined certain Islamic dogmas with Greek philosophical conceptions. To them reason and logic were more important than tradition (i.e. the practices of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.)) and revelation (i.e. the teachings of the Quran). In 912 Al-Ash'ari abandoned the *Mu'atazilis* and adopted the teachings of the *Ahli Sunni wa al-Jama'ah*, being greatly influenced by *Imam* Ahmad Hanbal, the founder of the *Hanbali* school of Sunnism.

Hereafter he devoted himself to the intellectual defence of the *Sunni* dogmatic position until his death in 935.<sup>38</sup> It is said that the movement towards the rational defence of the central dogma of belief of *Sunnism* (i.e. the *Sunni* concepts of *aqidah*) found its climax in the teachings of two great theological philosophers, al-Maturidi and al-Ash'ari.<sup>39</sup>

The “conversion” of al-Ash'ari to *Sunnism* and his subsequent differences with the *Mu'atazilis* need not be discussed in detail. It is sufficient to note that the essential difference between al-Ash'ari and the *Mu'atazilis* was the rejection of their notion that the *Quran* was created. Al-Ash'ari declared that the *Quran* was uncreated and the very speech of God.<sup>40</sup> Al-Ash'ari did not totally abandon reason, but worked out a position which may best be described as the support of revelation and tradition by reason: reason being subordinate to revelation. It is around this conceptualization that the Ash'ari theological philosophy developed its concepts of *aqidah* (belief). And it is in terms of this philosophical background that *Tuan Guru* wrote the *Ma'rifah al-Islam wa al-Iman* in 1781.

The *Ma'rifah a-Islam wa al-Iman* deals exclusively with the concepts of belief (*aqidah*) and as such deals with that part of the *Shari'ah* (Islamic law) known as the *Ilm al-Kalam*, i.e. the principles of belief or the knowledge of the existence of God – the *Shari'ah* being divided into two distinct parts, the *Ilm al-Kalam* and *Fiqh*. *Fiqh* is concerned with the practices of the religion, governing its rules and regulations, and hence projected as Islamic jurisprudence.

The manuscript is written in Arabic with interlineal translations in Melayu, occasionally Buganese, in Arabic script. It is vibrant with theological argument. True

to the Ash'ari tradition it is supported by reason and *dalil*, i.e. proofs from the *Quran* and Traditions. The main concepts of belief are excellently illustrated by diagrammatic explanatory representations. For the reader an understanding is created that in the final analysis, man's station in life, his material position and wellbeing, his very existence, is determined by the Will of God; and it is only in His power to change the destiny of man. Man has been given reason and the power to discriminate between good and evil, both of which are created by God, but man must strive to acquire (*iktisab*) good by being submissive to God's Will and attain piety (*taqwah*). This is the basic philosophy of the *Ma'rifah al-Islam wa al-Iman*.

The main theme of the first section of the manuscript, after clarifying the concepts of Islam and faith (*imam*), are the Will of God and the Power of God. The entire social structure functions around these concepts; and a man's primary concern is to acquire good and attain piety (*taqwah*), which is in God's Judgement and God's Power. These concepts are given Quranic support (*dalil*) by an extensive explanatory translation of Chapter LXVII (*Surah Mulk* – Chapter Dominion) of the *Quran*, which chapter expounds the Power of God and the Will of God. Man in his struggle to attain piety may, in his sufferings and afflictions, appeal to God who is Just and Merciful. In terms of this, *Tuan Guru* formulates medicinal spiritual prescriptions, i.e. *azimats* (talismans) and *isharah* (remedies) as a means of appealing to God.

These medicinal spiritual prescriptions, to which no more than ten out of the 600 pages of the manuscript are devoted, are strategically placed throughout the book, each to confirm and emphasise the Will and the Power of God. This does not make *Tuan Guru* a member of any *tariqah* or *sufi* mystical order, but it is in fact a rational-traditional Ash'ari response to two verses of the *Quran*: the *Quran* clearly states that in its words are healing powers (Chapter XVII verse 82); and the *Quran* refers to the powers granted by God to the Prophet Jesus to heal the sick by his permission and his Will (Chapter V, verse 113).

It is the determinism inherent in the Ash'ari rational-traditional theological philosophy which conditioned the slaves in the acceptance of their subjugation, and assured for them good treatment from their free black slave-masters, who feared the "acquisition" (*iktisab*) of evil which they might attain through injustice and ill treatment of their slaves. This explains apart from the fact that this system gave them social mobility, why the slaves generally never resisted their slavery, even after the formation of the Cape slave world.

It also explains why the nineteenth century Cape Muslims never organised politically, as a community, against the state; but resisted the regulations imposed upon them during the nineteenth century smallpox epidemics, and the closure of their urban cemeteries in 1886.<sup>41 42</sup> It was only when the state regulations were perceived as being contrary to *takdir* (i.e. the predetermined Will of God), that the Cape Muslims reacted. Interference in God's Will (*iradah*) is contrary to a tenet of belief. It is – in *Tuan Guru's*



terms – attributing to God *karahah*, defined by him as the “persuasion of God against his Will” which he says is “impossible” (*mustakhil*) as an attribute of God.<sup>43</sup>

The second section, if we can call it a section (for the manuscript is not divided into sections or chapters), starts with a biography of Muhammad Yusuf ibn al-Sunusi, who was born in Tlemsen, Algeria in 1486. He was a foremost Ash’ari *Sufi* theological philosopher who formulated a short creed on belief called the “*Sunusiyyah*”. Muhammad Yusuf ibn al-Sunusi must not be confused with Sidi-Muhammad ibn Ali al-Sunusi, the founder of the nineteenth century *sufi* order, the *Sunusiyya Tariqah*, i.e, the *Sunusiyya Sufi* brotherhood.<sup>44</sup> The militaristic philosophy of this brotherhood contradicts the determinism of the Ash’aris. *Tuan Guru* could not have been a member of this *sufi* brotherhood since it emerged only late in the nineteenth century.

The *Sunusiyya*, which was formulated by Muhammad Yusuf ibn al-Sunusi, and which became known in Cape Town as the *twintagh siefaats*, (i.e. the twenty attributes), asserts that every believer must know twenty attributes (*sifat*) necessary in respect of God, and twenty attributes impossible (*mustakhil*) for Him. The *Sunusiyyah* is extensively philosophical, for within the twenty attributes necessary for God are seven attributes of form, which have to be distinguished from seven very similar attributes pertaining to form. Within its reasoning context, the *Sunusiyyah* gives recognition to all 99 attributes of God which Muslims accept.

The *Sunusiyyah*, as formulated by Al-Sunusi, is reproduced *in toto* in the manuscript, and translated by *Tuan Guru* in Melayu in Arabic script. It acts as a convenient embodiment of the basic philosophy which *Tuan Guru* expounds in the first section of the manuscript.

It is the *Sunusiyyah* which proved the most popular and convenient part of the manuscript for rote learning; and several copies were transcribed from the original *Ma’rifah al-Islam wa al-Iman*, with the Melayu translations, as handbooks and readers for the students at the Dorp Street *Madrassah*. The author has two such copies in his possession and he has examined several others, including the one used by the slave *imam*, Abdolgaviel, of Simon’s Town, which has remained extant. It represents the most extensive example of the literary exploits of the Cape Muslim slaves prior to emancipation.

It is also the author’s contention that the *Sunusiyyah* or *twintagh siefaats* provided the slaves with an understanding of a rational unitary God, which the Christian missionaries with the concept of Trinity could not penetrate. The *Sunusiyyah* remained the main teaching subject of the *madaris* in Cape Town until well into the 1950’s and 1960’s, when the author as a child was required to memorise its concepts and reasoning context without fully comprehending them.

*Tuan Guru's Ma'rifah al-Islam wa al-Iman*, especially the portion dealing with the twenty attributes or the *Sunusiyyah*, became the main text of the Dorp Street *Madrassah* during its founding years. The other important subject was Arabic reading. At least one handwritten Arabic primer of the school has survived, and is currently filed in the Grey Collection in the South African Library.

Arabic as a language does not appear to have been taught, though Jan of Boughies was designated Arabic teacher.<sup>45</sup> His duties probably involved teaching the children to read the Arabic *Quran*. Several handwritten copies of the Arabic *Quran* were written from memory by *Tuan Guru* and the former slave, Rajab of Boughies, as additional readers. The recitation of the Arabic *Quran* is a requirement for the reading of the prayers. This does not necessitate a knowledge of the Arabic language. That Arabic, as a language, was not taught is evident from the very few Arabic loan-words in Cape Muslim Afrikaans. Such loan-words from Arabic are mainly confined to religious terminology, where these words were already inflected in Melayu from which language they were bridged into Cape Muslim Afrikaans. Then too, the need for Melayu translations indicates the limited knowledge the students had of the Arabic language.

From one of the student notebooks in the author's possession it would appear that the basic aspects of ritual ablution and prayers were taught. In 1797, *Tuan Guru* translated the *Al-Tilmisani*; and in 1798, the *Talilul-Chairah* into Melayu in Arabic script. Both these manuscripts deal extensively with Islamic ritual practice and the related laws. It was, nevertheless, the *Ma'rifah al-Islam wa al-Iman* which seems to have had the greatest impact on the Cape slave and free black community, and which provided the impetus for Islamic education at the Cape.

If one single factor has to be identified as being responsible for the survival of Islam in nineteenth century Cape Town, that factor is obviously the strength of the organised *madrassah* education system. Through this system with its rational-traditional theological philosophy the communal cultural and religious traits were reinforced and perpetuated. The *Sunusiyyah* in particular played a vital role. It gave the Cape Muslims rational answers for their belief in a unitary God.



## Chapter 4

# **“MY RELIGION IS SUPERIOR TO THE LAW”<sup>1</sup> THE SURVIVAL OF ISLAM AT THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE**

**Achmat Davids**

Whatever the future prospects of the Cape may be, it is certain that the Malays are destined to form permanently a part and parcel of the mixed races here. It may be observed that no country on the face of the earth is more mixed in its inhabitants than the Cape. The different occupants of the soil are almost too numerous to mention, but the mixture is suggestive of much speculation regarding the future of the Cape eventually. It is in this mixture partly that the difficulty in legislating for the general good lies, and doubtless this has been felt by the various Governors, as well as others who have entered our colonial affairs, whilst probably too the Home Government has found the solution of the knotty question of pleasing all parties equally perplexing.<sup>1</sup>

This is how a Cape colonist describes the difficult racial situation in the Cape of Good Hope in 1883. How much genuine concern there was for finding “the solution of the knotty question of pleasing all” is difficult to say. Legislative measures, introduced by both the local and central governments, favoured the ruling class. In them were vested the power to legislate and control, and their interest counted most.<sup>3</sup> People of colour, like the Cape Muslims, who constitute the poor, were on the receiving end. This is particularly evident from the various ways the franchise issue was manipulated from 1853 onwards.<sup>4</sup>

A year prior to this statement by a Cape colonist, the Cape Muslim community showed their teeth for the first time. They had patiently endured the harsh measures imposed upon them during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries’ smallpox epidemics. These measures did not take cognizance of their particular needs or social position. Nor were they implemented with any form of justice or consideration for the Cape Muslim sentiment.<sup>5</sup> By 1882, the Cape Muslim community could endure these measures no longer. They responded by declaring that their “religion is superior to the law”, and openly showed their defiance.

Three years later, greater trouble for the ruling authorities were to emerge. Cape Town experienced the first urban uprising of a black community in the history of South Africa. Government action caused the closing of the Muslim cemeteries on the slope of the Lion’s Rump. This was not going to be tolerated by the community. On Sunday

17 January 1886, 3 000 Cape Muslims walked from Woodstock, through the heart of the city, in a protest funeral, to forcibly bury a child in the cemetery at the top of Longmarket Street, on the road leading to the Lion's Rump. This cemetery was arbitrarily closed for burial on 15 January 1886, in terms of the Public Health Act No.4 of 1883, a piece of legislation the Cape Muslim community had protested against since it was first mooted after the smallpox epidemic of 1882.<sup>6</sup>

On two occasions in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, this normally law-abiding and loyal community suddenly found itself in conflict with the law. On the second occasion they made it perfectly clear that they would "die to the man" to enforce their rights to bury their dead in their traditional manner, by carrying the corpse to its last resting place.<sup>7</sup> They also made it clear that: "We ... are to have our turn now. You have ruled over us long enough."<sup>8</sup> Idle as this threat might have been, it clearly shows how deep-seated was their resentment.

Both of these two instances left white Cape Town totally perplexed. Their newspapers reacted in typical racial fashion. The Cape Muslim action, designed to focus attention on their grievances, was seen by the press as a form of "oriental fanaticism", while the protest march was ascribed to the tendency to "run amok", which was deemed to be inherent in their blood.<sup>9</sup> However, what white Cape Town feared most was the loss of control. The strongest "ethnic" group, which constituted a third of the city,<sup>10</sup> defied the laws. The fact that these laws were unjustly applied, and that the grievances of the Cape Muslim community were real, received little attention. White Cape Town needed to regain control, and in a way that today is traditional, the "Volunteers" were called up for duty in 1886, to once again restore "law and order" in the city.<sup>11</sup>

Political power was never a major concern of the Cape Muslim community. White hegemony was the tradition in politics, and white politicians, who flirted for their votes, had occasionally to bend to their wishes. They were aware of this and used it, at times, to the best advantage.<sup>12</sup> However, their primary concern was their religion. They were committed Muslims, adhering strictly to the principles of their faith, totally resolved to practice their religion in ways that were meaningful to them without interference from the "infidel" authority. They were not prepared to make their religion subservient to bad politics or social influences.<sup>13</sup> Thus, had greater justice prevailed, and more attention been afforded to their religious needs and sentiments, they would have continued to have been "safe and credible allies"<sup>14</sup> of the white ruling authority.

## **THE BEGINNING OF ISLAM AT THE CAPE**

Ironically the nineteenth century dawned with great hope and good prospects for Islam and the Muslims of the Cape. After 150 years of intense struggle to establish their religion at this southernmost tip of the African continent, they were now on the verge of consolidating Islam. After the first British occupation in 1795, things began to become more favourable for them. When they approached General Craig, the British

commander, for permission to erect a mosque on the grounds “that the obstruction to the free exercise of their religion was prejudicial to the conduct of the lower classes”, he readily agreed to their request.<sup>14</sup> Sir George Yonge was equally accommodating in 1800. Thus, from the end of the eighteenth century, they not only had a mosque but also an effective religious school from which Islam was disseminated through the slave culture.

However, the real growth of Islam at the Cape only started late in the eighteenth century, and, strangely enough, it was the white colonists who were responsible for this growth. This was because of the white reaction to the 1770 regulations for the Statutes of India, and in particular their concern over the regulation which prohibited the sale of Christianised slaves. The colonists interpreted this as interference in their slave ownership rights, and instead of leading their slaves towards Christianity, encouraged them to become Muslims. Therefore these regulations, which had been specifically designed to promote Christianity among the slave population, in reality led to the promotion of Islam.<sup>15</sup> The result was that by 1800, the benches set aside for slaves in the Groote Kerk were empty.<sup>16</sup>

Writers generally agree that the period when Islam grew most rapidly at the Cape was between 1800 and the final emancipation of slaves in 1838.<sup>17</sup> From being a relatively small community at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Muslim community grew to become a third of the population of Cape Town in 1842 (about 6 435 persons).<sup>18</sup> There are many reasons that could be cited as being responsible for this growth, but the most prominent are the granting of religious freedom in 1804, and the active propagation of the faith by the imams from the first mosque and religious school in Dorp Street. Both these institutions, operating from the same premises, were established in the last decade of the eighteenth century.<sup>19</sup>

Our concern in this chapter is not with the growth of Islam at the Cape, but rather with the difficulties under which Islam struggled through the nineteenth century and the tactics employed by the Cape Muslims to ensure the survival of their religion. Religious freedom definitely played a role in these processes insofar as it created the milieu within which the Muslims could operate and practice their religion without any apparent interference by the authorities. We do not need, however, to admit that religious freedom did not remove the social, racial and political prejudices which prevailed in Cape society throughout the nineteenth century.

## **THE OBSTACLES OF SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND RACIAL PREJUDICE FOR CAPE MUSLIMS**

Historical evidence clearly shows that racial prejudice was not evident amongst the colonists in the early years of the history of the Cape of Good Hope. “Multi-racial” marriages were common occurrences,<sup>20</sup> and land grants adjacent to white land were made to people of colour.<sup>21</sup> The first secular school had a distinctive “multi-racial”

character,<sup>20</sup> and at least one early Governor, Simon van der Stel, had “eastern blood” flowing through his veins.<sup>22</sup> Christianity was the great leveler. The Cape, as part of Indian Empire of the Dutch East India Company, was governed in terms of the Statutes of India, and the Calvinistic tenor of these Statutes restricted Burghership rights to Christians who were members of the Dutch Reformed Church. These Statutes were particularly severe on Islam, and it is quite easy to see the reason for this. It was the Muslim Sultanates in south-east Asia who had most vigorously opposed Dutch imperialism in that region, and therefore the Company was not eager to see Islam being spread in their territorial possessions.<sup>23</sup>

In the Cape, Islam was tolerated but “never sanctioned or recognized”. However, great difficulties were placed in the way of Muslims. They were denied Burghership rights, their marriages were declared unlawful and their children degraded. They needed special permission and ample security to stay in the colony, even though they might have been born here. They were subject to arbitrary arrest. Their homes were entered and searched by the police at their own discretion and without warrants. They were required to carry passes and man the fire brigade as a gratuitous service for the authorities. Tremendous restrictions were placed on their freedom of movement.<sup>24</sup> Despite all these harsh conditions, they still managed to establish and maintain their religion of Islam at the Cape of Good Hope.

As the nineteenth century dawned, their differences in worship began even more to distance them socially from the white colonists. Religious prejudice was now joined with racial discrimination. The colonists came to regard their white skins as a symbol of superiority, while dark skins signified inferiority. The dark skinned person was treated reasonably, provided that “he kept his place”.<sup>25</sup> The roots of this racial discrimination compare closely with the roots of class discrimination as practiced in western Europe. As in that area, farming here was the major production activity, and this separates the landowners from the serving classes. But, unlike western Europe, the economic differences at the Cape were compounded by racial differences. This gave rise to racial discrimination, and so the Cape Muslims were doubly disadvantaged.

## **LIBERALISM AND ISLAM AT THE CAPE**

With the advent of the nineteenth century, changes in Cape Town were necessary if it were to keep abreast of the traditions of western Europe. These traditions, as a result of the French Revolution, had undergone tremendous changes. A spirit of liberalism had emerged in Europe which the administration at the Cape could no longer ignore. Thus, when the Cape was handed over to the Batavian Republic in 1803, the responsibility for implementing the rule of law fell to the new Governors, Janssens and De Mist. They were willing to accept this responsibility, having been greatly influenced by the spirit of liberalism, but their stay was unfortunately doomed to be short and the task fell to the British. Nevertheless, of all the liberal measures introduced by them, the granting of religious freedom on 25 July 1804 was the most profound.<sup>26</sup>

Religious freedom was a cherished ideal of the Cape Muslim community, and so, whatever other motives Janssens and De Mist might have had for introducing it in the colony, it earned for them the loyalty of the Cape Muslim community. This appreciation was expressed by the formation of two artilleries at the request of General Janssens. The members of these artilleries were willing to sacrifice their lives when, in 1806, the Cape was invaded by the British.<sup>27</sup> They were not defending the colony – they were defending their right to worship freely in their newly established mosque.

The spirit of liberalism, initiated by Janssens and De Mist, was continued by the British administration. In 1828, with the promulgation of Ordinance 50, the process of implementing the rule of law was set into motion. These measures, including the emancipation of slaves, did not remove the religious and racial prejudice which the Cape Muslim continued to endure. Legislative measures alone could not remove prejudice. It needed attitudinal change, which up to this day has not happened in South Africa. White colonists' responses to the measures of this rule of law included anger and indignation. The placing of people of colour on "an equal footing" with them was viewed with repugnance. Hoards of them left the colony to continue their racial bigotry in the northern provinces.<sup>28</sup>

The Cape Muslim also did not fully utilize these measures. The municipal franchise, granted in terms of Ordinance 3 of 1839, and the parliamentary franchise, granted in terms of the new Constitution of 1853, were qualified measures. Yet, despite this, a large percentage of Cape Muslims had the vote. Of the total of 6 435 Muslims in Cape Town, 830 qualified to vote in 1842,<sup>29</sup> a little less than fifty per cent of the total registered voters.<sup>29</sup> In terms of voting, they had the balance of power. Unfortunately, they did not use this to its full potential.

### **CONSOLIDATION OF ISLAM AMONG SLAVES AND FREE BLACKS AT THE CAPE**

This could be ascribed to their lack of confidence about their ability to participate freely in politics. Almost two centuries of exclusion from Burghership had possibly given them a mistrust and disinterest in the political structures that had been created and in which they were allowed to participate after 1839, at which time it was suddenly discovered that they were citizens. Then one also needs to consider that, at this period of their history, they were preoccupied with the consolidation of their religion. This was vital for the future survival of Islam in this city. From their point of view, the granting of religious freedom was not a right but a privilege that had been granted by the "infidel" authority, and which could be withdrawn at his whim and fancy.<sup>30</sup> In any case, these political structures had no meaning for them, as they had structured their own religious hierarchical system around their religion. The positions in this hierarchy were highly sought after and this compensated adequately for the denial of their status in the broader social milieu.<sup>31</sup> Politics held little interest for them and, as they saw it, would not have benefited the continued existence of their religion.

## FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE CONSOLIDATION OF ISLAM AT THE CAPE

They realized that it was only in terms of numbers that they could make any impact on the Cape society. They called for the active propagation of their religion in that section of the community that they would be the most likely to be able to influence – the slaves and the free blacks. They shared with them a similar bondage, racial oppression and social background. Commonality of kind was the greatest unifying denominator. This appeared to be realized when the first Cape Muslim religious school was established in 1793. The school proved popular from its inception and within four years the number of converts to Islam had grown to such an extent that a regular mosque had become a necessity.<sup>32</sup> This school continued to be popular throughout the nineteenth century, and by 1807 it was being reported that it had an enrolment of 372 slave and free black students.<sup>33</sup> This number increased to 491 in 1825.<sup>34</sup> The students were taught precepts from the Holy *Quran* and to read and write in Arabic.<sup>33</sup>

## RAMPIE-SNY AND RATIEP AS STRATEGIES TO ATTRACT SLAVES AND FREE BLACKS TO ISLAM

Apart from the medium of instruction, which was Melayu in the beginning and later Afrikaans as this language became progressively the spoken language of the “non-whites”<sup>35</sup> (a development that we will look at later), various other strategies were employed by the teachers in order to attract the heathen slave and free black communities to the fold of Islam. Among these strategies can be mentioned the practice of *Ratiep* or *Khalifa*, the eastern sword ritual, and *Rampie-sny*, the cutting of the orange leaves on the birthday of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Both these practices are of south-east Asian origin and are not really part of the religion of Islam. They were used at the Cape as innovations to attract uninitiated slaves, and in the process they became part of the traditions of the Cape Muslim community.

These innovations were the direct responses of the Cape Muslim community to the socio-political milieu in which they were functioning. This milieu dictated that occasions be created for the slaves to congregate and participate in “religious” activities in order to release them temporarily from the yokes of their masters and their slavery. They needed to be identified with a culture that was basically similar to the one that had belonged to their cultural homelands and their ancestral past, a past that they would never again experience. Most of the teachers at this school were themselves former slaves, so they must have known of the intensity of this need for identification with the past. Using the Islamic concepts of *dhikr* (a recitation of chants in praise of God) they structured around this some innovative activities with which the heathen slaves could identify.

*Rampie-sny* is essentially a ladies’ function and is noted for its colorfulness. It is the one occasion when ladies have complete access to the main section of the mosque, which is the section that is normally reserved for men. At the beginning of the



nineteenth century the white slave owners must have been impressed by the colorfulness of this elaborate celebration and, as whites do to this day, they believed it to be a holy occasion. This helped to gain a pass for the slaves which gave them the temporary freedom to participate, and so *Rampie-sny* became a vehicle which helped to draw the slaves into the fold of Islam.<sup>36</sup>

*Ratiep* or *Khalifa* is a sword game that is characterized by the hitting of a sharp sword across the arms or by driving sharp skewers through the thick flesh of the face without causing any blood to flow. The exercise is accompanied by drum-beating and an almost hypnotic chanting in Arabic. The exercise must have given the slaves tremendous feelings of power over their bodies, despite their bondage, and the hope in the afterlife that Islam had to offer. The nature of this afterlife was clearly articulated by one of their *imams* who said: "We teach them (the slave) to believe that their souls are free, and that they must look up to God to make them free when they die."<sup>37</sup> *Ratiep*, according to Mayson,<sup>38</sup> drew many converts for Islam. Its influence in this direction was bemoaned by one Christian writer who proclaimed that it was "luring away potential converts from the pure and rational faith of the Christians."<sup>39</sup>

In 1854, when the frequent occurrence of the *Ratiep* was creating a nuisance in Cape Town and an enquiry had been instituted to curtail its performance, the *imams* readily agreed that it did not form part of the Islamic ritual. By this time *Ratiep* had served its purpose for Islam and, although they agreed that it should be constrained, they did not agree to its outright prohibition.<sup>40</sup> There was no way that they were going to concede that easily to the wishes of the infidel authority on any matter, even one which was only partially "religious".

The performance of *Ratiep* demonstrated in practical terms that their religion was superior to the laws of the infidel authority, despite the nebulous religious nature of the ritual. The desire to have it banned must have been interpreted by the average Cape Muslim as fear for this power and therefore as fear for Islam. The *imams* must have sensed this communal feeling and, though they could not justify *Ratiep* in terms of Islamic law, they compromised by agreeing that it should be performed on only one day of the year, the 12<sup>th</sup> day of the Muslim month of Rabi al-Akhir, giving this day a Melayu name, *Amantu Ablas*.<sup>41</sup> In this way they appeased both their community and the wishes of the authority.

What the white objection to *Ratiep* showed, apart from the noise factor, is that the prejudice against the religious practices of the Cape Muslims was not a thing of the past. This was clearly evident in the white articulation on the issue in 1854.<sup>42</sup> The spirit of liberalism did not reign supreme. Racial discrimination and religious prejudice was still very much a part and parcel of the nature of Cape society. This is further evident when one looks at the various spheres of social activity in Cape Town. Thus, the social policy pursued by the state and private sector had a definite religious bias. This can be seen in health, welfare and education. In the case of welfare, poor relief for Cape Muslims was considered to be a means to "soften their hearts to

Christianity”,<sup>43</sup> while the primary purpose behind missionary education of Muslims was to condition them for the “civilizing” influence of Christianity.<sup>44</sup>

## CAPE TOWN MUNICIPALITY’S OPPOSITION TO HEALTH AND BURIAL MEASURES

The Colonial Office, which one would have expected to be free of both racial and religious prejudices, became a victim of the thinking of the society in which it functioned. This is evident from the health measures, and especially those that pertained to epidemics, which were promulgated. These measures clearly indicated that the interests of the Colonial Office, and subsequently the Cape Town Municipality, were not geared towards the needs and sympathy of the lower classes. In fact the lifestyle of the poor held inherent dangers for the ruling class (and this was especially so during epidemics), and the legislation was therefore designed to give greater protection to that class.<sup>45</sup>

In the nineteenth century the majority of the poor were Cape Muslims. Many of them had just risen from slavery, and their lifestyle was characteristic of any society in a culture of poverty. Overcrowding, ignorance, squalor and insanitary conditions were the order of the day. Under normal conditions this lifestyle did not concern those in authority, and as long as the “Malays” continued to provide an efficient labour force,<sup>46</sup> the conditions under which they lived or labored was of little interest.

Early in the nineteenth century the Cape Muslims displayed a religious objection to vaccination, quarantine, fumigation and hospitalization. It had already been noticed in 1812 that the Cape Muslims would suck each others’ arms after they had been vaccinated at the Vaccine Institute.<sup>47</sup> Instead of educating this community as to the dangers of their actions, during epidemics those in authority superimposed regulations upon them which they could hardly comprehend.

They regarded epidemics as inflictions imposed on them by God, and which could only be relieved by Him. It was for this reason that communal prayer meetings were organized by them during epidemics in the nineteenth century.<sup>48</sup> The predetermination of life and death is in the knowledge of God over which man has no power. Vaccination was seen as interference in the will of God on the part of the “infidel” authority.<sup>49</sup>

Their communal life revolved around their *imams* whom they regarded as being their spiritual guides. The *imam* was consulted on all occasions. He was their welfare officer, medical practitioner, social and financial adviser. The bond of communal solidarity was cemented through the *imams*. The visitation of the sick was not just his social responsibility, but it was a religious observation. To tell him at a time when he was most needed by his congregation that he could not visit the members of his congregation was a gross interference in his religious practices. This was bound to evoke the anger of his people.

Their burial rites also played an important role in conversion to, and the consolidation of, their religion. It created for them a sense of equality and dignity, which they were denied in the society around them, for, irrespective of social standing, the final ritual and dignity afforded the dead was one of the strongholds that Islam had over Christianity at the Cape.<sup>50</sup> Apart from this, the final ablution rite of the death is a compulsory ritual in Islam, no matter how the body might have been deformed or destroyed by the cause of death. To deny Muslims these ablution rites or the dignity of carrying the corpse to its last resting place was an interference that could not be tolerated by this community.

To add insult to injury it came to the notice of the community that those of their members who had died in the hospital from smallpox were being buried in coffins provided for the indigent by the Municipality.<sup>51</sup> This made them afraid of the state hospitals. They feared that they would die in hospital, in which case they would be denied the compulsory Islamic ablution and burial rites. Their other objection to hospitalization was the food. This was not provided in accordance with Islamic dietary laws, and hospital regulations rejected their own food which was brought from home.<sup>52</sup>

During the 1807, 1812, 1840 and 1858 smallpox epidemics, the Cape Muslim community endured these indignities in silent protest. They hid their smallpox patients from those in authority and denied the spread of the disease among them. They suffered tremendously and their death toll was high, but they had faith. This faith was gallantly shared by the *imams* who visited smallpox patients in their homes, without the indignity of being fumigated, while doctors examined these same patients with probes through windows.<sup>53</sup> There is no record that any of these *imams* contracted smallpox or died of the disease.

However, when the 1882 smallpox epidemic arrived, they could no longer suffer these indignities, and they openly showed their defiance by refusing hospitalization, quarantine, vaccination and fumigation, and when confronted by the authorities, they made it clear that their “religion is superior to the law.”<sup>54</sup> White Cape Town could not endure this. To cast aspersions on their integrity, the Cape Muslims were accused of contaminating the linen of whites with smallpox by rubbing it against the bodies of their dying.<sup>55</sup> The Cape Muslims denied this charge. They did not believe in contamination anyway, and so the germ theory was a rejected notion. But racist Cape Town was not easily appeased. Newspapers started to scorn them, to blame the spread of disease on their lifestyle and on their “mongrel” interpretation of their faith.<sup>56</sup> The suggestion was made that the “Malays” should be accommodated in separate areas, and the sooner this could be done, the better “for all concerned”.<sup>57</sup> Yet the Cape Muslims were not uncharitable. As soon as their demands were met, provision made for the ablution ritual and nurses drawn from their own community to care for their sick, they willingly complied with the regulations.<sup>58</sup>

The strength of character displayed by the Cape Muslims in the nineteenth century could be directly attributed to their belief in Islam. It was the one hope that they had,

and it was the one factor that bound them together. The Christian mission effort in Cape Town could not penetrate their resoluteness, despite the fact that they had authority on their side. The Cape Muslims adhered unflinchingly to their faith.

## OPPOSITION TO MISSIONARY WORK

At the beginning of the nineteenth century missionary work in Cape Town (in contrast with that in the rural areas) had no money, no direction, and no verve or enthusiasm.<sup>59</sup> When it was extensively engaged in, from 1850 onwards, it proved a complete failure. In 1848 the Bishop of Cape Town wrote:

“Even Mahomedans (sic) appear to have been more zealous than we in the work of conversion. There are, I believe, 8 000 recent converts to that false creed in southern Africa and the work is still going on. I grieve to add that I have been informed by many whose statements I cannot question, that the conversion even from Christianity to Mahometanism (sic) are by no means unknown in that colony.”<sup>60</sup>

All sorts of tactics were resorted to by the Church in their efforts to convert the Muslims. The most despicable was the publication and circulation amount the Cape Malays in 1870 of the publication *The Story of Hadje Abdoellah as Told by Himself*. This booklet by the Anglican Church caused ripples in the Cape Muslim community that stretched from Cape Town even as far as Paarl.<sup>61</sup> It was purported to have been written by a Cape Muslim, but in reality it was a publication of the Mission in Cape Town. However, it failed to help the missionary cause and it gained no proselytes for the Church. Those who prepared this document failed to recognize that it was not Dutch, English or Melayu in Roman script (the three languages in which the publication appeared), but Afrikaans in Arabic script which was the written language of the Cape Muslim community at that time.<sup>62</sup>

Even the Christian missionary schools, with their strong Christian orientation and purpose of inducing the “civilizing” tenets of the faith<sup>63</sup> could not break the Cape Muslim commitment to Islam. This is evident from the following comment by a Christian:

I could not learn that any heathen children and certainly no single Mahomedan (sic) child, had been found to embrace Christianity from choice or conviction in consequence of being at any of our schools, whilst it was living at home with its heathen or Mahomedan (sic) parents.”<sup>64</sup>

The fibre of Muslim life was strong, and this can be attributed to the way in which they had been exposed to the religion of Islam. Judging from the numerous nineteenth century notebooks that have survived, only the most fundamental aspects of the faith were concentrated on. *Aqidah* or belief, with the emphasis on *Tauhid*, the unit of God was the main subject.<sup>65</sup> Faith in the Islamic concept of God and obedience to Him was strongly inculcated.

However, the Cape Muslim community was not unaware of the possible influence of the Mission school on their children. Hence, in the words of Mayson: "At then years of age, occasionally at a later date, they are removed [from the Mission schools] to their own Malay schools, where they remained till they attained the age of fifteen."<sup>66</sup> They also conducted their own secular schools, under the tutorship of recent converts from Christianity, where the children were taught English, Dutch, writing and accounts. The standard of education was "perhaps equal to that of the Christian schools." They were rivals to the Mission schools, from which they drew away many of the better class of "Mahometan (sic) children".<sup>66</sup> It was, however, the Muslim religious schools, the first of which was established late in the eighteenth century, which represented the strongest barrier against indoctrination by the Christians.

Marais simplistically attributes the growth of Islam in the nineteenth century to the generosity and cleanliness of the Cape Muslims. He further adds that Islam was the black man's religion,<sup>67</sup> but this is only half the truth. A notion that was also prevailing at the time was that the Cape Muslims were purchasing slaves, converting them to Islam and setting them free.<sup>68</sup> There might have been some limited instances where manumissions were the case, but they were certainly not normal practice. The Slave Register, compiled from 1816 onwards, shows the names of several Cape Muslims as slave owners, many of whom were prominent members of the nineteenth century Cape Muslim community. A glance at these slave registers also show that very few of these slaves were manumitted before the final emancipation of slaves in 1838.<sup>69</sup> These slaves might have been better treated and they might have shared the food at their masters' tables,<sup>70</sup> but they were certainly not liberated. Freedom from slavery was therefore not a factor which attracted the slaves to Islam or which played a vital role in the survival of Islam at the Cape of Good Hope.

## **THE ROLE OF MELAYU AS A SLAVE LANGUAGE AND ITS DEVELOPMENT INTO AFRIKAANS IN THE SURVIVAL OF ISLAM**

The factor which played the most vital role, and the one which is generally overlooked by researchers, is language. It was language which provided the common bond between slave and free black, heathen and Muslim, at the Cape of Good Hope. It was also language which facilitated the spread of Islam through the slave culture and ultimately through the free black community in nineteenth century Cape Town. The importance of conveying religious ideas in a language that was readily understood by the slaves had already been recognized by a Colonial official in 1825 when he had said: "The slaves should be assembled in a separate place of worship and ... a preacher, who understood the Malay language be appointed by the government in a manner as is observed at Batavia, for their instruction."<sup>71</sup> This was never done by the Christian churches.

However, the Cape Muslim community used the common slave language, Melayu, to its full potential. That Melayu was actually used by the Cape Muslims as a medium of instruction can be determined from various late eighteenth century and early nineteenth

century manuscripts and student notebooks which have remained in existence.<sup>72</sup> From these books it can be determined that Melayu was definitely spoken and written in Arabic script in the first formal Muslim religious schools in Cape Town. Characteristic of these manuscripts and notebooks is the Arabic text with interlinear translations in Melayu. This influence of Melayu is still evident in the spoken Afrikaans of the Cape Muslim community today, where Melayu religious terms are preferred to their Arabic equivalents.<sup>73</sup>

It is generally accepted that all the slaves who were brought to the Cape from south-east Asia could speak Melayu, which was a common language from New Guinea to Madagascar.<sup>74</sup> Here at the Cape they came into contact with non-eastern slaves, many of whom spoke Portuguese, and Franken has shown that Melayu and Portuguese remained separate languages at the Cape.<sup>75</sup> The non-east Asian slaves must have been absorbed into the Malaysian linguistic system by which religious ideas were conveyed through the slave culture.

The confusion which faces researchers stems, however, from the fact that Melayu was not the only Malayo-Polynesian language which was brought to the Cape by the slaves. In the eighteenth century the majority of the slaves came from the south-western limb of the Celebes and spoke a language called Boeghies or Bugunese.<sup>76</sup> This was a highly developed language form with a distinctive alphabet and script.<sup>77</sup> The only letter ever written by a slave to the authorities was written in Bugunese.<sup>78</sup> But Melayu was already the religious language of the eastern slaves in south-east Asia, before the Dutch invasion of the islands. It is only reasonable to assume that Melayu in its Arabic written form was extended as the religious language of Islam at the Cape. This, of course, has now been confirmed by the discovery of the early nineteenth century notebooks.

Melayu, however, did not remain the religious language. Through force of circumstances the slaves were required to communicate with their masters in Dutch, and this Dutch became creolised to form the spoken Afrikaans of the Cape Muslim community. Possibly from 1815 it started to replace Melayu as the language of instruction at the Muslim religious school. By 1830 this spoken language was being acknowledged by journalists like C.E. Boniface as the language of the "non-whites".<sup>79</sup> By then it was also a written language of the Cape Muslim community, judging from the already established system of Afrikaans spelling in Arabic script that has recently been discovered in a student notebook dated 1845.<sup>80</sup> Further evidence to confirm this is provided by the abortive attempt by W.T. Robertson to have his English translation of the *Hidayut-ool Islam* printed in Cape Town in 1830. There was also going to be a version of this book in "Dutch", but the whole idea was abandoned when the Cape Town printers could not provide the Arabic script.<sup>81</sup>

The first book in Afrikaans in Arabic script was printed in Cape Town in 1856.<sup>82</sup> This was followed by the *Bayan al-Din* printed in 1869.<sup>83</sup> When Pannevis started his

campaign in 1872 to have the Bible translated into Afrikaans,<sup>84</sup> Islamic literature in Afrikaans in Arabic script was in wide circulation in the Cape Muslim community.

Their early use of Afrikaans gave the Muslim community a distinct advantage over the other religious groupings in Cape Town during the nineteenth century. Unlike the Dutch reformed Church which insisted on High Dutch as the religious language and the English Church which insisted on English, there was no dichotomy of language for the Muslims. The language spoken at home was the same as the one they used in the mosque for their religious ideas. This helped considerably to attract converts who were neither comfortable in High Dutch nor English. At the same time it also helped to prevent apostasy.

Language thus played a most crucial role in the survival of Islam in the Cape of Good Hope in the nineteenth century. Therefore, when their religion was assailed by the hostile forces of their common environment, the use of the language which they understood the best, their creolized Dutch, was used as the medium of their *imams* to expound to them the truth of their teachings and to instil in them the feeling that their religion was superior to the law.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter set out to examine the survival of Islam in the Cape of Good Hope in the nineteenth century. It has concentrated mainly on Cape Town, simply because it was from here that Islam was spread to the country areas. By 1850 a small Muslim community had emerged in Paarl,<sup>85</sup> and by 1880 there were mosques in Paarl and in Worcester.<sup>86</sup> These communities were reliant on the Muslims in Cape Town for guidance and direction in their religious activities. Factors which, therefore, hampered the survival of Islam in Cape Town were equally evident in the country areas. This can be concluded from a religious issue which emerged in Paarl in 1897 and ended up in the Cape Supreme Court. The *imams* of Cape Town were on that occasion relied upon for guidance.<sup>87</sup>

Because the issue was survival, this study worked on the hypothesis that there must have been factors which counteracted the survival mechanism. It concludes that these factors were in fact religion and racial prejudice, and that this prevented the finding of "the solution of the knotty question of pleasing all". It also shows that legislation alone is insufficient to bring about social change, and that for as long as the prejudice exists, progressive change is not only retarded, but retrogression easily sets in. This is clearly evident from constitutional tampering which occurred in the Cape Colony after 1861 when the Cape Muslims started to show an interest in politics. The first piece of legislation was the Parliamentary Registration Act of 1887 which raised the franchise qualifications, then there was the 1892 Ballot act which introduced a literacy test, and finally the Constitutional Ordinance Amendment Act of 1883, which removed the cumulative vote in Cape Town and made it virtually impossible for a Cape Muslim to attain a seat in the Cape Parliament. By the end of the nineteenth century the spirit of

liberalism was completely dead. Segregation started to become the new political dispensation for the twentieth century. Finally, the nineteenth century Cape of Good Hope was not as liberal as we would like to believe.





## Chapter 5

### **IMAM ACHMAT SADIK ACHMAT (1813-1879): IMAM, SOLDIER, POLITICIAN AND EDUCATOR**

**Achmat Davids**

When one unravels the history of the Cape Muslim community, one does from time to time encounter some exceptional personages who have made magnificent contributions to the development and culture of this community. Some of them are still vaguely remembered in the oral traditions, but others are completely forgotten. However, their achievements remain an integral part of our history. One such exceptional person is *Imam Achmat Sadik Achmat*, who was the *imam* of the Auwal Mosque in Dorp Street between 1872 and 1879.

#### **PERSONAL HISTORY**

*Imam Achmat Sadik Achmat*, who was the youngest son of *Imam Achmat* of Bengal and Saartjie van de Kaap, was born in Cape Town in 1813.<sup>1</sup> In all probability he received his religious education from his father, who was the leading *imam* in Cape Town, and the principal-teacher at the Dorp Street Madrassah at the time. The Dorp Street Madrassah is the oldest (and the first) organized religious institution of the Cape Muslims. It was founded by *Imam Abdullah ibn Qadi Abd al-Salam* (popularly known as *Tuan Guru*) in 1793. It was a popular institution and in 1825, when Achmat Sadik was a teenager, it had a student population of 492 pupils. This institution provided the training for virtually all the prominent *imams* who were resident in Cape Town between the 1850's and the 1880's.<sup>2</sup>

Some time before 1850 Imam Achmat Sadik married Gamiela (probably Jamilah) of Cape Town by Muslim rites. Very little is known about the life of Gamiela. She did, however, bear him three children – a son, Muhammad Hamzah, and two daughters, Bia Aminah and Jaera. Muhammad Hamzah and Jaera left no issue, but Bia Aminah married Abd al-Majid Mathews and left twelve children, six of whom survived to adulthood. Those who survived were Garatie, Khadijah, Muhammad, Ismail, Rashidah and Q'ishah.

It would appear that Achmat Sadik was not happy with the security provided by his Muslim community marriages, as such marriages were not legally recognized at the Cape, and the children from such marriages were regarded as being illegitimate. Such children would be disadvantaged should their father die intestate. It was probably for this reason that Imam Achmat Sadik entered into a civil marriage with Gamiela on 14 June 1866.<sup>3</sup> As far as the author is aware, this makes him the first Muslim to enter into a civil marriage contract at the Cape of Good Hope.

However, this civil marriage was to no avail. On his death Achmat Sadik compiled a will, but this could not be found by the estate administrators. The result was that the children did not fully gain from the estate of Saartjie van de Kaap, their grandmother. In fact his civil marriage contract was never used to substantiate his children's claim from the estate. The children were treated as though their father had died intestate.<sup>4</sup>

## THE MUHAMEDAN SHAFEE CONGREGATION

As a young man Achmat Sadik was already displaying a keen interest in the religious affairs of his community. He was barely twenty years old when he became involved with his brothers, Muhammad and Ha-min, and the sons of *Tuan Guru*, Abd al-Ra'uf and Abd al-Raqib, in the establishment of the Muhamedan Shafee Congregation in 1834. This congregation appointed Abd al-Raqib, the eldest son of *Tuan Guru*, as their *imam*, but he died shortly after his appointment. He was succeeded by his brother, Abd al-Ra'uf, with Ha-min Achmat as his assistant.

The reasons for the establishment of the Muhamedan Shafee Congregation cannot be accurately determined. At the time of its establishment the main actors were all members of the Dorp Street Auwal Mosque, an institution established by *Tuan Guru* in 1795. From *Imam* Achmat of Bengal's evidence,<sup>5</sup> he was instructed by *Tuan Guru* to prepare his sons, Abd al-Raqib and Abd al-Ra'uf, to ultimately take over the *imamship* of the Auwal Mosque. It would seem that the sons of *Tuan Guru* were reluctant to depose old *Imam* Achmat. Instead they established their own congregation with the aid of *Imam* Achmat's sons.

The involvement of their sons in a mosque and congregation barely a hundred metres from the Auwal Mosque where *Imam* Achmat of Bengal officiated as *imam* must have infuriated him and his wife, Saartjie. Before *Imam* Achmat died in 1843, he unexpectedly appointed Abd al-Bari, his senior *khatib*, as his successor. Abd al-Bari was by then an old man already into his eightieth year. Abd al-Ra'uf, the son of *Tuan Guru*, and his sons were completely ignored as far as any office at the mosque was concerned, though they were competent for such a position. Saartjie followed in her husband's footsteps. Before her death she altered her will to prevent her sons from having the honour of burying her. Instead she appointed *Imam* Abd al-Bari, her husband's appointee as *imam*, to officiate at her funeral. It was only after the death of *Imam* Abd al-Bari in 1851 that Muhammad Achmat became the *imam* of the Auwal Mosque.<sup>6</sup>

## ACHMAT SADIK – THE SOLDIER

From the time of his involvement in the establishment of the Nur al-Islam Mosque until the time when he participated in the Cape Malay Corps, very little is known about the activities of *Imam* Achmat Sadik Achmat.

With the worsening situation on the eastern frontier during the Battle of the Axe in 1846, all male citizens in Cape Town between the ages of 16 and 60 years were called upon to enlist as soldiers. This call did not go unheeded and on 4 May 1846 large crowds, amongst whom were several Cape Muslims, gathered in Church Square eager to enlist.

Enough Cape Muslims to form a company of Muslim soldiers enlisted. This company, the “Malay Corps”, was divided into three divisions and sent by sea to Algoa Bay.<sup>7</sup> Each of these divisions had one or two ranked Muslim officers and an *imam*. The presence of an *imam* in each division was essential for the devout Cape Muslims. It is recorded that they regularly celebrated their religious observances while serving on the eastern frontier.<sup>8</sup>

*Imam* Achmat Sadik was attached to the third division of the Malay Corps, which was under the command of Captain R. Granger. *Imam* Achmat sadik served in the dual capacity of fourth lieutenant and *imam*. The division also had a Muslim sergeant, Samoldien, a Muslim corporal, Valentyn, and a Muslim bugler, Ragamadien. Achmat Sadik was in the unique position of being both *imam* and lieutenant, and this is even more exceptional when it is considered that an officer’s rank was not given lightly. In most instances the officers were appointed from the wealthy families in the Colony who had the money to be able to afford to buy their official rank. In any case, his honorable rank as lieutenant must have been a severe handicap when the “Malay corps” rebelled on the eastern frontier.

The Cape Malay corps had hardly arrived in Algoa Bay when they started to express their discontent. This was because the soldiers were receiving letters from home informing them that their wives and children were starving. The rations promised by the government had not been received. The soldiers then assembled outside the Brigade office in Grahamstown, refusing to march to the mouth of the Fish River. After this they took the war “coolly enough, and when off duty lie about singing in the most harmonious manner.”<sup>9</sup>

The Cape Malay corps were honorably discharged on 16 September 1846, and praised for their sacrifices and gallant services in the war. The promise of a mosque site was kept, and they were given the site on which the Jami’ah Mosque in lower Chiappini Street was to be built. It was because of this land grant that this mosque is sometimes referred to as the Queen Victoria Mosque.

Our hero, *Imam* Achmat Sadik, unlike many of his division, returned to Cape Town. His return was captured in a Thomas Baines painting entitled “Lieutenant and Priest of the Malays”, and at the time of writing it is part of the Oppenheimer Collection. Depicted for posterity, Achmat Sadik is shown dressed in an *imam*’s garb, standing at attention while shouldering a firearm, with a *tuding* and rifle at his side. The crowd around him are waving their *tudings* and Union Jacks.

## ACHMAT SADIK - EDUCATOR

On his return to civilian life, Achmat Sadik devoted himself completely to the Islamic education of his community. As head of the Dorp Street *Madrassah*, an institution with over 1 000 pupils, he started to work towards the consolidation of Islamic education in Cape Town. This was no easy task, considering the rivalries amongst the *imams* at the time. Nevertheless, in 1861, Mayson<sup>10</sup> reported that the Islamic educational establishment was under the supervision of a single “*imam moot*”, or assistant *imam*.

The “*imam moot*” referred to by Mayson was Achmat Sadik, who is identified by the fact that he was also the assistant *imam* at the Auwal Mosque. In 1843, on the death of his father, Achmat Sadik took over the responsibility for teaching at the Dorp Street *Madrassah*. This was one of two large teaching institutions in Cape Town. Several *madaris* were also conducted in the homes of various *imams* in the city. These *madaris* taught the reading of the *Quran*, the basic concepts of the religion, and Dutch and English reading and writing.

A new type of Muslim school started to emerge in Cape Town during the closing years of the 1840's. These schools were conducted by white converts to Islam and they attracted, according to Mayson,<sup>11</sup> the better class Cape Muslim. They rivalled the Christian mission schools in their instruction of English, Dutch, writing and “accounts”, and were considered to be far superior to them.

With such a large educational establishment, Achmat Sadik, as “*imam moot*” and “Superintendent-General” of the Cape Muslim educational effort, must have had a busy time. It was probably under his supervision that the *Kitab al-Qawl al-Matin* (Book of the Truthful Word) was printed in 1856. The language used in this publication is uncertain. Van Selms<sup>12</sup> claims that it was the first book in Afrikaans. What is certain from the report in *Het Volksblad*<sup>13</sup> is that this publication was printed in the Arabic script and was intended to be one of a series for children. No copies of these texts have yet been found.

The unified system of education of *Imam* Achmat Sadik started to disintegrate after 1863. On that year Abu Bakr Effendi established the Ottoman Theological School in Cape Town. Abu Bakr Effendi refused to include his school in the integrated education system. There were many reasons for this, but one of them was his *Hanafi* teachings. This resulted in an intense rivalry between the two theologians. Achmat Sadik is probably the teacher shown in the famous 1849 sketch by Angas.

## ACHMAT SADIK – THE THEOLOGIAN

Achmat Sadik did not remain a schoolmaster. The *Cape Almanac* of 1860 listed him as a “Malay priest”, resident at 38 Dorp Street, one of the Auwal Mosque properties, for the first time. This property had previously been occupied by his brother

*Imam* Muhammad Achmat, who is listed as being resident in Buitengracht Street. Prior to this date the *Cape Almanac* had listed him as a “schoolmaster”, resident at 43 Keerom Street. From the 1860 entry, it would appear that in that year he was jointly *imam* with his brother. In 1872, on the death of *Imam* Muhammad Achmat,<sup>14</sup> Achmat Sadik became the *imam* of the Auwal Mosque. This appointment made him the third member of the Achmat-Hamzah family to become an *imam* at the Auwal Mosque.

He first became involved in communal theological issues when he and his brothers, *Imam* Muhammad and *Imam* Ha-mim, protested against the banning of *Ratiep* or the *Khalifa* in Cape Town. This issue resulted from the complaint by a white resident of Venter Street, off Long Street, that the noise of the tambourines was disturbing the peace. The police were called to investigate and an inquiry, instituted by Sir George Grey, resulted.

The Achmat brothers stood alone in their insistence that *Ratiep* or *Rifa’a* constituted an integral part of Islamic practice. Most of the other *imams*, and even their friend Abd al-Ra’uf, claimed that this was not the case. Nevertheless, the insistence of the Achmat brothers resulted in one day of the year – the 12 of *Rabi al-Akhir* – being set aside for *Ratiep* in Cape Town. This day is still known as “*Amantu Ablas*”.

It was in his response to two publications in 1870 that Achmat Sadik showed his mettle as a theologian. One of these publications was Abu Bakr Effendi’s *Bayan al-Din*, which appeared in manuscript form in 1869. This book strongly advocates Abu Bakr effendi’s *Hanafiyyah* stance, and makes some disparaging remarks about *Imam* Idris Shafi, the founder of the *Shafi’iyyah* school of thought. Abu Bakr Effendi was accused of wanting to introduce the *Hanafiyyah* school of thought into a *Shafi’iyyah* community.

The other book is *The Story of Hadje Abdoellah as Told by Himself*, which was issued by the Anglican Mission in Cape Town in 1870. *The Story of Hadje Abdoellah* appeared in English, Dutch and Melayu in Roman script. It negatively portrays Islam as a false religion, and the verses of the *Quran* are cited as fabrications. This book also claimed that the *imams* in Cape Town knew very little about their religion.

In response to these publications, Achmat Sadik circulated handwritten copies of the *Althilmithani*, a book on Islamic jurisprudence that had first been translated by *Tuan Guru* in 1798 as a handbook for the Dorp Street Madrassah. Achmat Sadik had been instructed from this book by *Imam* Hadji, the founder of Mosque Shafee in Chiappini Street. *Imam* Hadji was one of the teachers at the Dorp Street Madrassah and a *khatib* at the Auwal Mosque during the 1820’s.<sup>15</sup> This manuscript clearly set out the Islamic belief practices and clarifies the right of a Sunni Muslim to follow any one of the four schools of thought. A copy of this manuscript survived and is currently in the possession of *Shaykh* Abd al-Malik Abd al-Rauf.

Probably the saddest episode in his life is his Supreme Court defeat on the Shafi'i-Hanafi controversy in Cape Town. When *Imam* Abd al-Rauf died in 1869, he was succeeded by *Imam* Abd al-Raqib, his son, as imam of the Nur al-Islam Mosque. Abd al-Raqib was a young man, intelligent, but strongly under the influence of Abu Bakr Effendi. When he became *imam*, he followed the *Hanafiyyah* practices during the Friday *Juma'ah* prayers at the Nur al-Islam Mosque.

This irritated his congregations who went to complain to *Imam* Achmat Sadik, who was a trustee of the Mosque. He at first tried to persuade Abd al-Raqib to follow the wishes of the congregation, but he refused to do so, stating that as he was the *imam* of the mosque, he could do as he pleased. Achmat Sadik in 1873 therefore had no option but to apply to the Cape Supreme Court to have Abd al-Raqib removed from office. This resulted in a bitter court battle on doctrinal issues, with Abu Bakr Effendi as the main witness for Abd al-Raqib.

The court, on the evidence of Abu Bakr Effendi, ruled in favour of Abd al-Raqib. The case gained tremendous sympathy from both the community and the local press for Achmat Sadik,<sup>16</sup> and intensified the conflict between the majority *Shafi'is* and the minority *Hanafis* in Cape Town. The ramifications of the *Hanafi-Shafi'i* dispute is extensively discussed in *The Mosques of Bo-Kaap*.<sup>17</sup>

The question of a single *Shafi'i Juma'ah* in Cape Town was one of the major issues during the second half of the nineteenth century. In terms of the teachings of *Imam* Shafi'i, there should be forty worshippers present before a *Juma'ah* can be performed in any one area. With the increase in the number of *Shafi'i* mosques in Cape Town, all performing *Juma'ah*, the question of a single *Juma'ah* at one mosque became an important issue.

When *Imam* Shahibo went on a pilgrimage in 1874, he also went to seek advice on the *Shafi'i Juma'ah* from the learned *shaykhs* and *muftis* in Mecca. They supported the ideal solution – one *Juma'ah* at one mosque in Cape Town. When Shahibo returned in July 1875, he was eager to implement this ruling. Consequently, on Thursday 15 July 1875, Shahibo called together the *imams* of the *Shafi'i* mosques in Cape Town to discuss with them the ruling from Mecca. This meeting took place at the Jami'ah Mosque in Lower Chiappini Street.

Shahibo's explanations were generally accepted by those *imams* who were present. Only *Khatib* Jakoof, who was deputising for Achmat Sadik, then away on pilgrimage, dissented. *Khatib* Jakoof argued that he could not accept such a ruling without the consent of *Imam* Achmat Sadik. On Monday, 19 July another meeting was held at the Jami'ah Mosque. This meeting involved lay members of the Muslim community as well as the *imams*. Again Shahibo's explanations were accepted, with dissent coming only from *Khatib* Jakoof.

Having gained sufficient consensus, Shahibo went ahead with a single *Juma'ah* at his mosque on Friday 23 July 1875. *The Standard and Mail*<sup>18</sup> reported as follows:

“Yesterday the service at the [mosque] of *Imam* Saibo were taken by Hadji Achmat [Salie] in accordance with the directions which were given to the former on his recent visit to Mecca. The [mosque] was filled, and the service passed off without interruption.”

After this report, it seems that *Juma'ah* was never again held at either the Palm Tree Mosque in Long Street or the Nur al-Islam Mosque in Buitengracht Street. However, the issue was still not completely resolved. *Juma'ah* was still being performed at the Auwal Mosque in Dorp Street. In 1889 the Palm Tree Mosque congregation sued to have Imam Moliat removed from office because of his failure to perform the Friday Congregational Prayers. The *Shafi'i Juma'ah* question emerged again in 1914.<sup>19</sup> Even today this theological question is not fully resolved.

### **ACHMAT SADIK – THE POLITICIAN**

Although participation in the political structures was not a major concern of the Cape Muslims, this does not mean that they were completely indifferent to the political situation around them. From time to time strong political opinions would be expressed by the Muslim community. So, for instance, there is hardly any indication in the records of the strength of the Cape Muslim opinion on the debate for the Constitution for Representative Government in 1853.

Ibn Samoudien, when interviewed by Mayson, was in fact reluctant to respond. He feared that the information sought might be used against his people, a fear which was increased by the excitement of the elections for Members of Parliament to serve under the new constitution, which were then taking place.<sup>20</sup> During the elections P.E. de Roubaix assumed for himself the responsibility of representing the Cape Muslims in the Cape Parliament. There appeared to be general satisfaction with this arrangement. De Roubaix equipped himself well for the task of serving the Cape Muslims – a service which was to gain him the appointment as Consul in Cape Town for the Turkish Government in the 1860's.<sup>21</sup>

However, the Cape Muslims began to become dissatisfied with De Roubaix, as he supported Responsible Government. Loyal to the British Crown and comfortable under its protection, the Cape Muslim community did not trust the Cape Colonists' move towards Responsible Government. They believed that it would lead to the reintroduction of slavery.<sup>22</sup>

Led by *Imam* Achmat Sadik, the Cape Muslims gathered 2 000 signatures in order to express their opposition to Responsible Government for the Cape. This petition was presented to De Roubaix, their representative in the Cape Parliament. At first he scoffed at this petition as the signatures were all in the same handwriting, to which they angrily responded that he should know that many of them could neither read nor write:

“Mr de Roubaix, we understand this much: we voted for you because you said you did not like Responsible Government, and would not have voted for you if you had said you liked responsible government.”<sup>23</sup>

Their anger was further displayed when, on 18 November 1873, *Imam* Achmat Sadik, supported by *Imam* Nasr al-Din and their congregations, published a Requisition nominating Charles Aiken Fairbridge to represent them in Parliament. Fairbridge was particularly suited to their needs. He did not support Responsible Government.

More importantly, he was a Voluntary, one of a group of Cape Parliamentarians who opposed State grants from the taxes in order to support certain religious organisations. Since 1854 they had been trying to pass anti-ecclesiastical grant legislation through the Cape Parliament. The Muslims, like the Jews and some Christian congregations, felt that they were dealt with unfairly by the terms of the Ecclesiastical Grants Act.

Fairbridge, in accepting the Requisition of *Imam* Achmat Sadik, said:

“You, Mohammedands [sic], have set many of our Christian sects an example to be imitated. Unaided by the State, and long in servile condition, your community has for many years maintained its ministers respectably. I can, therefore, well understand the feeling which prevails among you, and which many of you have expressed to me – that as you do not ask for your mosque to be supported at the expense of the Christians, so you object to being taxed for the support of Christian churches.”

However, during the heat of the Voluntary debate, Achmat Sadik on 4 December 1873 appealed to the Divisional Council against the rates imposed on the Auwal Mosque.<sup>24</sup> On 8 January 1874<sup>25</sup> a Divisional Council meeting resolved that all places of public worship are exempted from rates, and that rates should therefore not be charged on a mosque. Thereafter all mosques in Cape Town were exempted from rates.

The nomination of Fairbridge by *Imam* Achmat Sadik Achmat led to other Muslims nominating candidates to represent their interests in the Cape parliament, but by 1889 the mood had changed completely. The indifferent treatment of the Muslims during the 1882 smallpox epidemic had led to the boycott of the municipal elections of that year, while the cemetery uprising of 1886 had left them further disillusioned. Thus, Muhammad Dollie, a co-founder of the Hanafi Mosque in Long Street was to declare: “it is his downtrodden Malay brethren’s first determination to return one of themselves at the next general election.”<sup>26</sup>

They had to wait until 1894 for the next general election. In January 1893, Achmat Effendi declared that it was his intention to stand as a candidate for the Cape Parliament in the 1894 general elections.



This declaration was made at a meeting, attended by more than 600 people, in the Pilgrim's Mosque (now Burhanul) in Longmarket Street. It was the first time in the history of the Cape Muslim community that a mosque had been used as a venue for an election campaign. Presiding at this meeting was *Imam* Shahibo, and it is significant that it had been from his congregation, after a heated debate, that the Pilgrim Mosque congregation had been formed. The Cape Muslims were prepared to put aside their differences and support a Muslim candidate to represent them in Parliament. The support that Achmat Effendi received for his candidature was tremendous, and there was little doubt that he would be elected as "Senior Member for Cape Town" in the 1894 elections. He had secured the undivided support of the Cape Muslims.<sup>27</sup>

However, this was not to be. The liberal Cape was too conservative to have a Muslim Member of Parliament. The goal post had to be moved and the Constitution was tampered with. The cumulative vote, which would have secured Achmat Effendi's election, was changed. No longer could a voter give all his votes to a single candidate. The four votes from each Muslim voter, which would have secured Achmat Effendi's election, now had to be split amongst the other candidates in the race. Achmat Effendi was defeated.<sup>28</sup>

The political actions taken by Achmat Sadik Achmat in 1873 certainly caused ripples that stirred through the remainder of that century. When *Imam* Achmat Sadik died in 1879, he had made enough impact on Cape Muslim society to be remembered as one of that community's important sons.



## Chapter 6

# THE ORIGINS OF THE HANAFI-SHAFI'I DISPUTE AND THE IMPACT OF ABU BAKR EFFENDI (1835-1880)

Achmat Davids

The *Bayan al-Din* (An Explanation of the Religion), a very important religious text that had been written in Cape Town, was published in Constantinople in 1877 on the authority of Sublime Porte of the Ottoman Empire as a free gift publication to the Muslims of Cape Town. The book, which had been written by Abu Bakr Effendi, was an interesting publication in many ways. It has been regarded as the first serious printed work to have been written in Cape Afrikaans, and it is the most extensive publication in the early history of the literature of Afrikaans. It has also been accepted as being the oldest extant publication in Arabic-Afrikaans, the distinctive literary practice of the Cape Muslims, and it is characterised by the transcript of their colloquial Afrikaans into Arabic script.<sup>1</sup>

The author of the book has gone down in the history of the Cape Muslim community for two reasons. The first is that he made one of the most significant contributions to the development of Islam in this country, a development that was unfortunately marred by a very sharp schism between the *Hanafis* and the *Shafi'is*. The second reason is that, in writing this book, he devised original ways of writing Afrikaans in Arabic script.

## FROM KURDISTAN TO THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

Abu Bakr Effendi was born in Khashmaw, Shehrizur (Kurdistan), Turkey around 1835. His ancestry can be traced back to an aristocratic *Quraysh* family of Mecca who had belonged to the ancient Aryan race of the Kurds. He obtained his first instruction in Islamic theology at the Madrassah of Shehrizur, a religious educational institute which had been established by one of his ancestors, *Emir* Sulayman, known as the Conqueror. From here the young Abu Bakr went on to study in Istanbul, and from there to Baghdad where he completed his education. His father, Umar ibn Sala-udin, was killed in a Bedouin attack in Kurdistan while Abu Bakr was still studying. His family was forced to flee from Shehrizur and went to settle at Erzerum on the border of Trans-Caucasia. It was at Erzerum that Abu Bakr Effendi rejoined his family after his studies in Baghdad. The brilliant young man came to the attention of the Turkish Sultan in 1861 when his family and a group of Kurds they were leading sent him to Istanbul to beg for help from the Sultan against famine after a loss of harvest.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile in 1862 the British government received a request from a Cape parliamentarian, Mr P.E. de Roubaix, that a religious guide be sent to the Cape Muslim community. This request was directed to the Turkish ambassador in London in the hope that, even if a religious guide could not be provided, then at least books on Islamic practices could be acquired in order to settle a dispute amongst the Cape Muslims.<sup>3</sup> It is difficult to say to what extent De Roubaix had been pressured by the Cape Muslims to get them a religious guide. He had, however, been involved in the 1856 *khalifa* problem, which had involved the question of whether *ratiep* (which appears to be a *Rifa'i tariqah* religious practice) was religiously admissible. The problem arose because of the noise that accompanied the practice, and the indecisive and conflicting views of the Cape *imams* on the matter.<sup>4</sup> De Roubaix had also been involved in the never-ending dispute at the Palm Tree Mosque. The frequency with which this dispute had come before the Cape Supreme Court in the 1860's must have convinced him that an overseas religious guide was sorely needed by the Cape Muslims.<sup>5</sup> The only evidence known to the author, and which could possibly be seen as having been a request for a guide from the Cape Muslims, is a letter which De Roubaix received in 1862 from *Hadji* Medien, an aged *imam* living in Cape Town. Medien's letter, however, requested his assistance in securing some funds from the Turkish government for welfare purposes in Cape Town.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, the Turkish government responded to this request, and in 1862 Abu Bakr Effendi arrived at the Cape of Good Hope. It is said that the Cape Muslims were not aware of his arrival, and that he had already been here two days before they were informed, whereupon a reception committee, consisting of *imams* and *hadjis*, went to meet him. A photograph of this occasion has been preserved and is presently in the possession of the South African Cultural History Museum.

## THE FIRST SEEDS OF THE DISPUTE

Abu Bakr Effendi was well schooled in Islamic theology and had a thorough knowledge of the four major schools of thought, or *madh-habs*. In practice he subscribed to the *Hanafiyyah* school, to whose doctrinal code he adhered. It is difficult to say whether or not he had been instructed by the Turkish government to expound the *Hanafiyyah* teachings, with which the government had great sympathy. In a letter to the *Cape Argus* on 3 September 1873, Isaac Muntingh alleges that Abu Bakr Effendi had confided to him that he had been told that he would need to convert as many of the *Shafi'is* as possible to the *Hanafiyyah madh-hab* if he were to get an increase in pay from the Sultan. However, at the time, the Cape Muslims were almost exclusively *Shafi'is*.

Not wanting to cause offence as soon as he arrived, Abu Bakr Effendi established the Ottoman Theological School, on the corner of Bree and Wale Streets in Cape Town, under the guise of it being a Shafi-yyah educational institution. This helped to attract prominent Cape Muslims to the school as students.

## DOMESTIC PROBLEMS

On Wednesday 8 April 1863, a year after his arrival, Abu Bakr Effendi married Rukea Maker, the adopted daughter of *Hadji* Haroun, the saddlemaker of Keerom Street. She was only fifteen years old and exceptionally beautiful. It is reported that her natural parents were an English woman and a Cape Muslim man. Her mother was still alive, but her father had died while on pilgrimage to Mecca.<sup>7</sup> The couple had only met on two occasions before the marriage and on both these occasions they had had to communicate with each other through an interpreter. However, this had not prevented her mother from persuading Rukea to marry Abu Bakr Effendi. During the time that they were married the couple used an Arabic-English dictionary to make known their wishes to each other, and it is not surprising that communication difficulties, together with their incompatibility, led to many quarrels and domestic fights.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, two children were born from this marriage. One of these died in infancy, while the other, a boy,<sup>9</sup> seems to have evaporated into history. He is neither mentioned in the will of Abu Bakr Effendi nor listed on his death notice.<sup>10</sup> However, when this son was born, Abu Bakr Effendi apparently married by Muslim rites one of the ladies of the Ladies' Class at the Ottoman Theological School.<sup>11</sup>

It cannot be ascertained just who this lady was. She is not mentioned by name in his estate papers,<sup>12</sup> though she is acknowledged as being the mother of his children. Van Selms, from the oral history of the Effendi family, claims that she was the daughter of Jeremiah Cook, a shipbuilder from Yorkshire, who had settled in Cape Town in 1847, and that Abu Bakr had married her on the death of his first wife.<sup>13</sup> In an action brought by Rukea Maker *in forma pauperis* to the Cape Supreme Court, in which she claimed maintenance for herself and her son from Abu Bakr Effendi, the second wife is named as "Tahoora". In her plea, Rukea Maker stated that she had only learnt that Abu Bakr Effendi was married to "Tahoora" on 30 December 1866, the day that he made her leave the house and divorced her.<sup>14</sup> The name "Tahoora Effendi" is also signed as the witness to the death on the death notice of Abu Bakr's youngest son, Gosain Fozie Effendi,<sup>15</sup> who died at Claremont on 31 August 1888 at the age of 14 years.

In spite of all this, it can be safely assumed that the name of Abu Bakr Effendi's second wife was Taharah. This second marriage appears to have been a happy one, producing five sons and one daughter. Abu Bakr Effendi's death notice<sup>16</sup> lists his children as being: Achmat Ata'ullah (who was the only Cape Muslim ever to contest a seat in the Cape Parliament when he unsuccessfully contested the seat for Cape Town<sup>17</sup>); Fehema (who married one Abdol Rajab and went to live in Turkey<sup>18</sup>); Hishan Ni'mah-Allah (who wrote and published three Arabic-Afrikaans publications in 1894); Ala'udin; Omar Jalaludin; and Gosain Fozie. His will provided for a maintenance of two pounds per child per month until they reached maturity, and on condition that each one continue to reside with his or her mother.

His divorce from Rukea Maker and the subsequent exposure of the ill-treatment she had endured in his household<sup>19</sup> did not help Abu Bakr's image in the Cape Muslim community. What made matters even worse was that he did not defend himself against Rukea Maker's accusations in court. Instead he wrote a letter to the Cape Argus,<sup>20</sup> pleading innocence. This only led to further accusations by one of her supporters.<sup>21</sup>

From both socio-historic and linguistic points of view, it might be interesting to reproduce the contents of this letter, which is one of the two extant letters that Abu Bakr Effendi wrote in English, which was certainly his preferred medium of communication while he was at the Cape.<sup>22</sup> Judging from the contents of this letter it would seem that he had a good command of the English language. The letter read:

"Sirs,

I did not intend writing on this subject, but it would appear from the remarks made by the press, that my conduct to her has been inhuman. I feel compelled in my own defence to address you in this matter. The plaintiff in the course of her evidence stated that I assaulted her on various occasions, and altogether I treated her in a most shameful way. I was prepared at the trial of the case to refute this statement, not only by my own evidence but by that of several witnesses, but as her case of maintenance fell to the ground upon her own evidence, it was unnecessary for me to bring forward my witnesses. I regret, however, that this was not done, as I feel convinced that my own evidence and that of my witnesses would have satisfied not only the Court, but the public, that I had not treated her as she stated. It must appear strange that after I have treated her so badly and divorced her, yet that I should during her illness not only supply her with medical attendance and comforts, but constantly called to enquire after her health. When at the time I was accused of treating her so shamefully, I had made a will, leaving part of my estate to her. The fact is that during the time of our marriage, I supplied her with every comfort, furnished a house, allowed her as many as five servants at a time, and did everything possible to make her comfortable, but a snake in the grass has put me to great trouble, which is now at an end. The time will come when I will expose his machinations.

As regards the maintenance of the child, I have paid 10s per month for its support from infancy, besides supplying it with clothing, and from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1869, offered one pound per month, but the last offer was refused. These amounts may appear small to some, but as Rukea had previous to her marriage to me earned less, and hardly had any training, the amount was quite sufficient for a person in her position.

About Beker Effendi"<sup>23</sup>

This is a remarkable letter to come from a man who only eight years before had found it necessary to use an Arabic-English dictionary in order to communicate with his wife.



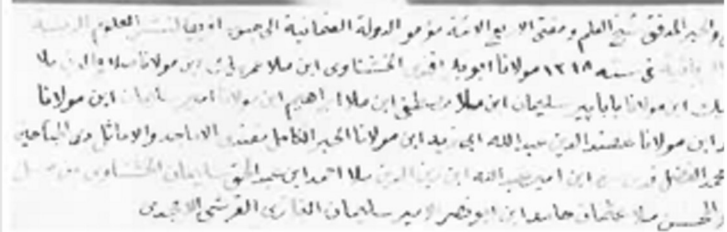
The shrine of Shaykh Yusuf in the background with the graves of some of his followers

*Photographs 6.1: The shrine of Shaykh Yusuf in the background with the graves of some of his followers.*



Shaykh Muhammad Salih Hendricks

*Photographs 6.2: Shaykh Muhammad Salih Hendricks*



Abu Bakr Effendi

*Photographs 6.3: Abu Bakr Effendi*





Fatima (Ma) Geyer

*Photographs 6.4: Fatima (Ma) Geyer*



*Imam Isma'il Talib with Shaykh Alawi Shattah of Mecca*

***Photographs 6.5: Imam Ismai'l Talib with Shaykh Alawi Shattah of Mecca***



The Huffaz in this photograph include (from left) in the front row, Hajji Yusuf Gabier, Hajji Sa'idiq Sadein and Imam Ma'awiyah Sedick. The last three in the front row (from left) are: Shaykh Muhammad Sa'idiq Solomon, Imam Hassan Abd al-Rahman and Abd al-Rahman El

**Photographs 6.6: The Huffaz**



*Photographs 6.7: Hatmah Al-Quran Jama' 1959*

HATMAH AL-QURAN JAMA' 1959	
Fourth row:	H.A. Soeker (Assistant Secretary) (later became a hafiz), A. Manuel, H.I. Soekar (later became a hafiz), M. Gabbir, A. Wazad, A. Gaud, H.A. Samodien, M.F. Samie
Fourth row:	A. Sollegli, H.I. Dolla, M.S. Mustapha, M.S. Abubakar, M.S. Davids, A. Abraham, Y. Shamsuddin
Third row:	M. Miller, H.A. Henriques, A. Regal, H.A. Abdullah, H.Y. Abraham, A. Isaac, M.S. Domingo, M. Yacob
Second row:	H.M.G. Dolla, A. Lasy, M.D. Bardien, Umar Abdullah (later became a hafiz), H.M. Manuel, Abd al Rahim Salleh (later became a hafiz), H.A. Johnson, M.S. Soeker, A. Samie
First row:	H.A. Barnes, Ibrahim Hassan Abd al-Kalamani (Hafiz), A. Barnes (Secretary), Hadji Yusuf Gabbir (Hafiz), H.A. Johnson (Chairman), Shafiq Muhammad Saib Solomon (Absohel) (Hafiz), Iman Shams al-Din Ibrahim (Hafiz), H.S. Taka, Abd al-Aziz Gabbir (Hafiz)
Seated:	R. Gabbir, A. Dolla



#### HATMAH AL-QURAN JAMA' 1972

- Fourth row:* M.C. Abdullah (Assistant Secretary), Y. Wentzel, A. Gantef, H.Y. Safodien (Vice chairman), H.A. Manuel, H.A. Samodien.  
*(left to right)*
- Third row:* H.R. Samsodien, H.N. Majiet, H.A. Amardien, H.E. Gasnola, H.A. Abdul, J. Allie, A. Dollie  
*(Left to right)*
- Second row:* H.A. Abdullah, H.M.S. Safodien, H.C. Dautie, A. Stoffels, A. Salie, H.M.S. Abrahams, H.A. Abrahams, H.S. Levy,  
*(left to right)*
- Sitting:* H.A. Mustapha, M.S. Soeker, H.A. Domingo.
- (left to right)*
- (left to right)* H.A. Amrien (Secretary), Imam Shams al-Din Ibrahim (Hafiz), Imam Abd al-Rahman Salih (Hafiz), Imam S. Domingo, Hadji Abd al-Aziz Gabier (Hafiz), H.A. Johnson (Chairman), Hadji Nawawi van cer Ross (Hafiz), H.M.S. Davids, Imam Hasen Abd al-Rahman (Hafiz), Shaykh Fuad Gatie (Hafiz), H.I. Dollie (Treasurer),  
 Shaykh Muhammad Salih Solomon (Abadie) (Hafiz), Shaykh Siraj Johaar (Hafiz), H.C. Johaar, A. Burns, M. Miller,  
 H.Y. Berdien, H.M. Manuel, I.Khan, M.Z. Tape, J.Dollie, H.M. Soeker

*Photographs 6.8: Hatmah Al-Quran Jama' 1972*



#### HATMAHAL-QURAN JAMA' 1987

- First row:* Assist. Secretary N. Abrahams, Hafiz A. Sallie, Secretary H.M.C. Abdullah, Hafiz H.N. Van der Ross, Chairman H.Y. Safodien, Hafiz H.A.A. Gabler, V/Chairman Y. Wentzel, Hafiz H.F. Gabler, President H.A. Gamief, Tres. H.A. Armen
- Second row:* H.R. Samsodien, H.S. Doulie, H.M.S. Abrahams, H.M. Rabar, H.A. Abdul, A. Gool, M. Miller, H.A. Stoffels, J. Alle, H.I. Dcllie.
- Third row:* E. Abrahams, A. Joos, H.F. Gamiekien, H.A. Gasant, I. Abdullah, I. Abdullah, Z. Dollie, F. Petersen, H.A. Abdullah.
- Fourth row:* H.A. Abrahams, O. Adams, M. Majiet, H.M.S. Rylands, H.N. Viljoen, A. Martin.

*Photographs 6.9: Hatmah Al-Quran Jama' 1987*



*Photographs 6.10: The three huffaz standing from left: Shaykh Yusuf Booley, Shaykh Isma'il Moos and Imam Abd al-Maik Heuwel*



*Photographs 6.11: From the left:- Shaykhs Abu-Bakr Abd al-Ra'uf , Muahmmad Salih Solomon , and Shaykh Seraj Hendricks. The first two are considered of the two greatest garis of South Africa.*





Shaykh Isma'il Edwards

*Photographs 6.12: Shaykh Isma'il Edwards*



Shaykh Yusuf Booley

*Photographs 6.13: Shaykh Yusuf Booley*



*Imam Abd al-Basir Basir*

*Photographs 6.14: Imam Abd al-Basir Basir*



Sayyid Muhsin ibn Salim al-Idrus

***Photographs 6.15: Sayyid Musin ibn Salim al-Idrus***



Shaykh Sa'dulla Khan

***Photographs 6.16: Shaykh Sa'dulla Khan***

During these eight years he had also been busy writing the *Bayan al-Din*, but in Cape Afrikaans in Arabic script. Such were the linguistic talents of Abu Bakr Effendi! This letter does not reject the influence of Afrikaans on his English, but the influence of English, as we shall see later is clearly evident in the Afrikaans of the *Bayan al-Din*.

However, Abu Bakr Effendi gained only half a victory in this case. He was not ordered to pay maintenance to Rukea Maker, but the court ruled that he must pay one pound ten shillings per month for the maintenance of his son. He appears to have resented this, and this explains his condescending attitude towards the boy. This is possibly why the son was ignored when the father compiled his will.

## COMMUNITY PROBLEMS

It was unfortunate for Abu Bakr Effendi that he should have divorced his wife at the same time as the Cape Muslims were beginning to have misgivings about his teachings. By 1866 pages of the *Bayan al-Din*, as handwritten student notes, were already circulating in the community. The *Hanafiyyah* teachings were clearly obvious from these notes, and this was not to be tolerated. Abu Bakr Effendi had to be brought to book. A two man delegation consisting of *Hadji* Abdullah and Gafiieldien Muntingh was appointed to lodge complaints about Abu Bakr Effendi in Mecca and Istanbul. They were instructed particularly to express the community's dissatisfaction with Abu Bakr Effendi's ruling that crayfish was *haram* – its being eaten was prohibited under religious law.

It is difficult to say just how effective these complaints were. *Hadji* Abdullah turned out to have been a good friend of Abu Bakr Effendi, and he preferred to converse in Arabic when the delegation met with Muslim dignitaries in Mecca and Istanbul, and this meant that Gafiieldien Muntingh could not follow his conversations. He spoke only Dutch, Melayu and English.<sup>24</sup> Later *Hadji* Abdullah was to deny that he had ever lodged a complaint in Mecca or Istanbul about Abu Bakr Effendi's *Hanafiyyah* teachings, and said that he "spoke about the crayfish".<sup>25</sup>

The Rukea Maker versus Abu Bakr Effendi case in the Cape Supreme Court added further fuel to the already simmering dissatisfaction with Abu Bakr Effendi. In 1871 a petition was circulated in the Cape Muslim community by Abdol Burns, Gafiieldien Muntingh and *Hadji* Abdullah. This petition sought Abu Bakr Effendi's removal from the Cape, and it was finally presented to the Governor, Sir Phillip Wodehouse.<sup>26</sup> This petition was not ignored by the authorities and Sir Phillip, in a letter to the Colonial Secretary, the Duke of Newcastle, wrote:

"... at the same time I think I ought to add that little good is likely to result from this stay. The people to whom he has been sent do not understand a word of the Turkish language and have a most imperfect knowledge of Arabic, and when to this extreme difficulty of communication is added a jealousy of his interference with their customs and privileges whether proper or improper, it is but natural that he should make but little progress with them."<sup>27</sup>

There was nothing else that Sir Phillip Wodehouse could do. Abu Bakr Effendi's sojourn at the Cape was financed by the Turkish government. He was paid twenty-eight pounds, seven shillings and three pence a month to teach the Cape Muslims,<sup>28</sup> a task which he executed with great enthusiasm. Thus, he explains in the Arabic foreword to the *Bayan al-Din*:

"I then began teaching the *Quran* to those of my followers with some education. In time I succeeded in training some of the more intelligent among them in the Arabic language, and in the essentials necessary for the proper observance of the Muslim religion. After some time and with much patience I could rely on a few of the more advanced pupils to become teachers in their turn. I encouraged them to teach small groups under my supervision. Eventually I held them responsible

to teach a given number of students in their own classes. I also opened a separate school for the women.”<sup>29</sup>

But his efforts do not seem to have borne the desired fruits. The number of *Hanafis* amongst the Cape Muslims remained relatively small, despite the fact that he had the support of the Turkish government in the publication of two Arabic-Afrikaans books – the *Bayan al-Din* (An Explanation of the Religion) and the *Marasid-din* (Observations of Religion), and several Arabic publications. Much of his efforts were negated by the 1873 Achmat Sadik versus Abdol Rakiep Cape Supreme Court litigation.

## THE DISPUTE ERUPTS

Until 1869 the *Hanafiyyah* teachings were propagated only at the Ottoman Theological -School, while the mosques in Cape Town adhered to their *Shafi’iyyah* teachings, especially as far as the Friday Congregational or *Juma’ah* prayers were concerned. It is during the reading of these prayers that the differences in practice between the *Hanafiyyah* and the *Shafi’iyyah* schools of thought became the most obvious. In 1869, however, a young man, Abd al-Raqib, was appointed as *imam* of the Nur al-Islam Mosque in Buitengracht Street, a mosque that had been established in 1844 and in which only *Shafi’iyyah* teachings were practised.

Abd al-Raqib was the son of *Imam* Abd al-Ra’uf, who had officiated as the first *imam* and who was a son of *Imam* Abdullah ibn Qadi Abd al-Salam (*Tuan Guru*). *Tuan Guru* is generally regarded as having been one of the founders of the *Shafi’iyyah* school at the Cape.

Abd al-Raqib, on the death of his father, went to study under Abu Bakr Effendi at the Ottoman Theological School and developed a great respect for his teacher. At the age of 17 years he was probably the youngest person to be appointed as an *imam* in Cape Town. At the time he was appointed as *imam* at the Auwal Mosque in Dorp Street, but to balance his youth the trusteeship of the mosque was vested in *Imam* Achmat Sadik, the assistant *imam* who was also in charge of Islamic education at the Cape. *Imam* Achmat Sadik was a co-founder of the Nur al-Islam Mosque.

At first the young Abd al-Raqib adhered to the *Shafi'iyyah* practices, but in 1870 he started to introduce the *Hanafiyyah* practices. This caused *Imam* Achmat Sadik to have a word with him, especially as at that time the latter had also written a manuscript, the *Althilmithani*, in Arabic with Melayu translation. This manuscript had been designed to counteract the *Hanafiyyah* teachings of the *Bayan al-Din*, which was circulating in the community as student notes.

The young *Imam* Abd al-Raqib followed the advice of the old man, but he later started again to conduct the services in accordance with the *Hanafiyyah* mould, declaring at the same time that he was in charge of the pulpit and could do “as he pleases”. This infuriated the congregation and many of them decided to leave the mosque, thus upsetting *Imam* Achmat Sadik. As trustee, he therefore had no option but to seek an interdict to remove Abd al-Raqib from office.<sup>30</sup>

The issues in dispute were mainly theological. To justify his actions, Abd al-Raqib depended upon Abu Bakr Effendi as his main witness, especially as the latter was already widely regarded by the Cape Supreme Court as a religious authority. His evidence had been heavily relied upon in the 1866 Palm Tree Mosque doctrinal case, and in the Abd al-Raqib case he again succeeded in impressing the court, but this time he committed perjury. He said:

“I am a Shafee and have never been anything else. I am Effendi, which means lord. I studied in Baghdad, where they are all pure Shafee.”<sup>31</sup>

Despite this perjury by Abu Bakr Effendi, the Cape Supreme Court still ruled in favour of Abd al-Raqib.<sup>32</sup> A few years later, Abu Bakr Effendi was to describe the case in the following words:

“Years ago a case was judged between *Imam* Achmat Sadik and *Imam* Abd al-Raqib with a claim that the *masjid* in which the latter was *imam* had belonged to the former *imam* and nobody other than his former disciples had the right to enter and pray in that mosque. I was called by the local administration and asked for a religious opinion, and I pointed out that the mosque was a *waqf* (trust) according to *Shari'ah* and because of that the public might not be denied access to it, and this was one of the conditions of the *waqf*. When I told them that, the plaintiff, Najjar Ishaq, lost the case and he had to pay the costs of the court, and he said: ‘He is a *Hanefite* and therefore I do not accept his verdict’, but he was not listened to.”<sup>33</sup>

This infuriated the *Shafi'i* Cape Muslim community and intensified their antagonism against Abu Bakr Effendi and his small group of *Hanafi* followers. Even an editorial in the *Standard and Mail*<sup>34</sup> expressed its misgivings about Abu Bakr Effendi. Nevertheless the victory encouraged him to proceed with the publication of the *Bayan al-Din*. As probably the first Arabic-Afrikaans lithograph, it was published in Constantinople in 1877 under the auspices of the Ottoman government. Although it was freely distributed, the book was rejected as an authoritative source by the Cape Muslim community.



After the court case, Abu Bakr Effendi assisted Abd al-Raqib with the Friday sermons at the Nur al-Islam Mosque in Buitengracht Street, but by then only a small group of Cape Muslims were continuing to worship there.<sup>35</sup> The *Hanafi-Shafi'i* Cape Muslim conflict was so totally unnecessary. Had Abu Bakr Effendi been more diplomatic, and had the Cape Muslim community been more tolerant, the mutual benefits to both parties would have been tremendous. Abu Bakr Effendi, as a learned theologian, had a lot to offer. Alas, this was not to be, for such is the prejudice and fanaticism of man.

Abu Bakr Effendi died on 29 June 1880 at his home in Bree Street at the fairly young age of 45 years.<sup>36</sup> A year later, as a result of their being persecuted by the *Shafi'i* Cape Muslims, his followers, under the leadership of Muhammad Dollie and Jongie Siers, opened their own mosque on the corner of Long and Dorp Streets. This was the first *Hanafi* mosque in Cape Town.<sup>37</sup> Yet, despite its shaky beginnings, this mosque was destined to play a major role in the educational history of the Cape Muslims at the beginning of the twentieth century. Much of this was the result of efforts by his son, Hisham Ni'mah-Allah Effendi, who amicably resolved the *Hanafi-Shafi'i* dispute.

## THE IMPACT OF THE *BAYAN AL-DIN*

The genius of Abu Bakr Effendi lies in his writing of the *Bayan al-Din*. This book was probably his greatest contribution to the cultural and linguistic history of his adopted country. As has already been mentioned, it was the most extensive publication in the early years of the Afrikaans language, and it is noted for the ingenious manipulation of the lettering symbols of the Arabic phonetic science of *tajwid*. Through this manipulation, Abu Bakr Effendi was able to create representations of Afrikaans sounds in Arabic script, where such lettering representations had not previously existed.

The *Bayan al-Din* consists of 354 pages, with forewords in Turkish, Arabic and Afrikaans. The Arabic text is almost identical to *Al-Multaqa* by Muhammad Ibrahim al-Halabi, and is therefore not a completely original work. It is essentially a *Hanafiyyah* paraphrase of the Arabic original, with many varied commentaries by the translator. It is therefore not just a straightforward translation, but a creative work. The *Bayan al-Din* is written in the Islamic tradition of having a text (the *matn*) with an explanation (the *sharh*). In the case of the *Bayan al-Din*, the Cape Afrikaans text was a creative translated commentary, as an expansion of the original text. It is this commentary which Van Selms came to regard as Abu Bakr Effendi's spiritual vision.<sup>38</sup> As far as its content is concerned the *Bayan al-Din* deals with such subjects of Islamic law as ablution, prayer, *zakah*, pilgrimage, and the dietary laws. It is, however, the Afrikaans language usage, which is of most interest.

It has already been indicated that Abu Bakr Effendi preferred to use the English language while at the Cape. This certainly left its mark on the sentence construction to be found in the *Bayan al-Din*, and this is understandable. He was, in fact, learning to

use the Cape Muslim Afrikaans while learning English and writing the *Bayan al-Din*. That he still managed to capture the sounds of most of the Cape Afrikaans words and to reflect them accurately through the use of the Arabic phonetic script (at times even manipulating this script to present the sound) is one of the outstanding features of this work. We can forgive Abu Bakr Effendi, who was, after all, a foreigner, if his sentence construction is sometimes clumsy, or when Afrikaans words are given an English representation. At the same time it must be recognised that it is precisely these shortcomings that make the *Bayan al-Din* so exciting linguistically.

In this work he made important contributions to the development of a distinctive alphabet for Arabic-Afrikaans by creating four vocalisms for the Afrikaans letter “e”, two of which (the *fatha-kasra* combination and the “end-e” structure) were adopted by later writers.

Prior to his arrival the Cape Muslim Arabic-Afrikaans writers had relied entirely on the Malaysian adaptation of the Arabic alphabet for the transcription of their spoken Cape Dutch or Cape Afrikaans in Arabic script. This Malaysian-Arabic alphabet was, however, inadequate for the representation of all the sounds of their spoken Afrikaans. Although people had tried to modify this alphabet so that Afrikaans sounds could be included, these attempts had been made within the constraints of the Malaysian-Arabic alphabet, which had proved inadequate. It was Abu Bakr Effendi who created the first distinctive Arabic-Afrikaans vocalism when he created the *fatha-kasra* combination. By doing this, he extended the existing process of Arabic letter manipulation or innovative orthographic engineering. This manipulation, however, was done within the constraints of the Arabic phonetic science of *tajwid*. His endeavours encouraged Abdurahim ibn Muhammad al Iraqi to create a *damma-fatha* combination as a distinctive vocalism for Afrikaans “o” as in “om”.

Writers prior to the author of this chapter seem to have ignored the influence of *tajwid* on Arabic-Afrikaans writing, and because of this they could not comprehend the struggle of the Arabic-Afrikaans writers to create the appropriate vocalisms to represent Afrikaans sounds which the Arabic alphabet and its vowel systems or its Malaysian adaptation could not provide. They had to be selective with the existing letters of the Arabic alphabet, and in particular they had to be concerned about selecting those letters which best conformed with the Afrikaans sounds. If no such letter existed, then they had to borrow one from another alphabet, or they might even have had to create one. By this process of selectivity and creation, the Cape Muslim Arabic-Afrikaans writers created a distinctive alphabet for Arabic-Afrikaans.

In his writing of the *Bayan al-Din*, Abu Bakr Effendi accelerated what was already a very fertile process of innovative orthographic engineering. This process had already been evident in the literary tradition of Arabic-Afrikaans prior to his arrival. By structuring Arabic vocalisms and lettering clusters to represent precisely Afrikaans sounds which the pure Arabic alphabet, or its Malaysian or Persian adaptations, could not convey, Abu Bakr Effendi was in fact extending this process. He had embarked

upon this within the constraints of the Arabic phonetic science known as *Tajwid*. The innovative orthographic engineering process, and its manipulation by Abu Bakr Effendi in order to create Arabic lettering symbols, was a major contribution to the development of a literary tradition amongst the Muslims at the Cape.



## Chapter 7

# FROM SOCIAL COHESION TO RELIGIOUS DISCORD: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SHAYKH MUHAMMAD SALIH HENDRICKS (1871-1945)

**Yusuf da Costa**

The *Al Zawiyah* Mosque lies on the lower reaches of Table Mountain in Cape Town, on the border between the suburbs of Walmer Estate and Zonnebloem (the old District Six). The founder of this Mosque, and also for many years its *imam*, was *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih Hendricks, one of the rare Islamic scholars in South Africa.

His story began in 1871, about 37 years after the emancipation of the slaves, when he was born to Abdullah Hendricks (also known as *Imam* Haji Hiji) and his wife A'ishah in the village of Swellendam.<sup>1, 2</sup> The period of his growing up was to coincide with a period in the life of the Cape Muslims that saw two important social phenomena. It was during this time that the community struggled for an Islamic identity despite its reduction to second class citizen status (along with all other non-whites in the country), and a series of religious controversies continued to tear the community apart. These controversies were also to contribute to the gradual withdrawal of the Muslim community from those others in the country who suffered from similar socio-political disabilities.

Muhammad Salih had three brothers (Abdul Basir, Abdul-Bari, and Sulayman) and two sisters (Aminah and *Khadijah*).<sup>3</sup> The choice of these names clearly shows the type of religious ethos that operated in the family despite its geographic isolation from Cape Town. What makes this even more significant is that Muhammad Salih's paternal grandparents were Apollis and Cassera Hendricks,<sup>4</sup> who were most probably slaves or the offspring of slaves, and who had been converted to Islam.<sup>5</sup> His maternal grandparents were Abdul-Basir and *Khashi'ah* van der Schyff,<sup>6</sup> who also came from close non-Muslim origins. Thus the boy's immediate family, on both sides, were converts to Islam within a social climate at the Cape that was far from being conducive to the survival of the religion.

## CONVERSIONS TO ISLAM

These conversions to Islam that were experienced by the family of Muhammad Salih before and after emancipation were not something that were rare at the Cape. However, there is also of course evidence that there was organised Christian missionary activity among the Muslims, both free and enslaved, and so there were some conversions from

Islam.<sup>7, 8, 9</sup> For example, at the time the Hendricks were living in Swellendam, there were eight “Malays” there who professed to be Christian.<sup>10</sup> Despite this, there were a number of factors operating at the Cape that favoured conversion to, rather than from, Islam.

Perhaps the major factor was that Christianity was the religion of those who did the enslaving and the colonising, and it was obvious that the slaves would have very little inclination towards a faith that formed part of the dominant discourse of colonialism in this country. The Reverend J.D. Saunders expressed this sentiment when he wrote in 1838:<sup>11</sup>

“The slaves, oppressed by their heavy yoke, excluded from partaking of the privileges and comforts of our holy religion, torn from their children, cruelly beaten, have in return no predilection for our faith...there has been so long such a deep gulf of separation between the white and the black man, that the black man has no desire to enter into the Christian Church, whose gates have been so long shut against him; he prefers joining with those who have been his friends in his distress, who invite, and encourage him to bring his children to the same school, to attend the same Mosque, and to look forward to meeting again in the same paradise.”

There were also other factors. Little attempt was made to encourage the teaching of Christianity among the slaves.<sup>12</sup> Where any missionary work did take place, it was mainly among the Khoikhoi.<sup>13</sup> The Dutch laws encouraging the Christianisation of the slaves were never really enforced,<sup>14</sup> while the Muslim religious leaders conducted their own missionary activities.<sup>15</sup>

As a consequence of these factors, all of which favoured conversion to Islam, “only 86 slaves out of a possibility of 35 698 in the Cape Colony were baptised between 1810 and 1824, approximately six per year.”<sup>16</sup> Those slaves who embraced Islam were generally assimilated into the Muslim community.<sup>17, 18</sup> Thus Muhammad Salih grew up at a time when there was a combination of social factors that encouraged the movement of people, and especially freed slaves, into the developing Muslim community through the process of religious conversion, and the assimilation of these people into that community.

## **COMMUNITY COHESION**

The introduction of slaves was not the only type of migration that was taking place at that time. There were two other types of migration taking place. One involved the movement of freed slaves to the towns (and especially Cape Town) after their emancipation in 1834, while the other involved a new stream of Muslim immigrants from the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. These came to settle in Cape Town during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth.<sup>19</sup> Describing the former migration, Ross<sup>20</sup> writes that the slaves:

“moved out into the slums, alongside their friends and kin who had been free before 1838. They were joined by a large number of ex-slaves who had moved into Cape Town from the countryside... [Many congregated] ... in the so-called coloured quarters of later Cape Town, District Six and the Malay Quarter on Signal Hill.”

This migration was to have a marked effect on the distribution of Muslims in the Cape Colony. According to the 1875 Census,<sup>21</sup> there were 11 209 Muslims in the Cape at that time. Of these, 8 848 or 79 per cent lived in the urbanised areas of the Cape Division.<sup>22</sup> In Cape Town itself there were 6 772 Muslims<sup>23</sup>, which represented 60 per cent of all Muslims in the Colony and 77 per cent of those living in the Cape Division. As a result of this migration to the towns, Muslims became very thinly distributed in the country areas, and only Graaf Reinet (with 20 Muslim families), Stellenbosch (with 120), Paarl (with 47), Uitenhage (with 39), and Port Elizabeth (with 129) had more than 20 Muslim families in their respective Divisions.<sup>24</sup> In the town of Swellendam, the Hendricks family was one of only 16 families (a total of 49 persons) at this time.<sup>25</sup> The depopulation of country areas of Muslim people was aggravated by the depression of the 1870's,<sup>26</sup> which further forced people to move to the towns in search of employment. M.E. and A. Rothmann<sup>27</sup> described the situation in Swellendam at the time as follows:

“Up to the last quarter of the nineteenth century there was a small colony of Malays in Swellendam. They were known as industrious and skilled workers, also in the building trade. So solid was their little community that it had its own *hajji* - one who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca. It was in these years that the trade suffered a severe recession; wainwrights, blacksmiths, builders and masons all being hard hit. So the Malay colony gradually left to seek work elsewhere. The last of them, Korie Hendricks, died in 1959, aged 90 years. ... A remnant of the old Malay graveyard may still be seen in the corner of the little park below the Primary School.”

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, one other important development took place amongst the Muslims in the Cape, and this was that most of the adherents of Islam amongst the different national origin groups at the Cape assimilated into a single identifiable socio-religious group or community. This had already become evident by the time that the slaves were being emancipated. According to Marais,<sup>28</sup> Islam had:

“welded all its adherents into a compact community, the process being naturally hastened after the emancipation of the slaves. To the whole community the name Malay was applied which belonged originally only to the Oriental section of it. The present-day Malays are therefore, a religious and not a racial group.”

This development meant that the common divisions based on original nationality which had existed among the Muslims had disappeared to a large extent by the end of the nineteenth century, and they had acquired their own cultural identity as they had evolved into an identifiable socio-religious group or community. This particularly occurred in

Cape Town, where the urban environment provided the social circumstances needed for greater interaction between people and, therefore, more opportunity for the development of a specific culture.<sup>29</sup> The religion of Islam was the basis of this cultural identity as it had been adopted by many of the slaves as their religion.<sup>30, 31</sup>

## LINKS WITH CENTRES OF LEARNING

All these major social developments in the Muslim community took place while the Hendricks family was living in comparative isolation in Swellendam. However, the family did have important links with Cape Town as Muhammad Salih's maternal relatives, the Van der Schyffs, all lived in the city and some of the suburbs, and also because the young boy was later to come to Cape Town for his initial Islamic studies. According to Mrs G. Abrahams of Longmarket Street, Cape Town:<sup>32</sup>

“Muhammad Salih came to Cape Town from Swellendam by mail cart to study under my mother's relatives. He studied under *Tuan* Abd-al-Jalil (called *Tuan* Abdul Kalil) of Chiappini Street (Cape Town) and *Imam* Ismail Ma-awiyyah Manie of Van der Leur Street (Cape Town). *Tuan* Abd al-Jalil was married to my maternal great-aunt.”

In 1888, at the age of sixteen years, Muhammad Salih left Swellendam to study in Mecca.<sup>33</sup> Surprisingly, Muhammad Salih was not the first “colonial-born” Muslim from the Cape Colony to go overseas for studies of this nature, despite newspaper reports to the contrary.<sup>34</sup> Others who had studied overseas before him included Hisham Ni'matullah Effendi (who had studied in Mecca and Istanbul), Abd al-Raqib ibn Abd al-Qahar Berdien (who had studied in Mecca), Muhammad Taliep (who had studied in Bombay and was, therefore, very fluent in Urdu), and Isma-il Ma-awiyah Manie (who had mainly studied *gira-at* in Mecca).<sup>35</sup> What was, however, important was that he was part of a growing tradition in the Muslim community that involved sending their children to study in Islamic centres, and thereby to continue the process of religious enrichment which the community so badly needed.

Mecca was then still part of the Ottoman Empire and was ruled at the time by Sultan Abd al-Hamid II (1876-1909).<sup>36</sup> The *Tasawwuf* tradition, which was later to be suppressed by the *Wahhabi* movement, was dominant in the city. This tradition was to leave an indelible impression on the religious philosophy and practice of Muhammad Salih. There is little doubt that his tutors in Mecca were steeped in this tradition, and that they passed on its philosophical teachings and practices to the young student. These tutors included, amongst others, *Sayyid* Abu Bakr Shattah, *Sayyid* Sulayman Shattah, *Shaykh* Umar Ba Junayd, and *Mufti al-Shafi'iyyah* Sa'id ibn Muhammad Bab-Sayl.<sup>37, 38, 39</sup>

In the meantime Muhammad Salih's parents left Swellendam and came to live in District Six in Cape Town. His father went on pilgrimage in 1890 and also took the opportunity to visit his son. In March the following year his father passed away while

still in Mecca, leaving him without any means of support.<sup>40, 41</sup> Fortunately for him (and also for the Muslim community), his two brothers, Abd al Bari and Sulayman, “seeing his good qualities continued to encourage and support him...”, and he was able to continue his studies without any fear of financial need.<sup>42</sup> Two years later (1893) his mother died in Cape Town.<sup>43</sup>

A few years later he entered into his first marriage, with Ruqiyyah Abdurahman, the sister of Dr A. Abdurahman. Her parents, Khadijah and Abd al- Rahman, had taken their sons to Britain to study the medical sciences and had brought their daughters to Mecca on pilgrimage.<sup>44</sup> It was therefore in Mecca that Muhammad Salih met her. The marriage produced one child, Abdullah, who died, and soon after his death Ruqiyyah also passed away.<sup>45, 46</sup> Thus, in the space of a few years the young student had lost his parents, wife and only child, as well as his eldest brother, Abd al-Basir, who died in Mecca in 1895. Soon afterwards he married again, but this time to an Arab woman whose name was Jawahir.<sup>47</sup>

## THE HYDRA OF PROFESSIONAL JEALOUSY

In 1902, when he had completed about fifteen years of study, Muhammad Salih left Mecca to come home. *En route* he called at the island of Zanzibar, where he stayed for about a year, acting as a temporary judge in religious affairs<sup>48</sup> and reorganising the island’s *Maulud-al- Nabi* celebrations.<sup>49</sup> The Sultan at the time was *Sayyid* Hamid ibn Muhammad.<sup>50</sup> *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih arrived home in July 1903, blissfully unaware that he was coming into a community that was tearing itself apart on religious and religious-related controversies; and this in spite of its history as victims of European slave activities in Africa and Asia, and despite the depth of its suffering and humiliation at the Cape.

In fact, even while he was on his way home “swords were already being drawn against him” because of a newspaper report that he had “attained his professorship” (whatever was meant by this) in Mecca.<sup>51</sup> A number of letters on the matter appeared in the local newspaper, some publicly disparaging him because of the “professorship”,<sup>52</sup> while others claimed that there were other equally well-qualified “professors” in Islam in the Muslim community.<sup>53, 54</sup>

Soon after he had arrived home there was another similar stream of letters over a newspaper report in the *South African News*<sup>55</sup> that he was allegedly claiming to be South Africa’s first “Mohammedan Bishop” (whatever this also meant). One letter claimed that there were already other such “bishops” in the community.<sup>56</sup> Not a single letter welcomed *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih into the community in the spirit of Islam without any reservations. One thing was certain – he had received his first experience of some of the divisive forces that were operating in the community. Unfortunately, this was not to be his last such experience. More, and much worse, was to come later.



Davids<sup>57</sup> deals in detail with the storm of religious- related controversies that battered the community, especially during the nineteenth century. These controversies were to continue unabated during the life of *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih and were to affect him in a very personal way. In the foreword to David's book, *Sayyid* Habibul Haq of the University of Durban-Westville summarises some of these controversies during the nineteenth century. He writes:

“The first mosque in the Bo-Kaap ... suffered from bitterness and disunity on the question of the succession of the imam and the Jumu'ah question ... [which] became an unending drama.”<sup>58</sup>

The second oldest mosque (the Palm Tree Mosque) ... gave rise to disunity and to unending problems.<sup>59</sup>

The third oldest mosque also does not portray a happy picture for it gave rise to the Hanafi-Shafi'i hatred campaigns.<sup>60</sup>

The details of the *Jami'ah* Mosque, also called the Queen Victoria Mosque, the fourth oldest mosque in the Bo-Kaap, ... seem most unpleasant.<sup>61</sup>

The *Shafi'iyyah* Mosque, the fifth oldest, was not immune from the inner tension of leadership struggle and litigations.<sup>62</sup>

The establishment of the two *Hanafi* mosques ... [was] the fruits of the hate campaign against the Hanafi school.<sup>63</sup>

Davids<sup>64</sup> summarises the disputes, stating that litigation “became a pattern of virtually all mosques in Bo-Kaap. There were thus tremendous cleavages within the structure of the community.” This is what *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih came home to.

Unfortunately, he had also not come to the end of the personal tragedies that had characterised his life so far. His Arab wife could not adjust to the Cape Town way of life, so he divorced her, allowing her to return to her family in Mecca.<sup>65</sup> There were no children from this marriage. He remarried in about 1905, this time to his cousin on his mother's side, the fifteen year old Kubra Toffie.<sup>66</sup> He was about 34 years of age at the time. This marriage eventually produced fifteen children (eight daughters and seven sons).<sup>67</sup>

He started teaching the Islamic religious sciences soon after he arrived in Cape Town. Ladies' classes were held every fortnight at the Palm Tree Mosque, and classes for men were held every week at the *Nur al-Hamadiyyah* Mosque. Both these mosques are situated in Long Street in Cape Town. At the same time he was conducting *Jumu'ah Salah* at the *Jami'ah* Mosque in Lower Chiappini Street in Cape Town.

It was in the Palm Tree Mosque that he launched an attack against the deculturation of Muslim women when he stated that they should cover their *aurahs* and wear *hijab*.

Large numbers of women, especially his students, heeded his call and covered up. This attempt to restore the Islamic propriety of women met with unexpected derision and contempt, but the women stood firm and slowly reaffirmed their dignity as Muslim women, despite the prevailing community antagonism.<sup>68, 69</sup> This was a major victory for Islam in a country in which the dominant culture was (and still is) colonialist and Christian. By covering their *aurahs* the Muslim women at the time sent out a powerful signal that they wanted to adhere to the cultural values of Islam.

### The *Jumu'ah* agreement

*Shaykh* Muhammad Salih's first public test came soon afterwards, in 1914, when the *Shafi'iyyah* *imams* signed an agreement that there would be one *Jumu'ah* in one mosque. The following was the agreement:

"All praise and thanks to Allah, the Almighty, as He should be praised; and all honour and blessings on our Prophet Muhammad and on his followers who came after him. Following on this thanks and praise; we, the undersigned *Shafi'iyyah* *imams* in Cape Town have all agreed the *Jumu'ah* should be one and not more, and that it should be performed in the mosque of *Imam* Hashim Shu'ayb. [Furthermore] that each *imam* who performs *Jumu'ah* will have an opportunity to deliver the *khutbah*, [and these *imams* are] *Imams* Hashim, Muhammad Behardien, and Abdurahman Qasim. The one who goes against this agreement (does not comply with the accord) or contravenes the agreement and the understanding, has broken the staff of the Muslims, and has contravened the law of the Book (the *Quran*) and the law of the *Sunnah* which the Prophet had practised. [In addition] the anger of Allah will fall upon him which means one severe punishment, and the anger of the Messenger of Allah will fall upon him which means that the Prophet will not intercede on his behalf, and he will be chased away from the Pond of the Prophet. We seek Allah's protection from all these. This agreement and accord was written on this paper and in my presence and in the presence of *Shaykh* Rashid ibn Salim Al-Madhuri. The above has been written and signed in my presence and that of many witnesses on the night of the 27<sup>th</sup> of the month of Safar in the year 1332.

Signed by:

Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Salim Ba Kathir	<i>Imam</i> Ibrahim Salih
<i>Imam</i> Hashim Shu'ayb	<i>Imam</i> Musa Abdul Hadi (Abd al-Hadi)
<i>Shaykh</i> Muhammad Salih ibn Hajji	<i>Imam</i> Abdol Farad (Abd al- Farad)
<i>Imam</i> Muhammad Beharodien	<i>Imam</i> Muhammad Galiel (Khalil)
(Baha-uddin)	
<i>Imam</i> Abdurahman Qasim	<i>Imam</i> Abdul Basir (Abd al-Basir)
<i>Imam</i> Abubakr (Abu Bakr) Kagavat	<i>Imam</i> Jassim
<i>Imam</i> Gabiebodien (Habib al-Din)	<i>Imam</i> Muhammad Salih
<i>Imam</i> Abdul Wahid (Abd al-Wahid)	

NOTE: *Imam* Amino (Amin al-Din) was not present at the discussion. He was ill. However, a few days later, *Shaykh* Abdullah Ba Kathir and I, with a number of others, had gone to *Imam* Amino to outline [the agreement] and to also give him an opportunity to deliver the *khutba* on a Friday. He disagreed and was dissatisfied with the making of one *Jumu'ah* in the above-mentioned place.

It is my request and approval that this agreement of the *Imams* of the Cape be translated and distributed to all the Muslims in the Cape Colony.

*Sayyid* Husayn Assa-kaf of Medina  
Cape Town  
4 March 1914”

The collapse of the agreement as a result of the attitude of *Imam* Amino must have caused considerable religious consternation to *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih. Oral history<sup>70</sup> indicates that he had played a significant role in the organisation of the conference of *Imams*, and that he had hoped to strengthen the Islamic base of the religious activities of the Muslims.

### **The Al-Zawiyah Mosque controversy**

About this time he began to conceive the idea that a complex should be established that could be used both as a mosque and a school. This was because a decision by the trustees of the *Khalil al-Rahman* Mosque in Ellesmere Street in Cape Town to build a Muslim Arabic school (of which he would be in charge) as part of the mosque complex had not materialised.<sup>71</sup> Matters were also complicated by the fact that he had moved his classes to his home, forcing him to teach his students under the most uncomfortable conditions.<sup>72</sup>

In 1919 he took the first steps towards the building of what was to later become known as the *Al-Zawiyah* Mosque. The word *Zawiyah* has a number of meanings. On the one hand, it means a corner of a house or a small mosque used for poor Muslims and students,<sup>73</sup> while in certain special cases it can be a retreat for members of a *tasawwuf* order (as in North Africa, for example). Unfortunately, the construction of the mosque, instead of being a milestone in the development of the religious structures of the Muslim community, gave rise to a court case in 1924 which played further havoc with Muslim unity and solidarity (or what was left of it after more than a century of religious and religious-related controversy).

The plaintiffs in the case<sup>74</sup> were *Haji* Abdurahman Bardien and *Haji* Tasserick, while the defendant was *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih. The plaintiffs purported that they and others had:

“raised among the members of the Malay community ... a fund for the purposes of acquiring land, for the benefit of the Malay community, and of erecting thereon a suitable hall to be used exclusively for the purposes of holding such

lectures, together with the buildings appurtenant thereto ,... In spite of protests and lawful demands from the contributors aforesaid (including especially the plaintiffs) and in breach of the ... agreement, defendant has wrongfully and unlawfully refused and still refuses to recognise the aforesaid contributors in the matter or to account to them in any way for the monies collected and/or raised on mortgage by him, or to have the aforesaid land and buildings registered in other than his own name, and claims to deal with the same property as his own in all respects. Moreover, defendant has wrongfully and unlawfully and in breach of the ... agreement diverted the said hall from the purposes for which it was acquired and erected, to wit a lecture hall, by using it for the purposes of a mosque.”

*Shaykh* Muhammad Salih rejected their claims, stating that the cost of lands was paid for “out of funds which either belonged to him personally, or which had been collected and handed over to him for his personal use”. The erection of the buildings had been paid for by donations from people who had “left [it] entirely to him to decide whether he would use [such donation] for the building or for his personal subsistence. Part of the cost of the building was in fact defrayed out of donations so received, and the balance out of money borrowed on mortgage.” He further stated that “the interior appearance of the *Al Zawiyah* Mosque from the time of its erection had no other appearance than that of a mosque.”

The court ruled that a reference should be appointed to determine how many people had contributed to the purchase of the land and the erection of the buildings, and that their contributions (with interest) should be refunded if they so wished. As a consequence of the ruling, the building remained as a mosque, but the impact of the case on the community was to result in community rifts that would take decades to heal.

This was a very bad period, and caused much sadness in the community. The members of his congregation helped to meet some of the costs, but his family was reduced to poverty. Mrs Abrahams of Longmarket Street, Cape Town recalls that “violence also broke out, especially against his supporters and family members, and my own father and the *Shaykh*’s one cousin were stabbed in Hanover Street in Cape Town at the time.”<sup>75</sup>

### **In the footsteps of the masters**

Despite all this, *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih continued a programme of teaching which has probably not been equalled by any other religious scholar in Cape Town. There is very little doubt that he made one of the greatest contributions to Islamic religious education in the history of Cape Town and its surroundings (if not in the whole country), and that he taught large numbers of students (commonly known in the Muslim community as *Zawiyah murids*). He therefore continued the tradition, in both the fields of education and *Tasawwuf*, that had been begun by the early Muslim “masters” at the

Cape, such as *Shaykh* Yusuf of Faure, *Imam* Abdullah al-Mazlum (*Tuan Guru*), and *Tuan Sa'id*.<sup>76</sup>

According to Allie,<sup>77</sup> his daily teaching programme was as follows:

“After the dawn prayer (*Fajr*) he held special classes for *imams*. Some of those who attended these classes, and who later came to play prominent roles in the religious affairs of the Muslims, were *Imams* Abd al-Basir, Shadley, Harris, and Muhammad Hayr.

From about 10.00 a.m. he had classes for descendants of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.), called *Ahl al-Bayt*. He treated them with great honour, and believed that they should occupy leadership positions in the community.

After the afternoon prayer (*Asr*), classes were held, amongst others, for members of the family of the Habibiyah Mosque of Athlone.

Between the early evening prayer (*Maghrib*) and the later evening prayer (*Isha*), classes were held for various groups.

As well as these classes, he held special lectures on Thursday evenings for the general public, at which he taught *Tafsir al-Quran*, and on Sunday mornings when he taught the *Ihya Ulum al-Din* of *Imam* Ghazali. Special classes for women were held once a fortnight, and in these he concentrated on Islamic Jurisprudence.

In describing the evening classes, Samaai<sup>78</sup> related the following:

We studied under him three evenings of the week, and were divided into different groups according to our level of advancement. Each group was taught individually. The major books studied included, *inter alia*, *Risalah al-Jami'ah*, *Maraq al-Falah*, and *Irshad al-Bariyyah*. Each student had his own texts, and all meanings and explanations had to be memorised.

There is very little doubt that *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih, who was a member of the *Alawiyyah Tariqah*,<sup>79</sup> used these classes to spread the teachings and practices of *tasawwuf* that had had such a major impact on him during his studies overseas. *Maulud al-Nabi* became, and still is, a major event in the yearly activities of the *Al-Zawiyah* Mosque. During his lifetime, the arrangements for the celebration started at least two months before the date, and on the night of the celebration the mosque was decorated with flowers and palms and illuminated with special lighting. Groups of men recited the *Maulad Barzanji* with solo recitals by certain prominent members of the congregation during the *qiyam*.<sup>80, 81</sup> On the following Sunday the women celebrated by walking in procession and reciting the *Salawaat* on the Prophet (s.a.w.s), while the men recited in an adjoining room.<sup>82</sup>

*Shaykh* Muhammad Salih also acquainted his students with certain well-known *tasawwuf* liturgical practices, such as the *Ratib-al-Haddad* (usually done by them on a

Thursday evening), the *Ratib al-Attas* (on a Saturday evening), *Nasr wa al-Falah*, the *Duriyyah* (made with special students), the *Qadiriyyah*, and *Yasin* with the seven *mubins*.<sup>83</sup> These practices all suggest that the mosque was deliberately named *Al-Zawiyah* because of the association of the word with *tasawwuf* orders.

*Shaykh* Muhammad Salih died in 1945, after about forty years of public service. At the time people whispered in hushed tones of reverence and awe about his death, and it was almost as though a cloud had settled upon the community. It is difficult to describe the almost imperceptible grief that slowly spread through the community as the news of his death spread, and as people came to realise the full implication of the loss.<sup>84</sup> He died without having been able to do much about the incomprehensible religious discord that was (and still is) prevalent in the Muslim community. However, he left three sons (*Shaykhs* Ibrahim, Mahdi and Mujahid) who continued to nurture the structures that he had created in order to keep the torch of Islam burning. Their contribution to the life of the Muslims in Cape Town is another page in the turbulent history of this community.



## Chapter 8

# THE HIFZ TRADITION AT THE CAPE: THE CONTRIBUTION OF SHAYKH MUHAMMAD SALIH SOLOMON<sup>1</sup>

**Yusuf da Costa**

The author's first recollection of the *hifz* tradition at the Cape was of attending, as a young boy in the latter half of the 1940's, the annual *Hatmah al-Quran* ceremonies in Goodwood, a suburb to the north of Cape Town. This ceremony consists of the recitation of the whole of the *Quran* by local *huffaz*. These ceremonies, which were held at various locations in the Cape Peninsula, lasted from just after the *Fajr Salah* till the *Maghrib Salah*, and were usually followed by a lecture and supper.<sup>2</sup>

The ceremonies attended by the author were held in the *Qulub al Mu'minin* Mosque and were open to the public. They were organized by a local Islamic organization, the *Ghauthias Maulud Jama'ah*. The name of this organization is intriguing. A *maulud jama'ah* is usually an organization that organizes its members and the public to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.)<sup>3</sup>. The word *Ghauthias* appears to be derived from *Ghauth*, a title granted to one of the highest categories of saints in Islam.<sup>4</sup> Thus, for example, *Shaykh* Abd al-Qadir ibn Abi Salih Janquidost Jilani is referred to as the highest *Ghauth* in Sufi literature, and he is considered to have founded the *Qadiriyyah* order.<sup>5</sup> According to Mr Ibrahim Abrahams of Kensington,<sup>6</sup> who was a member of the *Jama'ah*, the name "*Ghauthias*" was given to the group by the *Imam* Ahmad Ely, *imam* of the Husnayni Mosque in Diep River at the time, who also taught them the ceremonies associated with the *Maulud*. It is quite possible that Imam Ahmad had close links with the *Qadiriyyah* order.

The author and other children used to watch in awe from the openings between the balustrades of the balcony inside the Mosque as the *huffaz*, dressed in flowing robes of different colours and designs, recited chapter after chapter of the *Quran* from memory. Anyone who came to recite at these ceremonies was critically scrutinized by his peers, and any mistake in a recital was soon corrected by the other *huffaz*. There can be little doubt that these ceremonies were, in a very real sense, subtle evaluations by their peers of their standards of recital and memorisation.

## THE ORIGINS OF THE HIFZ TRADITION

This tradition goes right back to the origins of Islam, when Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) memorized the Revelation,<sup>7</sup> and transmitted it orally to his Companions for

memorisation and recording.<sup>8</sup> Thus, even during the Prophet's lifetime, many of his Companions had already memorized the *Quran*. These included, among others, Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, Abdullah ibn Abbas, Ibn Mas'ud, Abu Hurayrah, Abdullah ibn Amr ibn 'As, A'ishah, Hafsa, and Umm Salama.<sup>9</sup> This tradition of memorizing the *Quran* as also encouraged by statements in the *ahadith*<sup>10</sup> and has continued down the centuries to the present time,<sup>11</sup> and as Islam spread to other countries, so the tradition went with it.

**Table 8.1: The original readers of the seven modes of Quranic reading and the major transmitters of these modes<sup>15, 16</sup>**

Readers	Transmitters
1. Nafi'al Madani (d. 169 A.H.)	a. Qarlan (Isa ibn Mayna) b. Warsh (Uthman ibn Sa'id al-Misri)
2. Ibn Kathir al-Makki (d. 119 A.H.)	a. Al-Bazzi (Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Abi Bazzih) b. Qunbal (Muhammad ibn Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid ibn Sa'id al-Makki al-Mahzumi)
3. Abu Amr al-Basri (d. 153 A.H.)	a. Al-Duri (Abu Umar Hafs ibn Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz al-Duri al-Nahwi) b. Al-Susi (Abu Shu'ayb Salih ibn Ziyad ibn Abdullah al-Susi)
4. Ibn Amir al-Shami	a. Hisham (Hisham ibn Amir ibn Nasir al-Qadi al-Damashqi) b. Ibn Dhakwan (Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Bashir ibn Dhakwan al-Qarshi al-Damashqi)
5. Hamzah al-Kufi (d. 156 A.H.)	a. Khalaf (Khalaf ibn Hisham al-Bazzar) b. Khallad (Khallad ibn Khallad)
6. Al-Kisa'i al-Kufi (d. 189 A.H.)	a. Abu Harith (Al-Layth ibn Khuld al-Baghdadi) b. Hafs al-Duri
7. Asim al-Kufi (d. 127 A.H.)	a. Shu'bah (Abu Bakr Shu'bah Ibn Ay-yash ibn Salim al-Kufi) b. Hafs (Hafs ibn Sulayman ibn al-Mughirah al-Bazzaz al-Kufi)

An interesting aspect of the oral transmission of the *Quran* from the beginning of Islam (and which centuries later would also impact on the Cape) was that:

“the men around Muhammad transmitted it on the authority of the Messenger of God in different ways. These differences affected certain words in it and the manner in which certain letters were pronounced. They were handed down and



became famous. Eventually, seven specific ways of reading the *Quran* became established.”<sup>12</sup>

Although the most commonly prevailing view is that there are seven modes of *Quranic* reading, some people speak of ten modes,<sup>13</sup> and even of fourteen modes.<sup>14</sup> The names of those from whom the seven modes originated, and of those who transmitted these modes are to be found in Table 8.1.

## THE *HIFZ* TRADITION AT THE CAPE

The *hifz* tradition reached the Cape when Islam arrived here from the various parts of Africa and Asia (and especially from India and Indonesia), mainly as a result of the European international slave trade between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>17</sup> There is little doubt that among these early Muslim immigrants (political exiles, slaves and convicts) there may have been some *huffaz*, as some of these immigrants were trained Islamic teachers.<sup>18</sup> It is highly probable that individuals such as *Shaykh* Yusuf of Macassar and some of the scholars exiled to the Cape with him in 1694 had also memorised the *Quran*, because such memorization was a characteristic feature of Muslim scholarship of the time. What is definitely known is that in 1705 during the Dutch occupation of the Cape, an eastern political exile, the Rajah of Tambora (the Sultan Abdul-Basi) had written a copy of the *Quran* from memory at the residence of the governor of the Cape.<sup>19</sup> All traces of this *Quran* have been lost.

Imam Abdullah al-Mazlum (commonly referred to in the community as *Tuan Guru*<sup>20</sup>), who in the 1790's established the first formal school for Muslim children,<sup>21</sup> had also written from memory a copy of the *Quran* for use by the community, but this was much later. This *Quran* is to be found in the *Auwal* Mosque in Dorp Street, Cape Town. *Tuan Guru* had a number of contemporaries who appear to have memorized the *Quran*. These included *Imam* Rajab van Boeghies, who had also written several copies of the *Quran* from memory, and *Khalib* Hajji who became the founder *imam* of the *Shafi'i* Mosque.

It seems that when the different national-origin groups started to become welded into a single recognized Muslim community after the slaves had been emancipated in 1834,<sup>22</sup> the memorization of parts of the whole of the *Quran* as an essential part of Islamic education started to grow. This was partly because of the steady growth of the non-formal educational structures which had been established by the community even before the emancipation of the slaves.

For example, the educational work started by *Imam* Abdullah<sup>23</sup> spread to the point that in 1861 Mayson<sup>24</sup> could report that

“There are two large [Muslim] schools in Cape Town, in which the reading of al-Koran in Arabic is taught ... [and in] several of the priests' houses there are smaller schools ...”

Abu Bakr Effendi, a Kurd theologian who had been sent to the Cape by the Ottoman Government, established the Ottoman Theological School in Cape Town in 1862.<sup>25, 26</sup>

According to Omar Lutmi Effendi, who had accompanied Abu Bakr to the Cape:

“We let some of the pupils who had fine voices, namely Abd al-Hamid, Isma’il, and ‘Ubaidah memorise the *Quran* excellently within two years. Some others also came and tried to memorise the *Quran*.”<sup>27</sup>

Prior to the arrival of Abu Bakr Effendi, Isma’il Ma’awiyyah Manie, who was later to become the first locally-born Muslim to memorise the *Quran*, left for Mecca to study *gira’at*. He was awarded a medal by the Ottoman authorities in that city for his excellence in the field of Quranic recital. Later, after his return in 1903, he became the *imam* of the *Nur al-Hamadiyyah* or *Hanafi* Mosque in Cape Town, a position he held until he died in 1918.<sup>28</sup> Also attached to the mosque at about the same time was *Imam* Sa’d al-Din Dollie who also appears to have memorized the *Quran*.<sup>29</sup> He was one of a steady stream of young men who were sent overseas to study, a tradition that had started soon after the emancipation of the slaves. An anonymous observer of the Muslims at the Cape wrote about them at the time:

“They have of late been brought up to a higher standard of orthodoxy by more frequent and direct communication with the centre of authority at Mecca. Many young men now proceed thither for education.”<sup>30</sup>

At the same time, and even more so at the turn of the twentieth century, a number of Arabs came to make their home in Cape Town. Some of these were religious scholars, and they were to leave an indelible impression on the religious life of the Muslim community. *Shaykh* Muhammad Sa’id Najaar of Mecca and his father, *Shaykh* Uthman, arrived in Cape Town to settle in 1906. He was 25 years old at the time and a qualified *gari* in the seven modes of Quranic recital, an extremely rare qualification in South Africa at that time. He was later to officiate as *imam* at a number of mosques at the Cape, including the *Zina al-Islam* Mosque in Muir Street, Cape Town, *Quwwah al-Islam* Mosque in Loop Street, Cape Town, and the *Sunni Muslim* Mosque in Harvey Road, Claremont. He died in 1957.<sup>31</sup> One of his sons, *Shaykh* Abu Bakr (the *imam* of the *Zina al-Islam* Mosque in Muir Street until his death in 1993) studied *hifz* under him and under *Imam* Isma’il Talib of Salt River.<sup>32</sup>

Another Arab to arrive was Muhammad Sulayman Abadi, the father of *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih. He came from the town of Ta’iz in Yemen, the town where the Companion, Mu’adh ibn Jabal, lies buried. Abadi had five children from his marriage to Rufi’ah Adams of Constantia. Apart from Muhammad Salih, there were also Abd al-Rahman, Abdullah, Khadijah, and Fatimah. Muhammad Salih attended the Talfalah Primary School in Claremont. After studying *Quranic* reading under Muhammad Hanif of Wynberg, he started *hifz* under *Imam* Ma’awiyyah Sedick, who was teaching at the school at the time.

*Imam* Ma'awiyyah was of Turkish origin. His grandfather was from Istanbul and had come to settle at the Cape during the latter half of the nineteenth century. *Imam* Ma'awiyyah spent ten years in Mecca, studying *hifz* under *Shaykh* Mu'ti Mirdad, and on his return became *imam* at the Yusifiyyah Mosque in Wynberg. He also started teaching at the Talfalah Primary School. Apart from *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih, a number of other prominent *huffaz* at the Cape also studied *hifz* under him. These included, among others, Abd al-Rahman Ely,<sup>34</sup> *Imam* Hasan Abd al-Rahman,<sup>35</sup> *Imam* Malik Heuwel,<sup>36</sup> and the brothers *Imam* Ahmad Moos<sup>37</sup> and *Shaykh* Isma'il Moos.<sup>38</sup> *Imam* Ma'awiyyah died in 1955.<sup>39</sup> There can be little doubt that the foundations in *Quranic* recital and memorisation that these *huffaz*, and especially Muhammad Salih, had obtained from their teacher were largely responsible for their becoming some of the most prominent *huffaz* in the country.

Muhammad Salih had totally memorized the *Quran* by the age of 15, and in 1927, on the inspiration of his father and his teacher, he left for Mecca to further his studies in *hifz*. He remained in Mecca for about twelve years, although he did come home after eight years to marry before returning for further studies. His *hifz* teachers were *Shaykh* Muhammad Jamal Mirdad under whom he studied the mode of *Quranic* reading, *Qira'ah al-Hafs*, and *Shaykh* Muhammad Ubayd who taught him the mode of reading called *Qira'ah al-Warsh*, *Shaykh* Muhammad Jamal Mirdad was at that time the *imam* of the *Magam al-Hanafiyyah* in the *Masjid al-Haram* in Mecca. Apart from *hifz*, he also did religious studies at the Sulatiyyah Institute as well as with private tutors such as *Sayyid* Alawi Maliki and *Shaykh* Isa Rauwwas. When he finally returned home in 1938 (with his newly obtained title of *shaykh*), he brought with him a certificate issued by *Shaykh* Muhammad Jamal Mirdad detailing the *silsilah* of the *Qira'ah al-Hafs* and granting him permission to teach that *Qira'ah*.<sup>40</sup>

There was already a very firmly established *hifz* tradition at the Cape when *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih returned to Cape Town (after a short spell in Durban) (see Tables 8.2 and 8.3) There had also evolved what appears to be a peculiarly Cape variation of this tradition – the *Hatmah al-Quran* or the *Tilawah al-Quran*, a ceremony that involved all the *huffaz* coming together in order to recite the *Quran* from beginning to end. They all took it in turns to recite sections from memory until the whole of the *Quran* had been recited. These ceremonies were held in both mosques and private homes. However, during the 1920's a few annual ceremonies were held in a large marquee in the Observatory Graveyard. All the top *huffaz* participated, and it was held in conjunction with the annual *Maulud al-Nabi* celebrations.<sup>41, 42</sup> Van der Ross<sup>43</sup> describes another aspect of these ceremonies that began to evolve during the 1930's, before the arrival of *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih:

“During the 1930's the top *huffaz* formed a ‘circle’ consisting at the time of thirteen *huffaz*. They used to recite in mosques or residences either from *Isha* to *Fajr* or from *Fajr* to *Maghrib*. Each person had to recite a chapter. This was later changed to a half and then to a quarter chapter. Any person who considered himself to be a *hafiz* had to prove his worth by reciting in the ‘circle’ in public.”

On his return to Cape Town, *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih almost immediately started to establish a reputation for himself as a *qari'* and as a *hafiz*. He founded a small *madrassah* at the home of his parents in Wynberg and started giving lessons in *hifz* and *Quranic* recital.<sup>44</sup> Two of his first students were *Imams* Shams al-Din Ibrahim<sup>45</sup> and Ahmad Moos.<sup>46</sup> At the time he was granted the occasional opportunity to conduct the *Jumu'ah* Prayers at the *Yusufiyyah* Mosque in Wynberg.<sup>47</sup>

It was not until 1940 that the first steps were taken to form a socio-religious structure within which the *hifz* tradition at the Cape could operate. This happened when the *Hatmah al-Quran Jama'ah* was established under the chairmanship of Abu Bakr Johnson of Cape Town.<sup>48</sup> This organization, in which *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih would come to play a prominent role, had as its specific aims the provision of a platform for *Hatmah* or *Tilawah al-Quran* ceremonies, and the bringing together of the *huffaz* in a spirit of friendship that would allow them to listen critically to each other reciting. In this way it became possible to set standards for memorisation and recitation in a structured manner.

During the initial stages, the *huffaz* used to meet once or twice a month in order to recite together.<sup>49</sup> Later they met every Saturday evening:

“We used to gather together every Saturday evening. Each one would recite a *miqrah* until two chapters had been completed. On these occasions *Shaykh* Ahmad Behardien used to deliver lectures to the group on aspects of Islam.”

At other times the *huffaz* would come together on Thursday evenings for revision purposes:

“Most of the *huffaz* used to come together on a Thursday evening to recite. I found this when I joined them in 1962. We used to recite a *miqrah* each until two chapters had been revised. Those who participated included *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih, *Imam* Isma'il Talib, *Shaykh* Isma'il Moos, *Hajji* Siddiq Sadan, *Imam* Hasan Abd al-Rahman, *Imam* Shams al-Din Ibrahim, *Hajji* Yusuf Gabier, *Imam* Abd al-Malik Heuwel, *Hajji* Abd al-Aziz Gabier, and some of the students of *Imam* Isma'il Talib.”<sup>51</sup>

The *huffaz* divided into two groups during the early 1960's, the one group under *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih and the other under *Imam* Isma'il Talib.<sup>52</sup> *Shaykh* Yusuf Booley (who was not officially connected to either of the groups) also established another organization for *huffaz*, the *Jam'iyyah al-Qura'*, which founded a *hifz* school during the latter part of the decade.<sup>53</sup> The original division which had split the *huffaz* has now virtually disappeared as the older generation of *huffaz* have passed away. Both the *Hatmah al-Quran Jama'ah* and the *Jam'iyyah al-Qurah'* are today functioning in the community, complementing each other's activities rather than operating in a competition with each other.

Today *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih is considered to be the doyen of the *huffaz* at the Cape (and possibly in the country). The great respect given to him is shown by the open affection that he receives whenever he enters the *Auwal* Mosque in Cape Town on a Friday for *Jumu'ah Salah*. Most of those present will get up to greet him and hiss his hand. No other religious leader in the Cape is shown the same regard. And many people attend that mosque simply because they want to hear him recite and to be led by him in prayer.

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

**Table 8.2: Overseas-trained *huffaz/qari'un* at the Cape during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries<sup>54-68</sup>**

Names of <i>huffaz</i>	Place of training and name of tutor/s	No. of <i>gira'at</i>
Abdullah al-Mazlum ( <i>Tuan Guru</i> ) (d. 1807)	Unknown	Unknown
Abu-Bakr Effendi (d. 1880)	Baghdad	7
Isma'il Mu'awiyah Manie (d. 1918)	Mecca	Unknown
Abd al-Malik Hamzah (d. 1949) <sup>69</sup>	Mecca: <i>Shaykh</i> Muhammad Sharbini	Unknown
Mu'awiyah Sedick (d. 1955)	Mecca: <i>Shaykh</i> Mu'ti Mirdad	7
Sa'id Muhammad Najaar (d. 1957)	Mecca	7
Isma'il Edwards (d. 1958) <sup>70</sup>	Cairo: (Al-Azhar University)	3
Isma'il Talib (d. 1962) <sup>71</sup>	Mecca: <i>Shaykh</i> Muhammad Sharbini	7
Isma'il Moos (d. 1969)	Mecca: <i>Shaykh</i> Jamal Mirdad	1
Muhammad Salih Solomon	Mecca: <i>Shaykh</i> Jamal Mirdad; <i>Shaykh</i> Muhammad Ubayd	2
Yusuf Booley <sup>72</sup>	Mecca: <i>Sayyid</i> Abd al-Rahman Al-Maliki	1
Sa'dullah Khan <sup>73</sup>	Cairo: <i>Shaykh</i> Atiyya Bayyumi (Jam-iy-yah Ahl al-Quran) Al-Azhar University)	10
Abu Bakr Abd Al-Ra'uf	Medinah and Cairo <sup>74</sup>	10

Table 8.2 shows that, apart from Tuan Guru, Abu Bakr Effendi and Sa'id Muhammad Najaar, whom, it seems, had come here as *huffaz* from overseas, and Sa'dullah Khan, who comes from Vryburg, the Cape has produced only nine locally-born overseas-trained *huffaz* during a period of about two centuries. Of the nine, seven had studied in Mecca, and at least two (*Imams* Mu'awiyah Sedick and Isma'il Talib) had mastered seven *qira'at*, and one (Abu Bakr Abd al-Ra'uf) had mastered ten. At the time of writing only three of these locally-born overseas-trained *huffaz* (*Shaykhs* Muhammad Salih, Yusuf Booley and Abu Bakr Abd al-Ra'uf) are still alive.

**Table 8.3: *Huffaz who qualified/studied under overseas-trained huffaz at the Cape during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*<sup>75-90</sup>**

<b>Overseas trained <i>huffaz</i></b>	<b><i>Huffaz</i> who qualified/studied under them at the Cape</b>
Isma'il Mu'awwiyah Manie (d. 1918)	Abd al-Rahman Abd al-Rahman (d. early 1930's) Abd al-Malik Hamzah (d. 1949) Amin Connelly [Port Elizabeth] (d. 1950) <sup>91</sup> Mu'awiyah Sedick (d. 1955) Niftah al-Din Gamieldin (d. 1955) <sup>92</sup> Tahir Hamzah (d. 1965) Abd al-Hamid Hamzah (d. 1984) Yusuf Gabier (d. 1991) Fatima Geyer (nee Hamzah)
Abd al-Malik Hamzah (d. 1949)	Abd al-Rahman Ely (d. 1954) Isma'il Moos (d. 1969) Siddiq Sadien (d. 1982) <sup>93</sup> Hasan Abd al-Rahman (d. 1986) Ahmad Moos (d. 1986) Abd al-Malik Heuwel Muhammad Salih Solomon
Mu'awiyah Sedick (d. 1955)	Abd al-Rahman Abd al-Rahman (d. early 1930's) Umar Zardad (d. 1975) Hasan Abd al-Rahman (d. 1986) Abu Bakr Najaar (d. 1993) Qasim Solomons
Sa'id Muhammad Najaar (d. 1957)	Umar Zardad (d. 1975) Abd al-Aziz Gabier (d. 1992) Isma'il Moos (d. 1969) Talib Talib (d. 1975) Nur Salim (d. 1985)
Isma'il Edwards (d. 1958) Isma'il Talib (d. 1962)	

	Yusuf Gabier (d. 1991)
	Abu Bakr Najaar (d. 1993)
	<i>Sayyid</i> Thabit Rifa'i
	Yusuf Mia (Johannesburg)
	Musa Mia (Johannesburg)
	Ahmad Mia (Johannesburg)
	Abdulla Ibrahim (Johannesburg)
	Muhammad Mia (Johannesburg)
Isma'il Moos (d. 1969)	Hanif Moos
Muhammad Salih Solomon (See Table 8.4)	Ismuni Talib
Yusuf Booley	
	Salih Adams
	Abdullah Bayat
	Amina Bayat
	Kashif Basardien
	Abu-Bakr Muhammad (Durban)
	Ahmad Umar
	Abd al-Rahim Khan (Durban)
	Dawud Ali (Durban)
	Ibrahim Limalia (Durban)
	Ahmad Umar (Durban)
	Abd al-Qadir Hamzah (Durban)
	Qasim Vahed (Durban)
	Umar Faruq (Durban)

Tables 8.3 and 8.4 show that the overseas-trained *huffaz* had taught at least 77 students, most of whom could be considered to have been, or to be, virtually fully-fledged *huffaz*. Amongst these is one woman, Fatimah Geyer, and only one person who had studied the seven *qira'at* locally. It is interesting to note that only three of the overseas-trained *huffaz* (*Imam* Isma'il Talib and *Shaykhs* Muhammad Salih and Yusuf Booley) have made any significant contribution to the training of *huffaz* outside Cape Town. They trained five, twelve and ten *huffaz* respectively, mainly from Durban and Johannesburg.

Table 8.4 shows the range of students (from three of the country's major urban areas) who successfully completed *hifz* under *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih. The table does not include those who had studied elsewhere and had come to him for the final revision. Large numbers of students have, of course, also only been able to complete portions of the *Quran* under him, and many more had merely studied *Quranic* recital.<sup>107</sup> Thus, his influence is far wider than is suggested by the Table.

**Table 8.4: Huffaz who studied under Shaykh Muhammad Salih Solomon, and the number of huffaz trained by each one of them<sup>94-106</sup>**

<b>Huffaz trained by Shaykh Muhammad Salih Solomon</b>	<b>No. of huffaz produced by them</b>
<u>CAPE TOWN</u>	
Isma'il Soeker (d. 1987)	0
Ahmad Moos (d. 1986)	0
Hanif Booley (d. 1983)	0
Abd al-Rahman Salih	9
Shams al-Din Ibrahim	50
Abd al-Rahmin Sallie	19
Umar Abdullah	2
Siraj Willenberg	0
Abdullah Awaluddin	0
Fuad Gabier	16
Siraj Johaar	12
Abd al-Alim Atleker	?
Amin Soeker	0
Muhammad Moerat	6
<u>DURBAN</u>	
Harun Kadwah	0
Sulayman Makadah	0
Abd al-Haq Makadah	25
Yunus Makadah	0
Husayn Khan	0
Shabir Kajee	0
Isma'il Fahuiddin	0
Abu Bakr Muhammad	0
<u>JOHANNESBURG</u>	
Abd al-Rahman Haffejee	0
Faruq Patel	40
Shabir Rajah	0
<u>VRYBURG</u>	
Sa'dullah Khan	4

Of his fourteen Cape Town students, twelve eventually officiated at mosques, and, of these, seven went overseas to further their studies in the religious sciences before they took up their duties at these mosques. The student who has had the greatest impact on the teaching of *hifz* country-wide has been *Imam* Shams al-Din Ibrahim. His claim that



he has produced only about fifty *huffaz* is considered by informed opinion in the community to be a very conservative estimate. He is the only locally-trained *hafiz* to have had such an influence.

Apart from the *huffaz* mentioned in these tables, there are also some rare cases that need to be recorded. Although it is an accepted practice that “*hifz* is studied under *huffaz*”, a number of the locally-trained *huffaz* studied under teachers who were not themselves *huffaz*. These include Nawawi van der Ross who studied *hifz* under his father, Mirdad van der Ross, and *Imam* Isma’il Talib, who also studied under his father, Muhammad Talib Orrie. Neither of these fathers were *huffaz*.

**Table 8.5: *Huffazah* at the Cape during the nineteenth and twentieth, centuries<sup>108-112</sup>**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Fatimah Abrahams (Surrey Estate)	Studied under her husband, Irfan Abrahams, while he was studying in Medinah
A’isha Gabriels (Surrey Estate)	Studied under her husband, Ibrahim Gabriels, while he was studying in Medinah
Fatima Geyer (Wynberg)	Studied under her father, Abd al-Malik Hamzah
Hayah Moerat (Paarl)	Studied under Abd al-Rafiq Nackerdin of Paarl
Ruwaydah Samaai (Greenhaven)	Studied under Yusuf Gabier, and is at present with her husband
Amina Bayat (Athlone)	At Al-Azhar University Studied under Yusuf Booley

Table 8.5 shows how few women have memorized the Quran. From the information available, it seems as though the Cape has only produced six *huffazah*, although it is possible that there might have been some during the nineteenth century. Fatima Geyer of Wynberg, the daughter of Abd al-Malik Hamzah, stands out amongst them. She is the only *hafizah* in the history of the Cape to have studied under an overseas-trained *hafiz*. She spoke about herself in the following way:<sup>113</sup>

“I was born about 86 years ago. At the age of about seven years I started *hifz* under my father, and took about two years to complete the Quran. When my mother died I became responsible for the rearing of my brothers, and used to recite while doing the household chores. At the age of 25 years I married, and had eight of my own children to rear in addition to my brothers. Yet I never neglected the *Quran*. Perhaps because of my poverty I never received any recognition for my recital, although I did recite to *Shaykh* Abd al-Basit in Cairo on my way home from *hajj*.”

The *huffaz* at the Cape have always performed a number of important socio-religious functions in the Muslim community. One function, which is primarily religious, involves the performance of various duties associated with the mosque, such as leading the *Salah*, and especially the *Tarawih Salah* during *Ramadan*. The Burhan al-Islam Movement surveyed 93 mosques in the Cape during 1992,<sup>114</sup> and ascertained that about 105 persons, who were either involved in *hifz* studies or had completed their studies, were used in these mosques to lead the *Tarawih Salah*. It is their ability to recite the *Quran* from memory that has motivated many mosques to appoint *huffaz* as *imams*.

A function which has a strong social nature involves the performance of *Quranic* recitals at weddings, marriage ceremonies, and various fund-raising activities. Generally those with the most melodious voices (sometimes even from other provinces) are invited to perform at these social functions. This suggests that the recital has a predominantly entertainment function, at the expense of its religious nature.

These two socio-religious functions do not, of course, offset the educational role played by *huffaz*, most of whom inevitably become teachers of the *Quran*, either in the privacy of their homes or in *madaris*. In this way they have come to play an important role in the keeping alive of the *hifz* tradition and in the maintenance of a high standard of *Quranic* recital in the community.

The very high social profile of the *huffaz*, particularly as far as the functions they perform are concerned, has given them a special status in the community, and they are looked upon with considerable admiration, and even awe. The title of “*hafiz*”, which the community bestows on them because they have memorized the *Quran*, further strengthens this status. This title is generally conferred only when the person concerned does not already have another title, such as *shaykh* or *imam*.

On the whole, most of the older *huffaz* had little or no formal secular schooling, although those who went to overseas countries in order to study generally engaged in formal religious studies in those countries. Thus, for example, *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih only received a few years of primary schooling at the Cape, but he did attend an educational institution in Mecca where he did some religious studies. The reason for this is that the children who were studying *hifz* were expected to spend all their time memorizing the *Quran*. There is, however, a growing tendency now for formal “secular” schooling to be combined with *hifz* studies. Thus, for example, young *huffaz*, such as Dr Abdal-Qadir Tayob (Univeristy of Cape Town), Rashid Umar (University of Cape Town), Mukhtar Ahmed (University of Western Cape) and Salih Adams (University of the Western Cape) are all academics who have memorized the *Quran*. The *hifz* schools in Kensington (a suburb near Cape Town), one for boys and girls run by Kashif Basardien and another one for girls only run by *Imam* Umar Abdullah, primarily teach students who are attending senior secondary schools. Judging from their examination results, it does not seem that the additional task of having to memorise the *Quran* has had detrimental effects on their school work.

Finally, one of the major criticisms that is directed at the practice of memorizing the *Quran* is that, especially where students do not understand classical Arabic (as is the case at the Cape and in vast sections of the Islamic world), there is no educational value in such memorisation as it takes place without any understanding, and it is a boring and monotonous form of study.<sup>115</sup>

However, the whole question of memorizing the *Quran* should be looked at from other perspectives. The *Quran* was originally memorized for a number of important reasons, the first being that it was used as a means, among others, of preserving the Revelation. The *Quran* also had to be kept in the minds of people so that, irrespective of their circumstances, they could have a ready reference on which to base their behavior patterns. Also, the memorisation of the *Quran* is considered to be a form of religious service, and the memorized portions are of use in the practice of certain religious rites. Any Muslim would find it extremely difficult to practice Islam without having some portions of the *Quran* stored in his or her memory.<sup>116</sup>

It may be argued, and perhaps rightfully so, that as the *Quran* is now readily available in written form, the need to memorise it in order to preserve the Revelation and to have a ready mental reference has fallen away. There is, however, a vast difference in the impact made by seeing the Words of the *Quran* in written form and hearing the Words from “the tongues of the people”. And it is the “tongues of people” that, in a particular sense, give life to the Words of the *Quran*, whether the Words are understood or not. Apart from this, Muslims accept that Words, by virtue of their divine nature (as *Kalam-Allah*), impact on the human personality in such a way that it transforms it greatly at both the intellectual and the spiritual levels. Especially at the spiritual level, this transformation is not a result of the meaning but rather of the impact of the Divine Word.

Thus, the memorisation of the *Quran* should not be considered in terms of largely Eurocentred secular standards, or from the vantage points of cultural forms that have very little in common with Islam. Each culture has its own standards and values, and the memorisation of the *Quran* is a particular activity which satisfies the demands of the religious culture within which it operates.

In the light of all this, there can be no doubt that the *huffaz* at the Cape have played a unique role in the history of Islam in South Africa. They have kept the *Quran* alive within the social fabric of the Muslim community, and in this way they have made a major contribution to the preservation of Islam in the country. In all this, *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih Solomon’s contribution has been particularly significant.



## Chapter 9

# THE INFLUENCE OF *TASAWWUF*<sup>1</sup> ON ISLAMIC PRACTICES AT THE CAPE

**Yusuf da Costa**

The author's personal experience of the *tasawwuf* tradition first occurred in the late 1940's and then again when, as a member of the Cape Peninsula Muslim community, he participated actively in religious practices which had originated in *tasawwuf* orders. At that time he and others around him were blissfully unaware that certain common community practices, such as *Ratib al-Haddad* and the *Maulud al-Nabi*, were, in fact, part of the *tasawwuf* tradition which had come to the Cape between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries as part of the spread of the Islam religion to this country.

This diffusion of Islam was the direct consequence of European colonial activities in Africa and Asia at the time. These activities, which included the military conquest of large parts of the Afro-Asian world, gave rise to the forcible removal of large numbers of political prisoners, slaves and exiles from these colonial possessions to the Dutch and later British colony at the Cape. Amongst these people were many Muslims, most of whom came from territories where the practice of Islam was generally marked by a dominant school of Islamic religious jurisprudence called a *madh-hab*, and certain special orders of mysticism known as *tasawwuf* orders.

At this time West Africa was dominated by the *Malikiyyah* school and the *Qadiriyyah* order,<sup>3</sup> but East Africa was characterised by the *Qadiriyyah* and *Alawiyyah* orders and the *Shafi-iyyah* school.<sup>4, 5</sup> If it is considered that one of the routes to Madagascar followed by Islam was by way of East Africa, then it is reasonable to assume that at least some of the Muslims on the island were by this time adhering to the same school of religious jurisprudence and *tasawwuf* orders as those found in East Africa.

A number of writers<sup>6, 7, 8</sup> have described the wide impact of *tasawwuf* orders on the spread of Islam in the East Indies. These orders included, among others, the *Qadiriyyah*, *Alawiyyah*, *Sammaniyyah*, *Shattariyyah*, *Nagshbandiyyah*, and *Aydarussiyyah*. The dominant school of religious jurisprudence on the islands was the *Shafi-iyyah* school.<sup>9</sup>

According to Holt *et al.*<sup>10</sup> the *Hanifiyyah* school was the most prevalent school in India at the time, except for the Malabar Coast where the *Shafi-iyyah* school was dominant.<sup>11</sup> At that time India had a large number of *tasawwuf* orders, such as the *Chistiyyah*, *Qadiriyyah*, *Suhrawardiyyah*, *Nagshbandiyyah* and *Shattariyyah* orders.<sup>12, 13</sup>

There is considerable historical evidence to show that the Islam that spread to the Cape during the two centuries was characterised to a considerable degree by some of these orders.

### **The early *tasawwuf* orders**

As early as 1667 (only 15 years after the Dutch had set up their base at the Cape) some of the first political prisoners started to arrive at the Cape from the Dutch Asian colonies. In 1664 the Dutch had conquered the whole of the west coast of Sumatra from Sillebar to Barus, but a year later there was a successful revolt against Dutch occupation in the area. As a result of this, large numbers of people were executed,<sup>14</sup> and others exiled. The fate of those who were exiled to the Cape is outlined on a plaque in one corner of the shrine of *Tuan* Mahmud in Constatia:

“On the 24 January 1867 the ship, *Polsbroek*, left Batavia and arrived here 13 May following with three political prisoners in chains; Malays from the west coast of Sumatra who were banished to the Cape until further orders, on the understanding that they would eventually be released. They were rulers, *Orangh Cayen*, men of wealth and influence. Great care had to be taken that they were not left at large as they were likely to do injury to the Company. Two were sent to the Company’s forests and one to Robben Island.”

The account of this in the Journals of the Cape Governors<sup>15</sup> describes the prisoners as “bandiete” who had to be kept in chains. According to the Muslim community’s oral history, the two who were sent to the Company’s forests in Constantia were *Tuan* Mahmud *al-Qadiri* and *Tuan* Abd al-Rahman Matebe Shah *al-Qadiri*, whose graves are situated about a kilometer from each other in the Constantia area.

When they arrived in 1667 there were just a few Muslims at the Cape as the slave population at the time was only about 270,<sup>16</sup> and the free black population probably numbered less than ten.<sup>17</sup> Despite the few Muslims and the isolation of the exiles, it seems highly probable that some of the Muslim slaves (and especially those working in the forest) would have gathered around the exiles, and in the process established a small and very loose structure within which they first *tasawwuf* rituals (possibly of the *Qadiriyyah* order) were practiced. The presence of a number of Muslim graves in the vicinity of the shrines of both *Tuan* Mahmud and *Tuan* Abd al-Rahman suggests that there might have been some social structure that formed the rudiments of perhaps the first Muslim social unit at the Cape. There is, however, no clear evidence for this.

*Shaykh* Yusuf of Macassar arrived in the Cape in 1694, by which time it was quite possible that some practices of the *Qadiriyyah* order had already taken root. He is considered to have made one of the most telling contributions to the establishment and development of Islam in the country. He had first been exiled to Ceylon, and then later to the Cape at the command of the Dutch commanders in Batavia. This was because of his participation in the last great struggle for Bantamese independence from the Dutch.<sup>18</sup>

*Shaykh* Yusuf, whose full name and title was *Shaykh Yusuf al-taj al-Khalwati al-Maqasari*, arrived at the Cape in April 1694 aboard *De Voetboeg* with a retinue of 49 people, including two wives, two slave girls, twelve children, twelve imams (or religious scholars) and several friends with their families.<sup>19</sup> The group was eventually settled on the farm “Zandvliet” at the mouth of the Eerste River,<sup>20</sup> in what is today known as Faure.

There can be little doubt that as a *shaykh* or *murshid* of a *tasawwuf* order, *Shaykh* Yusuf must have continued to practice, at least with those who came with him, the religious rites and ceremonies associated with his order. It is common practice in such orders that: “... groups of disciples gather around a master of spiritual guidance (or *murshid*) seeking training through association or companionship”.<sup>21</sup> What was therefore formed at “Zandvliet” was a structure of socio-religious interaction inspired by the *tasawwuf* perspective, and which was to form the basis, albeit elementary, of what was later to become a small community.

The extent of the activity and influence of the *Khalwatiyyah* order is indicated, for example, by the general adoption by the Muslim people at the Cape of the *Khalwatiyyah* practice of having communal religious ceremonies (for want of a better term) on the first, third, seventh and fortieth nights after a funeral.<sup>22</sup> By the late eighteenth century, this was already a firmly established practice. In 1797 Robert Semple<sup>23</sup> recorded that: “[The Muslims] alone extend their care and seem to cherish their grief. On the third, seventh, tenth, fortieth, and hundredth day they again assemble around the grave, pour sweet-scented waters upon it, and strew over it the choicest flowers.”

Today the ceremony consists mainly of the recital of sections of the *Quran* and certain litanies, either at the grave or at the previous residence of the deceased. This is still generally practiced in the Western Cape. The ceremony has different names: an *arwah* (the plural of *ruh* which is the Arabic for “soul”), a *werk* (the Afrikaans for “work” which is a translation of the Arabic *aml*), and *haajah* (the Arabic for “a necessity”).

The use of this ceremony has today been extended, and it is not uncommon for a “*haajah* to be given or held” (as the expression goes) on birthdays, anniversaries, before a name-giving ceremony, or on any other auspicious occasion. It is also quite common for it to be incorporated into other religious ceremonies, such as the *Maulud al-Nabi*.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a number of other *tasawwuf* masters made their impact on the religious life of the Muslim community and further strengthened the already quite deep-rooted *tasawwuf* tradition at the Cape. Although there are no records to show the exact dates of the arrival of many of them nor where they had come from, it appears, according to oral tradition, that most of them arrived here during the eighteenth century.

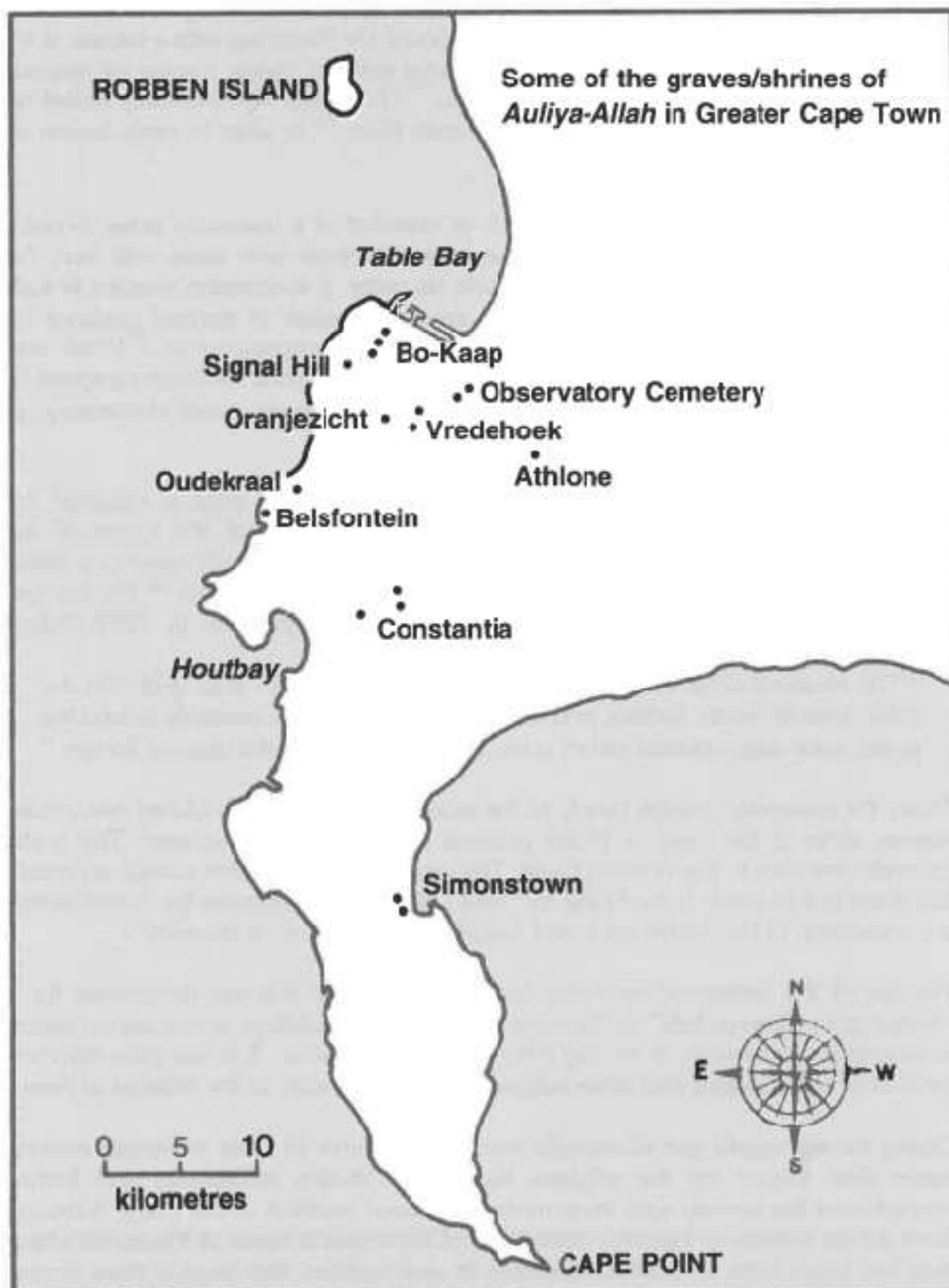


Figure 9.1: Graves/shrines of the *Auliya-Allah* in the Cape Peninsula

The distribution of commonly-known shrines and graves of *Auliya-Allah*<sup>24</sup> in the western Cape gives some idea of the number of such masters who had lived in the area. Jeffreys, the editor of the *Cape Naturalist*, describing this distribution, wrote in 1934<sup>25</sup> that there are a number of:

“tombs that make up the Holy Circle which stretches from Robben Island to the *Kramat* of *Shaykh* Yusuf on the Macassar Downs ... Starting at the old cemetery on the slopes of Signal Hill, just above the quarry in Strand Street, where two saintly men were buried many years ago, the circle continues to two graves on the top of Signal Hill ... Hence it goes on to a grave, much revered, situated above Oude Kraal beyond Camps Bay, and sweeps round the mountain to a *Kramat* at Constantia, on the Tokai Road. From there [the circle continues to] ... the *Kramat* of *Shaykh* Yusuf of Faure, on the farm “Zandvliet”. The circle is completed by an old tomb on Robben Island.”

**Table 9.1: The major shrines and graves of *Auliya-Allah* in the western Cape<sup>26-29</sup>**

Where situated	No. of shrines and graves	Names of masters, where known
Schotsche Kloof – in the Tana Baru cemetery on the slopes of Signal Hill	3	<i>Tuans</i> Guru, Sa'id and Nuruman
Tamboerskloof – on Signal Hill	2	<i>Tuans</i> Hasan and Ibrahim
Constantia	3	<i>Tuans</i> Abd al-Rahman, Mahmud, and Abd al-Mutalib
Oude Kraal – on the slopes of the Twelve Apostles	2	<i>Tuans</i> Nur al-Mubin And Ja'far
Vredehoek – on the lower slopes of Table Mountain in Deer Park	3	<i>Tuans</i> Ali Mustapha, Abd al-Qadir and Abd al-Haq
Oranjezicht – in the grounds of St Cyprian's School	1	<i>Tuan</i> Shams al-Din
Athlone – the grounds of the Habibiyah complex	1	<i>Tuan</i> Abd al-Latif*
Observatory – the Muslim Cemetery	2	<i>Shaykh</i> Abd al-Rahim* and <i>Sayyid</i> Muhsin*
Devil's Peak Estate – on the slopes of the peak	1	-
Simon's Town – the lower mountain slopes above the naval base	1	<i>Tuan</i> Abd al-Samad
Muizenberg	1	<i>Tuan</i> Abd al-Aziz
Robben Island	1	<i>Tuan</i> Matr al-Din
Faure	1	<i>Shaykh</i> Yusuf
Wellington	1	<i>Tuan</i> Sulayman
Worcester	1	<i>Tuan</i> Mas'ud



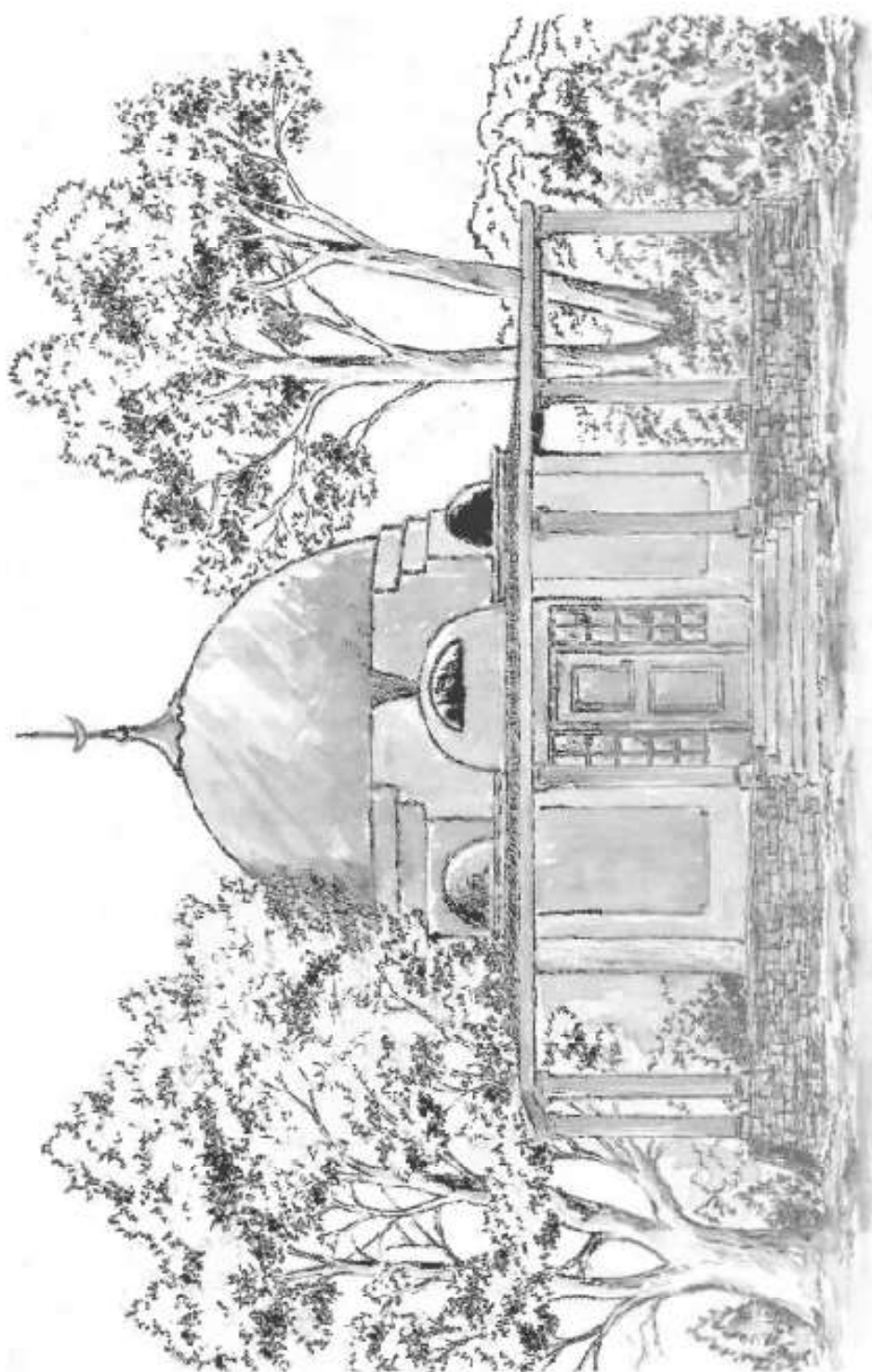


Figure 9.2: The shrine of Tuan Mahmud al Qadiri in Constantia

Table 9.1 gives an idea of the number and the geographical distribution of these shrines and graves.

By the end of the nineteenth century a large number of *tasawwuf* practices had become an integral part of the Islamic religious fabric at the Cape. There can be little doubt that this was largely due to the influence exerted by these masters and the orders in which they were operating. A good example of this involves *Tuan Sa'id*, who was banished to the Cape in 1743, *Tuan Ja'far*, who had arrived at the Cape during the rule of the Dutch East India Company, and Shaykh Abd al-Rahim ibn Muhammad al-Iraqi, who came to the Cape in 1880. They were all either *Alawiyyah shaykhs* or were well versed in *Alawiyyah* practices.<sup>30</sup> It is highly probable that such *Alawiyyah* practices as the *Ratib al-Haddad* and the *Ratib al-Attas* may have originated with them. At the very least, if these practices were already at the Cape when they arrived, they would certainly have strengthened them here.

Further evidence of the existence of *tasawwuf* practices prior to the end of the nineteenth century is provided by some of the older Muslim residents in the Cape Peninsula. According to Mr G. Petersen,<sup>31</sup> an octogenarian resident of Kensington, the *Ratib al-Haddad* and the *Maulud al-Nabi* were both practiced by his grandfather during the early nineteenth century. The late Mr M. T. Samaai, who was an equally old resident of Salt River, and later of Athlone, could trace his family tree back as far as his great-great-grandfather, *Imam* Muhammad Abd-al-Malik Isma'il, who came to the Cape from Java during the eighteenth century. Mr Samaai<sup>32</sup> stated that common *tasawwuf* religious ceremonies had been practiced in his family from the time of his grandfather.

In support of these assertions, it is interesting to note that during the first quarter of the twentieth century, Zwemer<sup>33</sup> recorded the existence of a number of *zawiyas* of "derwish or mystic brotherhoods", such as the *Qadiriyyah*, *Rifa'iyyah*, *Naqshabandiyyah*, *Chistiyyah*, and *Shadhaliyyah* in Cape Town and further wrote that: "When one remembers the influence of these orders in the history of Islam ... one is not surprised at the strength of Islam (at the Cape)."<sup>34</sup>

### ***Tasawwuf* at the Cape during the twentieth century**

The spread of *tasawwuf* practices to the Cape intensified during the twentieth century. This spread occurred mainly as the result of a combination of a number of factors.

One of the strongest factors that encouraged the spread to the Cape of *tasawwuf* practices was the fact that many of the young Muslims who had been sent to different parts of the Islamic world to study *hifz* or the Islamic religious sciences became involved, or at least interested, in such practices at the places where they had gone to study. When they returned home, they either spread or encouraged the spread of these practices. *Imam* Isma'il Talib (d. 1962), for example, who had studied *hifz* in Mecca until about 1898, taught young people in Salt River (a suburb close to Cape Town) to recite *riwayat* such as the *Maulud Barzanji Nadhm*,<sup>35, 36</sup> *Shaykh* Isma'il Edwards

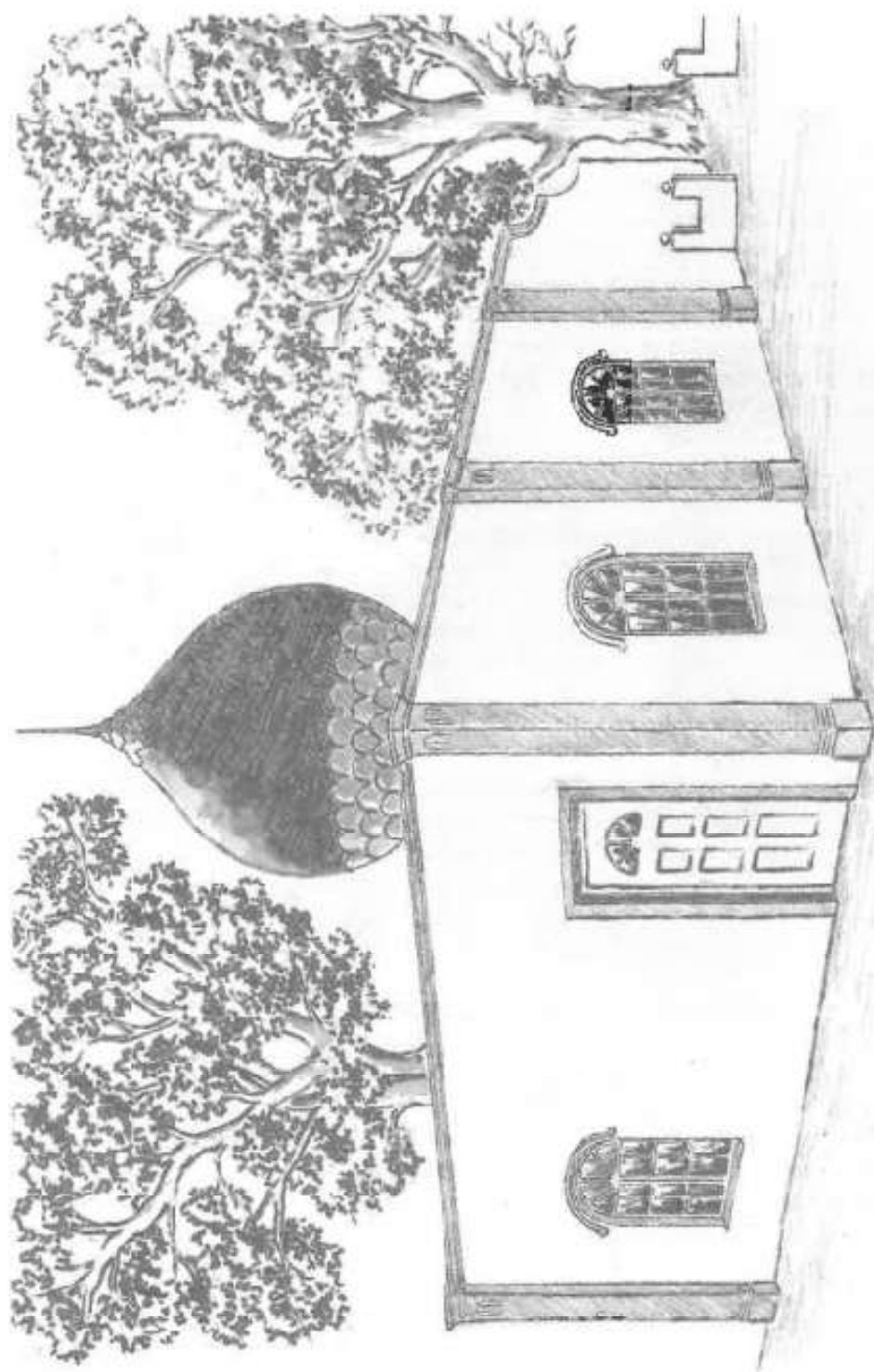


Figure 9.3: The shrine of Tuan Abd al-Rahman Matebi Shah al-Qadiri in Constantia

(d. 1958), who had studied in Cairo until about 1930, compiled the *Ratib al-Haddad* (with transliteration and Afrikaans translation). Copies of this book are still freely available in Cape Town. *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih Hendricks (d. 1945), a student in Mecca until about 1902, taught *tasawwuf* practices, such as the *Maulud al-Nabi*, *Ratib al-Haddad*, *Ratib al Attas*, and the *Dhurriyyah*, to his own students at the Al-Zawiyah Mosque. He had been initiated into the *Alawiyyah* order as a student.<sup>37</sup> Almost all the *shaykhs* and *imams* in the Cape Peninsula who had studied overseas during the first half of this century and before [such as *Shaykhs* Ahmad Behardien (d.1973), Muhammad Tayb Jassiem (d.1972), Abdullah Jamal al-Din<sup>38</sup> (d. 1948), and *Imam* Abd al-Basir<sup>39</sup> (d. 1962)], were well-known in the community for the exercise of many *tasawwuf* practices.<sup>40</sup> All of these *shaykhs* and *imams* also celebrated the night of the middle of the month of Sha'ban (called *Nisfu-Sha'ban* with the reciting of the *Ya'Sin* (one of the chapters of the *Quran*) three times accompanied by special applications. The common name for this night is *Roo-wah*.

Perhaps the major impact on the establishment and growth of the *tasawwuf* tradition during this century came about as a consequence of visits to the Cape by "*tasawwuf*" masters, or people steeped in the *tasawwuf* tradition, and in some cases by such persons settling at the Cape. Of those who settled here, there is considerable oral evidence that the greatest impact was made by *Shaykh* Abd al-Rahmin ibn Muhammad al-Iraqi (d. 1942), *Imam* Abd al-Latif Qadi (d. 1917), and *Sayyid* Muhsin ibn Salim al-Idrus (d.1934).

*Shaykh* Abd al-Rahim ibn Muhammad al-Iraqi arrived here in 1889. Commonly referred to in the community as "Sayri" (a corruption of the Arabic word *Say-yidi*, meaning "My lord"). *Shaykh* Abd al-Rahim hailed from Basrah in Iraq and was a *shaykh* of the *Alawiyyah* order. He played a major role in the establishment of *Aliwiyyah* practices at the Cape and was the one who "discovered" the graves of *Tuans* Nur al-Nubin and Ja'far near Oudekraal.<sup>40</sup>

*Imam* Abd al-Latif Qadi (whose full name included the appellations al-Chisti al-Nidhami al-Habibi al-Hafidhi al-Siddiqi) came to Cape Town at the beginning of this century under the impetus of *Shah* Ghulam Muhammad Habibi, the renowned Sufi Saheb of Durban. Originally from India, *Imam* Abd al-Latif had spent some time in the Transvaal and Natal as an Islamic worker before coming on to Cape Town in order to establish the Habibiyyah Mosque and madrassah complex on a land bought by Sufi Saheb in Athlone. The foundations for the complex were laid in 1905.<sup>41</sup> This complex, which today consists of a mosque and a number of educational institutions, is named after the spiritual guide of *Imam* Abd al-Latif, *Shaykh* Habib Ali Shah al-Chisti of Hyderabad. *Imam* Abd al-Latif, who initiated numerous people into the *Chistiyyah* order, was possibly the first in a long line of *tasawwuf* masters who have come to the Cape from the Indian sub-continent during this century.

Another master who left an indelible impression on Islamic practices at the Cape was *Sayyid* Muhsin ibn Salim al-Idrus from Mecca. A close associate of *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih Hendricks, he was to pass on to later generations a number of practices such as the *Ism al-Latif*, the *Sa-man*,<sup>42</sup> and the *Bismillah dhikr*.<sup>43</sup>

Apart from these masters who settled at the Cape, there were also a number of others who only visited here and who further strengthened the already very deep-rooted *tasawwuf* tradition in the Muslim community. The trend for such visits to the Cape was set in 1935 when *Maulana* Abd al-Alim al-Siddiqi al-Qadiri arrived here from India.<sup>44</sup> He returned in 1952<sup>45</sup> and was followed during the next few decades by, among others, *Maulana* Muhammad Ibrahim Khuster Siddiqi al-Qadiri Razvi from Mauritius in 1968, 1970 and 1978,<sup>46</sup> *Maulana* Fadl al-Rahman al-Ansari al-Qadiri from Pakistan in 1970 and 1974,<sup>47, 48</sup> *Hazrat* Zayn al-Abidin al-Qadiri from the Indian sub-continent in 1961, 1973 and 1983,<sup>49, 50</sup> Arif-Allah Ahraf al-Chisti al-Nidhami al-Ashrafi from the Indian sub-continent in 1970, 1976 and 1992,<sup>51</sup> *Shaykh* Umar Abdullah from the Comoros Islands in 1981,<sup>52</sup> *Peer* Bashullah Shah Ashrafi from India in 1981 and 1985,<sup>53</sup> and *Al-Haj* Muhammad Ja'far Shaykh Al-Aleemi al-Qadiri from Pakistan in 1985.<sup>54</sup>

These visits, which were primarily aimed at strengthening the *Chistiyyah* and *Qadiriyyah* orders at the Cape, also gave rise in some cases to community structures. The visits of *Hazrat* al-Abidin al-Qadiri inspired in Athlone the building of the Ghouthiyah Manzil in 1980, a “khanqah” for the activities of the *Qadiriyyah* order,<sup>55</sup> while *Maulana* Muhammad Ibrahim Khuster's visits resulted in the formation of a branch of the Sunni Razvi Society International in Cape Town;<sup>56</sup> and *Maulana* Abd al-Alim al-Siddiqi inspired in 1953 the establishment of the Islamic Publications Bureau, the forerunner of the *Muslim News*,<sup>57</sup> and had a number of institutions and organisations named after him (such as the Habibiyyah Siddique Brigade, the Siddique Primary School, and the Siddique Mosque in Elsies River).

As well as the *tasawwuf* tradition at the Cape being largely strengthened this century by masters who settled at the Cape or who came to visit here, certain isolated aspects of the tradition were initiated by individuals acting, in a sense, on their own. For example, during the early 1960's, Abd al-Rahman da Costa (d. 1987), then of Lansdowne, established a group which performed the *Gherwee Sharif*, a *Qadiriyyah* practice. At present the *shaykh* of the group is Rif'ah Manie of Grassy Park.<sup>58</sup>

Of course, this growth of *tasawwuf* at the Cape did not go unchallenged in the Muslim community, and there has been a number of examples of very vocal opposition to its teachings and its spread. For example, in 1970, matters came to a head with the visit of *Maulana* Muhammad Ibrahim Khuster. According to reports in *Muslim News*,<sup>59</sup> members of the *Tabligh Jama'* under the leadership of Abd al-Rahman Salie, *Shaykh* Umar Gabier, the chairperson of the Muslim Judicial Council at the time, and *Shaykh* Abu Bakr Najjaar, also then a member of the Council, came out strongly against some of the ideas expressed by *Maulana* Muhammad Ibrahim Khuster during his lecture tour of the Cape Peninsula that year. This opposition to the *tasawwuf* perspective of Islam enunciated by *Maulana* Khuster degenerated into attempts to disrupt the *Maulana's* lectures. At the time the Muslim Judicial Council refrained from taking a stand on the issue, possibly because *Shaykh* Ahmad Behardien, the doyen of the religious leaders in the Cape Peninsula, had come out in defence of the *tasawwuf* perspectives.<sup>60</sup>

Fifteen years later, in 1985, *Maulana* Ibrahim Adam, then a member of the Fatwah Committee of the Muslim Judicial Council, attached the *tasawwuf* tradition in Islam in a lecture entitled the “Barelvi Menace”.<sup>61</sup> This lecture caused a furore and four religious leaders came to the Cape from Natal in order to challenge him. At the meeting held in Athlone at the time, *Maulana* Adam refused to make an appearance to present his case.<sup>62</sup> The matter eventually fizzled out.

### Other related matters

There can be very little doubt that the practice of Islam at the Cape, by virtue of its very particular historical circumstances, has been considerably coloured by the *tasawwuf* tradition; and, in a sense, this tradition has added a warmth and fervour to the practice of Islam that is not necessarily found where such a tradition is not flourishing. This has resulted in certain unique community practices and structures being established that are generally associated, in one way or another, with this tradition.

For example, before they leave on pilgrimage, many Muslims in the Cape (accompanied at times by members of their families and their friends) go to the graves of the *tasawwuf* masters “to greet”, and to pray to God for a successful and acceptable pilgrimage. The social custom is to greet the masters (especially *Shaykh* Yusuf of Faure, and *Tuans* Nur al-Mubin and Abd al-Rahman al-Matebe Shah) before greeting members of the community. The reason given for greeting only these three is that they are the “great masters”. Whatever the case might be, an examination of the greeting format generally used whenever visiting such graves reveals very distinctly the deep respect shown to such masters:

“In the Name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Goodness.

Peace be upon, O Friend of Allah.

Peace be upon you and upon those who are around you of the dead of the Muslims, and the Mercy of Allah and His Grace. We have come to visit you, and stand at your grave; so do not reject us [and make us] disappointed people, and do not turn us away from your door.

Intercede for us, O Friend of Allah, by the Messenger of Allah (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) will intercede for us on the Day of Judgement, the Day on which neither property nor children will be of benefit; only those who meet Allah with a pure heart [will benefit].

May Allah be satisfied with you to the highest degree, and bestow Paradise as your home, resting place, dwelling, and final abode.

Peace be upon you and upon those who are around you of the dead of the Muslims.

We ask Allah, the Most Generous, the Lord of the Mighty Throne, to grant us benefit of your grace, and to bestow upon us of your grace, light secrets, and knowledge; in [our] religion and in this world and the hereafter. Peace be upon you, and the Mercy of Allah and His Grace.”

***Table 9.2: A sample of Maulud Jama'at, past and present, in the Cape Peninsula<sup>64-71</sup>***

<b>Suburb/area</b>	<b><i>Maulud Jama'at: past and present</i></b>
Bo-Kaap	Anjadiyyah Faldilah Good Hope* Itali-aanas* Koetsie* Quarry* Schotsche Kloof Stokers* Sweet Peas* Wahabi*
Claremont	All Blacks* Die Engelse* Die Boere* Green Roses* Naqshbandi* Nur al-Hidayah* Pick-ups* Primroses*
Heideveld	Rahmaniyah
Kalk Bay	Al-Shafiyyah Marines
Kensington	Din al-Islam Madrassah al-Islam
Newlands	Akkerdoppies*
Salt River	Mahmudiyyah Mas'udiyyah* Nur al-Huda
Simon's Town	All Blacks* Green Roses*
Steenberg	Hamidiyyah Hamadiyyah Muhammadiyyah Nur al-Din Usmaniyyah Sumayyah
Woodstock	Qur'inun
Wynberg	Lilies Red Crescent Squares

As well as offering this greeting, many Muslims consider that the graves where these masters lie buried are places of considerable *barakah* (Divine blessings), and they visit them in order to supplicate to God and to obtain some of these blessings. This practice goes back a long way in the history of the Cape. During the early 1860's a visitor to the Cape wrote about it with regard to the grave of *Shaykh* Yusuf of Faure in the following manner:<sup>63</sup>

“The people of the Cape of Good Hope hold [the] tomb of their saint in great veneration; and whenever they are in a difficult situation they would take vows at the grave of this esteemed personality ... The people came from far away [within] the Cape of Good Hope to visit [the] place. When we arrived at [the] place, we got off the cart to pay our respects to the saint ... There was no inscription or any sign showing who this personality was and where he had come from; but the people narrated from their ancestors that he was a Muslim scholar who had come from Java, by the name of *Shaykh* Yusuf and said that they had seen many of his extraordinary deeds.”

Other than all these, a number of community structures directly associated with the *tasawwuf* tradition have made their appearance in the Cape Peninsula. These especially include the groups which meet regularly in order to keep up the practices of the different orders. An interesting development in this regard has been the formation of *Maulud Jama'at*; groups which organize the annual celebration of the birthday of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.). Table 9.2 gives a sample of such groups which had been, or still are, operating in the Cape Peninsula.

## Conclusion

At the time of writing there is considerable activity in the Cape as preparations are made for the celebration of 300 years of Islam in the Cape, with the coming of *Shaykh* Yusuf, one of the original founders of the *tasawwuf* tradition at the Cape, being taken as the historical starting point. A tricentenary committee has come into being for this purpose, and virtually all sections of the community, irrespective of the particular religious perspective adhered to, are being drawn into the celebration. In a sense, this celebration gives community recognition, at least, to the impact of the *tasawwuf* tradition on the lives of the Muslims at the Cape. At most, the celebration implies the recognition of the religious validity of the *tasawwuf* perspective in Islam.



## Chapter 10 NOTES TO THE CHAPTERS

### CHAPTER ONE

#### THE EARLY CAPE MUSLIMS: VICTIMS OF EUROPEAN COLONISING ACTIVITIES IN ASIA AND AFRICA

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CHAPTER TWO

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE COMPANIONS: SHAYKH YUSUF OF MACASSAR  
(1626-1699)

1. This chapter has been rewritten by Y. da Costa from a thesis by Dr S. Dangor. Permission to do this has been obtained from Dr Dangor, and the rewriting consists mainly of rearranging certain of the paragraphs in order to make it less “thesis-like”, and to include a discussion of certain historical data that had not originally been included. Some of the notes were also compiled by Y. da Costa.
2. It is part of the Islamic tradition that the appellation “May the mercy of Allah be upon him” be added to the names of the *Auliya-Allah* and other categories of other deeply pious persons. Whenever the name of *Shaykh* Yusuf is mentioned in the text, this appellation is understood.  
Then, also, the *Khalwatiyyah* order was founded by ‘Umar al-Khalwati, who had been born in Jilan in Iran and who died in Tabriz in the same country in 1397. The name of the order denotes the performance of mystical practices in seclusion. The order initially spread in Anatolia during the Ottoman period. Today the order is to be found mainly in Egypt, Syria and Lebanon.
3. According to certain historical sources quoted in the thesis, the body of *Shaykh* Yusuf was exhumed and taken to Goa in April 1705, about six years after his death. He was then buried at a place called Lakiung in the Celebes. This is very problematic because the exhumation of bodies is generally anathema in Islam, and is only done under very exceptional circumstances. One cannot see that the scholars who were part of the group at Zandvliet would have allowed the exhumation (and that after about six years). In addition, there is no oral tradition in the Muslim community to confirm what would have been an exceptional historical event. If the grave in Faure is a false one, this would have been detected long ago in the Muslim community by people with very high degrees of spiritual sensitivity.
4. The translation of *Zubdah al-Asrar* is based on the translation made by Dr. S. Dangor of the University of Durban-Westville. Permission was obtained from the Department of Islamic Studies, University of Durban-Westville, to use the translated text. With the exception of a few modifications by the authors of this book, the text as it stands is the one prepared by Dr Dangor.
5. Abu Najib al-Suhrawardi (d. 1168) was originally from Suhraward, but later settled in Baghdad. He was a *faqih*, and a disciple of Ahmad al-Ghazzali, the younger brother of *Imam* al-Ghazzali. The *Suhrawardi* order goes back to him.
6. Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi (d. 1234) studied under his uncle, Abu Najib al-Suhrawardi, and was also a *faqih* and a *Sufi*. Through his disciples, his teachings spread far and wide.
7. Uways al-Qarani was a Yemeni contemporary of the Prophet (s.a.w.s) who he never met. He represents the prototype of the inspired *Sufi* who has been guided by Allah and who knows the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) without any outward connection.

8. Ibn al-Arabi (d. 1240) of Spain, is popularly known as “al-shaykh al-akbar”, the greatest master. For most *Sufis* after the thirteenth century, his writings constitute the apex of *Sufi* teachings.
9. Al-Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallaj (d. 922) of Baghdad was the disciple of Junayd. He was put to death on a charge of pantheism, having claimed to have reached real union with Allah.
10. Al-Halabi (d. 1417) was a Turkish *Sufi* poet who was executed for his ideas. He belonged to the *Hurufi* sect.
11. Al-Shibli (d. 945) was originally from Khurasan but later settled in Baghdad where he joined the *tariqah* of Al-Junayd.
12. Al-Bistami (d. 874) was a man of intense mystical piety, and originally from Bistam in Iran.
13. Abu al-Mughith ibn Jamil al-Jamani lived during the third century after the *Hijrah*.
14. Abu al-Qasim al-Junayd al-Baghdadi (d. 910) is regarded as the master of the *Sufis* of Baghdad. Representatives of the various orders refer to him as their “master”, and many *silsilas* (chains) go back to him.
15. Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (d. 1166) was one of the most famous *Sufis*. The *Qadiriyyah* order originates from him.
16. *Shaykh* Muhammad Baqi al-Naqshbandi al-Yamani (d. 1389) was one of the great personages of the *Naqshbandi* order.
17. Dhu al-Nun (d. 861) of Egypt was one of the most celebrated mystics of early Islam.
18. *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Fadl Allah al-Burhafuri (. 1620) has several works to his credit. He was a frequent visitor to Mecca and Medinah.
19. Abu Sai’d al-Kharraz of Baghdad (d. 1050) was born in Khurasan. To him is attributed the doctrine of *fana* and *baqa*.

### CHAPTER THREE

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#### CHAPTER FOUR

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## CHAPTER FIVE

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### THE ORIGINS OF THE *HANAFI-SHAFI'* DISPUTE AND THE IMPACT OF ABU BAKR EFFENDI (1835-1880)

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

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25. Ibid, part 1, p. 14.
26. *Standard Encyclopaedia of South Africa*. Cape Town: Nassau, vol. 10, p. 386.
27. Rothmann, M.E. and A., 1960. *The Drostdy at Swellendam*. Swellendam: The Drostdy Commission, p. 42.

28. Marais, J.S., 1962. *The Cape Coloured People, 1652-1937*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, pp 172-173.
29. Worden, 1985. pp 86 and 98.
30. Ross, 1985, p. 108.
31. Worden, 1985, p. 4.
32. Interview with Mrs G. Abrahams, Longmarket Street, Cape Town, 31 December 1990.
33. *South African News*, 11 July 1903.
34. *Cape Argus*, 2 May 1903.
35. Interview with Mr A. Davids, Longmarket Street, Cape Town, 16 January 1991.
36. Holt, P.M., Lambton, A.K.S. and Lewis, B., 1977. *The Cambridge History of Islam*, vols 1a-b and 2a-b. London, Cambridge University Press. Vol. 1a, p. 371.
37. Interview with Mr G. Allie, Station Road, Athlone, 19 January 1991.
38. *Cape Argus*, 2 May 1903.
39. Interview with *Shaykh* M.S. Solomon (Abadie), Longmarket Street, Cape Town, 21 January 1991.
40. Records of the Master's Office and the Orphan Chamber, 6/9/299:1951.
41. *Cape Argus*, 2 May 1903.
42. *Ibid*, 2 May 1903.
43. Records of the Master's Office and the Orphan Chamber, 6/9/315:666.
44. Interview with Mr G. Allie, Station Road, Athlone, 19 January 1991.
45. Interview with *Shaykh* M. Hendricks, Al-Zawiyah Mosque, Cape Town, 15 January, 1991.
46. Records of the Master's Office and the Orphan Chamber, 6/9/3285:17702.
47. Interview with Mr G. Allie, Station Road, Athlone, 19 January 1991.
48. Interview with *Shaykh* M. Hendricks, Al-Zawiyah Mosque, Cape Town, 15 January, 1991.
49. Interview with Mr G. Allie, Station Road, Athlone, 19 January 1991.
50. Ingham, K., 1965. *A History of East Africa*. London: Longmans, p. 175.
51. *Cape Argus*, 2 May 1903.
52. *South African News*, 17 June 1903 and 14 July 1903.
53. *Ibid*, 20 July 1903.
54. *Cape Argus*, 4 May 1903.
55. *South African News*, 14 July 1903.
56. *Ibid*, 20 July 1903.
57. Davids, A., 1980. *The Mosques of the Bo-Kaap*. Athlone, Cape Town: Institute of Arabic and Islamic Research.
58. *Ibid*, pp xxiii-xxiv.
59. *Ibid*, p. xxiv.
60. *Ibid*, p. xxv.
61. *Ibid*, pp xxv-xxvi.
62. *Ibid*, p. xxvii.
63. *Ibid*, p. xxix.
64. *Ibid*, p. xxiv.

65. Interview with *Shaykh* M. Hendricks, Al-Zawiyah Mosque, Cape Town, 18 December 1990.
66. Ibid, 18 December 1990.
67. Record of the Master's Office, 19/04/1943:98720.
68. Interview with Mrs M. Coenraad, Dolomite Road, Athlone, 24 January 1991.
69. Interview with Mrs G. Abrahams, Longmarket Street, Cape Town, 31 December 1990.
70. Interview with Mr M.T. Samaai, Cashel Avenue, Athlone, 2 February 1991.
71. Notorial deed, 16 March 1909. Deeds Office, Cape Town.
72. Interview with Mrs G. Abrahams, Longmarket Street, Cape Town, 31 December 1990.
73. Lane, E.W., 1867. *Arabic-English Lexicon*. Lahore: Islamic Book Centre, pp 1273-1274.
74. Records of the Cape Supreme Court, 2/1/1/986:137.
75. Interview with Mrs G. Abrahams, Longmarket Street, Cape Town, 31 December 1990.
76. Da Costa, 1990.
77. Interview with Mr G. Allie, Station Road, Athlone, 19 January 1991.
78. Interview with Mr M.T. Samaai, Cashel Avenue, Athlone, 26 January 1991.
79. Interview with *Shaykh* M. Hendricks, Al-Zawiyah Mosque, Cape Town, 18 December, 1990.
80. Interview with Mr G. Allie, Station Road, Athlone, 19 January 1991.
81. Interview with Mr M.T. Samaai, Cashel Avenue, Athlone, 20 January 1991.
82. Interview with Mr G. Allie, Station Road, Athlone, 19 January 1991.
83. Interview with Mr M.T. Samaai, Cashel Avenue, Athlone, 20 January 1991.
84. Interview with Mr G. Allie, Station Road, Athlone, 19 January 1991.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE *HIFTZ* TRADITION AT THE CAPE: THE CONTRIBUTION OF *SHAYKH* MUHAMMAD SALIH SOLOMON

1. Much of the contents of this chapter is based on oral history, and as such has one weakness – it is not always possible to verify the information provided. This particularly applies to those who claim to have totally memorised the *Quran*. Apart from asking that the person recite the whole of the Quran from memory, there is no way of authenticating such claims. It is for this reason that *Shaykhs* Muhammad Salih and Yusuf Booley both intimated that they doubt if there are more than ten persons in the Cape who can be considered to have the whole of the *Quran* stored in their memories all the time, despite claims to the contrary. It also seems that people tend to exaggerate and romanticise when they are furnishing information about their close relatives, such as their parents. This has caused immense difficulties in the research for this chapter, and should be borne in mind by the readers.  
As far as is possible, all person's names found in this chapter (and especially first names) have been spelt in such a way that they are kept as close to the original Arabic as possible. This is to try to avoid the distortions of names that have crept into the Muslim community.
2. Interview with Ibrahim Abrahams, Kensington, 22 November 1992.
3. It is part of the traditional Islamic decorum to attach the title "Messenger of God" or "Prophet" in front of, and the invocation "*Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam*" (s.a.w.s.) after the name of Muhammad. Although this is not usually done in works that have been written in languages other than Arabic, it has been decided that in this chapter it will be included out of consideration for non-Eurocentric literary traditions.
4. Gilani, M.A.Q., 1967. *Futuh al-Ghaib*. Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, pp xiv-xv.
5. Trimingham, J.S., 1973. *The Sufi Orders in Islam*. London: Oxford University Press, pp 40-44.
6. Interview with Ibrahim Abrahams, Kensington, 22 November 1992.
7. *Quran*, lxxv, 16-19 and xcvi, 2.
8. Von Denffer, A., 1983. *Ulm al-Quran*. London: The Islamic Foundation, pp 31-34.
9. Ibid, p. 33.
10. *Sahih al-Bukhari*. Medinah: Islamic University, vol. 6, p. 502.
11. Von Denffer, A., 1983, p. 34.
12. Ibn Khaldun, 1958. *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, vol. 2, p. 440.
13. Abdul al-Fatah al-Qadi, 1955. *Al-Budur al-Zahirah*. Cairo: Mustapha al-Halibi.
14. Hasan, A., 1984. *Sunan Abu Dawud*. Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, p. 1113.
15. 'Abdul al-Fatah al-Qadi, 1955, pp 5-7.
16. Hasan, 1984, 1113.

17. Da Costa, Y., 1990. *Islam in Greater Cape Town, A Study in the Geography of Religion*. Doctoral thesis, Pretoria: University of South Africa.
18. Ross, R., 1985. Cape Town 1750-1850: Synthesis in the dialectic of continents, in Ross, R. and Telkamo, G.T. (eds) *Colonial Cities*. Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, p. 20.
19. Davids, A., 1991. *The Afrikaans of the Cape Muslims from 1815-1915*. Unpublished M.A. manuscript. University of Natal, p. 72.
20. According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, "Tuan" is "a respectful term of address by Malay-speakers", and means "sir" or "master". "Guru" is of Hindu origin, meaning "a personal spiritual teacher or guide who has himself attained spiritual insight", according to the Britannica Micropaedia. *Tuan Guru* (or *Imam Abdullah*) was the son of Qadi Abd al-Salam of Tidore, according to the foreword to his book on Islamic jurisprudence.
21. Davids, A., 1987. The role of Afrikaans in the history of the Cape Muslim community, in du Plessis, H. and du Plessis, T. *Afrikaans en Taalpolitiek: 15 Opstelle*, p. 46.
22. Da Costa, 1990, p. 57.
23. *The Imperial Blue Book, Parliamentary Papers, 1834-1836, Part 1*, 18 March 1835. London: House of Commons, p. 207.
24. Mayson, J.S., 1963. *The Malays of Cape Town*. Cape Town: Africana Connoisseurs Press, p. 23.
25. Interview with Hisham Effendi, Newfields, 24 December 1992.
26. Effendi, O.L., 1991. *A Travelogue of my Journey to the Cape of Good Hope*, Cape Town: Al-Khaleel Publications, pp 1-2.
27. Ibid, p. 15.
28. Interview with Farid Manie, Grassy Park, 6 December 1992.
29. Anonymous, 1963. *Life at the Cape a Hundred Years Ago by a Lady*. Cape Town: C. Struik, p. 355.
30. *Tarawih Survey*, 1992. Cape Town: Burhan al-Islam Movement.
31. Interview with Fatimah Kriel, Kensington, 8 December 1992.
32. Interview with Abu-Bakr Najaar, Cape Town, 30 June 1992.
33. Interview with Muhammad Salih Solomon, Cape Town, 30 June 1992.
34. Abd al-Rahman Ely worked for the Cape Town Municipality as a street-sweeper. Oral tradition has it that he used to revise the *Quran* while sweeping the streets (interview with Ibrahim Ganief, Athlone, 10 December 1992). He never held any official position in a mosque although he used to lead *Tarawih Salah* at mosques during *Ramadan*. He died in 1954 (interview with Abdullah Salie, Surrey Estate, 10 December 1992).
35. *Imam* Hasan Abd al-Rahman who died in 1986 was a hawker of fruit and vegetables by trade. He served as *imam* at the *Sunni Muslim Mosque* in Claremont until just before his death. His father, Abd al-Rahman Abd al-Rahman, was also a leading *hafiz* who had memorised the seven modes of *Quranic* reading. He died in the early 1930's, (interviews with Aminah Salam, Salt River, 11 December 1992 and Abu-Bakr Najaar, Cape Town, 15 December 1992).

36. *Imam* Abd al-Malik Heuwel is at present the *imam* of the *Yusufiyyah* Mosque in Wynberg.
37. *Imam* Ahmad Moos had also studied under *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih. He was a bricklayer by trade. In 1969 he became the *imam* of the *Sunni Muhammadiyyah* Mosque in Kromboom, a position he held until his death in 1986 (interview with Isma'il Moos, Lansdowne, 10 December 1992).
38. *Shaykh* Ismail Moos had also studied *hifz* in Mecca under *Shaykh* Muhammad Jamal Mirdad (interview with Muhammad Salih Solomon, Cape Town, 30 June 1992). He succeeded *Imam* Isma'il Talib as *imam* of the *Muhammadiyyah* Mosque in Tennyson Street, Salt River in 1962. At the same time he was teaching at the Talfalah Primary School in Claremont. He held both positions until his death in 1969. (Interview with Muhammad Zayn Bardien, Salt River, 25 June 1992). The *hifz* tradition in the Moos family has been continued by a nephew of *Shaykh* Isma'il Moos. He is *Imam* Hanif Moos, who had studied under his uncle, and is today the *imam* of *Masjid al-Bahr* in Strandfontein near Cape Town. (Interview with Hanif Moos, Wynberg, 11 December 1992).
39. Interview with Maymunah Albertus, Wynberg, 9 December 1992.
40. Interviews with Muhammad Salih Solomon, Cape Town, 24 July and 14 December 1992.
41. Interview with Muhammad Zayn Bardien, Salt River, 25 June 1992.
42. Interview with Nawawi van der Ross, Fairways, 29 June 1992.
43. Ibid, 19 June 1992.
44. Interview with Muhammad Salih Solomon, Cape Town, 14 December 1992.
45. *Imam* Shams al-Din Ibrahim has been the *Imam* of the *Nur al-Huda* Mosque in Salt River for the past 37 years. He began his *hifz* studies at the age of fourteen years and took two years to memorise the *Quran* (interview with Shams al-Din Ibrahim, Salt River, 13 January 1993).
46. Interview with Shams al-Din Ibrahim, Salt River, 13 January 1993.
47. Interview with Muhammad Salih Solomon, Cape Town, 14 December 1992.
48. Ibid, 14 December 1992.
49. Ibid, 14 December 1992.
50. Interview with Nawawi van der Ross, Fairways, 29 June 1992.
51. Interview with Abd al-Rahim Salie, Surrey Estate, 1 July 1992.
52. Ibid, 1 July 1992.
53. Interview with Yusuf Booley, Lotus River, 22 December 1992.
54. Interview with Fatima Hassan, Johannesburg, 23 December 1992.
55. Interview with Yusuf Booley, Lotus River, 22 December 1992.
56. Interview with Sa'dullah Khan, 22 December 1992.
57. Interview with Abd al-Malik Heuwel, Wynberg, 23 December 1992.
58. Interview with Muhammad Salih Solomon, Cape Town, 14 December 1992.
59. Interview with Bahiyyah Moos, Salt River, 16 December 1992.
60. Interview with Fatima Geyer, Wynberg, 7 July 1992.
61. Interview with Qasim Abd al-Ra'uf, Lansdowne, 22 December 1992.
62. Interview with Abu-Bakr Najaar, Cape Town, 15 December 1992.
63. Interview with Farid Manie, Grassy Park, 6 December 1992.

64. Interview with Shams al-Din Ibrahim, Salt River, 13 January 1993
65. Interview with Khadijah Edwards, Salt River, 23 December 1992.
66. Interview with Hisham Effendi, Newfields, 24 December 1992.
67. Interview with Abu Bakr Abd al-Ra'uf, Lansdowne, 19 April 1993.
68. Bradlow, F.R. and Cairns, M., *The Early Muslims at the Cape*. Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, p. 21.
69. Perhaps Abd al-Malik Hamzah, who later went to live in Johannesburg, is best remembered for having taught *hifz* to three of his children (Tahir, Abd al-Hamid, and Fatimah). Tahir on one occasion recited the whole of the *Quran* in four prayer cycles during *Ramadan* in the Grey Street Mosque in Durban. It took him from after the *Tarawih Salah* till *Fajr* (interview with Fatima Geyer, Wynberg, 30 June 1992).
70. *Shaykh* Isma'il Edwards was the *imam* of the *Nur al-Islam* Mosque in Cape Town until his death in 1958. In 1922, at the age of 16 years, he was one of a group of young boys who went to study in Cairo. He returned in 1930 and gradually developed a reputation as a *qari* and a writer. He has been the Muslim community's most prolific writer, with about 45 works on different aspects of Islam coming from his pen (interview with Khadija Edwards, Salt River, 25 December 1992).
71. Considered to be possibly the youngest *hafiz* produced by the Muslim community at the Cape, *Imam* Isma'il Talib had completed memorising the *Quran* by the time he was eight years old. At the same age his parents took him to Mecca to study, where he remained for nine years until 1898. He later became *imam* of the *Muhammadiyah* Mosque in Salt River, and acquired national renown as a *gari*, scholar and linguist (interview with Bahiyyah Achmat, 16 December 1992).
72. *Shaykh* Yusuf Booley is considered today to be one of the senior *huffaz* at the Cape. In 1946 he went to Mecca to study *hifz* and the Islamic Religious Sciences and stayed in that city for about five years. During his stay there, he was allowed to lead the *Tarawih Salah* with a group of people in the Masjid al-Haram outside the normal *Tarawih Salah*. People would come to listen to his recital. Although he is not officially an *imam* of a mosque, he inevitably takes charge of the *Tarawih Salah* during *Ramadan* in one or other mosque in the Cape or Natal (interview with Yusuf Booley, Lotus River, 22 December 1992).
73. *Shaykh* Sa'dullah Khan completed *hifz* at the age of nine years. In 1984 he completed a law degree at the University of Durban-Westville, and spent the years 1987 to 1990 studying ten *Qira'at* at the *Jamiyyah Ahl al-Quran* at Al-Azhar University. Atiyyah Bayyumi of the *Jamiyyah* has certified his competence in seven of these *Qira'at*. He is at present the *imam* of Gatesville Mosque, and also teaches at the Islamic College of South Africa in Athlone, Cape Town (interview with Sa'dullah Khan, 22 December 1992).
74. *Shaykh* Abu Bakr Abd al-Ra'uf completed his initial *hifz* studies under Yusuf Gabier at the age of sixteen years. He then went to Medinah, and after matriculation, completed a B.A. degree with Quran studies as a major in the *Quliyyah al Quran al-Karim wa al-Dirasat al-Islamiyyah* at the University of Medinah. During the first year he completed seven *qira'at*, and completed a

further three during the fourth year. All ten *qira'at* were studied on the basis of *adilah* from the *Shatibiyah* which is considered the most authentic work on *qira'at*. One of his teachers was Abd al-Fatah al-Qadi whose work *Al-Wafi* is a *sharh* of the *Shatibiyah*. *Shaykh* Abu Bakr is at present reciting the *Quran* to *Shaykh* Abdullah of the *Al-Azhar* Mosque, hoping that, on completion, he will be able to obtain a certificate with a *silsilah* in the recital up to Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) (interview with Abu Bakr Abd al-Ra'uf, Lansdowne, 19 April 1993).

75. Interview with Habibah Abrahams, Cape Town, 16 December 1992.
76. Interview with Maymunah Albertus, Wynberg, 9 December 1992.
77. Interview with Fatima Geyer, Wynberg, 7 July 1992.
78. Interview with Abu-Bakr Najaar, Cape Town, 15 December 1992.
79. Interview with Khadijah Edwards, Salt River, 23 December 1992.
80. Interview with Fatima Hassan, Johannesburg, 23 December 1992.
81. Interview with Sadiyah Hendricks, Salt River, 16 December 1992.
82. Interview with Bahiya Achmat, Salt River, 16 December 1992.
83. Interview with Yusuf Booley, Lotus River, 22 December 1992.
84. Interview with Mahdi Sadien, Diep River, 4 February 1993.
85. Interview with Imran Zardad, Johannesburg, 24 December 1992.
86. Interview with Abdullah Ibrahim, Johannesburg, 23 December 1992.
87. Interview with Khadijah Connelly, Grassy Park, 30 December 1992.
88. Interview with Khadijah Gameeldien, Penlyn Estate, 25 December 1992.
89. Interview with Rahmah Brown, Kensington, 14 April 1993.
90. Interview with Khadijah Sadien, Kenwyn, 17 April 1993.
91. At the time of his death in 1950, *Imam* Amin Connelly was the *imam* of the Pier Street Mosque in Port Elizabeth, and the only *hafiz* in the city at the time (interview with Khadijah Connelly, Grassy Park 30 December 1992).
92. *Imam* Niftah al-Din Jamal al-Din was Paarl's only *hafiz* up to the time of his death in 1955 at the age of 45 years (interview with Khadijah Jamal al-Din, Penlyn Estate, 25 December 1992).
93. Siddiq Sadien's brother, Muhammad Makki Sadien, studied and completed his *hifz* under him. He died in 1982 (interview with Khadija Sadien, Kenwyn, 17 April 1993).
94. Interview with Siraj Johaar, Wynberg, 26 December 1992.
95. Interview with Amin Soeker, Athlone, 26 December 1992.
96. Interview with Adam Moerat, Paarl, 27 December 1992.
97. Interview with Abd al-Rahman Salih, Wynberg, 26 December 1992.
98. Interview with Shams al-Din Ibrahim, Salt River, 13 January 1993.
99. Interview with Abd al-Rahim Sallie, Surrey Estate, 30 June 1992.
100. Interview with Umar Abdullah, Wynberg, 20 July 1992.
101. Interview with Muhammad Salih Solomon, Cape Town, 14 December 1992.
102. Interview with Abd al-Haq Makadar, Durban, 29 March 1993.
103. Interview with Sa'dullah Khan, 29 March 1993.
104. Interview with Shabir Rajah, Cape Town, 21 April 1993.
105. Interview with Faruq Patel, Cape Town 22 April 1993.
106. Interview with Abd al-Rahman Haffeejee, 27 April 1993.

107. Interview with Muhammad Salih Solomon, Cape Town, 14 December 1992.
108. Interview with Abu Bakr Simon, Greenhaven, 1 February 1993.
109. Interview with Irfan Abrahams, Surrey Estate, 31 January 1992.
110. Interview with Na'im Moerat, Woodstock, 31 January 1993.
111. Interview with Fatima Geyer, Wynberg, 7 July 1993.
112. Interview with Adam Moerat, Paarl, 2 February 1993.
113. Interview with Fatima Geyer, Wynberg, 7 July 1993.
114. *Tarawih Survey*, 1992. Cape Town: Burhan al-Islam Movement, p. 15.
115. Eickelman, D.F., 1985. *Knowledge and Power in Morocco*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
116. Von Denffer, 1983.

## CHAPTER NINE

### THE INFLUENCE OF TASAWWUF ON ISLAMIC PRACTICES AT THE CAPE

1. There are many *tasawwuf* orders at the Cape, and this chapter will not try to describe all the different aspects of the major orders which have spread to the Cape between the seventeenth century and the present. Instead, it will attempt to present a description of a very small aspect of the major features of the *tasawwuf* tradition at the Cape.
2. Da Costa, Y., 1990. *Islam in Greater Cape Town, A Study in the Geography of Religion*. Doctoral thesis, Pretoria: University of South Africa.
3. Lewis, I.M. (ed.) *Islam in Tropical Africa*. London: Oxford University Press, p. 18.
4. Ibid, p. 13.
5. Trimingham, J.S., 1980. *The influence of Islam upon Africa*. London: Longmans, p. 31.
6. Schrieke, B., 1957. *Indonesian Sociological Studies*, parts 1 and 2. Amsterdam: The Royal Tropical Institute.
7. Legge, J.D., 1964. *Indonesia*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
8. Trimingham, J.S., 1973. *The Sufi Orders in Islam*. London: Longmans.
9. Gibb, H.A.R. and Kramers, J.H., 1974. *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, p. 514.
10. Holt, P.M., Lambton, A.K.S. and Lewis, B., 1977. *The Cambridge History of Islam*, vols 1a-b and 2a-b, London, Cambridge University Press, vol. 2a, p. 34.
11. Dale, S.F., 1980. *Islamic Society on the South African Frontier: The Mappilas of Malar, 1498-1922*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 26.
12. Holt *et al.*, 1977, vol. 2a, p. 34.
13. Trimingham, 1973, pp 96-97.
14. Crawford, J., 1820. *The Indian Archipelago*. Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, vol. 2, pp 433-434 and 529.
15. *Journals of the Cape Governors*, vol. 5, 1667-1670. Cape Town: South African Archives, pp 92 and 96-97.
16. Da Costa, 1990, p. 77.
17. Elphick, R. and Shell, R., 1984. Intergroup relations, Khoikhoi, settlers, slaves and free blacks, 1652-1795, in Elphick, R. and Gilomee, H. (eds), *The Shaping of South African Society*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longmans, p. 149.
18. Rochlin, S.A., 1939. Aspects of Islam in nineteenth century South Africa. University of London School of Oriental Studies Bulletin, July 1939, pp 213-221.
19. Dangor, S., undated. *Shaykh Yusuf*. Mobeni: Iqra Research Committee, MSA of South Africa, pp 27-28.
20. Ibid, p. 29.
21. Trimingham, 1973, p. 237.
22. Ibid, p. 201.
23. Bradlow, F.R., 1968. *Robert Semple's Walks and Sketches at the Cape of Good Hope*. Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, p. 42.

24. The words *Auliya-Allah*, the plural form of *Wali-Allah*, are usually translated as “friends of Allah” (Ali, 1938, pp 500-501). They are those who have been blessed with the *karamat* which are “the miraculous gifts and graces with which Allah surrounds, protects and aids his saints” (Gibbs and Kramer, 1974, p. 216). In greater Cape Town the “*kramat*” refers to the master or saint himself, or to the place where he lies buried.
25. Jeffreys, K.M., 1934. The Malay tombs of the Holy Circle. 1. The tombs of Signall Hill. *The Cape Naturalist*, vol. 1, no. 1, Nov. 1934, p. 15.
26. These are only the more generally known graves and shrines. In some of these cases, as at Vredehoek, the masters are known by different names. In the instance of the name of the master at Vredehoek, the author has come across two names for him in the community – Abd al-Malik and Shams al-Din. It is difficult to explain how this came about. Also, in some other cases, the names have been badly distorted; such as *Tuan Materin* on Robben Island. It is assumed here that the name was most probably *Matr al-Din*.  
 The inscriptions on some of the gravestones also bear witness to *tasawwuf* activity at the Cape. On Signal Hill the names on the graves of *Tuans* Muhammad Hasn Ghaybashih and Abd al-Haq in the Deer Park have the additional appellation of *al-Qadiri*. This means that they were, in all probability, masters in the *Qadiriyyah* order. The same appellation is attached to the names of *Tuans* Mahmud and Abd al-Rahman in Constantia.  
 Note also that the names with asterisks are of those masters who had lived at the Cape during this century.
27. Jeffreys, 1934.
28. Davids, A., 1991-1992. The history of the *karamats*. *Boorhanol Newsletters*.
29. Author’s personal research, January-February 1986 and 1993.
30. Davids, A., 1991-1992.
31. Interview with G. Petersen, Kensington, 15 June 1992.
32. Interview with M.T. Samaai, Salt River, 22 June 1992.
33. Zwemer, S.M., 1925. A survey of Islam in South Africa. *International Review of Missions*, vol. 16, October 1925, p. 567.
34. Ibid, p. 568,
35. Interview with M.Z. Bardien, Salt River, 12 August 1992.
36. Out of this grew the establishment of two groups during the early 1930’s, both of which celebrated *Maulud al-Nabi* annually in the Salt River area, the *Mas’udiyyah* (with *Imam* Muhammad Zayn Bardien as *shaykh*) and the *Mahmudiyyah* (with Abd al-Malik Marli and Hafiz al-Din Marli as *shaykhs*). The *Mas’udiyyah* went out of existence in the 1970’s (interviews with M.Z. Bardien, 12 August 1992 and 17 October 1993). Even before some of these groups came into being, there was another group operating in Salt River area, the *Pink Roses Ratib al-Haddad Jama’*, under the leadership of a Salt River resident, Nur Harris. The origins of this group are unknown (interview with M.Z. Bardien, 17 October 1993). At present the *Ratib al-Haddad* tradition in Salt River is being carried on by Salt River resident Abdullah Jabudien, who had received the *Ratib* from *Imam* Abu Bakr Saban (d. 1976). According to the latter’s son, *Imam* Bayan al-Din



Saban, *Imam* Abu Bakr had also introduced the *Ratib al-Nasr wa al-Falah* into their family after acquiring it from *Imam* Nur Hashim who had obtained it from an *Alawi sayyid* in Mecca. The Saban family still recites this *Ratib* regularly (interview with Bayan al-Din Saban, 12 June 1993).

37. *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih Hendricks had handed down certain of these practices to some of his students to perform. Thus, for example, he handed down the *Ratib al-Haddad* to *Hadji* Ismail Salam (d. 1978) of Woodstock (a suburb adjacent to Cape Town). The *Ratib al-Haddad* was practiced under his guidance in the Salam family until his death, when his son-in-law, Khidr Parker, took charge of the *Ratib*. When Parker died in 1991, Jamil Salam (a son of *Hadji* Isma'il) took over. The Salam family recites the *Ratib* every Sunday evening (interview with I. Parker, Kensington, who had also received the *Ratib* from *Hadji* Isma'il Salam (interview with Isma'il Abrahams, Kensington, 7 July 1993).
38. *Shaykh* Abdullah had translated the *Ratib al-Haddad* into Afrikaans using Arabic script. This booklet is in the possession of the author of this chapter.
39. *Imam* Abd al-Basir Basir (d. 1962) had studied locally under *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih Hendricks and in Mecca under *Shaykh* Umar Ba Junayd and *Shaykh* Jamil Mirdad. He used to recite, amongst other things, the *Ratib al-Haddad*, the *Ratib al-Atas*, and the *Ratib al-Nasr wa al-Falah* (all of which he had written out in impeccable Arabic script, together with the other *tasawwuf* practices, in an exercise book), and had passed these practices on to some of his children and to others, such as Ahmad Jumat Majal and Abd al-Rahman Abrahams of the Bo-Kaap. This is apart from his weekly participation in the *dhikr* sessions of the *Wahabi Moulud Jama'* of the same area (interview with Ahmad Basir, Cape Town, 18 October 1993). It is highly probable that *Imam* Abd al-Basir had received these practices from *Shaykh* Muhammad Salih Hendricks and/or from his own teachers in Mecca. It is interesting to note that during the lifetime of *Imam* Abd al-Basir, (and for about two decades afterwards) the Bo-Kaap was characterized by a large number of *Malaud Jama'at* (with the most uncommon names) which, amongst other things, celebrated the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) every year. Apart from the *Wahabi Moulud Jama'*, there were also among others, the *Good Hope* -, *Stokers* -, *Sweet Peas* -, *Quarry* -, and *Itali-aanas Maulud Jama'at*. Many of them were operating at the same time. Today only two are functioning, the *Anjadiyah* – and the *Schotsche Kloof Maulud Jama'at* (interview with Ahmad Basir, 21 October 1993). These groups kept alive in the community the *tasawwuf* tradition of celebrating the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.). The fact that there are today only two such groups may indicate that there has been a decline in the tradition in that area.
40. Davids, 1991-1992.
41. Kazi, Q., undated. *Hazrat Maulana Abd al-Latif*. Unpublished paper.
42. Both the *Sa'man* and the *Ism al-Latif* had also reached Cape Town by other routes. The *Sa'man* had been brought to the Cape by, among others, *Shaykh* Ahmad Hajji of Faure, who had obtained it in Zanzibar, Sharif Ibrahim of Wynberg, who had originally come from the Cameroons (interview with M.T. Gamiet, Grassy Park, 22 October 1993), and *Shaykh* Ibrahim Alawi of Mecca,

who had settled in Woodstock (interview with A. Jabudin, Bonteheuwel, 18 August 1993).

There was also a considerable *Sa'man* tradition in Salt River that was primarily fostered by the Latif family. The author remembers it being done in that suburb by Muhammad Amin Latif (d. 1971), who had obtained it from his father, an immigrant from the East Indies early this century. At present the tradition is being carried on by Muhammad Amin's sons, Musa and Isma'il (interview with M. Latif, Kensington, 1 August 1993). And in Simon's Town, prior to the application of the 1950 Group Areas Act to the town, the *Sa'man* was performed by *Imam* Musa Davis. He had obtained it from some Somali sailors (interview with A Davis, Retreat, 22 October 1993).

As for the *Ism al-Latif*, apart from *Sayyid* Mughsin, it was also brought to the Cape by *Tuan* Hasn al-Din (interview with F. Gameeldien, Athlone, 1 August 1993).

43. Interview with Y. Jakoet, Cape Town, 15 October 1993.
44. *Muslim News*, 9 April 1985.
45. Ibid, 28 January, 1983.
46. Ibid, 28 June 1968, 19 June 1970 and 15 September 1978.
47. Ibid, 28 August 1970.
48. Interview with Y. Zalgoankir, Athlone, 25 November 1993.
49. *Muslim News*, 11 February 1983.
50. Interview with E. Patel, Kensington, 25 November 1993.
51. Interview with A. Dalvi, Athlone, 4 August 1993.
52. *Muslim News*, 16 January 1981.
53. Ibid, 27 March 1981 and 22 November 1985.
54. Ibid, 8 February 1985.
55. Ibid, 21 March, 1980.
56. Ibid, 6 May 1980.
57. Ibid, 15 March, 1985.
58. Interview with E. Ganief, Athlone, 21 November 1993.
59. *Muslim News*, 17 July 1970.
60. Ibid, 17 July 1970.
61. Ibid, 15 March 1985.
62. Ibid, 15 March 1985.
63. Effendi, O.L., 1991. *A Travelogue of my Journey to the Cape of Good Hope*. Cape Town: Al-Khaleel Publications.
64. *Jama'at* marked with an asterisk appear to be out of existence in the areas mentioned.
65. Interview with F. Abrahams, Kensington, 22 October 1993.
66. Interview with Ahmad Basir, Cape Town, 18 October 1993.
67. Interview with S. Essack, Kensington, 22 October 1993.
68. Interview with C. Gabriels, Surrey Estate, 22 October 1993.
69. Interview with M.T. Gamiet, Grassy Park, 22 October 1993.
70. Interview with A. Jabudin, Salt River, 22 October 1993.
71. Interview with F. Stemmet, Steenberg, 23 October 1993.

## GLOSSARY OF ARABIC TERMS

*Adillah:* textual proofs

*Ahl Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah:* those who follow the Prophetic Practice and the Practice of the Community

*Akhyar:* the plural of *khayr*, the best or chosen one

*Al-abd al-kamil/al-ihsan al-kamil:* the perfect person

*Al-Tauwwab:* the All-Forgiving

*Alawiyyah:* a religious order founded by Muhammad Ibn Ali (1178-1255) of the Ba Alawi tribe in the southern portion of Arabia.

*Alim:* a title given to a religious scholar

*Arif:* one who had attained gnosis

*Auliya:* the plural of *Wali*, a Friend of Allah

*Aurah:* that part of the body which it is indecent to expose

*Aydarussiyyah:* a religious order derived from the Alawiyyah order, and which was founded in Aden by Abu Bakr ibn Abdullah al-Aydarus in 1509

*Buraq:* the animal on which the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) travelled from Mecca to Jerusalem, and then into the Hereafter

*Chistiyyah:* a religious order associated with Mu'in al-Din Muhammad Chisti (died 1236) of India

*Dhakir:* one who celebrates the praises of Allah

*Dhikr:* the celebration of the praises of Allah

*Fajr:* dawn

*Faqih:* an expert in Islamic jurisprudence

*Fiqh:* Islamic jurisprudence

*Hadith:* what has been recorded of the Prophetic Practice. Its plural is *Ahadith*. A *Hadith Qudsi* is what has been recorded of what Allah spoke to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) but which is not part of the *Quran*.

*Hafiz:* one who has memorized the *Quran*. Its plural is huffaz. Its feminine form is *hafizah*, the plural of which is *huffazah*.

*Haj:* the pilgrimage performed in the month of Dhu al-Hijjah

*Hanafiyyah:* a school of thought founded by Imam Abu Hanifah. Its adherents are called *Hanafis*.

*Haqiqah:* the ultimate Reality of Truth

*Hatmah (tilawah) al-Quran:* a ceremony during which the whole of the *Quran* is recited from memory.

*Hijab:* clothing worn by women to veil them from strangers

*Hijrah:* the flight of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) from Mecca to Medinah

*Hifz:* the memorisation of the *Quran*

*Ihya Ulum al-Din:* The Revival of the Religious Sciences written by Al-Ghazali

*Ijazah:* permission

*Ikhlas:* sincerity

*Imam:* a prayer leader / one in charge of the mosque / a founder of a school of thought / a politico-religious leader

*Isha':* the end of dusk when a special prayer is made

*Jama':* a group or congregation. Its plural is *jama'at*.

*Jumu'ah:* the Friday congregational prayer

*Juz:* a thirtieth part of the *Quran*

*Kalam Allah:* the Divine Word

*Kamil:* perfect or complete

*Khalifah:* vice-regent

*Khatib:* in Cape Town it refers to one who substitutes for the *imam* of a mosque or is his second in command

*Khutbah:* lecture delivered in the mosque on a Friday or on the two *Eids*

*Kramat:* name given to a *Wali* of Allah or the place where he lies buried

*Madh-hab:* a school of thought

*Madrasah:* a school, although in South Africa it refers to an Islamic school. Its plural is *madaris*.

*Maghrib:* a few minutes after sunset when a special prayer is performed

*Malikiyya:* a school of thought founded by Imam Malik

*Maqam al-Hanafiyyah:* the place in the Great Mosque in Mecca where the followers of the *Hanafiyyah* school of thought used to perform their formal prayers.

*Masjid al-Haram:* the Great Mosque in Mecca

*Maulud al-Barzanji:* an epic poem dealing with aspects of the birth and life of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.)

*Maulud al-Nabi:* the celebration of the birth of Prophet (s.a.w.s.)

*Maulud Jama':* an organization formed with the express purpose of organizing the celebration of the birth of Prophet (s.a.w.s.)

*Miqrah:* an eighth of a *Quranic juz*

*Mufti:* one who passes religious judgements

*Naqshabandiyyah*: a Central Asian religious order associated with the name of Muhammad Baha al-Din al-Naqshabandi who died in 1389.

*Qari'*: a reputable reciter of the *Quran*. Its plural is *qari'un*

*Qiblah*: the direction towards which Muslims perform their formal prayers

*Qira'ah*: a mode of *Quranic* recital. Its plural form is *qira'at*.

*Qiyam*: the standing which takes place when a certain stage is reached during the recital of the epic poem on the birth and life of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.)

*Ratib al-Attas*: a combination of litanies and invocations generally recited in the Alawiyyah order

*Ratib al-Haddad*: a combination of litanies and invocations generally recited in the Alawiyyah order.

*Ratib al-Nasr wa al-Falah*: a combination of litanies and invocations generally recited in the Alawiyyah order.

*Rifa'iyyah*: a religious order originally from Iraq, which is derived from Ahmed ibn al-Rifa'i who died in 1182.

*Riwayah*: what has been narrated. It is commonly used in Cape Town to refer to an epic poem on the birth and life of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Its plural is *riwayat*.

*Salah*: the formal prayer in Islam. Its plural form is *salawat*.

*Salawat*: also refers to special invocations recited on the Prophet (s.a.w.s.)

*Salik*: one who strives along the spiritual path

*Sammaniyyah*: a religious order which originated in Syria, and which was founded by Muhammad ibn al-Karim al-Sammani (1718-1785)

*Sayyid*: a lord. Also refers to a member of the family of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.)

*Shadhaliyyah*: a religious order dominant in North Africa and which is derived from Abu al-Hasn Ali al-Shadhili who died in 1258.

*Shafi'iyah*: a school of thought founded by Imam Shafi'i. Its followers are called *Shafi'is*.

*Shariah*: Islamic canonical Laws.

*Shattariyyah*: a religious order developed in India after having been founded by Abdullah al-Shattar who died in 1428/9.

*Shaykh*: a title given to a religious scholar / a founder of a mystical order / the head of such an order / or a very pious person

*Sifah*: an attribute of Allah. Its plural is *sifat*.

*Silsilah*: a chain of transmission

*Sufi*: one who leads a highly spiritualised life and who is generally attached to one or other religious order.

*Suhrawardiyyah*: a religious order founded in Baghdad, and attributed to Diya al-Din Najib al-Suhrawardi who died in 1168.

*Sunnah*: the Prophetic Practice.

*s.a.w.s.:* Sallal-lahu alayhi wa sallam (May the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him)

*Tabligh Jama'*: a missionary group which has its origins in India.

*Tafsir al-Quran*: exegeses of the *Quran*

*Tarawih*: special formal prayers performed during the month of Ramadan

*Tariqah*: a special religious approach evident in religious orders.

*Tasawwuf*: the religious practice in religious orders which aims at direct experience of Allah.

*Wahabi Movement*: a movement founded in Arabia during the eighteenth century by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab aimed specifically at purifying Islam.

*Waqf*: an unalienable gift or legacy granted for use by the Muslim community.

*Yasin* (with the seven *mubins*): *Yasin* is a section (called a *surah*) of the *Quran*, and the seven *mubins* are seven stops in the *surah*.

*Zakah*: the name given to what a person takes out of his/her property for those in need.



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