



THE SANAD OF SHEIKH ALEEY ABDUL QADIR

In the name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Praise belongs to the One who leads to His elect those He Seeks to lead to Himself, may blessings & peace unending be showered upon our master Mohammed the bearer of the crown of election and the one adorned with the mantle of perfection.

I bear witness that there is god other than the One true God who is singular in possessing Necessary Being, and I Bear witness that our master Mohammed is His Messenger the greatest of Contingent beings, the one whose way is the final way of salvation and sanctification until the day God lifts the mantle of sanctification from the face of the earth and inherits the earth and all that is upon it.

Glory be to the One Who says □ everything upon it (the earth) is perishing and nothing will remain but the Countenance of your Lord the Possessor of Majesty & bounty□, Glory be to the One who will annihilate the worlds and call out □to whom does the kingdom belong today□, He will then answer His Essence by His Essence and say □ to God the One the all Conquering□.

The realities of such verses are as real today in the perceptions of the knowers of God as they will be on the day when such events take place, for they (the knowers of God) ascribe no ownership to any but God the One True King, and behold contingent being to be in perpetual annihilation when looked at in and of themselves, their existence only being affirmed by the Divine Creative Acts, by this perception the knowers of God have had the reality of creations ontological destitution laid bare.

The path to this realization can only be attained by one of two means an inward and an outward the inward is by being taken to Divine Presence by an act of Divine grace, the outward is by walking the way at the hands of a living master who has himself realized the stations of the knowers of God, or more rarely by the Spiritual influence of a realized master who has already passed away and

dwells in the inner-space between this world and the next. Some reach this realization by one of these means and others by more than one, □and to God belongs the affair in the beginning and the end□, □He chooses for Himself those He Wills, and Guides to Himself those who turn to Him□.

The one who walks this path must slay the adolescent of his lust, pierce through the ship of his habits, and build the wall of his good deeds¹.

This book is dedicated to the masters who walked this path before us and carried the meaning of □and a man came running from the furthest part of the city saying "O my people follow the messengers□, people who took on the character of the seal of Prophecy (may God bless him and give him salutations of peace) in whom all the previous prophecies are encompassed, our master the Messenger of God Mohammed the Son of Abdullah Blessing & peace be upon him, whose character was the Quran, □and you are truly on an immense character pattern□, by following in his footsteps they become beloved to God who says □Say (O Mohammed) if you love God then follow me and God will love you and forgive you your sins He is the oft Forgiving, the all Merciful□, by becoming beloved to God they attained to the station of "When I love him I am the eye with which he sees, the ear with which he hears, the hand with which he strikes, and the feet with which he walks, and were he to ask Me I would give him", by becoming people who see, hear, act, and move by the permission of God they became leaders □and we made among them leaders who guide by Our command when they were patient and had certainty regarding Our signs□, they have thus been entrusted with the task of calling people back to their Creator in accordance with □Say I (the pronoun refers to the prophet Mohammed) guide to God on the basis of inner-sight, I and those who follow me□.

May God bless us with their love, for as our Master Mohammed (may unending blessings and peace be showered upon him said: "a man is with those he loves", it is also reported that one of the great prophetic inheritors said: "when the righteous are mentioned mercy descends"², it has also been said that "the biographies of the righteous are among the Hosts of God, with which he strengthens the hearts of the knowers of God" and this statement is in line with the verse of the Quran: (All that We relate to thee of the stories of the apostles,- with it We make firm thy heart: in them there cometh to thee the Truth, as well as an exhortation and a message of remembrance to those who believe.)

With this in mind we begin the biographies of our masters.

¹ An allegorical understanding used by Habib Mohammad Hadi al-Saqqa in his letter of advice to one of his students, may God sanctify their secrets.

² Some narrators attributed this statement to Maruf al-Karkhi, others attribute it to Sufyan al-Thawri, and others attribute it to Sufyan Ibn Uyayna

Sheikh Aleey Abdul Qadir al-Tahiri.

Born Rusli Soluman, in 1962 in the Malaysian island of Penang, his family later moved to the Malaysian mainland, he began his path of learning in the town's local mosque, this mosque was sometimes frequented by a visiting scholar, and in one session the scholar said: "the human heart was only created for the remembrance of God", Sheikh Ali was still very young at the time, but went to the scholar and asked him how one should remember God.

Acting on the instruction he received, Sheikh Ali began to invoke God by day & by night, Imam Qushairi states in his famous Epistle: "remembrance of God is the herald of sainthood, whoever is given the herald is given sainthood". Sheikh Ali would also travel huge distances on his bicycle in order to study the recitation of the Quran with his Quran teacher.

During this period in his life changes began to occur and he would spend hours standing at the graves of his local cemetery, remembering the transience of this life and the inevitability of death, he would sometimes become so immersed in his inner experience he would ask his mother whether or not he had eaten!

She began to worry for her son's sanity, especially as she also began to hear the villagers talking about how long he stood at the graves in the cemetery. The local Sheikh although a simple man had studied under his father who had studied the Sciences of Islam at a traditional school where the students were taught the Islamic disciplines, and received instruction on the Sufi path, the education of the imam's father made the imam familiar with some of the experiences he saw Sheikh Ali going through, and he suggested that the young boy be sent to a traditional centre of learning, one in which a community of students gathered under a Spiritual master to learn both the scholarly disciplines and the path of Sufism.

He was sent to the school of Sheikh Omar Zuhdi who was a man of scholarly learning, a teacher of the spiritual sciences, and a living Sufi master from a lineage of masters going back to the famous 17th Century Saint, the Imam Ahmed Ibn Idris. He would attend the classes of Sheikh Omar Zuhdi & to his amazement what he heard from the Sheikh was confirmation of his own inner experiences, the day Sheikh Ali entered the school of Omar Zuhdi his state of witnessing was to see 'there is no divinity other than the One God (Ar: Allah), Mohammed is the Messenger of God.

Sheikh Omar Zuhdi lived a life of simplicity and frugality, and his school had no electricity or running water, the residents of the school would use lamps and candles for lighting and a well or pool for water. Sheikh Ali once commented on this simplicity and exposure to the elements and said it really brought home the lessons Sheikh Omar gave on reliance on God & seeking refuge in Him alone.

One of Sheikh Ali's fellow students turned to him one day and said we will never really understand the states the Sheikh is talking about until we are initiated onto the spiritual path and given its litanies, the student continued and said we must ask him to give us permission to recite the litanies he received from his masters. When Sheikh Ali's colleague approached Sheikh Omar with this requested he directed him to go to another master of the same lineage living far in the south of Malaysia in Malacca and to take the litanies of the way from him. This Sheikh was Haji Abdul Waheed may God sanctify his secret, and he will be mentioned in more detail as he was the first Sheikh to give Sheikh Ali permission to transmit the way to others, and it will be his lineage that will be focused on. One of Sheikh Ali's companions and friends on the way is the wondering ascetic, known for his charismatic gifts, the Shattari Master Haji Isa, this man lived in a hut in the forest for many years. He would walk into a town with a white umbrella covered in his saying , these saying would include admonishments, aphorisms and reminders for people read as he walked about town. He would go around a town picking up scraps of paper and other rubbish and put them into bundles, which he would then set alight as people looked on in bewilderment, Sheikh Ali once explained his action, saying that Haji Isa was indicating how people live their lives. Meaning people spend their lives pursuing things of no consequence or worth (rubbish) which would later become nothing more than ashes scattered by the wind.

Another of Sheikh Ali's masters was Sheikh Abdullah the master who was intoxicated by witnessing the lights of Divine manifestation. He lived in a dilapidated hut in the middle of a forest, this dilapidated hut was surrounded by a perfectly arranged fence, Sheikh Abdullah sat silently on his bed, absorbed in his state and surrounded by a mosquito net, while Sheikh Ali sat on the floor looking at the master and communing with him. Sheikh Ali once said the hut was made of branches, twigs and straw and no-one would believe a human being could live there. He also commented that the mosquito net was an indication of Shariah, and that one should be within its boundaries, but not be veiled from witnessing Reality.

Another of Sheikh Ali's masters was the great master Sheikh Jafar al-Hafidh, Sheikh Jafar had a traditional centre of learning, where he taught the sacred sciences, it was under this master that Sheikh Ali did much of his studies of the sacred sciences, including the writings of Imam Ghazali, Sheikh Jafar, used to come out with his clothes looking immaculately clean and pressed, he was a teacher who would teach both through his classes and through his presence, people would come to the Sheikh's school in a state of carelessness and heedlessness and begin changing within a short time without the Sheikh actually telling them to make those particular changes, he was the kind of person Ibn Ata Allah was describing in his aphorisms when he said: "Do not keep the company of anyone but the person whose state elevates you, and whose words show you the way to God". Sheikh Ali spent 7 years in the company of Sheikh Jafar studying jurisprudence, Doctrine, Sufism, and the

other sacred sciences, and it was Sheikh Jafar that Sheikh Ali went into the teachings of Hujjat al-Islam al-Imam al-Ghazali.

Amongst others Sheikh Jafar had a connection to Sheikh Mohammad Zakariah al-Kandahlawi, Sheikh Jafar went to India to spend time with him and received Ijazas. After Sheikh Jafar passed away Sheikh Ali went on to study with a number of Sheikhs throughout Malaysia.

Among the Sheikhs he spent time with were Sheikh Daud a Malay scholar who spent many years in Mecca studying and teaching, Sheikh Daud was a master of the spiritual path, and very learned in Jurisprudence, he would go into the Subtleties of jurisprudence and legal differences. Sheikh Ali also spent time with Hajji Arshad who was already very old by the time Sheikh Ali met him, and who was a student of the famous Imam Fidani the great transmitter of Hadith of his time, Hajji Arshad had Ijazas from Imam Fidani, and passed his Ijaza's onto Sheikh Ali. One would not be exaggerating if one said that Sheikh Ali had some form of connection to all the traditional Sheikhs of Malaysia.

Sheikh Ali does not encumber his students with interacting with him in the code of conduct demanded between master and discipline out of compassion for them, rather he deals with his students like a brother they can all approach and confide in, this was also the method employed by the great knower of God (and one of the Sheikhs in our lineage) our master Abdul Aziz al-Dabbagh al-Idrisi al-Hassani al-Fasi, who once told his students "I do not demand that you deal with me within the protocols usually demanded between master & disciple, for you would not be able to fulfill those, but rather deal with me as a brother and confide in me", Sheikh Ali usually dresses immaculately, some spiritual masters are attentive to being well dressed, in order to help the student maintain his heart link by not coming out dressed in anyway people would disapprove of as the persons disapproval may end up severing the heart link with the Sheikh, so the whole point of dressing, and maintaining ones appearance in this manner is to help the student maintain their heart's link to the Sheikh. His method of teaching is subtle, he words are profound and carry layers of meaning, he gives generously, he is a perfect master, his way is a way of balance between attraction (*Jadhb*) and wayfaring (*Suluk*), spiritual intoxication and sobriety, annihilation and subsistence, he is as Ibn Ata' Allah said: "a servant who drank... and was increased in sobriety, became absent... and was increased in presence, his separation does not veil him from his being gathered... nor does being gathered veil him from his separation, his annihilation does not bar him from his subsistence... nor does his subsistence divert him from his annihilation, he gives every right its due." May God benefit through him, increase his rank, and preserve him.

Sheikh Haji Abdul Waheed

The learned scholar, the spiritual master of open unveilings, the knower of God Haji Abdul Waheed, the Sheikh had his school in Malacca and was famous in

those parts, he was known for his charismatic gifts, and true unveilings. When Sheikh Ali met him, Haji Abdul Waheed was already very old and was intoxicated by a strong divine attraction. He spoke with Sheikh Ali and his companion about what they did and why they had come, saying you have come to take the path, stay three months and I will give it to you, at this Sheikh Ali was bewildered as he had only drove his motorbike all the way down there to drop his colleague who had asked Sheikh Omar Zuhdi to give him the way, and whom Sheikh Omar had instructed to take it from Haji Waheed, after dropping his friend off he was intending to go back to Sheikh Omar Zuhdi's school, three months away was not planned, but Haji Waheed's state openly proclaimed what kind of man he was, so Sheikh Ali and his colleague resigned themselves to three month in Sheikh Haji Waheed's school. The Sheikh would have states people found hard to understand, he would sometimes suddenly get up and walk towards his Morris Minor, his students following closely behind, the get in the car and tell his students to drive to the Malaysian capital K.L. which was some hours away from Malacca, on one occasion the car came to an abrupt halt in the middle of nowhere due to an empty tank, Haji Waheed picked up a bottle of water said something and then told a student say "in the name of God" and pour it in the tank, the student did as he was instructed and when the ignition was turned on the car started! He would sometimes get driven to K.L. do two cycles of prayer at the India Mosque in the heart of K.L. stand outside looking at people and then get back in the car to be driven back to Malacca. His way was through a lineage going back to Imam Ahmed Ibn Idris may God sanctify his secret, through the great scholar of Kelantan Haji Wan Musa al-Kelantani.

Haji Wan Musa of Kelantan (d1939)

Haji Wan Musa was one of the imminent scholars of Kelantan, he studied under his father the famous Abdul Samad Bin Mohammad Saleh better known as Tuan Tabal, it was also at his father's hand that he received the way of Sidi Ahmed Ibn Idris, and passed it onto his disciplines.

Sheikh Abdul Samad Bin Mohammad Saleh also known as Tuan Tabal

Tuan Tabal is believed to be the master who first introduced the way of Sidi Ahmed Ibn Idris in Kelantan. He came from a noble family known for their knowledge, his father Mohammad Saleh was an imam and well known for devotion.

Tuan Tabal went to Mecca to do his pilgrimage, and visit the Prophet may blessings and peace be upon him in Medina. Having performed his pilgrimage he spent many years in Mecca learning the various Islamic Sciences, it was during his time in Mecca that he devoted himself to God and developed as a scholar, it was also at this time that Tuan Tabal was initiated into the way of

Ahmed Ibn Idris by Imam Ahmed Ibn Idris's direct student Sidi Ibrahim al-Rashid, according to some narrations he received it from the student of Ibrahim al-Rashid the famous Mohammad Ibn Ahmed al-Dandarawi. However the first is more possible because Tuan Tabal returned to Malaysia from Mecca in 1860 and Sidi Ibrahim al-Rashid passed away in Mecca in 1874.

News about Tuan Tabal's return to his country reached the ears of one Tok Semian whose real name was Haji Abdul Rahman Lebai Muda, a Kelantan dignitary. Tuan Tabal soon abandoned his village and stayed at Kota Bharu, the capital city of Kelantan on the invitation of Tok Semian for the purpose of teaching and spreading Islamic knowledge. Kota Bharu then became an important center of learning and famous for its Central Mosque which in turn served as an important center of sacred learning. Students came from near and far, not only from around Kota Bharu, but also from all over the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Thailand, the Borneo State, and Cambodia. It was during this time that Tuan Tabal married one of Tok Semian's daughters called Wan Kalthum. Thereafter Tuan Tabal with the blessed birth of his first son Nik Wan Ahmed and in 1874 with another son, named Haji Wan Musa.

While in Kota Bharu, Tuan Tabal built 'Surau' for the purpose of performing congregational prayers, teaching and other activities. This Surau was known as "Surau Tuan Tabal" and it is still in use to the present day. In fact, Tuan Tabal was different from his contemporary scholar's in Kelantan. He was known as a scholar who combined the inward and the outward and was a knower of God and a scholar of the Islamic sciences, may God sanctify his secret.

Sidi Ibrahim al-Rashid may God sanctify his secret.

Sidi Ibrahim al-Rashid was born in 1228/1813 in the north of Sudan, his grandfather was a Maliki Scholar and his father was a judge in the town of Shendi just north of Khartoum.

He was the youngest of the well known disciples if Imam Ahmed Ibn Idris. He first heard about Imam Ahmed Ibn Idris while he was still a young man studying the sacred sciences with his father in his native Sudan. Sidi Ibrahim al-Rashid had a vision of Imam Ahmed Ibn Idris while just after his Hajj and recounts it thus:

"Among the miracles of Sidi Ahmed Ibn Idris may God be pleased with him, is an occurrence which took place before we reached him, it occurred while we were in Mecca, for we had gone there for Hajj and he was in Yemen at the time. After we had completed the Hajj, I was stricken by a severe illness, so bad I could not even get up to attend to the call of nature, and I feared I would die in that state. I implored God to let me meet a perfect Sheikh who would take me to the real knowledge of God and His Messenger may blessings and peace be upon him and his family, so that I may die in a complete state of knowledge. I

asked God to answer this for the rank of Sidi Ahmed Ibn Idris may God be pleased with him. The moment I closed my eyes to sleep, I saw Sidi Ahmed Ibn Idris may God be pleased with him come while I was lying on my bed, he stood before me and said: you medicine is place Zam Zam water between your skin and flesh. I said: O master I am sick you do it, so he turned and a water-skin full of Zam Zam was brought to him on the back of a water carrier, when he arrived Sidi Ahmed pierced a hole in the skin of my testicles and placed the top of the water skin under my skin, and a reverberation began in my whole body like the reverberation of a shield, and I perspired much, I awoke to find my strength had come back and that I could stand and walk where I wished, and I was healed by the master's blessing."

Sidi Ibrahim al-Rashid fell ill again and had another dream in which he saw Imam Ahmed Ibn Idris. After the Hajj was over he went to Yemen and it was there that he met Imam Ahmed Ibn Idris. He took the way from Imam Ahmed on the second day after they met, he remained by his master's side and it is said that Imam Ahmed Ibn Idris may God sanctify his spirit passed away with his head resting on Sidi Ibrahim al-Rashid's lap. Sidi Ibrahim al-Rashid spent the remainder of his life travelling between the Hijaz, Jerusalem, Libya, Upper Egypt, and northern Sudan. He passed away in 1874 and was buried in the al-Mala quarter of Mecca.

Imam Ahmed Ibn Idris

The axis of the circle of sanctity, the knower of God, the master known to some of the followers of his way as al-Sayed al-Shifa', most sources cite he was born in the town of Maysur, the dates given for his birth are 21 Rajab 1163/18 March 1750 and 21 Rajab 1173/16 June 1760. A scion of the house of Prophecy his lineage is as follows:

Ahmed son of Idris son of Mohammad son of 'Ali son of Ahmed son of Mohammad son of 'Abdullah son of Ibrahim son of Omar son of Ahmed son of 'Abdul Jabbar son of Mohammad son of Yamlah son of Mashish son of Abu Bakr son of 'Ali son of Hurma son of 'Isa son of Ahmed Mizwar son of 'Ali Haydra son of Mohammad son of Idris II (Founder of the City of Fez, said to be the only city founded by a descendent of the Prophet Mohammad) son of Idris I (Founder of the Idrisi dynasty in Morocco) son of Abdullah al-Kamil (one of the Imams of the Prophetic house in his time) son of Hassan al-Muthana (Great-grandson of the Prophet ﷺ) son of Hassan (the Grandson of the Prophet ﷺ, and fifth rightly guided caliph of Islam) son of 'Ali (Cousin to the Prophet ﷺ, his son in-law, and fourth rightly guided Caliph of Islam) and Fatimah the daughter of the Prophet of God Mohammad son of Abdullah may God bless him and his family and give them peace unending.

Imam Ahmed Ibn Idris first studied under two of his brothers, firstly Mohammad Ibn Idris and after the former's death with Abdullah Ibn Idris, and in about his twentieth year he moved to Fez to study in and around the great

University-Mosque of the Qarawiyin in Fez. He remained in and around Fez for thirty years, studying and later teaching. Among his teachers in Fez were:

1. The great Imam the transmitter of Hadith in Maghrib in his time, the man the Egyptian historian al-Jabarti called the 'Crescent of the Maghreb', Imam Mohammad Ibn Talib al-Tawudi Ibn Suda al-Merī. Imam Ibn Suda was one of the most influential scholars of his day in Morocco, among his teachers he counts the great Imam Ahmed Ibn Mubarak al-Lamati al-Sijilmasi (who along with being a great scholar was also a disciple of Sidi Abdul Aziz al-Dabbagh, and the actual compiler of Sidi Abdul Aziz al-Dabbagh's teachings in the famous book *al-Ibriz fi Kalam al-Sheikh Abdul Aziz*). Imam Ibn Suda mentions in an Ijaza he gave to the scholars of al-Azhar when he passed through Cairo on his way to Hajj, that he not only studied with Imam Ahmed Ibn Mubarak al-Lamati al-Sijilmasi, but that he also buried him in a grave adjoining that of Sidi Abdul Aziz al-Dabbagh. Imam Ibn Suda also studied with the great lexicographer and Hadith specialist, the famous Imam Mohammad Murtada al-Zabidi whom he met while Ibn Suda was in Cairo, Imam Zabidi was one of the great scholars of Islam and has amongst his many great works a commentary on Imam Ghazali's 'Revival of the Religious Sciences', Imam Zabidi counts among his teachers both the famous Shah Wali Allah of Delhi, and realized master Habib Mustapha bin 'Abd al-Rahman al-'Aidroos al-Ba'Alawi. During his time in Cairo Imam Ibn Suda also taught the Muwatta of Imam Malik at the great mosque-university of al-Azhar. During his time in Medina, Imam Ibn Suda studied with Sheikh al-Samman the eponymous founder of the Sammanyia branch of the Khalwatiyya. Imam Ibn Suda was also a Master of the Nasiri branch of the Shadhilli Way. His Ijaza in the Nasiri Branch of the Shadhilli Way came from Sheikh Yusuf al-Nasiri who took the way from his uncle Sheikh Ahmed ibn Mohammad al-Nasiri who took the way from his father the Qutb Mohammad ibn Mohammad al-Nasiri al-Dur'i. Sheikh Yusuf al-Nasiri wrote the following Ijaza to Imam Ibn Suda:
"Know my brother and son in the way of God, that people have asked us to give them one who will, invest them with the litanies of the Nasiri Shadhilli in those parts (meaning Fez) because of the distance (meaning between Fez and the Naisri Zawiyah in the Valley of Dir'a in the south of Morocco), and for fear they would be cut off from the path, people have been emphatic in their request. I turned to God for direction, and saw that I should give the permission to our master (Imam Ibn Suda) because he is the most worthy of people for the task and the person able to give it its dues, and be able to be vigilant of both the Creator and His creatures, I have given him permission to invest in the Way those who come to you from amongst the men, and those seeking fellowship on the Way among the women folk, dated the month of Shawal 1194³.

³ Al-Ruw'ia al-Sufiah 'Ind al-Tayyeb bin Kiran, printed by: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, Beirut.

Imam Ibn Suda also benefitted from the company of the Knower of God and descendant of Imam Hussein, Sheikh Ahmed Ibn Mohammad al-Saqili al-Fasi who had himself taken the Khalwati Way from the Sheikh of the University-Mosque of al-Azhar Imam Mohammad al-Hifnawi may God sanctify his secret.

Among those who authorized Imam Ibn Suda are Sheikh Mohammad bin 'Abd al-Salaam Bennani who took from Imam Ahmad bin Naser al-Dir'I (whose Nasiri chain was already mentioned above) who took from Imam Abu Salim al-'Aiashi (author of the famous travelogue *al-Rihla al-'Aishiah* a.k.a. *Ma' al-Mua'idh*)⁴. Imam al-'Aiashi cites in his famous travelogue (which he stated that he wrote not just a travelogue but also as a catalogue of learning) some of the teachers he took authorizations from the including Sheikh 'Isa bin Mohammad al-Tha'alibi al-Maliki (who took the Naqshbandi path from Sheikh Mohammad Ma'sum who took the way from his father Imam Ahmad Sirhindi whose chains of transmission are well known), as well as Imam Hassan bin 'Ali al-'Ujaimi who wrote an epistle on Forty Sufi Chains of transmission, detailing their methodology and how the chains of transmission reached him and authorized Imam al-'Aishi stating after the introduction of his authorization:

"I have authorized you and all those you know to be worthy among your children and loved ones to transmit it (meaning the epistle and all the Sufi paths it contains) and to invest with the mantle of initiation, to give the formulas or remembrance, to extend the hand for the repentance of the repentant, to take a covenant and pledge from them, and to open up circles of remembrance and affiliation to the people of God, in the same way I took this, particularly from our Sheikh, master, and source of blessing, our Imam the singular Imam Safi al-Din Ahmad ibn Mohammad al-Qushashi may God sanctify his secret and give benefit through him, and may God be praised you took directly from him and his successor Mulla Ibrahim⁵..."⁶

In short Imam Ibn Suda took knowledge from a great many masters of his age, both in the Maghreb and in the East, and also benefitted from the company of the Friends of God whom he met in his lifetime. He was considered an authority in the various sciences. Imam Mohammad Ibn Jaffar al-Kattani al-Hassani al-Idrisi (the great transmitter of prophetic traditions, the scholar, historian & biographer and friend of God) described him in the following words:

"He was famous in Fez and throughout Morocco, where he had full prominence amongst kings as well as those under them from amongst

⁴ The Chain of transmission from Imam Ahmad ibn Idris to Imam al-'Aiashi is cited by Sheikh Falih al-Dhahiri al-Hijazi in his work entitled '*Husn al-Wafa li 'Ikhwan al-Safa*'.

⁵ Mulla Ibrahim al-Qurani al-Shahrzuri al-Shafi'i, one of the great scholars/saints of who lived in the Hijaz and passed away 1025 A.H. he authored a number of books including his catalogue of learning entitled '*al-Umam li 'Iqad al-Himam*'.

⁶ Excerpt taken from Vol. II p. 296 *al-Rihla al-'Aishiah*, printed by: Dar al-Swaidi, Abu Dhabi, UAE.

the elite and the common people, and he was their point of reference in all their affairs.

He was intense in his worship, of good character, a lover of the family of the Prophet ﷺ, he had empathy and concern for others, was tender hearted, cried often, deeply reflective, known for his many great stances, his praiseworthy blessings, and his many unveilings, he lived for about 84 years, and enjoyed the full use of his faculties of hearing and sight, along with good physical health throughout his years.”

He passed away after the afternoon prayer on Thursday 19th of Dhul-Hijjah 1209 A.H. his funeral prayer was led by his son Ahmed after the Friday prayer and he was buried in his Sufi Lodge which is now a mosque in Fez, may God sanctify his secret, Amen. Imam Ahmed ibn Idris studied the various sciences with this Imam and the six canonical books of Prophetic traditions, this Imam being among his chains of transmission back to Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani and Jalal-Uddin Suyuti.

2. Imam Mohammad al-Tayyib ibn Kiran (born 1172-1258) one of the great scholars of Fez and a scholar who attained mastery in the legal sciences both in legal principles and jurisprudence, he was considered an authority in each of the sacred sciences. He defined Sufism thus: "The science of Sufism is the science which investigates the behavior (Arabic: Adab) befitting the servant in the presence of the Lord of lords", he also stated in his refutation of those who questioned the miracles of deceased saints: "the miraculous gifts of God's saints do not stop after their death, nay they may even increase, as is well known among many of them. The deprived person is the one, who denies their miraculous gifts and the permissibility of visiting them". He goes onto state: "the miracles of saints are from the miracles of the Prophets, for the miracles of the saints of this community are derived from the miracles of the Prophet Mohammad may blessings and peace be upon him, and whoever denies them (the miracles of saints) has denied the miracles of the Prophets".

Imam Ibn Idris also studied with other famous scholars in Fez, and was occupied with the acquisition of knowledge even when his teachers permitted him to start teaching in his own right. Among the people who would attend Imam Ahmed Ibn Idris's public lectures was the man who would be his future spiritual mentor the blessed friend of God, the Knower of God our master:

3. Imam Abu al-Mawahib Abdul-Wahhab al-Tazi
(a descendant of the Prophet ﷺ through the lineage of his grandson Imam Hassan) Sheikh Abdul-Wahhab al-Tazi was over a hundred years old at the time. The way Imam Ahmed Ibn Idris was introduced to Sheikh Abdul-Wahhab was through a Mauritanian Scholar who often

⁷ Excerpt taken from 'Salwat al-Anfas wa Muhadathati al-Akias beman Uqbirah min al-'Ulama' wal-Sulaha' bi Fas' by Imam Mohammad Ibn Jaffar al-Kattani vol: 1, 40th Biography.

visited Fez, the great Mauritanian master Mohammed al-Mjaidari, Ahmed Ibn Idris would study under Mjaidari during his visits. On one occasion when Mjaidari was preparing to go back home to Mauritania (known at the time as Chinquit after one of its famous cities of learning) Ahmed Ibn Idris asked if he could accompany him to which Mjaidari replied let me ask my Sheikh for his permission, the reply came as a surprise to Ahmed Ibn Idris as Mjaidari was a great scholar in his own right as well as an accomplished master on the Sufi Way. Mjaidari came back and said “my Sheikh did not give me permission to do that and says bring him to me and I will gather him with the Messenger of God ﷺ” this made Ahmed Ibn Idris even more surprised. So Sidi Ahmed Ibn Idris went with his teacher Mjaidari to see Sheikh Abdul-Wahhab al-Tazi and Sidi Ahmed was initiated into the Way by Sheikh Abdul-Wahhab al-Tazi and dedicated himself totally to his mentor, one day al-Tazi said to Ibn Idris “I think your Sheikh Mjaidari has passed on to the mercy of God”. Ibn Idris asked “how did you come to know that Sidi?” al-Tazi replied “the Sheikh of spiritual training has times allocated and in which he turns his spiritual attention towards the spirits of his disciples, as long as they are alive he will not find them in one state, sometimes he will see them more luminous and at other times dimmed according to their wayfaring and obedience, and at times closer to God at others more distant. For a few days now I find him (Mjaidari) in the same state I left him in, and in the same place” (Mjaidari is the same teacher who gave Ibn Idris the ‘Litany of the Sword’ *Hizb al-Sayf*), when some caravans arrived from Chinquit they brought news of Mjaidari’s passing away and it confirmed what Tazi had said. On one occasion al-Tazi and Ibn Idris went to visit the resting place of ‘Abdul-‘Aziz al-Dabbagh (whose teachings and saintly miracles are mentioned in the book known as *al-Ibriz*⁸) al-Tazi said to Ibn Idris “this is my Sheikh and father through wet-nursing⁹ when they reached the place where al-Dabbagh was buried, al-Tazi recited some poetry on his love for his master among the lines he recited were the words:

*My heart is forbidden the love of anyone else
Just like Moses was once forbidden any wet-nurse.*

Imam Tazi’s master our master Al-Dabbagh was a descendant of the Messenger of God ﷺ may God bless him and his family and give them peace unending, he had many saintly miracles and openings, and passed away before he had reached his forties may God sanctify his secret, one of the things he used to tell his companions was “I do not demand that you deal with me within the protocols usually demanded between

⁸ By the aforementioned Imam Ahmed Ibn Mubarak al-Lamati al-Sijilmasi (who along with being a great scholar was also a disciple of Sidi Abdul Aziz al-Dabbagh, and the compiler of Sidi Abdul Aziz al-Dabbagh’s teachings in the famous book *al-Ibriz fi Kalam al-Sheikh Abdul Aziz*

⁹ Because Abdul-Wahhab al-Tazi was wet-nursed by al-Dabbagh’s wife.

master & disciple, for you would not be able to fulfill those, but rather deal with me as a brother and confide in me". Al-Dabbagh may God sanctify his noble secret was given a litany by our master al-Khidhr and the litany was: "O God O Lord of Mohammed son of Abdullah ﷺ unite between me and Mohammed son of Abdullah ﷺ in this world and the next" al-Dabbagh recited this litany 5,000 times a day from the day he received it until he received his openings five years later, his state was such that he would be asked questions and say I will give you an answer once I have asked the Messenger of God ﷺ and some of his sayings and teachings May God sanctify his lofty secret are to be found in the aforementioned *al-lbriz*¹⁰.

As for meeting the Prophet ﷺ in their waking state and taking knowledge from him ﷺ, al-Dabbagh, al-Tazi and Ibn Idris all attained this blessing, to the point that:

*"at the end none of them referred or turned to anyone but him ﷺ, those affiliated to the Mohammedi Way have this as their special hallmark and hence this path is designated with this name even though all the paths go back to him ﷺ, Abu al-Baq'a' al-Makki"¹¹ may God have mercy on him said: the foundation of this way is inward immersion of the wayfarer in witnessing the being of the Messenger ﷺ while the outward is adorned with following him in words and deeds, and the tongue is occupied with sending salutations on him and occupied with that most of the time in seclusion and in the crowd until his heart is overcome and his secret is permeated with veneration of him ﷺ to the point the he (the wayfarer) is moved when he hears mention of his (the Prophet's) name ﷺ and his heart is mostly overcome with the vision of him ﷺ and his ﷺ image is always before him (the wayfarer) so God will honour him (the wayfarer) with His bounty outwardly and inwardly so dream visions of him ﷺ most of the time in the wayfarer's sleep, then in spiritual events which occur at the point between sleep and wakefulness and then in the waking state and this cannot be comprehended except by direct experience"*¹².

Sayyid al-Dabbagh's outward chain of initiation goes through 'Omar bin Mohammad al-Hawari from al-'Arabi al-Fashtali from Imam Mohammad al-Nasiri al-Dir'i whose chain back to Imam Shadhili is famous and documented in books on the subject may God sanctify all their secrets.

¹⁰ The book has been translated as: 'Pure Gold from the Words of Sayyidi abd al-Aziz al-Dabbagh, printed by: Brill, Leiden & Boston, 2007.

¹¹ Known as Abu al-Baq'a' al-Makki his full name is Abu al-Asrar Hassan Ibn 'Ali al-'Ujaimi, one of the great transmitters of Prophetic Tradition, often found in the chains of transmission of those who came in the generations after him and one of the great Sufi masters, he lived in the Hijaz may God sanctify his secret.

¹² *Al-Manhal al-Rawi al-Ra'iq fi Asanid al-'Ulum wa al-Tara'iq* by Imam Mohammed Ibn Ali al-Sanussi.

Imam al-Tazi also took the way from the already mentioned Sheikh Ahmed Ibn Mohammad al-Saqili of Fez who had taken the Khalwati Way from the Sheikh of the University-Mosque of al-Azhar Imam Mohammad al-Hifnawi, al-Tazi also took the Khalwati Way directly from Imam Mohammad al-Hifnawi, as well as Hifnawi's successors Sheikh al-Samman and Sheikh Mahmoud al-Kurdi may God sanctify their blessed secrets.

Imam al-Tazi also had another line of transmission in the Shadhilli line Mohammad ibn abi Ziyan al-Qundosi who took the way from Mubarak būn 'Adni who took the way from Imam Mohammad al-Nasiri al-Dūr'i may God sanctify their blessed secret.

Imam al-Tazi also had another chain of transmission from the Sheikh Mohammad bin 'Abd al-Ghafoor al-Sindi from his teacher Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Mufti from his teacher Imam Hassan ibn 'Ali al-'Ujaūmi who wrote the previously mentioned epistle on Forty Sufi Chains of transmission, these include the Chisti, Qadiri, Saherwardi, Naqshbandi, Shadhilli, Ahmadi (back to the famous saint Ahmad al-Badawi of Egypt and not the Ahmadi sect of the sub-continent) Shattari, Kubrawi chains and many others which total up to forty chains of transmission, may God sanctify their lofty secrets.

After Imam al-Tazi passed away may God perfume his blessed resting place (in Fez) Imam Ahmad began looking for another master because of the benefit he found therein (even though he was already a person of great unveilings by the time his master passed away), his search took him to:

4. Sheikh Abu Qasim al-Wazir al-Ghassani of Fez, this master was a man of lofty spiritual states and once said: "I see the created universe from the Empyrean to the earth (*ara' al-kawn min 'arshihi ila farshihi ka-jinah ba 'udha*) as the wing of a gnat". Sheikh Abu Qasim al-Wazir al-Ghassani took the way from the great Knower of God Sheikh 'Ali al-Jamal of Fez (also the Sheikh of Imam Darqawi, the chain of transmission from Sheikh 'Ali al-Jamal upwards being the same as that of the Darqawi line), may God sanctify their lofty secrets.

Imam Ahmad ibn Idris carried on going from Sheikh to Sheikh as each Sheikh passed away because of the immense blessing of service to the Sheikhs, and he continued in his manner until he received an inspiration telling him there is no human master left for you to take from you master is the Quran, at this point Imam Ibn Idris immersed himself totally in the Quran and its contemplation, until God gave him the immense openings he had in the Quran and the traditions of the Messenger of God ﷺ his students collected some of his commentaries on verses of the Quran and they were printed in a book edited by the late Sheikh Saleh al-Ja'fari (known for his Friday lessons in Azhar), among the saintly miracles of Imam Ibn Idris is that he would look at his palm when talking about the Quran and the other side of his hand when commenting

on Prophetic traditions as if he was reading from his hand, towards the end of his life he stopped even looking at his hands before commenting on passages of the Quran our Prophetic traditions, but would just start speaking in a manner that left his listeners in awe. At about the age of fifty Imam Ibn Idris left his native Morocco never to return, he made his journey eastwards passing through north Africa by land stopping at different places on route to teach and benefit the servants of God and then crossing by sea from the city of Benghazi (in present day Libya) to Alexandria (in present day Egypt), he travelled between lower and upper Egypt staying at various places in order to benefit people before crossing over to the Arabian peninsula where he spent many years in the Hijaz spending time in the blessed cities of Mecca, Medina and Ta'if, there he gathered many great men of learning around him who would later spread his teachings, he went back to Egypt spending a number of years there before moving back to Mecca. He finally moved to Yemen spending time in some of its ancient cities such as the scholarly city of Zabid, before settling in the north of Yemen and passing away in a town there known as Sabya on 22nd Rajab 1253 AH, may God sanctify his lofty secret. His lofty states and the knowledge that sprang from him and was carried in his blessed breast was vast and rarefied, the saintly miracles which he had were too many to mentioned but sufficient is the fact he took his litanies from al-Khidhr by the permission of the Prophet ﷺ and then directly from the Messenger of God ﷺ¹³. May God benefit us through him, and perfume his blessed resting place Amin.

¹³ This is documented in the writings of his student including Imam Sanussi and in the compilation of Formulas of Salutations known as 'Afdhal al-Salwat 'ala' Sayed al-Sadat' Imam Yusuf al-Nabahani, may God sanctify their secrets.