



(right to left: *Shaykh* Waṣfī and *Shaykh* Muḥammad al-Rashīd)

### ***Shaykh* Waṣfī al-Masaddi (1335-1431=1917-2010) Syria**

(Adapted and translated by Shoayb Ahmed from *al-'Arf al-Wardī* by *Shaykh* Muḥammad Abū Bakr Bā Dhīb with additional information from the article by *Shaykh* Majd Makki)

Waṣfī ibn Aḥmad ibn Yusuf ibn Ahmad ibn ‘Abd al-Jalil was a devout scholar, a *faqih* and an excellent orator and a spiritual guide.

He was born in the city of Homs in Syria in 1917 (1335). His father was a scholar, while his mother was from the al-Jundi family.

His father, *Shaykh* Ahmad was closely connected to *Shaykh* Ahmad al-Tuzaqli al-Turkumani al-Naqshbandi who in turn was closely connected to *Shaykh* Khalid al-Naqshbandi.

He learnt the basic essentials of reading and writing and mathematics from his father. His father was an Imam and a teacher at one of the mosques in the city and he was the young Wasfī’s first Quran teacher.

After his elementary studies he enrolled at the al-Madrasa al-Waqfiyya that was under the supervision of *Shaykh* Muhammad Zahid al-Atasi (d.1366=1947). He studied at this institution for six years during which he studied Usul-Fiqh of the Hanafi *madhhab*, *Nur al-Idab* and the text of *Mukhtasar al-Quduri* and *al-Kamil* by al-Mubarrid all under *Shaykh* Zahid. *Shaykh* Wasfī resembled his teacher in his recitation of the Quran and in his gait. Some of his other teachers were:

- *Shaykh* Muhammad Yasin Basmar with whom he studied Imam Nawawi’s collection of forty Hadith, Arabic Grammar, Logic and other subjects.
- His son, *Shaykh* Abu al-Sa’ud Basmar with whom he studied Arabic Grammar, Logic and *Mukhtasar Ibn Abi Jamra* in Hadith.
- *Shaykh* Anis al-Kalalib
- *Shaykh* Muhammad ‘Ali ‘Uyun al-Sud
- *Shaykh* Ahmad ibn ‘Umar Safi (1276-1367=1860-1948) with whom he read *Tafsir al-Baydawi*

- *Shaykh* Salim Safi
- *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Qadi al-Khoja (1373=1953) who was an excellent Hanafi *faqih*. *Shaykh* Wasfi studied *Hashiya Ibn ‘Abidin* and *Sharh al-Qastallani ‘ala Sahih al-Bukhari*. *Shaykh* Wasfi and *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ‘Uyun al-Sud were fortunate to have had special lessons with the *Shaykh* in the laws of inheritance and they studied *al-Sirajiyya*.
- *Shaykh* Tawfiq al-Atasi (1283-1385=1866-1965) with whom he studied *Hashiya Ibn ‘Abidin*
- *Shaykh* Najm al-Din al-Atasi (1278-1352=1859-1933) with whom he studied *Multaqa al-Abhur*
- *Shaykh* Taqi al-Din al-Atasi (1285-1360=1868-1941). *Shaykh* Wasfi and *Shaykh* Muhammad Tayyib attended lessons in *Hashiya Ibn ‘Abidin* with him.
- *Shaykh* Abu al-Saud al-Atasi (1303-1364)
- *Shaykh* Ibrahim al-Atasi (1268-1359)
- *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Khalid al-Ansari al-Himsi (1287-1364=1870-1945).
- *Shaykh* Abu al-Nasr Khalaf al-Himsi (1292-1368=1875-1948). He was a scholar and a spiritual guide who had benefited from many illustrious scholars including *Shaykh* Badr al-Din al-Hasani, *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Jafar al-Kettani and his father *Shaykh* Salim Khalaf al-Himsi. His father, *Shaykh* Salim had taken the Naqshbandi Sufi way from *Shaykh* Ahmad al-Tuzaqli. *Shaykh* Wasfi also took the Naqshbandi way from him.
- *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Ghaffar ‘Uyun al-Sud who was a close friend of *Shaykh* Wasfi’s father.

He met some ‘*ulama* from Damascus but did not receive *Ijaz’a* from them. They are:

- *Shaykh* Muhammad Sa’id al-Burhani
- *Shaykh* Muhammad al-Hashimi
- *Shaykh* Abu al-Khayr al-Maydani
- *Shaykh* Salih al-Tunusi

He graduated in 1936 and got married in the same year. He remained closely connected to the Mufti of Homs, *Shaykh* Tahir al-Atasi (1276-1359=1859-1940) under whom he studied *Jamu’ al-Jawami*, *al-Tawdih wa al-Talwih*, *al-Hikam al-‘Ata’iyya* and was even given the responsibility of transcribing the *Shaykh*’s fatwa’s.

A number of other ‘*ulama* granted him *Ijaz’a*. They include:

\* *Shaykh* Muhammad al-‘Arabi al-Tubbani (1315-1386=1897-1966) whom he met during his Hajj in 1950. On this journey he also met *Shaykh* ‘Alawi al-Maliki, *Shaykh* Muhammad Nur Sayf and *Shaykh* Amin al-Kutbi.

\* *Shaykh* Muhammad Makki al-Kettani (1312-1393=1894-1973). This erudite scholar was the son of an illustrious scholar in addition to having studied under many luminaries. He was fond of *Shaykh* Wasfi and even suggested that the *Shaykh* be appointed as the guide and advisor for all Islamic activities. When *Shaykh* Makki passed away, *Shaykh* Wasfi was allowed to see the deceased before his body was taken from the home. On seeing him *Shaykh* Wasfi said that never in his life had he seen a deceased person like *Shaykh* Makki with beauty and *nur* clearly visible.

\* *Shaykh* Muhammad Yusuf al-Binnuri (1326-1397=1908-1977) who studied under *Shaykh* Anwar Shah al-Kashmiri, *Shaykh* Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani and others. Many prominent scholars narrate from him. *Shaykh* Wasfi met him during the Hajj of 1950 and he granted *ijaz’a* to both *Shaykh* Wasfi and to *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ‘Uyun al-Sud.

\* *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Muhsin al-Ustuwani (1275-1383=1859-1963). He studied under some illustrious scholars who included; his father, *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Qadit al-Ustuwani, *Shaykh* Salim al-Attar, *Shaykh* Sa’id al-Ustuwani and *Shaykh* Mahmud Nasib al-Hamzawi.

\* *Shaykh* Nu’aym al-Nu’aymi al-Jaza’iri (1327-1393=1909-1973) who narrated from *Shaykh* Muhammad Tahir ibn ‘Ashur, *Shaykh* Salim Bo Hajib and *Shaykh* Mahmud ibn al-Khoja. This scholar came from Algeria to Homs with the intention of studying the modes of recitation under *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ‘Uyun al-Sud

\* *Shaykh* ‘Alawi al-Maliki (1329-1391=1910-1971) whose chains of transmission were compiled in a book by his son, *Shaykh* Muhammad ‘Alawi al-Maliki.

After his father’s demise in 1935 he assumed the responsibility of leading the Salat and teaching at the al-Qasimi Mosque. He had trained and acquired the skill as a public speaker during his father’s lifetime. During his father’s last illness he fulfilled his father’s duties of leading the Salat, delivering the lectures and conducting lessons. He read *Tafsir al-Khaz’in* with his father in the very mosque. He remained the public speaker (*kehatib*) at the mosque until 1980 when he moved to Saudi Arabia.

He conducted a lesson in the Qasimi Mosque after Maghrib that was attended by students of sacred knowledge and another after ‘Asr for the public. Every Tuesday he had a lesson at his home and every Friday after ‘Asr in the main mosque. He conducted a lesson daily after Zhuhr at the Dalati Mosque.

During these lessons he taught *Tafsir al-Khaz’in*, *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, *Maraq’i al-Falah*, *Hashiya al-Tahtawi*, *Shar’at al-Islami*, *al-Anwar al-Muhammadiyah* an abridged form of *al-Mawahib al-Laduniyya* by *Shaykh* Yusuf al-Nabhani. His practice was to complete the entire book and then continue with another. There were times when he may have repeated a book. He remained dedicated towards calling people to Allah. One of his close friends and aides in the field of Da’wa was *Shaykh* Mustafa al-Sibai’.

*Shaykh* Wasfi’s approach was one that relied on solid proof without any bias towards any religious group or faction. He adopted the way of his *Shaykh*, *Shaykh* Abu al-Nasr Khalaf al-Himsi.

*Shaykh* Wasfi was appointed as a teacher at the Sharia Institute that was established in 1946 and a year later he assumed administrative duties at the same place. He withdrew from teaching for about five years and thereafter he resumed where he continued until 1982.

The reason for his withdrawal is that the Sharia Institute was known to have had very high academic standards and much of this was attributed to the fact that an excellent teacher like *Shaykh* Wasfi taught the students in the former years, thus providing them with a firm foundation. However when he was assigned some administrative duties he taught the senior classes and with the result the former classes were neglected. He therefore felt that his presence at the institution was of no benefit and resigned he returned to his teaching after persistence from his friend, *Shaykh* Muhammad al-Tayyib. In total he served the institution for thirty-three years.

In 1952 he was appointed as the official teacher of the region of Homs. This was during the period of the Mufti, *Shaykh* Tawfiq al-Atasi. He held this position until 1980.

He played a very significant role in preserving and renovating the mosques of Homs especially the Mosque of Khalid ibn al-Walid and the attached institution. He also contributed to the preservation of al-Mu’addas Mosque in 1977 that the Christians had tried to convert into a church. In 1978 he worked towards renovating the al-Qasimi Mosque.

In 1980 he migrated to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia where he taught Quran at the King ‘Abd al-Aziz University for about six years during which he also conducted some lessons in Sira. It is interesting to note that when he had arrived in Jeddah, the university required his certificates. However *Shaykh* Wasfi had studied under the *shuyukh* and thus requested that the Sharia Institute in Homs issue him with a letter of recommendation acknowledging that he had served the institution for many years as a teacher. This letter was issued and on this basis he was appointed as a teacher at the university in Jeddah. He delivered the Friday sermon in the Abu Dawud Mosque in Jeddah for about twenty-five years. He had a weekly lesson in Fiqh, Hadith and Tafsir for people from Homs who were residing in Jeddah and another for Damascenes and a public lessons after ‘Asr during Ramadan. Many sort to meet him and even to pose their questions to him. *Shaykh* Salman Abu Ghudda and *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Rahman Hajjar and others were among the many who frequented his lessons.

After many years he finally returned to Homs where he was warmly received by the ‘*ulama* and the public. He continued to move between Jeddah and Homs until he passed away in Homs on the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup> August 2010 (15<sup>th</sup> Ramadan 1431). The Janaza Salat was performed at the Khalid ibn Walid Mosque and he was buried in the Kathib Graveyard.

*Shaykh* Wasfi was a handsome man of fair complexion who was distinct with his clothing. He was an effective lecturer, a successful teacher and a person of captivating personality. His gatherings were filled with immense benefit. He was blessed with insight and knowledge from Allah.

His face was bright and radiant and some his students mentioned that if a person looked at him then he was reminded of Allah. In addition if a person wished to free himself from the anxieties of life, then merely sitting in the Shaykh’s company will be a source of comfort and peace. He was a person whom the young and the old, the layman and the scholar was attracted to on seeing or meeting him for the first time. He was extremely humble before the people and before his Creator. He was eager to serve people and in doing so was an example of kindness and generosity. He possessed immense love for Allah and His beloved Prophet Muhammad.

{The translator met the *Shaykh* in 2007 and is included in the *ijaza* from him along with *Shaykh* Wael al-Hanbali, *Shaykh* Salman Abu Ghudda, *Shaykh* Akram Nadwi, *Shaykh* Muhammad Abu Bakr Ba Dhib and others}

Below is an example of his handwriting from an *ijaza* to some students.

كتبة خادم العلماء  
صفي أحمد الحدي  
١٤٣٠ هـ  
١١ مايو ٢٠٠٩