

**Tadhkiratul Awliya’
Memorial of the sufi masters**

**SAYYIDUNA’L IMAM QUTB UD-DA’WA WA’L-IRSHAD
AL-HABIB ‘ABDALLAH BIN ‘ALAWI AL-HADDAD رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ (1044-1132 A.H)
(Rady Allahu ‘Anhu)**

By: Siddiq Osman Noormuhammad

(Please recite ‘Alayhissalam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ , Rady Allahu ‘Anhu رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ , Naf’anAllahu bih نَفَعْنَا بِهِ اللهُ , or Rahmatullahi ‘alayh رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ after the names of the great and noble personalities as appropriate).

1. He loved and obeyed Allah ﷻ and the Prophet ﷺ

Two things stand out most prominently in the life history of al-Imam al-‘Ārif Billah ‘AbdAllah bin ‘Alawi al-Haddad, also known as Mawlana al-Haddad رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ (Rady Allahu ‘Anhu). The first is that he loved Allah ﷻ from the innermost recesses of his heart, and secondly, he totally followed the **Sunnah** (tradition) of our Beloved Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in fulfillment of the teachings of these two verses of the Holy Qur’an:

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ

And those who believe are strongest in love of Allah. (2:165)

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحِبُّكُمْ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ

غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Say (O beloved Prophet): If you love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (3:31)

Imam al-Haddad is one of the greatest sufi saints of all times whose life was musk-scented with the love of Allah ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ, rose-scented with the love of the **Ahl al-Bayt** and the **Sahaba** رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ (Rady Allahu ‘Anhum), and ‘ūd-scented with the love of the **Awliya’ Allah** and the **Salihin** (Rahmatullahi ‘alayhim ajma‘in).

Naf'anAllahu bih نفعنا به (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

He is from the **Ahl al-Bayt**, tracing his pure, saintly and noble descent from RasulAllah ﷺ, through Sayyidina 'Ali رضي الله عنه and Sayyidatina Fatima رضي الله عنها, and their son, **Sayyidu'sh-shuhada** Imam al-Husayn رضي الله عنه. As a descendant of RasulAllah ﷺ, he fulfilled his duty to preserve the Muslim heritage and spread the teachings of Islam.

Naf'anAllahu bih نفعنا به (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

Propagation of Islam is done through writing, by word of mouth and on foot. None of the folk of the later centuries has excelled in all three spheres as has Mawlana al-Haddad.

Naf'anAllahu bih نفعنا به (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

He is Shaykh al-Islam, the leader of the people of **at-Tawhid**, Pure Islamic Monotheism.

He has been acclaimed as the **Mujaddid** (renewer) of the twelfth Islamic century.

Naf'anAllahu bih نفعنا به (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

He attained the spiritual rank known as **as-Siddiqiyya al-kubrā wa'l wilāyā al-'uzmā** (the greatest saint of supreme veracity of his time).

He is a sufī master in the **Ahl as-Sunnah wa'l Jama'ah** tradition. He is Shafī'ī **madh-hab(an)** (in sacred Muslim law), Ash'arī **'aqīdatan** (in tenets of Muslim Faith), and 'Alawī **mashrab(an)** (in drinking at the spiritual fount).

He showed concern for the widows, orphans and the poor. He adopted many orphans and raised them up together with his own children. He regularly assisted widows. He allowed the poor and the travellers to eat freely from his plantations. He paid his workers generously. His house was always full of guests. We should follow in his footsteps and maintain these traditions of generosity.

Naf'anAllahu bih نفعنا به (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

He led a simple life. Those who visit his “**maqam**” in Tarim inform us that the room in which he had study sessions with his students is so small that you wonder how he managed to have “**dars**” in such a small room.

Naf’anAllahu bih ^{الله} نفعنا به (may Allah ﷺ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

He was an ‘**ābid** (worshipper of Allah ﷻ) since his childhood. Apart from the well-known **Salat as-Sunnah** and **Salat an-nāfila** (supererogatory Prayers), he used to pray in his childhood an additional 100 or more **raka‘āt Salat an-nāfila** every day in different **masajid**. We should make a **niyya** (intention) to pray 100 **raka‘āt Salat an-nāfila** at least on any one day or night every year, especially in the month of Ramadan.

Naf’anAllahu bih ^{الله} نفعنا به (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

He did the **ziyara** (visited the grave) of NabiyyAllah Hud ^{عليه السلام} in Yemen for thirty years in the month of Sha‘ban. He also did the **ziyara** of the **Awliya’ Allah** (Friends of Allah) and the **Salihin** (the pious), the living as well as those who had passed ahead.

Naf’anAllahu bih ^{الله} نفعنا به (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

His own shaykh was al-Habib ‘Abd ar-Rahman bin ‘Umar al-‘Attas who composed the Ratib al-‘Attas and who is well-known as **Qutb al-anfās**, the spiritual axis of pure breaths taken only for the sake of Allah ﷻ. Thus one spiritual master produces other spiritual masters.

Naf’anAllahu bihima ^{الله} نفعنا بهما (may Allah ﷻ Allah make us benefit from them both), **Amin**.

He obtained **ilhām** (inspiration) and **kashf** (unveiling of spiritual realities) from Allah ﷻ.

He also obtained many other blessings through various other means created by Allah ﷻ. For example, he obtained,

- (a) **asrār** (spiritual mysteries) from the presence of RasulAllah ﷺ
- (b) **madad** (spiritual help) from spiritual masters who had passed ahead, and
- (c) **fath** (spiritual opening) from his shuyukh (spiritual masters).

He experienced the spiritual realities of **shuhūd** (witnessing spiritual realities), **fanā Fillah** (self-extinction for Allah), and **baqā Billah** (subsistence bestowed by Allah for His sake); but many of us cannot yet understand or comprehend these realities.

He left a three-fold legacy:

- (a) of **Dhikrullah** (remembrance of Allah ﷻ),
- (b) of religious guidance through his exemplary character and the ten books that he authored, and
- (c) of religious poetry in his Diwan (collected poems) of 150 religious poems.

Naf'anAllahu bih نفعنا به (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

This article first explains this three-fold legacy which has, for the past three centuries benefited:

- (a) the ordinary Muslims in general,
- (b) the beginners on the spiritual path, as well as
- (c) the **mashāyikh** who are firmly established on the spiritual path.

He passed ahead on 7 Dhu'l Qa'dah 1132 A.H. Thus the year 1432 A.H. exactly marks his 300th anniversary to celebrate his achievements in promoting piety. This day is commemorated with love and devotion in Tarim, his birth place and last resting place in the valley of Hadramawt in Yemen, as well as in many other places all over the world.

Naf'anAllahu bih نفعنا به (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

2. Imam al-Haddad Preserved and Conveyed the Tradition of Zikr, Remembrance of Allah ﷻ

Allah ﷻ has commanded in the Holy Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٤١﴾ وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ﴿٤٢﴾

O faithful Muslim believers! Remember Allah with much remembrance.

And glorify Him in the morning and evening. (33:41-42)

To help Muslims follow this Command, our beloved Holy Prophet ﷺ left a legacy of **Dhikrullah** (**Zikrullah**, Remembrance of Allah ﷻ). His Family and Companions رضي الله عنهم handed over this legacy to the next generation. This legacy was handed over from generation to generation in a continuous chain. Imam al-Haddad preserved and conveyed this tradition till it has reached us. Our responsibility is to preserve and convey this tradition to the next generation.

Imam al-Haddad compiled the most beloved **adhkār** (plural of **dhikr**), **ad‘iya** (plural of **du‘ā**: supplication) and **kalimāt** (Declarations of Muslim Faith) from the Holy Qur’an and the **Ahādīth** (plural of Hadith: Saying) of our Beloved Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, in Wird ul-Latif to be recited after Salat al-Fajr, and Ratib al-Haddad to be recited at night. **JazakAllah** (may Allah reward you) Mawlana al-Haddad for rendering this invaluable service to the Muslim **ummah**. To-day, Wird ul-Latif and Ratib al-Haddad are recited in all the four corners of the world and have been translated in many languages, including Indonesian/Malaysian, Kiswahili, Arabic Afrikaans, English, French and Swedish. The **nur** (spiritual light) of these **adhkār** and **awrād** (regular additional voluntary invocations) has spread across the world, illuminating homes, hearts and foreheads of Muslims.

Naf’anAllahu bih نفعنا به (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

The verses of the Holy Qur’an, the **du‘ā**, and the **kalimāt** in Ratib al-Haddad and Wird ul-Latif convey the **‘aqīda** (tenets of Muslim Faith). So the daily life of a Muslim is based on conviction in the **‘aqīda** as well as the regular pronouncement of that **‘aqīda** in the form of **dhikr**.

We learn from the biographical anecdotes of the Imam that the Ratib came to him by inspiration (**ilhām**) and was compiled on the night of the twenty-seventh of Ramadan in 1072 A.H.

Allahu Akbar الله أكبر (Allah ﷻ is Supremely Great!)

Once a Muslim brother from Sri Lanka visited us in Toronto and gave us a beautifully handwritten copy of Ratib al-Haddad. This is yet another proof that the Ratib is recited in all the four corners of the world.

Ratib al-Haddad is also included in Majmu‘ah Mushtamila (A compendium of writings, p. 33-34) of Shaykh ‘Abd ar-Rahman bin Ahmad az-Zayla‘ī of Tariqa al-Qādiriyyah from Somalia. Everyone loves the Ratib and wants it.

If you have gone for the Hajj Pilgrimage, and are sitting in front of the Ka‘ba, you should not be surprised if you hear someone sitting next to you recite Wird ul-Latif after Salat al-Fajr, and Ratib al-Haddad after Salat al-‘Ishā’.

Those who go for Hajj would do well to recite the Ratib al-Haddad and the Wird ul-Latif, individually as well as in congregation, in the **Haramayn** (holy sanctuaries) in Makkah and Madina, and in ‘Arafat and Mina.

Imam al-Haddad also compiled the longer Wird ul-Kabir. It takes about one and half hours to recite. Ordinary mortals might consider it an achievement to recite it once in a year. Mawlana al-Haddad used to recite it twice every day.

Naf'anAllahu bih نفعنا به (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

In just one recitation of Wird ul-Kabir, we recite the Name of Allah (His **Ism udh-Dhāt**) 1867 times.

Allahu Akbar الله أكبر (Allah ﷻ is Supremely Great!)

Every day after **Salat az-Zuhr**, he used to recite **Tahlil (lā ilāha illallāh**: none is worthy of worship but Allah) 1000 times. He also used to recite Hizb al-Bahr of Imam Abu'l Hasan ash-Shazili every day after Salat al-'Asr.

Naf'anAllahu bihima نفعنا بهما (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from them both), **Amin**.

His daily **adhkār** and **awrād** have been compiled by the '**ulamā** (scholars). One such compendium titled Sharh Ratib al-Haddad (An Appreciative Explanation of Ratib al-Haddad) of more than 500 pages was compiled by his great grandson al-Habib 'Alawi bin Ahmad bin al-Hasan bin 'AbdAllah al-Haddad in 1199 A.H. It includes the **du'ā** (supplication) that Mawlana al-Haddad recited following the recitation of Du'ā us-Sayfī after which he saw RasulAllah ﷺ in a dream.

Naf'anAllahu bih نفعنا به (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

Some other '**ulamā** (scholars) have also done a **sharh** (appreciation) of the **adhkār** of Mawlana al-Haddad. For example, Shaykh 'AbdAllah bin Ahmad Ba Sawdan wrote a **sharh** on Wird u'l Latif, Wird u'l Kabir and Ratib al-Haddad.

As-Sayyid 'Alawi bin Muhammad bin Tahir al-Haddad compiled the daily **Dhikrullah** (remembrance of Allah) of Mawlana al-Haddad in another classic titled Wasīlatul-'ibād ilā zādi'l ma'ād (A Means for people to provide for the Hereafter).

What is most pleasing about his supplications as indeed about all such supplications is the way he overflows with **Asma' al-Husna**, the Most Beautiful Names of Allah ﷻ.

His gatherings of ‘ilm (learning) and **dhikr** (remembrance of Allah ﷻ) were attended by people, jinn, **rijāl al-ghayb** (men of the unseen), and **arwāh** (souls). Now his soul is present at religious gatherings that are held with love and devotion.

Naf’anAllahu bih نفعنا به الله (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

If you are fortunate enough to do the **dhikr** of Allah ﷻ compiled by Mawlana al-Haddad in the company of your shaykh, and if your shaykh himself is a perfect spiritual guide, the **dhikr** of Allah ﷻ might run through your veins. And what a thrill that would be!

Naf’anAllahu bih نفعنا به الله (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

3. Imam al-Haddad is Qutb u’d-Da‘wa wa’l Irshad

Imam al-Haddad authored ten books which have become classics of Muslim spirituality. For more than three centuries, Muslims have read them and become more pious. Hence his title: **Qutb u’d-Da‘wah wa’l Irshad** (the Spiritual Axis of Propagation of Islam and Right Guidance).

Naf’anAllahu bih نفعنا به الله (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

Imam al-Haddad, as one of the greatest Muslim scholars, quotes verses from the Holy Qur’an and the Hadith of RasulAllah ﷺ. He quotes the Sayings of the **Anbiya’** (Prophets, peace be upon them), the **Ahl al-Bayt** and the **Sahaba**, the **Tābi’in** (Followers) and the **Taba’it Tābi’in** (Followers of the Followers) as well as the **Awliya’ Allah** (Friends of Allah) and the **Salihin** (the pious), and narrates anecdotes about them. So what comes out clearly and distinctly is his advice and guidance based on those teachings and received wisdom.

JazakAllah (may Allah ﷻ reward you) Mawlana al-Haddad.

He is an author in the tradition of Imam al-Ghazali who loved his Ihya ‘Ulum id-Din (Revival of Religious Sciences) so much that he composed a poem in its praise. But we learn more from him because he also quotes the great ‘**ulamā** and **mashāyikh** (scholars) who came after Imam al-Ghazali.

Naf’anAllahu bihima نفعنا بهما الله (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from them both), **Amin**.

The emphasis in his instruction is to:

- (a) Follow the Qur'an and the Sunnah,
- (b) have **taqwa** (reverential awe of Allah ﷻ) and hope for His Mercy, but avoid long hopes, maintaining balance between **khawf** (fear of Allah's punishment for bad deeds) and **rajā'** (hope in His Mercy),
- (c) acquire useful knowledge which is pleasing to Allah ﷻ,
- (d) perform good deeds with a sincere and pure heart, and avoid evil,
- (e) know our responsibilities and fulfill them,
- (f) make the best use of our short span of life on earth which will perish to prepare for the Afterlife which will endure, and
- (g) love the Prophet ﷺ, his Family and Companions, and the **Awliya' Allah** (who are also referred to as **Rijālullah**, men of Allah), and follow their example. The teaching is that the path (**tariqa**) of the Sufis is the best path to follow. So throughout his books, he quotes the **Awliya' Allah** and **Rijālullah**.

He is the alchemist who wants to wean the hearts of people away from the allure of this world and turn them into **Rijālullah**.

Naf'anAllahu bih ^{الله} نفعنا به (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

These days, computerized indexes of the Holy Qur'an are available. If you wish to find the verses of the Holy Qur'an on a particular subject, you just reference that index. Well, Mawlana al-Haddad did not require such an index. He was himself a living index, not only of the Qur'an but of Hadith Sharif as well. You open any chapter of his book Ad-Da'wat-ut-Tāmmah (The Complete Invitation to Islam), for example, and you will find explained many verses of the Holy Qur'an on a particular topic as well as innumerable relevant Hadith Sharif, and the sayings of the **Awliya' Allah**.

Naf'anAllahu bih ^{الله} نفعنا به (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

One of the rights of the books of Imam al-Haddad over a **muhibb** (loving disciple) is to recite at least the verses of the Qur'an in these books.

All the people in general can benefit from Ad-Da'wat-ut-Tāmmah (The Complete Invitation to Islam), a beginner on the spiritual path benefits from Ādāb sulūk il-murīd (the Book of the disciple); a **khatīb** (preacher) can benefit from all his books, especially An-Nasāih id-Dīniyyah (Counsels of Religion), Risālat u'l Mu'āwanah (The Book of Assistance), and Sabīl u'l-iddikār (The Lives of Man); while someone who is a spiritual master benefits from An-Nafāis (The Sublime Treasures, Answers to Sufi Questions).

One of his celebrated pieces of writing is “Aqida Ahlus-Sunnah wa’l Jama‘ah” which is the last chapter of An-Nasāih id-Dīniyyah. It clearly stands out as the **Aqida** (creed) of **Ahlu-Sunnah wa’l Jama‘ah** as he clearly states that the first rightful **Khalifa** of the Prophet ﷺ was Sayyiduna Abu Bakr as-Siddiq رضي الله عنه, followed by Sayyiduna ‘Umar al-Faruq رضي الله عنه, then Sayyiduna ‘Uthman Dhu’n-Nurayn رضي الله عنه, then Sayyiduna ‘Ali al-Murtada رضي الله عنه.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the writing of the Imam is that it is so pure, effective and useful. It is comprehensive yet succinct, and it has so much depth, yet it does not overwhelm you.

Durūs (study sessions) from An-Nasāih id-Dīniyyah and Risalat-ul-Mu‘awanah have been held in a **masjid** in Jakarta for the past 120 years. The barakāt (blessings) of these study sessions have spread so that these days, lessons are given from the books of the Imam such as Sabil al-Iddikār (The Lives of Man) as far away as Sydney, Australia. Some of his books form part of the syllabus in academies of learning. His books and religious poetry are quoted by scholars in their speeches from Turkey to Kenya.

Naf‘anAllahu bih نفعنا به الله (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

He does not talk down at you but speaks to you in earnest and with respect, considering you to be an intelligent person capable of much spiritual progress. You cannot help exclaiming that he is so wise!

Naf‘anAllahu bih نفعنا به الله (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

Dr. Mostafa al-Badawi of Madina has taken the lead in translating most of the books of the Imam into English, and in writing his book-length biography in both Arabic and in English, with the blessings of Sayyidi wa Murshidi al-Habib Ahmad Mash-hur bin Taha al-Haddad, who inherited from the Imam the ‘**ulūm** (knowledge), **anwār** (spiritual lights), **asrār** (spiritual mysteries) and the **Mustafawi akhlāq** (the noble character of the Chosen Prophet ﷺ).

SubhānAllah سبحان الله (Glorified is Allah ﷻ).

Some of the books of the Imam, or one or more chapters from them, have already been translated into other languages as well, such as Indonesian and Malaysian, Urdu, Kiswahili, Somali, Swedish, Danish and Dutch.

It is heartening to note that the publishers **Kitaba: Islamic Texts for the blind** have published the translation of the opening chapters of Al-Nasaih al-Diniyyah in Braille.

Al-Hamdu Lillah الحمد لله (All Praise is for Allah سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ).

Imam al-Haddad was the **Qutb u'l Irshad** to whom people would come to get answers to their questions. He advised ordinary people, traders, the scholars, the rulers, everyone. His **muhibbin** (loving disciples) would sit at his feet to learn and get his **du'ā** (supplication to Allah) and **barakāt** (blessings). Many of his disciples went on to become **Awliya' Allah** (Friends of Allah) themselves.

Al-Hamdu Lillah الحمد لله (All Praise is for Allah سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ).

He had a letter written to the **sultan** (ruler) of his time stating the responsibilities of rulers as explained in the Qur'an and Hadith.

He had disciples in Morocco, Egypt, Syria, the Hijaz, the Persian Gulf, Turkey and India. Some of them visited him in Tarim, and some he corresponded with.

Naf'anAllahu bih نفعنا به (may Allah سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

He is the Imam who wants to bring us to "**Hadratillah**" (the Presence of Allah سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ). That is why he quotes this verse of the Holy Qur'an in his books as well as in his poetry.

فِي مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ ﴿٥٥﴾

On a seat of truth in the presence of the All-Powerful King (Allah). (54:55)

May Muslims continue to read the books of Imam al-Haddad and become more pious, **Amin**.
May non-Muslims read his books in increasingly large numbers and may Allah سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ open their hearts to Islam. **Amin**.

4. Imam al-Haddad's religious poetry

He composed 150 religious poems which have been compiled alphabetically in his Diwan titled Ad-Durru'l manzūm li-dhawi'l 'uqūl wa'l fuhūm (Poetic pearls for discerning and understanding minds). In this way he conveyed the teachings of Islam in a comprehensive way, both in prose and poetry.

Naf‘anAllahu bih نفعنا به الله (may Allah ﷺ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

One of his poems is largely **salawāt** and **salam** (invocation of blessings and peace) on our Beloved Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. He composed it when he went for his Hajj Pilgrimage. Its 16th couplet is engraved inside the room where the Prophet ﷺ lived attached to the Masjid an-Nabawi in Madina. Let us seize the opportunity to recite it to gain **barakāt** (blessings).

Nabiyyun ‘Azīmun khuluquhu khuluqulladhī
lahu ‘azzama’r-Raḥmanu fī Sayyidi’l kutbi

The great Prophet whose character is the character which
The Most Beneficent Allah exalted in the master of the Revealed Books (the Qur’an).

In this couplet, the Imam is referring to this verse of the Holy Qur’an in praise of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾

And indeed, you are of the most exalted character. (68:4)

Allahumma salli wa sallim ‘alayh
O Allah! Bless him and grant him peace.

When a brother from Pakistan in Tariqa al-Qādiriyyah heard about this, he was filled with so much joy that he named his son Haddad.

SubḥānAllah سبحان الله (Glorified is Allah ﷻ).

This **qasida** has been included by Imam as-Sayyid Muhammad bin ‘Alawi al-Maliki of Makkah in Shifā al-fuād bi ziyārati Khayri’l ‘ibād (The cure of the heart from the visit to the Best Devotee of Allah). He has identified it as Al-Qasida al-Haddadiyya ad-Dākhiliyyah li’l Hujratin Nabawiyya Ash-Sharīfah (The Eulogy by Imam al-Haddad Engraved Inside the Blessed Room of the Prophet ﷺ). Those who go for Hajj or ‘Umra would do well to recite this **qasida** at the **Rawda** (Garden of Paradise) of RasulAllah ﷺ in Madina.

His **qasida** “Ar-Rāiyya al-Kubrā” consists of 201 couplets, all rhyming in the letter rā’. It conveys to us many of the teachings of Islam, especially about the Hajj Pilgrimage. In five of

these couplets, he addresses RasulAllah ﷺ directly, manifesting his special relationship with him. These five couplets begin with:

Alā yā RasulAllah
Yes, O the Prophetic Messenger of Allah!

Alā yā HabibAllah
Yes, O the Beloved one of Allah!

Alā yā KhalilAllah
Yes, O the Friend of Allah!

Alā yā AminAllah
Yes, O the Trusted one of Allah!

Alā yā SafiyyAllah
Yes, O the Chosen one of Allah!

Allahumma salli wa sallim ‘alayh
O Allah! Bless him and grant him peace.

The final 35 couplets of **qasida** “Ar-Rāiyya al-Kubrā” consist of ‘Aqīdatu’l Islam (Tenets of Muslim Faith). He also composed ‘Aqīdatu’l Islam in prose. Thus he composed the ‘**aqīda** in both prose and poetry.

Naf’anAllahu bih نفعنا به (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

Two of his **qasidas** are most often to be found in books of **awrād** and **adhkār**. The opening line of one of these is:

Qad kafāni ‘Ilmu Rabbī
min suāli wa’khtiyārī

It is sufficient that my Lord Knows
about my requests and choices
(so I do not even need to ask Him or choose, He chooses for me).

It has been reported that this **qasida** is a proven **du‘ā** (supplication to Allah ﷻ). Problems are solved when this **qasida** is recited.

Al-Hamdu Lillah ﷻ (All Praise is for Allah ﷻ).

The opening words of the second **qasida** are:

Yā Rabbi Yā ‘Ālima’l hāl
Ilayka wajjahtu’l āmāl

O Lord! O The Knower of conditions!
To You I turn my face with hopes

There is supplication to Allah ﷻ in many of the **qasāid** (religious poems) and since supplications to Allah ﷻ conclude with **salawāt** (blessings) on the Prophet ﷺ, eighty-seven of the one hundred and fifty poems of the Imam end with **salawāt**. Let us then benefit by reciting the concluding couplets of one such **qasida**.

Dīni Khayri’l khalqi ashrafihim
Sayyidi’s-sādāti min Mudari

Salawātullahi tablughuhu
mā taghanna’l wurqu fi’sh-shajari

(Diwan, p. 233)

The religion of the best creation (of Allah), the Most Noble of them
The Master of the line of noble descent from Mudar

May Allah’s blessings reach him
as long as birds chirp on trees

Mudar, one of the ancestors of the Prophet ﷺ, has been mentioned here. Such a **qasida** in which his ancestor Mudar is mentioned is called **qasida Mudariyya**. Normally, the ‘**ulamā** mention him in one of the opening couplets. Trust Mawlana al-Haddad to make his **Qasida Mudariyya** unique by sealing it with the name Mudar together with **Salawāt ala’r-Rasūl** ﷺ.

Sallū ala’l Habībi’l A‘zam
Allahumma salli wa sallim ‘alayh

Invoke blessings on the Most Beloved Prophet
O Allah! Bless him and grant him peace.

It is a tradition among the eminent ‘**ulamā** to write a **qasida** using the word **faraji** (relief from grief) in one of its opening couplets. Such a **qasida** is called **qasida Munfarija** which is traditionally a **du‘ā**. Imam al-Haddad also composed a **qasida Munfarija** with 27 couplets. This **qasida** is considered so blessed that the author of Sharh Ratib al-Haddad included it in the Sharh (p. 476-477).

Some of his **qasāid** have become so popular that they are recited with great joy by both the young and the old in **majālis** (gatherings) of **dhikr**, **mawlid an-Nabī** ﷺ and anniversary celebrations of great Muslims.

If someone recites to you one of his poems and you are so emotionally overcome that unstoppable tears run down your cheeks, this is a sign that you love this man of Allah and that you love goodness.

He is so succinct that in just one couplet of a **qasida**, he mentions all the four Imams of **madh-hab**, that is Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Shafi‘ī, Imam Malik and Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

He loved Sayyiduna Ghawth al-‘Azam Muhyiddin Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani al-Hasani, and Sayyiduna al-Faqih al-Muqaddam Muhammad ibn ‘Ali Bā ‘Alawi al-Husayni so much that he composed poems in their honour. He composed poems in honour of many other **Awliya’ Allah**.

Naf‘anAllahu bihim نفعناهم (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from them), **Amin**.

As far as poetic form is concerned, the Imam came up with a uniquely new genre of **qasāid**, one of which is very famous. The opening line of its congregational reply is:

Alā Yā Allah bi Nazrah
min al-‘ayn-i’r-Raḥīmah

Yes, O Allah! With a gaze
from the eye of mercy

This **qasida** has four stanzas. Each stanza begins with a **rubā‘ī** (quatrain), followed by three hemistiches in a different rhyme, and ends with a rhyming couplet. This **qasida** is a **rāiyya** in which each **rubā‘ī** and each couplet ends and rhymes in the letter **rā’**, **Maashaa Allah!**

We can better understand the esteem with which the poems of an ‘**ālim** (scholar) are held, by finding out who has done

(a) a **sharh**, appreciation of his poetry in prose,

- (b) a **takhmīs** of his poem, augmenting it from a couplet to a quintet,
- (c) a **damn** of his poem, composing a similar poem with the same rhyme and poetic meter, and
- (d) a **taqrīz**, appreciation of his poetry in a poem.

So let us now come to the **sharh**, **takhmīs**, **damn** and **taqrīz** of his poetry.

Some ‘**ulamā** have written **sharh** (appreciative explanation) of the whole Diwan of Mawlana al-Haddad as well as of his individual **qasāid**. For example, his disciple al-Habib Ahmad bin Zayn al-Habashi (1069-1144 A.H) wrote a voluminous **sharh** of the Diwan. He wrote a well-known appreciation of the **qasida** whose opening words are ‘**alayka bi Taqwallah** (to you with the reverential awe of Allah), as well as of his **qasida** “**al-‘Ayniyya**” which has 140 couplets all rhyming in the letter ‘**ayn**.

He also did a 150 page **sharh** of just one **manzūmah** (instructive poem) of the Imam on “**wasiyyah**” (advice) in which he quoted 500 Sayings of RasulAllah ﷺ and 300 **āthār** (narratives) of pious predecessors.

SubhānAllah سبحان الله (Glorified is Allah ﷻ).

One of the **munawwarin** (whose heart is illuminated) said that he saw this **qasida** of the Imam on “**wasiyya**” as a sea of light.

Another of his students, al-Habib Muhammad bin Zayn bin Sumayt (1107-1172 A.H) wrote an appreciation of his **qasida** whose opening words are: **Yā Rabbi Yā ‘Ālima’l hāl** (O Lord! O The Knower of conditions!). He also wrote a biography of Imam al-Haddad titled: Ghāyat-u’l qasid wa’l murād (The utmost aspiration and wish).

He also composed a Tawassul (Mediation) in which he uses the mediation of his pious predecessors in supplicating to Allah ﷻ, and he mentions Mawlana al-Haddad in this couplet:

Sa’altuka yā Mawla’l mawālī bi-Shaykhinā
wa Qudwatina’l Haddadi Ghawthi’l khalīqati

I beg of You, O Lord of the masters, for the sake of our Shaykh
our exemplar al-Haddad, the qualified axis of spiritual help

Naf’anAllahu bih نفعنا به الله (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

Those who do the **sharh** (appreciative explanation of a **qasida**) talk about:

- (a) Its noble teachings from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and the explanations of the pious predecessors, especially about Islamic spirituality;
- (b) the occasion for which it was composed, for example, the opening of a **masjid**;
- (c) the depth and the breadth of the knowledge and the wisdom in it; and its subtle, fine and refined aspects;
- (d) its poetic form, for example, its rhyme, rhythm, and poetic meter, and
- (e) its **nūr** (spiritual light); and spiritual power in moving the listeners to spiritual ecstasy, and in transforming the lives of people, turning them to piety.

Some **shu'arā** (poets) have composed **takhmīsāt** of the **qasāid** of Mawlana al-Haddad. A **takhmīs** is the augmentation of a couplet to a quintet. Examples are the **takhmīs** of the qasida '**Alayka bi Taqwallah** by al-Habib Saqqāf bin Muhammad al-Jufri (passed ahead 1230 A.H), and another **takhmīs** of the same **qasida** by al-Habib al-Hasan bin Salih al-Bahr (passed ahead 1273 A.H).

One of the traditions among the **mashāyikh** (spiritual masters) is to compose a **qasida** in the same **damn** (called **zamīn** in Urdu), that is, with the same rhyme and poetic meter as the **qasida** of a predecessor. In this instance, Imam 'Ali bin Muhammad al-Habashi (1259-1333 A.H) did a **damn** of **qasida at-Tāiyya al-Kubrā** of Mawlana al-Haddad. (Simt-ud-Durar, p. 356).

Naf'anAllahu bihimā نفعنا الله بهما (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from them both), **Amin**.

Some '**ulamā** have composed **taqārīz** (appreciative poems) in praise of the Diwan as quoted in its "Introduction". These are two couplets of such praise by an anonymous poet.

Lillahi Diwan-un li-Sayyidi 'asrihi
kanzi'l haqāiqi Qurbina'l Haddādi

Awda'a fihī kullī fannin mubda'in
fihī 'sh-shifā wat-tibbu li'l-ajsādi

(Diwan, p.41)

By Allah, the Collected Religious Poems of the master of his era
are the treasure of the spiritual realities of our Spiritual axis Imam al-Haddad

He has placed in it all kinds of creative poetry
In it is a healing and medication for people

Two Ph.D. topics come to mind for recommended research on this subject:

- (a) The comprehensiveness of the teachings of Islam both in the prose writing as well as in the poetry of Imam al-Haddad: A comparative perspective.
- (b) The comprehensiveness of the teachings of Islam in the Mathnawi of Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi and in the Diwan of Imam al-Haddad: A comparative perspective.

Al-Fatiha!

5. Imam al-Haddad's meritorious performance of Hajj

Imam al-Haddad performed the Hajj Pilgrimage in the year 1079 A.H. While he was on the Hajj Pilgrimage, a **derwish** stood up on Jabal Rahmah (the mount of mercy) at 'Arafat and referring to the Imam announced that everyone should thank Allah ﷻ for making them perform Hajj with this **qutb** (Spiritual axis, Spiritual Pole, greatest saint of his time).

The Imam stayed for 40 days in Madina. He composed a **Salam** (greeting of peace) on RasulAllah ﷺ whose 16th verse, as explained earlier, has been engraved inside his **hujra**. There, he greeted RasulAllah ﷺ with **Salam** and all those who were present, heard our Beloved Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ reply to his **Salam**. He has mentioned this historical incident in his **qasida ar-Rāiyya al-Kubrā** in these couplets.

Waqafnā wa sallamnā 'alā Khayri Mursalin
wa Khayri Nabiiyin mā lahū min munāziri

fa radda 'alaynā wa huwa hayyun wa hādīrun
fa shurrifa min hayyin wa hādīri

ziyāratuhu fawzun wa nujhun wa maghnamun
li ahli'l qulūbi'l mukhlisātīt-tawāhiri

bihā yāhsulu'l matlūbu fi'd-dīni wad-dunā
wa yandafi'ul marhūbu min kulli dāiri

bihā kullu khayrin 'ājilīn wa mu'ajjalīn
yanālu bi-Fadlillāhi fa'nhad wa bādīri

We stopped and said salams to the best Prophetic Messenger of Allah
and the best Prophet, none can equal him

So he replied to us as he is alive and present
And is most ennobled from among those who are noble, alive, and present

Visiting him is a triumph, success and bounty
for possessors of pure and sincere hearts

With it (the visit) are obtained religious and worldly wishes
and all dreadful harms are removed

In it (the visit) is all goodness for now and in the future
bestowed by the Grace of Allah ﷺ, so embark on it without delay

Sallū ‘ala’l Habībi’l A‘zam
Allahumma salli wa Sallim ‘alayh

Invoke blessings on the Most Beloved Prophet!
O Allah! Bless him and grant him peace!

Al-Habib ‘Umar bin Zayn bin Sumayt narrates that a **WalīAllah** who was a sweeper of the **haram** (holy sanctuary) in Makkah informed the people that Imam ‘AbdAllah bin ‘Alawi al-Haddad had passed ahead. He was asked how he knew about something that happened in far-off Tarim. He said that every day and every night, he saw the Imam do the **Tawaf** (circumambulation) of the Ka‘ba but he did not see him that day so he concluded that he had passed ahead.

Allahu Akbar ﷲ (Allah ﷻ is Supremely Great!)

6. Imam al-Haddad is unique in many ways

He is indeed unique in many ways. He had lost his eyesight at the age of four as a result of an illness. After that he memorized the Holy Qur’an, Hadith Sharif and classics of Muslim spirituality. Then he authored all his books and religious poetry. So all his learning and teaching is based on memory. He set an example for the whole of humanity to strive as best as we can. Even those who do not believe in miracles must admit that this was a miracle.

Those who believe in miracles do not make a big deal out of this because they know that Mawlana al-Haddad had **basira** (inner-sight), an eye in the heart by which he could see just as other people see with their physical eyes, and he could as well see spiritual realities and the **rijāl**

al-ghayb (men of the unseen) which ordinary people cannot see. He could also sit in the hearts of people and read their thoughts as all great sufi masters do.

Naf'anAllahu bih ^{الله} نفعنا به (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

Imam al-Haddad is such a unique shaykh that if you cannot find an answer to a question on Islam anywhere, he will provide that answer. For example, you might wonder why Muhyuddin Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani revealed so many spiritual mysteries while other spiritual masters are reticent. The answer is provided by Imam al-Haddad in his book It-hāf is-sāil (Gifts for the seeker, p.11). He explains that Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani was under an order to reveal these spiritual secrets and the secret of why this permission was given cannot be revealed!

Naf'anAllahu bihima ^{الله} نفعنا بهما (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from them both), **Amin**.

Mawlana al-Haddad is also unique in that he is the only one who composed separate **ad'iya** (supplications) to be recited after the recitation of Surah al-Fatiha, Surah YaaSeen, Surah al-Waqi'ah, and Ayatul Kursi. He thanks Allah ﷻ for bestowing upon us such treasures. This is the extent to which he was attached to the recitation of the Holy Qur'an.

Naf'anAllahu bih ^{الله} نفعنا به (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

He is also unique as he composed 'Aqīdatu'l Islam (Tenets of Muslim Faith) in both prose and poetry.

Naf'anAllahu bih ^{الله} نفعنا به (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

His own Shaykh, Al-Habib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-Rahman al-'Attas had predicted that 40 men named 'Umar would reach Allah ﷻ at the hands of Imam al-Haddad. When in his old age, Imam al-Haddad once fell ill, his family members felt that his end was now near. He told them "not so" because 40 men named 'Umar had not yet become **Awliya' Allah** at his hands as had been predicted. After this prediction was fulfilled, he left his earthly existence, and when he breathed his last, a beam of light was seen coming out of his body.

SubhānAllah ^{سبحانه} (Glorified is Allah ﷻ)

7. Poetry in honour of Imam al-Haddad

Appreciation begets appreciation. Mawlana al-Haddad composed poems in praise of the **Awliya' Allah** and poems have been composed in his praise.

We learn about this from one of his earliest biographies Tathbītu'l fu'ād (Strengthening the heart) compiled by one of his disciples Shaykh Ahmad bin 'Abd al-Karim al-*Hasāwī* al-Shajjār (passed ahead 1094 A.H) who accompanied him for more than 16 years. He informs us that when Mawlana al-Haddad passed ahead, his grandson As-Sayyid 'Alawi bin al-Husayn bin 'AbdAllah al-Haddad composed a poem in his honour with 142 couplets, as many as are the letters in the full name of the Imam! Others who composed poems praising him were Al-Habib Zayn ul-'Ābidīn from Basra, As-Sayyid 'Alawi bin Ja'far Mad-har and his brother As-Sayyid 'AbdAllah bin Ja'far Mad-har.

(Tathbītu'l fu'ād, vol. II, p. 354).

The "Introduction" to his Diwan also quotes some of the poems composed in his honour. For example, another disciple of the Imam, al-Habib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-Rahman al-Baar praised him in these couplets:

Abī Hasan-in Shaykh i'l-mashāyikhi jumlatan
Imām-in wa bi'l Haddadi yusmā wa yu'rafu

Sharifun munifun aryahiyyun muhadh-dhabun
Bahiyyun hayiyyun muhsinun muta'attifu

Wa 'allāmah habrun samā bi-tawādu'in
kalāmun lahu durrun kahū lā yuallafu

(Diwan, p. 43)

Father of Hasan, the shaykh of all the shaykhs
An Imam, titled and known as al-Haddad

Descendant of the Prophet, exalted, reviver (of hearts), refined
Shining, giving life (to dead hearts), doer of good with spiritual excellence, compassionate

And the most learned scholar towering above all with humility
his words are such pearls that cannot be matched

Naf'anAllahu bih ^{الله} نفعنا به (may Allah ^ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

Let us also quote just one couplet from a poem by Shaykh al-Adīb al-'Allāmah Muhammad bin Salim bin Wisāl i'l-*Ihsāiyy* in his honour.

Fa Haddadu'l qulūbi *habību* qalbī
wa shaykhī bi'l Jamāli wa bi'l Jalāli

(Diwan, p. 43)

The smelter of (the rust from) the hearts (to make them glow), the beloved of my heart
and my shaykh, possessor of both beautiful and majestic attributes

Naf'anAllahu bih ^{الله} نفعنا به (may Allah ^ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

Imam 'Ali bin Muhammad al-Habashi eulogized on him in a **qasida** with 27 couplets when he did his **ziyara** (visited him). Its opening couplet is:

Bi'l *fath* wa'l-irshād wa'l imdād
thabatat qawā'idu shaykhina'l Haddādi

With the spiritual opening, guidance and spiritual help
have been firmly established the foundations of our Shaykh al-Haddad

These are two more couplets from the same **qasida**.

Fa jamī'u man salakat-*tarīqata* ba'dahu
mustasbihūna bi-nūrihi'l waqqādi

Qarrat bihī 'aynu'n-Nabiyyi Muhammad-in
fa huwa lahū min *ahsani*'l awlādi

(Simtu'd-Durar, p. 267-281)

Its Kiswahili translation is:

Wote waliyofuata twariqa baada yake
Wameongozwa na nuru yake iliyozagaa

Jicho la Tumwa Muhammadi limetulia juu yake
Kwani yeye ni afdhali ya watoto wake

(Kiswahili translation by Shaykh Muhammad Mlamali Adam).

Then all those who followed the spiritual path after him
Were illuminated by his brilliant light

He is the delight of the eye of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ
As he is one of the best of his children

Naf'anAllahu bih نفعنا به (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

Shaykh Uways bin Muhammad al-Qādirī of Somalia has mentioned him in his Tawassul (Mediation).

Bi Ad-hami ma'a Uways al-Qarani
wa Sahibi'r Rawatib i'l-Haddadi

wa bi'sh-Sharifi 'Abdillahi Haddadi
huwa'l Waliyyu qayyimu'l karāmah

(Al-Jawharu'n-nafīs, The precious pearls, p. 97-98)

For the sake of Ibrahim Ad-ham and Uways al-Qarani
and Imam al-Haddad, the composer of the Ratibs

For the sake of Imam 'AbdAllah Haddad, a descendant of the Prophet
he is a Friend of Allah with established miracles

Naf'anAllahu bih نفعنا به (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

Syed Hamid Yazdani sahib of Toronto, a poet in Tariqa Naqshbandiyya has composed a **manqabat** in Urdu on Imam al-Haddad with 21 stanzas, of which the opening three stanzas are:

Allah Allahu Allah Allahu
Allah Allahu Allah Allahu
Dhikr hai jin ka Khuda ki yād
Qutb-e 'ālam Hazrat-e Haddād

Mustafa ka nūr sīnay mein
dil hai ya ek Tūr sīnay mein

dharkano mein naqsh Rabb ki yād
Qutb-e ‘ālam Hazrat-e Haddād

Nātiq un kay haqq mein hai Qur’ān
haan “**wa lā hum yahzanūn**” hai shān
daafi‘ har gham hai un ki yād
Qutb-e ‘ālam Hazrat-e Haddād

(Gul-e-Tauseef, p. 48)

Allah Allahu Allah Allahu
Allah Allahu Allah Allahu
his mention leads you to the remembrance of Allah
the spiritual axis of the world Imam al-Haddad

The Chosen Prophet’s spiritual light is in his bosom
Is it the heart or is it Mount Sinai in his bosom
Engraved in his heart-beat is the remembrance of the Lord
the spiritual axis of the world Imam al-Haddad

The Qur’an mentions the Awliya’ Allah
Yes, “neither will they grieve” is their eminent station
his remembrance removes every grief
the spiritual axis of the world Imam al-Haddad

Naf’anAllahu bih ^{اللّٰه} نفعنا به (may Allah ^{سُبْحٰنَہٗ} make us benefit from him), **Amin**.

Blessed are those who grow up with Mawlana al-Haddad in any day and age. When you join a **madrassa**, you learn to recite the Holy Qur’an and you might also hear a **qasida** of the Imam but you are too young to find out whose **qasida** it is. When you join an institution of higher learning, someone might give you Mukhkhul ‘Ibadah (The Kernel of worship), a **kitab** of **adhkār** and **awrād** compiled by al-Habib as-Sayyid ‘AbdAllah bin Mustafa bin Hasan al-‘Aydarus, and you recite the Ratib al-Haddad and the Wird ul-Latif of the Imam from it even though you might not yet know anything about him. Then if you come across a translation of one of his books, you begin to learn more from him and you wish his books are translated in more languages. If Allah ^{سُبْحٰنَہٗ} has blessed you with a Shaykh of the stature of al-Habib Ahmad Mash-hur bin Taha al-Haddad who inherited from the Imam, then you are made. Then you know that both Imam al-Haddad and your shaykh al-Habib are with you.

Naf’anAllahu bihima ^{اللّٰه} نفعنا بہما (may Allah ^{سُبْحٰنَہٗ} make us benefit from them both), **Amin**.

It is but appropriate to end this **tadhkira** (memorial) of Imam al-Haddad with this quatrain from one of his **qasāid** which is normally recited as part of **du‘ā** (supplication to Allah ﷻ).

Rabbi fa'nfa'nā bi barkat**ihim**
wa'hdina'l *husnā* bi *hurmat**ihim***
wa amitnā fi *tariqat**ihim***
wa mu'āfātin mina'l fitani

First, we come to its translation in Malaysian.

Ya Allah, kumiakanlah kami dengan barmat mereka
Berilah petunjuk pada kami jalan baik dengan kehormatan mereka
Matikanlah kami pada jalan mereka
Serta selamatkanlah kami dari fitnah

(Translated by Ali Zaynal Abidin Al-Hamid, Mutiara Qasidah, p. 11, www.alhawi.net)

O Lord! Make us benefit from their blessings (the blessings of the Prophet and his descendants)
and guide us to goodness for the sake of their sanctity
and may we pass ahead in their spiritual path
and be saved from sedition

Tadhkiratu'l Awliya' (the memorial of the sufi masters) is truly unending. May we continue to benefit from the teachings, the example and the **barakāt** (blessings) of Mawlana al-Haddad; and in the Hereafter, may Allah ﷻ keep us with him, together with the Prophets, the Truthful, the martyrs and the pious. **Āmīn Yā Rabba'l 'Ālamīn.**

Siddiq Osman Noormuhammad
7 Dhu'l Qa'dah 1435, September 2014
Toronto.
madrasahidaya.net

Acknowledgement: I am grateful to Brother Ijaz Khan for gifting me with a set of books of Imam al-Haddad. **JazakAllah** (may Allah reward you), brother Ijaz. **Amin.**