FOUR MAKERS OF CAPE MUSLIM HISTORY

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أَعُوْذُ بِاللهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيْمِ

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ وَ الصَّلاَةُ وَ السَّلاَمُ عَلٰى أَشْرَفِ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَ عَلٰى

آلِهِ وَ أَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِيْنَ

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Foreword

The Muslim community at the Cape has origins which lie deep in colonialism and its offshoot, the trafficking in human beings. Because colonialism impacted mainly on the Afro-Asian continents, which became a major source of slavery, most of the members of this community can trace their family origins to one or other country on these continents. Resistance to colonialism, especially in Asia, produced a large number of political figures who formed part of this traffic when they were exiled to different colonial possessions of the major European powers. And so the Cape became the home of a steady stream of slaves and political exiles from Asian and African territories.

It is interesting to note that most of the people who came here during the 17th to 19th centuries came from areas where Islam had taken root prior to the sweep of colonialism into the Afro-Asian world. A large percentage of the slaves and political exiles, and others, who came to the Cape at the time were therefore Muslims, torn from their community and social roots and shipped in boats called slavers to the Cape. The trauma of this is beyond description, and it represents pages of untold human suffering in Muslim community history at the Cape. It is not an over exaggeration to state that part of Cape Muslim history lies in indescribable human ordeal and suffering, as is the case of so many other communities all over the world. Thus, there lies deep in the historical memory of these Muslims a period in their lives of massive degradation and distress committed on them by a "colonial barbarism" that overwhelmed their lives in their countries of origin and at the Cape.

The only connection that these "migrants" eventually had with their roots in their places of origin was their religion. Of all else they were deprived, their dignity, social status, names, cultural activities and family links. At the Cape, they came into an environment dominated by a culture of Euro-Christian origins and in which there were no Islamic structures to help them in fostering their beliefs and practices. Just as many of them survived slavery, so their religion also survived despite attempts by those in power to eliminate this last link they had with their countries of origin. These people, despite what they were going through as slaves and exiles, must have had an incomparable attachment to their faith, otherwise the faith would not have survived the onslaughts against it and

against its bearers at the Cape. Either that, or there must also have been certain socio-religious activities and factors, which strengthened this faith or rather which encouraged the survival of Islam.

It is very difficult, if not quite impossible, to judge the level of anybody's belief system, even under the best of circumstances. It is, therefore, best to see whether at this early period in Cape history there were local factors that encouraged the survival of Islam as a religion. Perhaps the most important factor was the fact that the early immigrants brought with them the teachings, practices and discipline of Mainstream Islam as reflected in Islamic spiritual orders that flourished at the time in parts of Asia and Africa. Thus, quite early already, during the latter part of the 17th century, spiritual orders, such as the *Qadiri*, *Khalwati* and *Naqshbandi* Orders, were operating at the Cape under the guidance of political exiles such as *Tuans* Abdurahman and Mahmud and Shaykh Yusuf of Macassar. These orders became the major social vehicles through which Islam was strengthened and made to spread. Within these orders, the slaves were provided with the "freedom" of religious expression, the companionships that linked them together within the structures of these orders, and the teachings which strengthened their belief systems. And so these orders (those mentioned here and also others which came later, such as the *Alawi* and *Chisti* Orders) became the major means for the survival of Islam at a time when the community had very few support structures. Although there were no mosques, the community made use of rooms in private homes, called *langars* in which gatherings for prayers and other purposes were held.

Part of the social operation of the orders, was the fact that many of those personalities in leadership positions within these orders at the Cape were exceptionally pious people, and they have come down in our history as "Friends of Allah". The importance of this should not be underestimated. When intensely pious people speak, they bring their hearts into operation and not only their minds because their hearts are for Allah, and when they teach it is done only for His sake. They desire nothing in return from this world. They only ask for their Lord's satisfaction with them. This attitude infuses what they say and teach with a deep spirituality, not found in other persons. In this way, they must have inspired those slaves and others to keep their faith and to direct themselves to Allah Almighty despite their social positions and conditions. This is because they taught "from heart to heart".

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Pretentious intellectuality, so common with sections of the Muslim clergy and some Muslim intellectuals throughout the world, cannot move hearts. Only a heart filled with deep love and respect for Allah Almighty can do that. This is the main reason for the success of the "Friends of Allah" in preserving Islam at the Cape. They influenced and moved hearts.

In this work, I deal with four individuals from our community who made lasting impressions on our history during the 20th century. I do not know their stations by Allah Almighty. I only know that they made lasting impacts on the religious life of this community during that century, and that this impact lives on today. I also know that by their contributions, they walked in the footsteps of those who have come down in Cape Muslim history as "Friends of Allah". People still speak about the four of them with admiration and even with awe. Their contributions have lived on in the memories of this community. They are Mawlana Abdul Latif (d. 1916), Shaykh Muhammad Salih Hendricks (d. 1945), Shaykh Muhammad Hayr (d. 1952) and Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks (d. 1981).

Through this work, I hope that they will never be forgotten, and, like our righteous forefathers, future generations would see them as important carriers of the banner of Islam in the Muslim community at the Cape.

And Allah knows best.
Yusuf da Costa
September 2013

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*ONE ALWAYS SAYS *Alhamdu lillah* (all praise be to Allah) to express one's sincere gratitude to Allah Almighty for the variety of blessings He has granted one, enabling one to perform, amongst other matters, certain research and writing tasks. There is a deep sense of appreciation in me for this.

*I DEDICATE this work to my *shaykh,* Shaykh Muhammad Nazim al-Naqshbandi al-Haqqani of Cyprus, and all those other *shaykhs* who have made contributions to my intellectual and spiritual development, and who have played major roles in making me more conscious of my relationship to my Creator. This dedication is to express my gratitude to my Creator for their presence in my life, and the presence of my parents, wives, and other family members who have unselfishly granted me the space and time to walk the path I am on.

*TO ALL THOSE PEOPLE who allowed me to interview them, and to quote them, I say thank you very much for allowing me to intrude into your private space and time.

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Glossary

adab: refined behaviour

Adhan: the Call to Prayer

adhkar: is the plural of *dhikr*. Although the word *dhikr* is usually translated as "remembrance of Allah", it refers to the reciting of certain litanies, such as praises of Allah, and combinations of invocations as a form of "remembrance" of Allah.

Ahmadies: a group that differs with the rest of the Muslim world on the status and finality of the prophethood of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.)

Alhamdu lillahi rabbil alamin: all praise to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds

alim: a religious scholar (pl. *ulama*)

awrah: parts of one's body that are indecent to expose.

Ba Alawiyyah Tariqah: founded by Muhammad ibn Ali (1178-1255) of the *Ba Alawi* tribe in the southern part of Arabia.

Banaa: water, for drinking purposes especially by the sick, on which words or verses of the Qur'an have been recited.

barakah: blessings

Chistiyyah Order was founded by Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chisti (d. 1236) in India

Dam: an enlarged form of checkers

Days of Tashriq: the 11th, 12th and13th of Dhul al-Hijjah, the days of the drying of the meat, after the Day of Slaughtering on 10th of that month

deculturization: losing the elements of one's culture, such as language, dress, types of food and religious activities and replacing them with the elements of another culture.

deenyat: religious teachings

dhikr: celebrating the praises of Allah Almighty (pl. *adhkar*)

du'a: an invocation

fatwa: a religious decision

fiqh: the rules governing forms of worship and other forms of Muslim behaviour.

Free Blacks: former slaves who had bought their freedom and their descendants, and Muslims who were not slaves who had come to settle at the Cape from different parts of Asia and Africa.

hadith (pl. *ahadith)*: Prophetic tradition (s)

hajah: a special combination of prayers made on particular occasions especially on the anniversary of death.

Hanafi (Hanafiyyah) Madh-hab: the school of thought of Imam Abu Hanifa (699-767). He was called Imam al-A'zam "The Greatest Imam", Muhammad Nu'man bin Thabit bin Zuta bin Maah, better known as Abu Ḥanifah, and was the founder of the *Sunni Hanafi* school of Islamic jurisprudence.

hifz: the memorization of the Qur'an

hijab: a woman's veil

Hijaz: a region in western Arabia on the Red Sea coast

ihram: putting oneself in a state of holiness for *haj* or *umrah.*

ijazah: permission

imam: prayer leader or a leading religious figure

jamaat-khanah: a large room in a private house used for public prayer purposes or a building used for such purposes.

jamarat: the three pillars at Mina representing *Shaytan*, and which are pelted during *Haj.*

jiekke: from the word *dhikr,* the recitation of litanies

Jumu'ah: the Friday congregational prayer

khilafah: is the office of *khalifah.* A *khalifah* is usually appointed by a *shaykh* of a Sufi order to take charge of a particular area and is given licence to perform certain tasks on behalf of the *shaykh* (Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders*, p. 174). This *khalifah* should not be confused with the *Khalifah* who is, the religio-political head of an Islamic state or with an Islamic teacher.

khutbah: a sermon in the mosque, for example, on a Friday.

koesiesters: koeksisters

La ilaha illah: there is no god other than Allah.

lallie-malas: coconut balls

langar: a large room in a house used exclusively for prayer purposes by members of the public.

liedjies: little songs

madrassah: a school, usually a religious one

mantra: the recitation verses of the Qur'an over a person and then blowing over him.

Mawlud al-Nabi: celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.)

mufti: one who passes religious decrees.

murid: a person under the guidance of a sufi *shaykh*, a spiritual master

Naqshbandi Sufi Order: was first called *Khwajagan;* owes its initial insights to Yusuf al-Hamadani (died 1140 A.D.) and Abd al-Khaliq al-Ghudjdawani (died 1179 A.D.) but was eventually associated with the name of Muhammad Baha ad-Din an-Naqshbandi (died 1389 A.D.)

madrassah: a school, especially a religious school

Malikiyyah School of Thought: the school of religious interpretation founded by Imam Malik. His full name was Malik ibn Anas ibn Malik ibn 'Amr al-Asbahi (715 - 796) is known as "Imam Malik," the "the Shaykh of Islam," the "Proof of the Community," and "Imam of the Abode of Emigration." He was one of the most highly respected scholars of jurisprudence in Sunni Islam. Imam Shafi, who was one of Malik's student for nine years and a scholarly giant in his own right, stated, "When scholars are mentioned, Malik is like the star among them."

oemmi: my mother

olap: a penny

Pharsee: the Persian language

placaat: an edict

platteland: the rural area beyond the city of Cape Town

qadi: a judge

Qadiri Sufi Order: is attributed to Sayyid Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (died 1166 A.D.); its foundations were laid in Baghdad

qiyam: standing, especially the standing that takes place at some point during the reciting of the *Barzanji* with *Mawlud al-Nabi.*

Rabi al-Awwal: one of the months in the Islamic calendar

Ratib al-Attas: a combination of litanies and prayers from the *Ba Alawiyyah* Order

Ratib al-Haddad: another combination of litanies and prayers from the *Ba Alawiyyah* Order

riddah: rejecting, or the turning away from, Islam.

Rifa'i Sufi Order: derived from Ahmad ibn ar-Rifa'i (died 1182 A.D.) who established the Order originally in southern Iraq.

salihin: the pious people

Seven Days: seven days after a death, special prayers are made for the deceased (this comes from the *Khalwatiyyah* Order and brought to the Cape by Shaykh Yusuf of Macassar)

Shafi (Shafi'iyyah) Madh-hab: the school of thought of Imam Shafi'i (767-820). He was active in juridical matters and his teaching eventually led to his school of jurisprudence (or Madh'hab) named after him. Hence, he is often called Imam al-Shafi'i. His full name was Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i.

Shari'ah: the Divine Law

Sifat: attributes, and in the text, it refers to the Attributes of Allah

silsilah: a chain

Subh: the dawn prayer

sufism: the perspective of Islam that stresses spiritual purification under the guidance of a *shaykh.*

Surah al-Ihlas: one of the chapters of the Qur'an

Tafsir al-Qur'an: commentary on the Qur'an

tajwid: the rules governing the correct pronunciation and recitation of the words of the Qur'an.

tariqah: this word means "road, way or path". It has acquired a specialized meaning in *tasawwuf*, and that is the system of *ibadat* (forms of religious service), based generally on the Qur'an and the Prophetic teachings, which were laid down for spiritual training in the various Muslim religious orders (called sufi orders). These orders came into existence after the 11th century. *Tariqah* also refers to the path one is guided along by one's *shaykh* to attain spiritual purification.

tahlil: the words *La ilaha illallah*

tasawwuf: the process of putting oneself through different forms of religious service under the guidance of a shaykh for spiritual purification (see *tariqah*)

tawhid: teachings on the Unity of Allah

thawb: a cloak

ustadh: a teacher or religious guide

Wahhabi School of Thought: founded by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792) in Saudi Arabia and is the official ideology of the Kingdom.

wird: a specific time of the day or night devoted to private worship or a section of the Qur'an or certain litanies recited on that occasion.

MAWLANA ABDUL LATIF (1859-1916) OF THE "COLLEGE":

RAISING THE *CHISTIYYAH* FLAG

Introduction

Athlone, one of the most densely populated suburbs of Cape Town, has within its borders the largest single complex of buildings and religious activities associated with the name of Islam in the Western Cape, and possibly in the country. The building complex, commonly referred to as "Habibiyyah", "Habibiyyah College" or "the College", consists, amongst other things, of a mosque, four educational institutions, an orphanage, a graveyard and a bookshop. Included in the complex, between the nursery school and the mosque, is a shrine that houses the grave of Mawlana Abdul-Latif, the major initial

inspiration behind the construction of the complex. Many of those who knew him called him "*Sayri*", a distortion of the Arabic *sayyid* or *sayyidah* (the feminine form), a term of respect mostly used for a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad **(ﷺ)**, a leader of people, or for a very pious person.

Origins and achievements of the family

Mawlana Abdul-Latif was born in the village of Ibrahimpatan in the district of Ratnagiri in Konkan, near Bombay, around 1859. His foreparents, on his father's side, who could trace their family tree back as far as Sayyiduna Abu Bakr as-Siddiq,[1] had migrated from Arabia to Persia, and then to India during the 16th century.[2] When they arrived in India, the country was under the control of the second Mughal ruler, Nasin al-Din Muhammad Humayun (d. 1556). He had ruled India from 1530-1540 and 1555-1556.[3] It appears that Emperor Humayun either knew Mawlana Abdul-Latif's foreparents or knew about them because when they arrived in India, he asked them to go to Konkan to work in the cause of Islam. He could request this since there were a number of religious scholars in the immigrant family. In compliance with this request, the family went to settle in Konkan.[4]

In Konkan, generation after generation of the family produced Islamic scholars and workers in the cause of Islam, and between these scholars a number of copies of the Qur'an and many religious works were written.[5] In addition, one of the grandfathers of Mawlana Abdul-Latif, Abdurahman, had at the outset been appointed as a *qadi*[6] for the whole of Konkan by Emperor Humayun.[7] It appears that this tradition of having *qadis* appointed from the family continued, at least, to well into the 18th century.[8]

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[1] Sayyiduna Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, d. 634 (r.a.), was the first *Khalifah* (religio-political head) of Islam after the death of the Prophet Muhammad **(ﷺ)**.

[2] A. Purkar, 22:06:95

[3] *Encyclopaedia Brittanica* vol. 5, p.201

[4] A. Purkar, 22:06:95

[5] Many of these Qur'ans and religious works are to be found in the family archives in Durban, Natal (A. Purkar, 22:06:95).

[6] It was from this title of *qadi* that later members of the family adopted the surname of *Kagee* which came to replace the original family name of *Al-Siddiq* (A. Purkar, 22:06:95).

[7] Purkar, 22:06:95; K. Kagee, *Hazrat Mawlana Abdul Latief*, unpublished mimeograph, undated.

[8] Kagee, ibid.

Mawlana Abdul-Latif's parents were Muhammad Yusuf, the son of Qadi Abdur-Rahman, and A'ishah. Mawlana Abdul-Latif had one brother (Kazi Hasan) and seven sisters (Zanab, Khatoon, Khurshid, Fatimah, Kulsum, Aminah, and Latifah).[9]

Early education and induction into the Chishtiyyah Order

As a young boy, Mawlana Abdul-Latif received his early Islamic education in Ratnagiri, and later completed further studies in Bombay. He studied Qur'anic recitation and other Islamic subjects under a scholar who was from Panipat which is in northern India, and who was staying temporarily in Bombay at the time. It is also quite possible that Mawlana Abdul-Latif had attended classes at the *madrassah* attached to the *Zakariyyah Mosque* in Bombay, where he later became principal and also *imam* of the Mosque.[10]

It appears that the introduction of the family to *sufism* only took place in the last quarter of the 19th century when Mawlana Abdul-Latif was in his late thirties or early forties. And this came about as a result of an invitation to visit Ratnagiri, which Mawlana Abdul-Latif's brother, Kazi Hasan, had extended to Khwaja Habib Ali Shah, a *Chishtiyyah shaykh* from Hyderabad, the Deccan in India. This visit resulted in Mawlana Abdul-Latif being inducted into the *Chishtiyyah Order* as a *murid*[11] of Khwaja Habib Ali Shah; perhaps the most eventful occurrence in his life because it would give him an understanding of Islam which would later change the whole direction of his life. As a result of a number of visits to Konkan by Khwaja Habib Ali Shah, almost the whole family of Mawlana Abdul-Latif was inducted into the *Chishtiyyah Order*.[12]

The *Chishtiyyah Order* originated in the town of Chist to the east of Harat in Afghanistan during the thirteenth century.[13] The Order traces its links back to the great divine, Al-Imam al-Hasan al-Basri (d. 728) of Basra in Iraq, and then to Sayyiduna Ali

[9] Purkar, 22:06:95
[10] Kagee, op. cit.
[11] A *murid* (an aspirant or novice) is one who attaches himself to a *shaykh* in a sufi order, and is trained by the *shaykh* during a period of probation in the spiritual exercises of the order. In certain orders the *shaykh* is also called a *murshid* or a *pir*. For the rest of the paper the word novice will be used in place of *murid.*
[12] Purkar, 08:07:95
[13] Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders*, p. 64

ibn Abi Talib (the fourth Khalifah in Islam).[14] The founder of the Order in India was Khwaja Mu'inud-Din al-Chishti al-Ajmiri (d. 1236) who had been a novice of the greatest modern *Chishtiyyah shaykh*, Khwaja Uthman Harwani.[15] The Order was introduced into the Deccan by Shaykh Nizamud-Din Awliya (d. 1325) from whom the *Nizamiyyah* branch of the *Chishtiyyah Order* was established. After his death, his novices continued his work in the Deccan. One of the best-known novices was Khwaja Bandah Nawaz (d. 1422).[16] Mawlana Abdul-Latif's induction into the *Chishtiyyah Order* had linked him into a chain of some of the most respected modern *sufi* masters whose names stretched as far back in Indian history as the thirteenth century.

Later when Mawlana Abdul-Latif was to become a *shaykh* in the Order, the following appellations would be added to his name: *Al-Chishti al-Nizami al-Hafizi al-Habibi al-Siddiqi*. *Al-Chishti* refers to the name of the Order (*Al-Chishtiyyah*), *al-Nizami* to the branch of the Order, *al-Hafizi* to a further branch traced back to Khwaja Hafiz Muhammad Ali, *al-Habibi* to the name of Mawlana Abdul-Latif's *shaykh* (Khwaja Habib Ali Shah) and al-*ASiddiqi* to his family link to Sayyidatuna Abu Bakr Siddiq (r.a.).

According to Jawoodeen:[17]

In the early 1890's, Hazrat MoulanaAbdul Latief married Khurshid who was the sister of Hanifah Bi the second wife of Hazrat Soofi Saheb. From this marriage Hazrat Moulana Abdul Latief had four children all of whom passed away in infancy. In 1898 Hazrat then married Jamal Bi in India and from the marriage Hazrat had two daughters, namely, Khairunissa and Khadija Bi.

Indian migration to South Africa

In October 1860 about four hundred Indians left Madras on board the Truto en route to Natal.[18] They represented the first batch of indentured labourers that had been recruited in India by the British Colonial Government in Natal to work on the sugar plantations in the colony. When sugar had first been produced in Natal, it was expected that the colony

[14] *Shijra*, undated
[15] Rizvi, The Chishtiyyah, p. 127; Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders*, p.64
[16] Rizvi. op. cit. pp.130-1
[17] Jawadeen, R. 2005. Hazrat Moulana Abdul Latief Qazi: a profile of selfless service to the Muslim community. *Habibia Soofie Masjied centenary magazine*, p. 17.
[18] Badsha Peer, the well-known Durban saint, was also on board this ship.

would achieve considerable economic development. Unfortunately, there was a decided lack of cheap labour for the large white-owned sugar plantations. When the labour shortage reached crisis proportions, the Natal Legislature passed legislation enabling labour to be imported from India.[19]

The labourers were allowed to bring their families with them, and once the period of indenture had been completed, they had the choice to return home or remain in Natal.[20] Despite opposition from the "whites", more Indians arrived in Durban, and not only indentured ones. Many came on their own expense, and those who had completed their period of indenture inevitably decided to remain in the country.[21]

The indentured labourers who were brought to South Africa from India by the British in the latter part of the nineteenth century included several hundred Muslims from both south and north India, primarily from Hyderabad and Malabar. The so-called "passenger" Indians who followed in their wake were mainly traders, the vast majority of whom were Muslims from the districts of Surat, Valsad and Kathiawar, though there were some from Madras and Calcutta.[22]

The importation of indentured Indian labourers continued until 1911. "Free" or "passenger Indians" continued to enter the country up to 1913 when the Union government placed a ban on further immigration. By 1902 there were about 75 000 Indians in Natal.[23] Many of the immigrants had also moved to the Cape and the Transvaal where they established small businesses or found other means of employment.

In India, in the meantime, there was considerable concern within the Islamic religious leadership over the fate of the beliefs and practices of these new Muslim immigrants to South Africa. In Natal and the Transvaal, there were very few Islamic religious structures, such as mosques and *madrassahs*, to cater for the religious needs of the young immigrants. The Grey Street Mosque had already been built, and there were a few *jamaat-khanas* but very little else. In fact, these immigrants were coming into a social environment in which Islam was a struggling to plant its roots.

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[19] *Illustrated History of South Africa*, p. 222
[20] Ibid. p. 223
[21] van Zyl, p. 229
[22] Dangor, p. 67
[23] van Zyl, op. cit.

At the Cape, the situation was far more encouraging. By the beginning of this century, the Muslim community in the western Cape was little more than two centuries old, and there was about twenty mosques scattered throughout the area,[24] and a fairly well-structured *madrassah* system run mainly in private homes. This Cape Muslim community, it appears, was also primarily of Indian origin. The majority of "slaves, political prisoners and exiles" which constituted the founders of this community had come from the Malabar and Coromandel coasts, and from Bengal. By the last half of the nineteenth century, the Muslims at the Cape had become integrated into a single socially recognizable community. This meant that most of their individual national-origin characteristics had disappeared.[25]

The arrival of Sufi Sahib and Mawlana Abdul-Latif in South Africa

The major worry about the survival of Islam concerned not the Cape but Natal and the Transvaal. Early in the 1890s, Mawlana Abdul-Latif was invited by Konkani families in Johannesburg to come to the city to teach. He was the principal of the *Zakariyyah Madrassah* in Bombay at the time. According to Jawoodeen: [26]

The first time Hazrat Moulana Abdul Latief came to South Africa was as an Islamic teacher. The historical establishment of Muslim traders of Kokani origin in the former Transvaal meant that this community was required to establish Islamic institutions. It was these families which requested that Moulana Abdul Latief first visit South Africa to function as a teacher to these Kokanie families in the former Transvaal. It should be borne in mind that while there were many Muslim traders which settled in the former Transvaal many of them followed the Hanafi madhab while those of Kokanie origin followed the Shafi madhab and thus the request to Hazrat to come to them as a teacher as he would have been able to teach them the Shafi madhab as well.

He came, but only stayed for a few months and went back to the *Zakariyyah Madrassah*.[27]

[24] *Taraweeg Survey, 1995*
[25] da Costa, 1990
[26] Jawoodeen, op. cit, p. 23
[27] Kagee, op. cit.

Soon afterwards, in order to obtain a clear picture of the conditions of the Muslims in South Africa, the *Chishtiyyah shaykh* of Mawlana Abdul-Latif, Khwaja Habib Ali Shah of Hyderabad, sent one of his other novices, Shah Ghulam Muhammad - later affectionately called Sufi Sahib - to this country in 1895.[28] He stayed for about two years, familiarising himself with the conditions of the Muslims in different parts of the country, and returned to India. He met Mawlana Abdul-Latif, who was also his brother-in-law, in one of the villages of Konkan, and together the two went to their *shaykh*, Khwaja Habib Ali Shah, in Hyderabad.[29]

Sufi Sahib was informed by their *shaykh* that his place of work in the cause of Islam was to be South Africa, and that he was to return there. After a few months in South Africa, Sufi Sahib requested Mawlana Abdul-Latif to join him. This was around the end of the 19th century. On arrival, he was placed in charge of the *madrassah* established in Riverside, Durban by Sufi Sahib. The *madrassah* was part of a complex of religious structures established by Sufi Sahib in the area at the time. According to Jawoodeen:[30]

At the Riverside Khanqah in Durban Moulana Abdul Latief was in charge of education at the madressa and more especially the education of the orphans ...As the most senior teacher at the Riverside Khanqah, Hazrat Moulana Abdul Latief also supervised and taught the ustaads who were also teaching at the institution as student numbers increased and more diverse classes were organized ...

Students were placed in different classes in terms of age, aptitude and educational ability ...(There were) beginners classes where Qur'an and Urdu were taught. The more senior classes (received instruction in) Arabic, Quran, Urdu, Pharsee, Islamic history, and Deenyat ... It is interesting to note that the immortal Mathnawi of Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi ...was also taught.

Other than teaching the usual curriculum, Mawlana Abdul-Latif (with the active support, and inspiration, of Sufi Sahib) established the use of Urdu as a medium of instruction at the Riverside *madrassah*. This, of course, provided a strong impetus for the survival of the Urdu language in the Muslim community in Natal at the time, and was possibly the first time that Urdu was used as a medium of instruction in Religion

[28] Ajam, undated
[29] Kagee, op. cit.
[30] Jawoodeen, op. cit, pp. 24-25

Education in the country. All of Sufi Sahib's children attended Mawlana Abdul-Latif's classes, and partly as a consequence of this inspiration to use the Urdu language, some of them, when they became adults, came to write poetry through the medium of the Urdu language.[31]

Mawlana Abdul-Latif settles in Doornhoogte, Cape

After about three years at the Riverside *madrassah*, Mawlana Abdul-Latif desired to return home. One of the reasons for this was the fact that his father was still alive. He was requested, however, by Sufi Sahib to postpone his trip until he (i.e. Sufi Sahib) had returned from Cape Town where he had some work to do. In Cape Town Sufi Sahib negotiated the purchase of the land in Doornhoogte on which the present Habibiyyah complex stands. Jawoodeen states that:[32]

At the Doornhoogte site in Cape Town which Soofi Saheb purchased a small wood and iron house was built …While Soofi Saheb was in Cape Town many people had become murids and entered the fold of the Chisti silsilah. Hazrat Soofi Saheb ensured that the foundation of the current masjid was laid and a madressa which also acted as a Jamat khana was completely built prior to him returning to Durban.

When Sufi Sahib returned to Riverside, he informed Mawlana Abdul-Latif that he had received a letter from their *shaykh*, Khwaja Habib Ali Shah of Hyderabad, confirming the granting of *khilafah* to him (i.e. to Mawlana Abdul-Latif). Jawoodeen states: [33]

Thus, the khilafat granted to Moulana Abdul Latief occurred with permission and authority of Kwaja Habib Ali Shah. The khilafat conferred on Moulana Abdul Latief was in the Chisti, Habibi and Qadri silsilas. Hazrat Soofie Saheb also gave Moulana Abdul Latief a staff of his as a gift upon conferring khilafat to him …The granting of khilafat to Moulana Abdul Latief was unique as under normal circumstances the sheikh who is granting khilafat would (himself) grant the mureed or person such khilafat.

In addition, Mawlana Abdul-Latif was instructed to go to Cape Town to work in the cause of Islam. Without any hesitation, he made arrangements for the rest of his family

[31] Kagee, op. cit.
[32] Jawoodeen, op. cit, p. 25
[33] Op. cit.

in Konkan to join him in Cape Town,[34] and left Riverside for Doornhoogte where the piece of land had been purchased.[35]

At the time of Mawlana Abdul-Latif's coming to Cape Town, Doornhoogte (or Thornhill, as it was officially named) was part of what was then called Mowbray Flats that was a section of the Cape Flats.[36] The whole of the Cape Flats was a largely sandy area. Most parts of the natural vegetation had been destroyed by cutting for firewood and replaced by different types of grasses and shrubs. Doornhoogte was generally undeveloped, and with the high-water table the area was subject to considerable flooding during winter.[37] In addition, there was not a single mosque or *madrassah* in the whole of the Cape Flats.

When he arrived in Cape Town, either at the end of 1903 or beginning of 1904, he was welcomed by members of the local Muslim community who had also migrated to South Africa from Konkan, and amongst whom there were a number of *Chishtiyyah* adherents. He, and later the other members of his family, settled in the "wood and iron" house that had been constructed on the land bought by Sufi Sahib in Doornhoogte. His Islamic work, he started immediately.

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[34] The family members who came immediately to join him from India were his father, Qazi Muhammad Yusuf, his two wives, Gadijah Bibi and Jamaal Bibi, his two sisters, Latifah Bibi and Aminah Bibi, and his brother, Kazi Hasan. His other sister, Kulsum Bibi came afterwards. Only two of Mawlana Abdul-Latif's children survived him, Khayrunisa and Khadijah. The former married one of the sons of Sufi Sahib. She died in childbirth (Purkar, 27:06:95; 01:07:95).

With regard to the family members who eventually settled in South Africa, Kazi Hasan, who was known as *cotheh mamoo jaan* (younger uncle) in the family, died in 1933 and lies buried in the Habibiyyah Sufi Graveyard in Athlone. He had no children. Zanab Bibi became the wife of Sufi Sahib of Riverside, Natal. Kulsum Bibi married Kazi Ahmad, and their children were Imams Abdul-Karim, Mustapha and Abdul-Samad, and also Ghulam Husayn. Imams Abdul-Karim and Mustapha were joint imams of the Habibiyyah Mosque in Athlone for a long time. Imam Abdul-Karim who died in 1986 is the father of Mawlana Qutub al-Din Kagee, one of the present imams of the same mosque. Imam Mustapha was also the imam of the Harvey Road Mosque in Claremont and later the Addison Road Mosque in Salt River for a short periods. He died in 1952. Imam Abdul-Samad married the eldest daughter of Sufi Sahib. He was the imam of Park Road Mosque in Wynberg for a time, and then officiated at the Grey Street Mosque in Durban for about twenty years, and later as assistant-imam for about another seven to eight years. Amina Bibi and her husband came to join her brother, Mawlana Abdul-Latif, in Cape Town, and she later died here. Latifah Bibi, the youngest sister of Mawlana Abdul-Latif, married Muhammad Yusuf Purkar. The present imam of the Habibiyyah Mosque, Imam Abdul-Latif Purkar (commonly called Imam Bapoo), is the only surviving child from her family of eight children (Interviews: Purkar, 22:06:95; Kagee, 23:06:95, 26:06:95). In 1988 Imam Bapoo was granted *khilafah* (see Note 31) by Shah Peer Hafiz Pasha al-Habibi, the president of the *Habibiyyah Silsilah* in Hyderabad. This was into the Chishtiyyah and Qadiriyyah Orders through a series of sub-branches.

[35] Kagee, op. cit.

[36] S.A. Archives: MOOC, 6/9/827

[37] Wilson, pp. 553-4

The birth of Habibiyyah "College"

The birth of the "College" started in a manner which has had a very deep spiritual significance for the Muslims at the Cape. On the very first Friday in January 1904, a few days after he had arrived, Mawlana Abdul-Latif informed those Muslims who were around him that the *Jumu'ah* was going to be held on the land bought for the building of a mosque and *madrassah*. The ground was cleared, and sheets and other covers were spread out. Just after the sun had reached its highest point in the sky, the *Adhan* was made. For the first time, the words of this Call rang out in Doornhoogte.

The Call must have been a highly emotional moment for those present, and later when the Mawlana delivered the *khutbah* with a tree stump as a pulpit, and then lead the people in the Prayer.[38] The whole proceedings must have been especially significant to those first-generation immigrant Muslims from Konkan. Here they had an imam who was "of them". He had come from Konkan, spoke their language, and understood their cultural idiosyncracies. Although there were many mosques and *madrassahs* at the Cape at the time, the language used as a medium of instruction was the developing Afrikaans language of which these immigrants from Konkan could by then only understand a few words. The arrival of Mawlana Abdul-Latif changed all that. Their children could now be taught, and lectures delivered in the mosque through the medium of their home language.

The success of the first *Jumu'ah* spurred them on. Very soon the "wood and iron" structure had been replaced by a house of brick and mortar,[39] and in January 1905 the foundation of the mosque was laid. In addition, provision was made for the construction of an orphanage, kitchen, storeroom, and rooms for accommodation for travellers.[40] In the meantime, Sufi Sahib had transferred the land of the mosque from the Shah Ghulam

[38] The tree stump is still in existence, and stands in the courtyard of the Habibiyyah Nursery School. It is interesting to note that the first pulpit in the Mosque of the Prophet of Islam in Medinah (called *Masjid al-Nabawi*) was a tree stump against which the Prophet (may the peace and blessings be upon him) stood when delivering the sermon.

[39] This is the same house still occupied today by the present imam of the mosque, Imam Bapoo, and his family.

[40] Kagee, op. cit.

Muhammad Trust to the Molvi Abdul-Latif Trust.[41] Very soon the mosque was complete, and when one of his novices inquired about such a large mosque for such a sparsely populated area, Mawlana Abdul-Latif replied with uncanny foresight: "This bush will one day be a bustling town".[42]

Later the Molvi Abdul-Latif Trust acquired two additional pieces of land in the Lower Main Road Woodstock; a piece of freehold land at 9 Lower Main Road, and a piece of municipal land at the corner of Dublin Street and Lower Main Road.[43] The land was bought to help "maintain the College". Thus, during the first two decades of this century, Mawlana Abdul-Latif, with the support of his novices and others in the Muslim community (especially those from Konkan), laid the foundations for the complex of religious structures known today as the "College".[44]

The *Chishtiyyah* Order at the Cape

Up to now, no evidence has been found of any visible *Chishtiyyah* activity at the Cape prior to the coming of Mawlana Abdul-Latif. It could, therefore, quite safely be assumed, until contrary evidence is found, that the Order was originally established at the Cape only when Mawlana Abdul-Latif arrived here at the beginning of this century. There were, of course, a few *Chishtiyyah* adherents amongst those members of the Muslim community from Konkan who had migrated to the Cape just prior to Mawlana Abdul-Latif's arrival, and also perhaps some who had been inducted into the Order when Sufi Sahib had visited the Cape earlier. It is, however, doubtful whether these early Chishtis had established the Order at the Cape in any significant way.

One of Mawlana Abdul-Latif's first acts was to bring all the *Chishtiyyah murids* into a single group, those who had been inducted into the Order in Konkan and new ones whom he had inducted at the Cape. At the same time, he arranged certain patterns of *adhkar* that the group had to do. The following times were used for group *adhkar*:[45]

* every day after the Dawn Prayer.

[41] Purkar, 27:06:95
[42] Kagee, op. cit.
[43] MOOC, 6/9/827
[44] Purkar, 01:07:95
[45] Purkar, 08:07:95

* every day after the Midday Prayer - with some of his novices and any others present, including children, they would recite *Surah al-Ihlas* ('The Chapter of Faith' in the Qur'an) and *Darud Sharif* (special invocations for the Prophet); each one 1 200 times.
* every Thursday evening after midnight - three to four hours the words *La-ilaha-illallah* (There is no god other than Allah).
* Every 6th, 7th, 11th, 18th and 19th night of the month - the words as on a Thursday evening.

Mawlana Abdul-Latif's personal daily devotions included, *inter alia*, reciting the *Dala'il al-Khayrat* and the *Du'a al*-Sayfi.[46] On certain nights of the month, he would also recite certain litanies while standing on the stoep of the mosque, bareheaded and wearing only a top and a *lungi*. This used to last from about midnight to just before dawn. Despite this considerably time-consuming programme of religious devotions, Mawlana Abdul-Latif still had time to write. One of the works completed by him was *Riyad al-Sufi* (The Gardens of the Sufi). Another work on Islamic jurisprudence was unfortunately not completed.[47]

As part of his duties as a *Chishtiyyah shaykh*, Mawlana Abdul-Latif appointed two *khalifas*. The one was Shah Muhammad Yusuf al-Habibi who was married to his sister and who was living at the "College", and the other was Sayyid Shah Ahmad of Karda in India. The latter was on a visit to his *Qadiriyyah*[48] novices in Cape Town and decided to be inducted into the *Chishtiyyah Order* by Mawlana Abdul-Latif.[49] This induction is a clear indication of the high regard for Mawlana Abdul-Latif's spiritual status by others in a similar discipline. There could be no greater complement than the one paid to him by Sayyid Shah Ahmad when the latter requested to be inducted into the *Chishtiyyah Order* at his hand.

A number of activities, some of which have their origins in sufi orders, are practised at the "College". These include the anniversaries of the death of such luminaries as Shaykh Abdul-Qadir al-Jilani, Khwaja Mu'inud-Din al-Chishti al-Ajmiri, Hazrat Shaykh Sayyid

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[46] The *Dala'il al-Khayrat* (Proofs of the Good Deeds) - a poem prayer by Imam al-Jazuli (d. 1470) of Morocco. He was of the *Shadhiliyyah Order* [Trimingham, p. 301; V. Danner, p. 41].
The *Du'a al-Sayfi* or *Hizb al-Sayfi* (a special invocation) was composed by Shaykh Abu al-Abbas Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Tijani (d. 1815) of Algeria who founded the *Tijaniyyah Order* [Barradah, undated].
[47] Davids, 1992, p. 15
[48] The *Qadiriyyah Order* was founded by Shaykh Abdul-Qadir Jilani (d. 1166) [Nizami, 1991, p. 6].
[49] Purkar, op. cit.

Abdul-Qadir al-Kalyari al-Qadiri and Shah Ghulam Muhammad; the observance of ceremonies associated with the tenth day of the Islamic month of Muharram, the Day of Ashura; and the recital of the *Ratib al-Haddad* from the *Alawiyyah Order*[50] and the *Gherwie Sharif*[51] of the *Qadiriyyah Order.*

Managing the affairs of the "College"

Once the basic structures of the "College" were in place, Islamic classes were introduced for both children and adults. One of the first teachers appointed was Imam Abdur-Rahman Gamieldien, the father of Shaykh Shakir Gamieldien, at one time the imam of Aspeling Street Mosque in Cape Town.[52] Under the guidance of Mawlana Abdul-Latif, the "College" made major contributions to the Islamic education of a number of persons who later became imams of mosques. These persons included, amongst others, Imams Shadhili Dollie, Muhammad Kajal, Abdus-Samad Kagee, Abdur-Rahman Gamieldien, Abdur-Rahman Umar, and Dawud Hafejee.[53] Many of them had also later assisted with the teaching of the children in the *madrassah* attached to the mosque.

Mawlana Abdul-Latif managed the affairs of all the institutions that comprised the "College". In addition, he taught his novices about sufism, and to many of them he also taught Persian. Perhaps one of his most striking qualities in handling these affairs was the very special attention he gave to the orphans. Every single night prior to his performance of a special night devotions, with candle in hand, he would check on the conditions of the children in their sleeping quarters. And he would first see to their needs before proceeding to the mosque for prayers and invocations till after sunrise.

Many accounts of his spiritual achievements have come down in the oral history of the family. His greatest achievement was, however, the extent he was able to perform his vast amount of religious devotions while at the same time engaging in the hard daily

[50] The *Alawiyyah Order* was founded by Muhammad ibn Ali Ba Alawi (d.1255) in Hadramaut, south Arabia (Trimingham, p. 16).
[51] The *Gherwie Sharif* is the blessed 11th night of *Rabi' al-Akhir* on which Shaykh Abdul-Qadir passed away. This night is also referred to amongst sections of the Muslim community at the Cape as *amantu a-blas*. It appears that the words *amantu a-blas* are of Javanese origin (Interview: C. Johaar, 17:07:95).
[52] Davids, 1992, p. 14
[53] Kagee, op. cit.; Pandey, 31:07:95

grind associated with working in the Cause of the religion that he had made his way of life.

Social programme for the poor

Perhaps one pf his greatest contribution to the social life in Athlone, was his launching of a social programme, especially of feeding the poor. This programme has continued up to today and reflected his determination to "dirty his hands" in the cause of Islam. Nothing was beyond him to do, from feeding a poor person to taking a child to the toilet in the middle of the night. According to Jawoodeen:[54]

Moulana Abdul Latief Qazi establishd social programmes for the poor and orphans at the Habibia Soofie Musjid. Any travelers who were stranded or who required accommodation at the Habibia Soofie Musjid were assisted with such accommodation and even provided with meals. A kitchen was set up in order to prepare meals for those who based at the College. In fact Hazrat Moulana Abdul Latief, his family, the orphans, travelers, and any other person present at meal times were welcome to the table as meals were communally served. After Jummah salaah meals were communally served for those who resided at the college and musallees. In fact preparation for the Jummah salaah started early in the day as people from all over the Cape Flats would come to the musjid to assist with the food preparation, ensuring that there was sufficient water for wudhu and to recite Surah Khaf prior to the Jummah Khutbah. The musjid since its inception encouraged a great community spirit based on unity of the ummah. In fact one of Hazrat Moulana Abdul Latief's great accomplishments was the cementing of relations between Muslim people hailing from diverse cultural backgrounds on the Cape Flats and unifying them around the deen of Islam.

A formal orphanage was established by Hazrat Moulana Abdul Latief. This orphanage housed many prominent local and religious personalities from around Cape Town. By day the orphanage served as madressa and at night it served as the sleeping quarters for the orphans.

[54] Jawoodeen, op. cit, p. 29

Final days

In 1911, Mawlana Abdul-Latif performed the pilgrimage to Mecca. On his way back, he went Hyderabad and Ajmer to visit the graves of Khawja Habib Ali Shah and Khwaja Mu'inud-Din al-Chishti al-Ajmiri respectively. He then returned to Cape Town to continue his work.

Well before his death, he had informed his family that he felt that he was not going to live much longer, and he wrote a special letter on the matter to his *khalifah*, Shah Muhammad Yusuf al-Habibi, when on a visit to some of his murids in Johannesburg. In the letter he requested that he (i.e., Shah Muhammad) pay special attention to the responsibilities associated with the "College".

Mawlana Abdul-Latif was suffering from diabetes at the time. About a month prior to his death, he was virtually confined to bed, and he could not attend the congregational prayers in the mosque. He used to pray sitting on his bed, and he would use a small table with a cushion on as the place on which to prostrate. On the 17th April 1916 as the Call to Prayer was being made at the mosque for the Midday Prayer, he raised himself from his bed to prepare for the Prayer, and died. Just the day before, permission had arrived from the local authority that, in the event of his death, he could be buried in the grounds of the "College".

He had requested that on his death, his compulsory bath and the Prayer for the Deceased should be in the hands of one of his novices, Imam Hasan Jakoet, the imam of the Habibiyyah Mosque at the time. This request was carried out. Two of those who placed him in his grave were Shah Muhammad Yusuf al-Habibi and Hajji Wazir Parker.[55] His novices remained standing around the grave in silent prayer for a long time. Although his death was a major loss to them at the time, the results of the work that he had done in establishing the "College" and the *Chishtiyyah Order* in the Cape are still with the Muslim community to this day, and it is now almost eight decades later.

[55] Purkar, 12:08:95

Conclusions

Many people in this country, as in other countries, have made different kinds of contributions to the welfare and quality of life of others, and in understanding these contributions one has sometimes to access certain of the very private expressions of some of their cultural practices. Mawlana Abdul-Latif came from a cultural environment in Konkan, India in which Islam was a dominant factor. His experiences within this environment he brought with him to this country, and, in his interaction with others at the Cape, he brought these experiences to bear on the landscape and on the religio-social practices of the Muslims in the spatial framework within which he lived and worked. In the process, he inspired the erection of a complex of religious structures that stand as permanent monument to his work, and he personally helped to establish at the Cape one of Islam's most influential sufi orders.

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SHAYKH MUHAMMAD SALIH HENDRICKS (1871-1945): IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE SUFI MASTERS

Introduction

In 1994, with the centenary of the coming of Shaykh Yusuf of Macasser to the Cape, Achmat Davids and I decided to write a short account of Cape Muslim history as part of the celebrations. The book was published as *Pages from Cape Muslim History*. One of my briefs was to write a short account of the life and contribution of Shaykh Muhammad Salih of the *al-Zawiyah Masjid* in Walmer Estate. During my research I was absolutely amazed at the information I came across. I had never known that Shaykh Muhammad Salih was in fact a remarkable scholar, perhaps the best ever produced by our community, both locally and nationally. A few years later his grandson, Shaykh Seraj Hendricks, one of the present *imams* at the *al-Zawiyah Masjid* and also an outstanding scholar in his own right, did further research and unearthed even more extraordinary material about his grandfather. This monograph, which brings together my and Shaykh Seraj's research, is

an attempt to put the historical record straight regarding the life of, and the almost unequalled contribution made by his grandfather (and my great-uncle) to the religious life of the Muslim community at the Cape.

It happens on many occasions that an individual, usually with some community support and recognition, is able to impact significantly on the religious thinking and practices of such a community. Such individuals are able to do this through a combination of their personalities, writings and teachings, whatever the nature of this combination might be or the relative strengths of the different elements in that combination. In the case of Shaykh Muhammad Salih:

(a) He received considerable support from family members, both his and that of his wife, and large numbers of others in the community. This helped him to overcome the burden of the onslaughts directed at him as others, jealous of his scholarly and spiritual achievements, attacked him from all sides. These attacks culminated in a court case against him, which dealt with the building of the *al-Zawiyah Masjid*. The support by *Zawiya murids* (as the adherents of the *al-Zawiyah Masjid* were called) persisted throughout his life, and later it was given to his children and grandchildren who continued the tradition he had started. This support prevented him from being isolated, as many might have wished, and enabled him to put his religious stamp on the community.

(b) Perhaps the most courageous thing he did was to call on Muslim women to cover their *awrahs*. This attempt by him to reassert Islamic values and to stop the creeping loss of what Islam stood for, in a society in which the dominant culture was white, Christian and colonialist, brought major derision on him and those women who covered up. Most of this derision came from within the Muslim community by those who had adopted the manners, styles and behaviour of the dominant culture. This applied especially to the women of the Muslim community at the time. Shaykh Muhammad Salih stood his ground and insisted that his female students cover up. Gradually his call spread in the community, and more and more women started to take a stand against their deculturization. It is interesting to note that, as far as we had researched, the other religious leaders made no similar calls at the time. If Shaykh Muhammad Salih had done nothing else, then his stand against the deculturization of Muslim women would have made him a major figure in our community. However, he did much more.

(c) He was a major source of religious knowledge at the Cape. As perhaps the greatest scholar produced by the community, he started a programme of teaching that spread Islamic knowledge at a rate never done before, or after. Teaching from early in the morning until late at night, he raised the level of religious knowledge of the community to a standard never enjoyed by the community before. His teaching programme, which included the use of Arabic texts by some of those who attended his lectures, produced a large number of students who later made additional contributions to the community's religious life. Included in the programme were lectures from the *Ihya Ulum al-Din* of Imam Ghazali. This was another first in the country as he tried to imbue his teachings with a depth of spirituality drawn from the experiences of the *Ba Alawiyyah Tariqah*.

(d) His spirituality was expressed by him through his membership of four *tariqas* or sufi orders, his teachings on *tasawwuf* and his participation, on his own and with his students, in a variety of spiritual practices. It is this spirituality that placed him in the forefront as a major exponent of Mainstream Islam in the history of the Muslims at the Cape. That he must have been a deeply pious scholar, there is no doubt about. It is this piety, I am sure, that saw him sacrificing his time to lead the Muslim community along a path towards spiritual achievements. Today he is recognized as perhaps one of our greatest sons, a recognition that he should have received during his lifetime. If this had been done at the time, his impact on the religious life of the community would have been even more immense and lasting. He is a classic example of the deliberate wastage of a major religious source in our community. The community damage as a consequence of this wastage of him and of others like him has left us so much poorer and deprived.

His family

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

His story began in 1871, about 37 years after the emancipation of the slaves, when he was born to Abdullah Hendricks (also known as Imam Hajji Hijji) and his wife A'ishah in

the village of Swellendam.[56] The period of his growing up was to coincide with a period in the life of the Cape Muslims that saw two important social phenomena. It was during this time that the community struggled for an Islamic identity despite its reduction to second-class citizen status (along with all other non-whites in the country), and a series of religious controversies continued to tear the community apart. These controversies were also to contribute to the gradual withdrawal of the Muslim community from those others in the country who suffered from similar socio-political disabilities.

Muhammad Salih had three brothers (Abdul-Basir, Abdul-Bari, and Sulayman) and two sisters (Aminah and Khadijah).[57] The choice of these names clearly shows the type of religious ethos that operated in the family despite its geographic isolation from Cape Town. What makes this even more significant is that Muhammad Salih's paternal grandparents were Apollis and Cassera Hendricks,[58] who were most probably slaves or the offspring of slaves, and who had been converted to Islam.[59] His maternal grandparents were Abdul-Basir and Khashi'ah van der Schyff,[60] who also came from close non-Muslim origins. Thus the boy's immediate family, on both sides, were converts to Islam within a social climate at the Cape that was far from being conducive to the survival of the religion.

Conversions to Islam

These conversions to Islam that were experienced by the family of Muhammad Salih before and after emancipation were not something that was rare at the Cape. However, there is also of course evidence that there was organized Christian missionary activity among the Muslims, both free and enslaved, and so there were some conversions from Islam.[61] For example, at the time the Hendricks family was living in

[56] Cape Argus, 2 May 1903; Records of the Master's Office and the Orphan Chamber, 6/9/315: 666.
[57] Ibid. 6/9/315:666
[58] Ibid. 6/9/299:1951.
[59] Interview: Shaykh M. Hendricks, Zawiyah Mosque, Cape Town. January, 1991.
[60] *Records of the Master's Office and the Orphan Chamber*, 6/9/315:666.
[61] Lightfoot, T.F., 1900. The Cape Malays, in Gibson, A.G.S., *Sketches of Church Work and Life in the Diocese of Cape Town.* Cape Town: The South African Electric Printing and Publishing Co., pp 33-34; Mayson, J.S., 1963. *The Malays of Cape Town.* Cape Town: Africana Connoisseurs Press, p. 33; Worden, N., 1985. *Slavery in Dutch South Africa.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 97.

Swellendam, there were eight "Malays" there who professed to be Christian.[62] Despite this, there were a number of factors operating at the Cape that favoured conversion to, rather than from, Islam.

white and the black man, that the black man has no desire to enter into the Christian Church, whose gates have been so long shut against him; he prefers joining with those who have been his friends in his distress, who invite, and encourage him to bring his children to the same school, to attend the same Mosque, and to look forward to meeting again in the same paradise.

There were also other factors. Little attempt was made to encourage the teaching of Christianity among the slaves.[63] Where any missionary work did take place, it was mainly among the Khoikhoi.[64] The Dutch laws encouraging the Christianization of the slaves were never really enforced, while the Muslim religious leaders conducted their own missionary activities.[65] As a consequence of these factors, all of which favoured conversion to Islam, "only 86 slaves out of a possibility of 35 698 in the Cape Colony were baptized between 1810 and 1824, approximately six per year."[66] Those slaves who embraced Islam were generally assimilated into the Muslim community.[67] Muhammad Salih thus grew up at a time when there was a combination of social factors that encouraged the movement of people, and especially freed slaves, into the developing Muslim community through the process of religious conversion, and the assimilation of these people into that community.

The coming of the slaves to the Cape was not the only type of migration that had taken place at that time. There were also two other types of migration. One involved the movement of freed slaves to the towns (and especially Cape Town) after their emancipation in 1834, while the other involved a new stream of immigrants, many of whom were Muslim, from the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. Some of them came to settle

[62] 1875 Census, Colony of the Cape of Good Hope. Cape Town: Saul Solomon, part 2, p. 333.
[63] Ibid. p. 97.
[64] Bird, W., 1966. *State of the Cape of Good Hope* in *1822.* Cape Town: C. Struik, p. 76.
[65] Wright, W., 1969. *Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope.* New York: Negroes University Press, p. 4; Theal, G.M., 1898. *Records of the Cape Colony*, vols 1-36. London: William Clowes and Sons, vol. 35, p. 366.
[66] Davids, A., 1990. Words the slaves made: A socio-historical-linguistic study. *South African Journal of Linguistics*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp 1-24.
[67] Mayson, J.S. op.cit. p. 15;. Aspeling, E.G., 1983. *The Cape Malays*. Cape Town: C. Struik, p.6.

in Cape Town during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century.[68] Describing the former migration, Ross writes that:

the slaves moved out into the slums, alongside their friends and kin who had been free before 1838. They were joined by a large number of ex-slaves who had moved into Cape Town from the countryside ... [Many congregated] ... in the so-called coloured quarters of later Cape Town, District Six and the Malay Quarter on Signal Hill. [69]

This migration was to have a marked effect on the distribution of Muslims in the Cape Colony. According to the 1875 Census,[70] there were 11 209 Muslims in the Cape at that time. Of these, 8 848, or 79 per cent, lived in the urbanized areas of the Cape Division.[71] In Cape Town itself there were 6 772 Muslims,[72] which represented 60 per cent of all Muslims in the Colony and 77 per cent of those living in the Cape Division. As a result of this migration to the towns, Muslims became very thinly distributed in the country areas, and only Graaf Reinet (with 20 Muslim families), Stellenbosch (with 120), Paarl (with 47), Uitenhage (with 39), and Port Elizabeth (with 129) had 20 or more Muslim families in their respective Divisions.[73] In the town of Swellendam, the Hendricks family was one of only 16 families (a total of 49 persons) at this time.[74] The depopulation of country areas of Muslim people was aggravated by the depression of the 1870's,[75] which further forced people to move to the towns in search of employment. M.E. and A. Rothmann[76] described the situation in Swellendam at the time as follows:

Up to the last quarter of the nineteenth century there was a small colony of Malays in Swellendam. They were known as industrious and skilled workers, also in the building trade. So solid was their little community that it had its own hajji - one who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca. It was in these years that the trade suffered a severe recession; wainwrights, blacksmiths, builders and masons all being hard hit. So the Malay colony

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[68] Da Costa, Y., 1990. *Islam in Greater Cape Town: A Study in the Geography of Religion.* Doctoral thesis, Pretoria: University of South Africa.
[69]. Ross, R., 1985. Cape Town 1750-1850: Synthesis in the dialectic of continents, in Ross, R. and Telkarno, G.T. (eds) *Colonial Cities*. Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, p. 116.
[70] *1875 Census, Colony of the Cape of Good Hope.* op.cit. p. 17.
[71] Ibid. p. 325.
[72] Ibid. p. 349.
[73] Ibid. pp 13-14.
[74] Ibid. part 1, p. 14.
[75] *Standard Encyclopaedia of South Africa*. Cape Town: Nassau, vol. 10, p. 386.
[76] Rothmann, M.E. and A., 1960. *The Drostdy* at Swellendam. Swellendam: The Drostdy Commission, p. 42.

gradually left to seek work elsewhere. The last of them, Korie Hendriks, died in 1959, aged 90 years. ... A remnant of the old Malay graveyard may still be seen in the corner of the little park below the Primary School.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, one other important development took place amongst the Muslims in the Cape, and this was that most of the adherents of Islam amongst the different national origin groups at the Cape assimilated into a single identifiable socio-religious group or community. This had already become evident by the time that the slaves were being emancipated. According to Marais,[77] Islam had:

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

This development meant that the common divisions based on original nationality which had existed among the Muslims had disappeared to a large extent by the end of the nineteenth century, and they had acquired their own cultural identity as they had evolved into an identifiable socio-religious group or community. This particularly occurred in Cape Town, where the urban environment provided the social circumstances needed for greater interaction between people and, therefore, more opportunity for the development of a specific culture.[78] The religion of Islam was the basis of this cultural identity as it had been adopted by many of the slaves as their religion.[79]

Student days in Mecca

All these major social developments in the Muslim community took place while the Hendricks family was living in comparative isolation in Swellendam. However, the family did have important links with Cape Town as Muhammad Salih's maternal relatives, the van der Schyffs, all lived in the city and some of the suburbs, and also because the young boy was later to come to Cape Town for his initial Islamic studies. According to Mrs G. Abrahams of Longmarket Street, Cape Town:[80]

[77] Marais, J.S., 1962. *The Cape Coloured People, 1652-1937.* Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, pp. 172-173.
[78] Worden, N. op.cit. pp. 86 and 98.
[79] Ross, R. op.cit. p. 108; Worden, N. op.cit p. 4.
[80] Interview: Mrs G. Abrahams, Longmarket Street, Cape Town, 31 December 1990.

FOUR MAKERS OF CAPE MUSLIM HISTORY

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

In 1888, at the age of sixteen years, Muhammad Salih left Swellendam, a district not far from Cape Town, to study in Mecca.[81]

According to Hendricks:[82]

Family history relates that his father, as a relatively wealthy man at the time, had initially prepared the young Muhammad Salih to pursue medical studies in the United Kingdom. Arrangements to this effect were apparently at an advanced stage which appears to indicate that he had most likely completed his high school education. It was at this point, however, that the event that would change the entire direction of his future occurred.

Sayyid 'Abd al'Aziz al-Maliki, grandfather of Sayyid Muhammad 'Alawi al-Maliki, was an itinerant sufi who had recently arrived at the Cape from Makkah and frequently shuttled between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth in search of Muslim communities and furthering the aims of Islam. It was during the course of one of his many trips between the two cities that he discovered the small Muslim community in Swellendam. Here he befriended Imam 'Abd Allah Hendricks and persuaded him to send the young Muhammad Salih to Makkah to study the "medicine of the soul" rather than the "medicine of the body". The friendship that was forged between the two families during this time still continues up to the present. Imam 'Abd Allah agreed, and together, in 1888, Sayyid 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Maliki and Shaykh Muhammad Salih left for Makkah.

Surprisingly, Muhammad Salih was not the first "colonial-born" Muslim from the Cape Colony to go overseas for studies of this nature, despite newspaper reports to the contrary.[83] Others who had studied overseas before him included Hisham Ni'matullah Effendi (who had studied in Mecca and Istanbul), Abd al-Raqib ibn Abd al-Qahar

[81] South African *News,* 11 July 1903.
[82] Hendricks, S. 2005. *Tasawwuf (Sufism): its role and impact on the culture of Cape Islam*. Unpublished M.A. thesis. Pretoria:UNISA, pp. 373-374.
[83] *Cape Argus*, 2 May 1903.

Berdien (who had studied in Mecca), Muhammad Taliep (who had studied in Bombay and was, therefore, very fluent in Urdu), and Isma-il Ma-awiyah Manie (who had mainly studied Qur'anic recital in Mecca).[84] What was, however, important was that he was part of a growing tradition in the Muslim community that involved sending their children to study in Islamic centres, and thereby to continue the process of religious enrichment which the community so badly needed.

Mecca was then still part of the Ottoman Empire and was ruled at the time by Sultan Abd al-Hamid II (1876-1909).[85] The *tasawwuf* tradition, which was later to be suppressed by the *Wahhabi* movement, was dominant in the city. According to Hendricks:[86]

(Although) Makkah fell to the Wahhabis on October 13, 1924, it took a long time after that before they could impose their rigorist interpretations on the Hijaz, if, indeed, they ever really succeeded. The sufi shaykhs, although under duress, continued disseminating their tasawwuf teachings for a long time ...

Despite the political problems in the Hijaz, Makkah remained one of the foremost centres of traditional Islamic education and in fact had the potential to become a university city in the manner of Bukhara many centuries earlier. Three of the most important madrasas that were established during the nineteenth century in Makkah were the Madrasat al-Falah, the Madrasat al-Sulatiyya, and the Madrasat al-Fakhriyya ... Shaykh Muhammad Salih Hendricks, and his four sons after him, Shaykh Ahmad (died during his first year in Makkah), Shaykh Mahdi (1928-1936), Shaykh Ibrahim (1928-1936), and Shaykh Mujahid (1948-1956), all studied - amongst other institutions - at (the Madrasat al-Sulatiyya) ...

Nonetheless, on his arrival, Shaykh Muhammad Salih set himself down to a rigorous programme of learning, and under the constant supervision of Sayyid 'Abd al-Aziz al-Maliki who acted as his guardian in loco parentis. Amongst the prominent scholars of the time from whom he received his tuition were Shaykh Muhammad Salid Bab Sayl, Shaykh 'Umar Ba Junayd, Shaykh Bakri Shata, Shaykh 'Uthman Shata, Shaykh Muhammad Sulayman Hasb Allah, and Sayyid Husayn al-Hibshi (1842-1912). Three of these shaykhs became the consecutive Grand Muftis of the Shafi'i madhab in Makkah. Shaykh

[84] Interview: Mr A. Davids, Longmarket Street, Cape Town, 16 January 1991.
[85] Holt, P.M., Lambton, A.K.S. and Lewis, B., 1977. *The Cambridge History of Islam*, vols la-b and 2a-b. London: Cambridge University Press, vol. la, p. 371.
[86] Hendricks, S. op.cit. pp. 378-380.

Muhammad Salid was the first, then followed by Sayyid al-Hibshi. However, Sayyid al-Hibshi only accepted the appointment after Shaykh 'Umar Ba Junayd agreed to act as his chief assistant. After the death of Sayyid al-Hibshi, Shaykh 'Umar Ba Junayd became the official Grand Mufti of the Shafi'i madhab in Makkah.

The *tasawwuf* tradition was to leave an indelible impression on the religious philosophy and practice of Muhammad Salih. His tutors in Mecca, steeped in this tradition, passed on its philosophical teachings and practices to the young student. The first *tariqah* order into which Shaykh Muhammad Salih was inducted, was the *Ba Alawiyyah* Order:

Shaykh Muhammad Salih's induction into the Ba `Alawi order ... came primarily through Shaykh 'Umar Ba Junayd ... At the time nineteenth century Makkah was prominently represented by the Ba `Alawi order. Sayyid Husayn al-Hibshi, for example, inducted the previously mentioned Shaykh 'Abd al-Hamid Quds into the Ba `Alawi order. Moreover, nearly every one of the leading shaykhs in Makkah at the time was a proponent of one order or another. Shaykh Bakri Shata, for example, the author of two widely read works on tasawwuf (was the sufi shaykh under whom) Shaykh Muhammad Salih studied the Ihya `Ulum al-Din of Imam al-Ghazali, one of the main - if not penultimate - works in the Ba `Alawi order. It appears, therefore, that while the students were inducted into the order by a particular shaykh there existed within the Makkan network of teaching a set of complementarities that reinforced and strengthened what each of the others were teaching.

Amongst his renowned fellow students in Makkah were Shaykh 'Abd Allah Ba Kathir (who was the head of the Ba Kathir delegation that arbitrated in the Jum`a Dispute at the Cape in 1914), Sayyid 'Abbas al-Maliki (grandfather of the late Sayyid Muhammad 'Alawi al-Maliki, and later chief Qadi in Makkah), and the aforementioned Shaykh 'Abd al-Hamid Quds.[87]

In the meantime Muhammad Salih's parents left Swellendam and came to live in District Six in Cape Town. His father went on pilgrimage in 1890 and also took the opportunity to visit his son. In March the following year his father passed away while still in Mecca, leaving him without any means of support.[88] Fortunately for him (and also for the Muslim

[87] Ibid. pp. 381-382.
[88] Records of the Master's Office and the Orphan Chamber, 6/9/299:1951; Cape Argus, 2 May 1903.

community), his family, "seeing his good qualities continued to encourage and support him ...", and he was able to continue his studies without any fear of financial need.[89] Two years later, in 1893, his mother died in Cape Town.[90]

A few years later he entered into his first marriage with Ruqiyyah Abdurahman, the sister of Dr A. Abdurahman of Cape Town. Her parents, Khadijah and Abd al-Rahman, had taken their sons to Britain to study the medical sciences and had brought their daughters to Mecca on pilgrimage.[91] It was, therefore, in Mecca that Muhammad Salih met her. The marriage produced one child, Abdullah, who died, and soon after his death Ruqiyyah also passed away.[92] Thus, in the space of a few years the young student had lost his parents, wife and only child, as well as his eldest brother, Abd al-Basir, who died in Mecca in 1895. Soon afterwards he married again, but this time to an Arab woman whose name was Jawahir.[93]

Sojourn in Zanzibar

In 1902, when he had completed about fifteen years of study, Shaykh Muhammad Salih left Mecca to come home. *En route* he called at the island of Zanzibar, where he stayed for about a year, acting as a temporary judge in religious affairs[94] and reorganizing the island's *Mawlud al-Nabi* celebrations.[95] The Sultan at the time was Sayyid Hamid ibn Muhammad.[96]

In about March of 1903 he left Makkah for Zanzibar where he stayed for a number of months. It appears that a post for a temporary assistant Qadi had emerged during that time, and that through the mediation of his fellow student Shaykh 'Abd Allah Ba Kathir, who was also a resident of Zanzibar, it was suggested that Shaykh Muhammad Salih be appointed to that position. This appointment was ratified by his teacher Shaykh 'Umar Ba Junayd.

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[89] Ibid. 2 May 1903.
[90] Records of the Master's Office and the Orphan Chamber, 6/9/315:666.
[91] Interview: Mr G. Allie, Station Road, Athlone, 19 January 1991.
[92] Interview: Shaykh M. Hendricks, al-Zawiyah Mosque, Cape Town, 15 January, 1991; *Records of the Master's Office and the Orphan Chamber*, 6/9/3285:17702.
[93] Interview: Mr G. Allie, Station Road, Athlone, 19 January 1991.
[94] Interview: Shaykh M. Hendricks, Al-Zawiyah Mosque, Cape Town, 15 January, 1991.
[95] Interview: Mr G. Allie, Station Road, Athlone, 19 January 1991.
[96] Ingham, K., 1965. *A History of East Africa.* London: Longmans, p. 175.

According to Bang (n.d.: 10),[97] *Shaykh Muhammad Salih is listed as a "shaykh of the Alawi tradition, a teacher, and a scholar" by the foremost chronicler of the Shafi'i 'Ulama of East Africa, Abdullah Saleh Farsy, in his work The Shafi'i 'Ulama of East Africa, ca. 1830-1970: A Hagiographical Account.*

It was in Zanzibar that the relationship between Sayyid Ahmad b. Sumayt - author of the Tuhfat al-Labib - and Shaykh Muhammad Salih was cemented. During his tenure as an assistant judge and teacher he was active in shaping the mawlud celebrations in Zanzibar (da Costa, 1994: 107).[98] *While he contributed to the organisation of these ceremonies he also adopted some of the indigenous practices which he, in turn, introduced into Cape Town. While in Zanzibar he also added a number of books to his already substantial collection. From Sayyid Ahmad b. Sumayt he received at least twenty copies of the Tuhfat al-Labib. These copies were meant both for distribution amongst some of the Cape 'Ulama and for teaching his more advanced students.*[99]

Later that year, in July 1903, he finally decided to return to Cape Town.

The hydra of professional jealousy

Shaykh Muhammad Salih arrived home in July 1903, blissfully unaware that he was coming into a community that was tearing itself apart on religious and religious-related controversies; and this in spite of its history as victims of European slave activities in Africa and Asia, and despite the depth of its suffering and humiliation at the Cape.

In fact, even while he was on his way home "swords were already being drawn against him" because of a newspaper report that he had "attained his professorship" (whatever was meant by this) in Mecca.[100] A number of letters on the matter appeared in the local newspaper, some publicly disparaging him because of the "professorship",[101] while others claimed that there were other equally well-qualified "professors" in Islam in the Muslim community.[102]

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[97] Hendricks, S. op.cit. p. 383 quotes from Bang, A.K. 2003. *Sufis and scholars of the sea: family networks in East Africa, 1860-1925*. London: Routledge Curzon.
[98] Da Costa, Y. op.cit.
[99] Hendricks, S. op.cit. pp. 383-384
[100] *Cape Argus*, 2 May 1903.
[101] *South African News*, 17 June 1903 and 14 July 1903.
[102] Ibid. 20 July 1903; *Cape Argus*, 4 May 1903.

Soon after he arrived home there was another similar stream of letters over a newspaper report in the South African News[103] - that he was allegedly claiming to be South Africa's first "Mohammedan Bishop" (whatever this also meant). One letter claimed that there were already other such "bishops" in the community.[104] Not a single letter welcomed Shaykh Muhammad Salih into the community in the spirit of Islam, without any reservations. One thing was certain - he had received his first experience of some of the divisive forces that were operating in the community. Unfortunately, this was not to be his last such experience. More, and much worse, was to come later.

Davids[105] deals in detail with the storm of religious-related controversies that battered the community, especially during the nineteenth century. These controversies were to continue unabated during the life of Shaykh Muhammad Salih and were to affect him in a very personal way. In the foreword to David's book, Sayyid Habibul Haq of the University of Durban-Westville summarizes some of these controversies during the nineteenth century. He writes:

The first mosque in the Bo-Kaap ... suffered from bitterness and disunity on the question of the succession of the imam and the Jumu'ah question ... [which] became an unending drama.[106]

The second oldest mosque (the Palm Tree Mosque) ... gave rise to disunity and to unending problems.[107]

The third oldest mosque also does not portray a happy picture for it gave rise to the Hanafi-Shafi'i hatred campaigns.[108]

The details of the Jami'ah Mosque, also called the Queen Victoria Mosque, the fourth oldest mosque in Bo-Kaap, ... seem most unpleasant.[109]

The Shafi'iyyah Mosque, the fifth oldest, was not immune from the inner tension of leadership struggle and litigations.[110]

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[103] *South African News,* 14 July 1903.
[104] Ibid. 20 July 1903.
[105] Davids, A., 1980. *The Mosques of the Bo-Kaap.* Athlone, Cape Town: Institute of Arabic and Islamic Research.
[106] Ibid. pp xxiii-xxiv.
[107] Ibid. p. xxiv.
[108] Ibid. p. xxv.
[109] Ibid. pp xxv-xxvi.
[110] Ibid. p. xxvii.

The establishment of the two Hanafi mosques ... [was] the fruits of the hate campaign against the Hanafi school.[111]

Davids[112] summarizes the disputes, stating that litigation "became a pattern of virtually all mosques in Bo-Kaap. There were thus tremendous cleavages within the structure of the community." This is the situation into which Shaykh Muhammad Salih came home.

Unfortunately, he had also not come to the end of the personal tragedies that had characterized his life so far. His Arab wife could not adjust to the Cape Town way of life, so he divorced her, allowing her to return to her family in Mecca.[113] There were no children from this marriage. He remarried in about 1905, this time to his cousin on his mother's side, the fifteen year old Kubra Toffie.[114] He was about 34 years of age at the time. This marriage eventually produced fifteen children (eight daughters and seven sons).[115]

Restoring Islamic cultural values

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

It was in the Palm Tree Mosque that he launched an attack against the deculturization of Muslim women when he stated that they should cover their *awrahs* and wear *hijab*. At the time most Muslim women were copying the styles of women from the dominant Christian and colonialist culture. Large numbers of women, especially his students, heeded his call and covered up. This attempt to restore the Islamic propriety of women met with unexpected derision and contempt, but the women stood firm and slowly reaffirmed their dignity as Muslim women, despite the prevailing community

[111] Ibid. p. xxix.
[112] Ibid. p. xxiv.
[113] Interview: Shaykh M. Hendricks, Al-Zawiyah Mosque, Cape Town, 18 December 1990.
[114] Ibid. 18 December 1990.
[115] *Record of the Master's Office*, 19/04/1943:98720.

antagonism.[116] This was a major victory for Islam in a country in which the dominant culture was un- and anti-Islamic. By covering their *awrahs* the Muslim women at the time sent out a powerful signal that they wanted to adhere to the cultural values of Islam.

The *Jumu'ah* agreement

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

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

Signed by:

Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Salim Ba Kathir

Imam Hashim Shu'ayb

Shaykh Muhammad Salih ibn Hajji

[116] Interviews: Mrs M. Coenraad, Dolomite Road, Athlone, 24 January 1991; Mrs G. Abrahams, Longmarket Street, Cape Town, 31 December 1990.

Imam Muhammad Beharodien
Imam Abdurahman Qasim
Imam Abubakr Kagavat
Imam Gabiebodien
Imam Wahid
Imam Ibrahim Safih
Imam Musa Abdul Hadi
Imam Abdol Farad
Imam Muhammad Galiel
Imam Abdul Basir
Imam Jassim
Imam Muhammad Salih
NOTE: Imam Amino was not present at the discussion. He was ill. However, a few days later, Shaykh Abdullah Ba Kathir and I, with a number of others, had gone to Imam Amino to outline [the agreement] and to also give him an opportunity to deliver the khutba on a Friday. He disagreed and was dissatisfied with the making of one Jumu'ah in the above-mentioned place.
It is my request and approval that this agreement of the Imams of the Cape be translated and distributed to all the Muslims in the Cape Colony.
Sayyid Husayn Assa-kaf of Medinah
Cape Town
4 March 1914

The collapse of the agreement as a result of the attitude of Imam Amino must have caused considerable religious consternation to Shaykh Muhammad Salih. Oral history[117] indicates that he had played a significant role in the organization of the conference of *imams,* and that he had hoped to strengthen the Islamic base of the religious activities of the Muslims.

[117] Interview: Mr M.T. Samaai, Cashel Avenue, Athlone, 2 February 1991.

The al-Zawiyah Masjid controversy

About this time he began to conceive the idea that a complex should be established that could be used both as a mosque and a school. This was because a decision by the trustees of the *Khalil al-Rahman* Mosque in Ellesmere Street in Cape Town to build a Muslim Arabic school (of which he would be in charge) as part of the mosque complex had not materialized.[118] Matters were also complicated by the fact that he had moved his classes to his home, forcing him to teach his students under the most uncomfortable conditions.[119]

In 1919 he took the first steps towards the building of what was later to become known as the Zawiyah Mosque. The word *zawiyah* has a number of meanings. On the one hand, it means a corner of a house or a small mosque used for poor Muslims and students,[120] while in certain special cases it can be a retreat for members of a *tasawwuf* order (as in North Africa, for example). Unfortunately, the construction of the mosque, instead of being a milestone in the development of the religious structures of the Muslim community, gave rise to a court case in 1924 which played further havoc with Muslim unity and solidarity (or what was left of it after more than a century of religious and religious-related controversy).

The plaintiffs in the case[121] were Haji Abdurahman Bardien and Haji Tasserick, while the defendant was Shaykh Muhammad Salih. The plaintiffs purported that they and others had:

raised among the members of the Malay community ... a fund for the purposes of acquiring land, for the benefit of the Malay community, and of erecting thereon a suitable hall to be used exclusively for the purposes of holding such lectures, together with the buildings appurtenant thereto, ... In spite of protests and lawful demands from the contributors aforesaid (including especially the plaintiffs) and in breach of the ... agreement, defendant has wrongfully and unlawfully refused and still refuses to recognize the aforesaid contributors in the matter or to account to them in any way for the monies collected and/or raised on mortgage by him, or to have the aforesaid land and buildings registered in other than his own name, and claims to deal with the same

[118] *Notarial deed*, 16 March 1909. Deeds Office, Cape Town.
[119] Interview: Mrs G. Abrahams, Longmarket Street, Cape Town, 31 December 1990.
[120] Lane, E.W., 1867. *Arabic-English Lexicon*. Lahore: Islamic Book Centre, pp 1273-1274.
[121] *Records of the Cape Supreme Court*, 2/1/1/986:137.

property as his own in all respects. Moreover, defendant has wrongfully and unlawfully and in breach of the ... agreement diverted the said hall from the purposes for which it was acquired and erected, to wit a lecture hall, by using it for the purposes of a mosque.

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

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

This was a very bad period, and caused much sadness in the community. The members of his congregation helped to meet some of the costs, but his family was reduced to poverty. Mrs Abrahams of Longmarket Street, Cape Town recalls that "violence also broke out, especially against his supporters and family members, and my own father and the Shaykh's one cousin were stabbed in Hanover Street in Cape Town at the time."[122]

In 1920, after the usual ritual of court cases and litigations, he successfully established the Azzawia Mosque. The inaugural khutbah (sermon) was delivered by ... Sayyid Mustafa 'Ali al-'Aydarus of Surat in India. Amongst the delegation that was present at the opening were Sayyid 'Abd al-Samad al-Rifa`i of the then Lourenco Marques in Mocambique and Sayyid Muhammad al-`Aydarus of the Comores who later became the principal of the Zeerust High School in the Transvaal (North West Province).[123]

[122] Interview: Mrs G. Abrahams, Longmarket Street, Cape Town, 31 December 1990.
[123] Hendricks, S. op.cit. p. 385.

In the footsteps of the masters

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

According to Allie,[124] his daily teaching programme was as follows:

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

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

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

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

** After Isha he also had a special group of about ten people to whom he taught advanced lessons on tasawwuf.*

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

In describing the evening classes, Samaai[125] related the following:

We studied under him three evenings of the week, and were divided into different groups according to our level of advancement. Each group was taught individually. The major

[124] Interview: Mr G. Allie, Station Road, Athlone, 19 January 1991.
[125] Interview: Mr M.T. Samaai, Cashel Avenue, Athlone, 26 January 1991.

books studied included, inter alia, Risalah al-Jami'ah, Maraq al-Falah, and Irshad al-Bariyyah. Each student had his own texts, and all meanings and explanations had to be memorised.

In addition to all of these, Shaykh Muhammad Salih, who was a member of the *Ba Alawiyyah Tariqah,*[126] used these classes to spread the teachings and practices of *tasawwuf* that had had such a major impact on him during his studies overseas. Hendricks writes about this:[127]

The adhkar and awrad that were practiced are also firmly rooted in the Ba 'Alawi tradition. These included recitals of the Ratib al-Haddad, the Ratib al-'Aydarus, and the Ratib al-Attas. The former was performed on Thursday evenings, while the latter two were recited on Saturday Evenings. In his personal capacity or in the company of selected murids he also performed a number of other litanies such as the Dala'il al-Khayrat and the dhikr of the Ashab al-Badr in which the 313 names of those who fought at the Battle of Badr form the core of the litany. He also performed the Khatm al-Khawajakan according to both the Qadiri and Naqshbandi versions. To these liturgical practices da Costa adds the Nasr wa1-falah, the Durriyya, and the Ya Sin with the seven mubins.

Most visible in his public tasawwuf profile, however, was the attention he paid to the Mawlud al-Nabi ceremony. He would spend up to three months in advance of Rab'i al-Awwal - the month in which the Prophet (saws) was born - in preparation of this celebration. There were three components to the celebrations: the men's mawlud, the women's mawlud, and the children's mawlud. These were held, as they still are today, on different days of the week. The highlight of the celebrations was the women's mawlud. Significant in his approach to the mawlud practice was the fact that he only allowed regular students of his to participate in the mawlud jama'a (group). The mawlud that was - and still is - recited at the al-Zawiya is that of al-Barzanji. Weeks before the actual ceremony he would teach the text of the Barzanji, along with a number of commentaries on it, to his students. This he did to preclude the degeneration of the ceremony into mere

[126] Interview: Shaykh M. Hendricks, Al-Zawiyah Mosque, Cape Town, 18 December 1990.
[127] Hendricks, S. op.cit. pp. 388-389.

entertainment - particularly of the competitive kind. As a typical Ba 'Alawi in the Hijazi mould he was determined to maintain a balance between praxis and theory.

The *Mawlud al-Nabi* became, and still is, a major event in the yearly activities of the *al-Zawiyah Masjid.* On the night of the celebration the mosque is decorated with flowers and palms and illuminated with special lighting. Groups of men recite the *Barzanji* with solo recitals by certain prominent members of the congregation during the *qiyam.*[128] On the following Sunday the women celebrate by walking in procession and reciting the *Salawat* on the Prophet **(ﷺ)**, while the men recite in an adjoining room.[129]

Shaykh Muhammad Salih had not only been inducted into the *Ba Alawiyyah Tariqah*. According to Hendricks: [130]

Three other orders into which Shaykh Muhammad Salih was inducted were the Rifa`iyya, the Qadiriyya, and the Naqshbandiyya orders. He was inducted into the Rifa'i order by Sayyid Mansur al-Rifa'i who, as mentioned earlier, was the son of the Grand Shaykh of the Rifa'i order at the time, Sayyid Hamza al-Rifa'i. The wording of the ijaza granted clearly states that it is an ijaza irshad that entitled Shaykh Muhammad Salih to induct others into the order. His Qadiri ijaza was granted to him by Sayyid Muhsin b. Salim al-'Aydarus from Makkah. The Naqshbandi ijaza was granted at a ceremony that was conducted by a Naqshbandi delegation from Madina at the shrine of Tuan Ja'far in 1934. At this ceremony (the ilbas al-khirqa) he was invested with a green turban and a green thawb. The line of induction was through that of Shaykh Amin al-Kurdi, author of the Tanwir al-Qulub - a copy of which was handed to Shaykh Muhammad Salih at the investiture.

When his two sons, Shaykhs Mahdi and Ibrahim Hendricks returned from Makkah in 1936, he started applying himself more vigorously to his tasawwuf activities. While he left them in charge of the various study circles that were structured according to different levels of advancement, he focused largely on a smaller group designated almost entirely for tasawwuf teachings. To this group he taught the Tuhfat al-Labib of Sayyid Ahmad b. Sumayt in the Arabic language.

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[128] Interviews: Mr G. Allie, Station Road, Athlone, 19 January 1991; Mr M.T. Samaai, Cashel Avenue, Athlone, 20 January 1991.
[129] Interview: Mr G. Allie, Station Road, Athlone, 19 January 1991.
[130] Hendricks, S. op.cit. pp. 389-390.

Some of his more prominent students

During his almost forty years of teaching, Shaykh Muhammad Salih produced large numbers of highly competent students who later played important roles in the community as religious leaders and teachers, and in spreading the teachings on *tasawwuf*. Hendricks comments on some of them:[131]

It was through (some of his students) that his tasawwuf teachings and practices were continued through subsequent generations within the community. Some of them such as 'Abd al-Wahhab Abrahams and Muhammad Noor Toefy presided as imams at the mosque. Along with the latter two, other close students of the shaykh such as Ahmad Siraj (Seraai) and Muhammad Noor Bardien (Ghudayfi) were instrumental in the form and structure that the mawluds took. In the typical manner of sufi lodges they, along with a number of others, were resident students at the al-Zawiya. Others, such as Hajji Ismail Salam (d. 1978), were granted ijaza in the Ratib al-Haddad which he in turn handed down to his son-in-law, Khidr Parker. When Khidr died in 1991 the son of the late Hajji Ismail, Jamil, took charge of the Haddad dhikr. This tradition still continues in that family. In this way, with many other imams and families, the Ba Alawi and mawlud practices were widely disseminated throughout the community.

Amongst the more prominent of the Cape imams who initially studied with Shaykh Muhammad Salih was Imam 'Abd al-Basir Basir (d. 1962). Imam 'Abd al-Basir later left for Makkah where he became a student of Shaykh 'Umar Ba Junayd. Amongst the practices he encouraged were the Ratib al-Haddad, the Ratib al-'Attas, and the Ratib al-Nasr wa l-Falah - copies of which, according to da Costa "he had written in impeccable Arabic script." (da Costa, 1994: 164-5). According to da Costa too, it "is highly probable that Imam Abd al-Basir had received these practices from Shaykh Muhammad Salih Hendricks and/or from his own teachers in Makkah" and continues by adding that it "is interesting to note that during the lifetime of Imam Abd al-Basir ... the Bo-Kaap was characterised by a large number of Malaud Jama'at which, amongst other things, celebrated the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (saws) every year" (da Costa, 1994: 165). There was not a student, and particularly the imams amongst them, who were not

[131] Hendricks, S. op.cit. pp. 389-391.

introduced to these practices by Shaykh Muhammad Salih. The likelihood, therefore, is that Imam 'Abd al-Basir was initially introduced to these practices by him which were later reinforced by his teachers in Makkah.

One of his young proteges at the time, Hanief Allie - ex-principal of Habibia Primary School and who later married his daughter, Sakina - continued many of the Ba 'Alawi practices in his personal capacity and also introduced the mawlud celebrations into Habibia Primary. This became one of the major annual events at the school. He was also one of the lead reciters of the mawlud Barzanji at the al- Zawiya.[132]

End of an era

Shaykh Muhammad Salih died in 1945, after about forty years of public service. At the time people whispered in hushed tones of reverence and awe about his death, and it was almost as though a cloud had settled upon the community. It is difficult to describe the almost imperceptible grief that slowly spread through the community as the news of his death spread, and as people came to realize the full implication of the loss.[133] He died without having been able to do much about the incomprehensible religious discord that was (and still is) prevalent in the Muslim community. However, he left three sons (Shaykhs Ibrahim, Mahdi and Mujahid) who continued to nurture the structures that he had created in order to keep the torch of Islam burning. Their contribution to the life of the Muslims in Cape Town is another page in the turbulent history of this community.

[132] The reference to da Costa refers to da Costa, Y. & Davids, A., 1994. *Pages from Cape Muslim History*. Shuter & Shooter.
[133] Interview: Mr G. Allie, Station Road, Athlone, 19 January 1991.

SHAYKH MUHAMMAD HAYR (1887-1952): AN ICON OF *MADRASSAH* EDUCATION

Introduction

A few doors up the road from the *Awwal Mosque* in Dorp Street, Cape Town, at number 49[134] is a residence which for many decades housed one of the central *madrassahs* in the

[134] The house was later occupied by one of the daughters of Shaykh Muhammad, Abdeah, and her late husband, Sulayman da Costa. The tradition of using the house as a *madrassah* was continued by da Costa for about three decades. He used the house as a *madrassah* for adults from about 1955 to 1984 after which he moved his classes to a small hall converted into a classroom because of the lack of space in his home. The name of this *madrassah* was *Dar al-Huda* (The Abode of Guidance). When these classes were moved out of 49 Dorp Street in 1984, the long tradition of the use of the house as a *madrassah* for almost eight decades came to an end. Sulayman da Coata died in 2000 and the *madrassah* closed.

Bo-Kaap area, if not in the whole of the Cape Peninsula. This house was at the same time the home of the teacher at this *madrassah*, Shaykh Muhammad ibn Hay-rud-din Ishaq (commonly referred to in the community as Shaykh Muhammad Hayr) and his family. This *madrassah* was an excellent example of an arrangement of "house *madrassahs*" that formed the structural backbone of a system of Islamic education that had been devised by the Muslim community from about the beginning of 18th century. This system had been arranged primarily for two interrelated reasons; to inculcate into the community's children the basic teachings of Islam, and, in the process, to withstand the influence of the dominating Western-Christian discourses that were prevalent in Cape colonial society since the latter half of the 17th century.

The need for an alternative educational system was to counteract the agenda of converting Muslims children to Christianity operating especially in the Christian mission schools, as revealed by the following statement:[135]

Several attempts have been made before this to win the Malays[136] *proper, but no impression of any great or lasting nature has been produced. But upon closer inspection and a fuller inquiry I see no grounds for despair ...There are many Malays who know English as well as ourselves; masses of their children are frequenting our schools both religious and secular. These not only learn the English language and English ways and thoughts, but they learn the English Church Catechism and the Collects and Gospels, and they receive other Christian teaching ... hereby is produced a silent but deep impression, wearing out slowly but surely Moslem bigotry and prejudice.*

The impact of the colonial educational system on this agenda of converting Muslims is also mentioned:[137]

It would be unjust to say that nothing has been done for the conversion of the Malays at the Cape ...Indeed particular missionaries, such as the late Revds. Elliot, Gorrie, Arnold, and others, specially devoted their attention and energies to that noble object. The instances in which they met with success have been comparatively rare. In such cases of success, secular education mainly obtained in the public schools has had a beneficial

[135] Rev. Dr J.M. Arnold, 1877, p. 246

[136] The term "Malay" was used at the time to cover the whole Muslim population at the Cape, irrespective of national origin. Today the term is considered derogatory because of its racial overtones and geographical inaccuracy, with the community preferring to be called Muslims (da Costa 1990: 275-290). Wherever the term "Malay" is used in the text, it occurs in direct quotations from other works.

[137] Aspeling, 1883, p.18

effect.

During the first fifty years of the Dutch settlement at the Cape there was virtually no organized attempt at Islamic education. The political exiles (such as *Tuans* Abdur-Rahman Matebe Shah and Mahmud, whose graves are in Constantia), many of whom were learned Islamic teachers,[138] had been isolated, the Dutch had issued a *placaat* forbidding the Mardyckers[139] from practising or propagating their religion in public[140] and many of the slaves were still in the process of arriving at the Cape.

The development of alternative educational structures

From the beginning of the eighteenth century, the major factor, which assisted in the establishment of special Islamic schools, was the growth of the "free black" population (many of whom acted as both religious leaders and teachers) in the slowly developing urban area of Cape Town. They had the education, personal autonomy, accommodation, and the free time permitted by urban occupations, to organize religious schools:[141]

... in the eighteenth century, Cape Town was a much freer place than the platteland of its hinterland ...The diversity of occupations and the normal relationships of the town allowed a great amount of contact between slave and free ...What is more, they allowed a degree of social mobility unheard of in the countryside. (In addition) ... in the town it was possible (for the slaves) to accumulate the wealth to buy freedom ... Almost all the 1075 cases (of eighteenth century manumissions) came from Cape Town ...

The teachers from the "free blacks" played a critical role:

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[138] Ross, 1983, p. 20

[139] According to Valentyn (Aspeling 1883: 3-4):

> *Mardycka, or Maredhika, in the East Indies, belongs to Amboyna, now considered one of the Southern Molucca Isles. It is situated on the north-east coast of Leytimor ...To Leytimor belong (a number of) villages ... (and) a hamlet commonly called Campon-Maredhika, inhabited by strangers who first arrived with the Portuguese from the Mollucas proper, and were employed to help in strengthening the position of the latter against the Amboineese.*

Aspeling explains further,

> *On the same principle the Amsterdam Chamber was most anxious that free Malays should settle at the Cape to strengthen the position of the Dutch against the Hottentots and other natives, i.e. to be employed in a similar manner as the Mardyckers had been by the Portuguese at the Mollucas.*

[140] Davids, 1979, pp. 6-7

[141] Ross, 1984, p. 12

As in the (eighteenth) century, most of the ("clerical element") hailed from the Dutch East Indies but from the year 1800 onwards several of their spiritual leaders came from other parts of Asia as well. Thus in the period 1800-1850 one discovers these names mentioned frequently: Frans van Bengalen, Achmet van Arabia, and Achmet van Bengal ...Further at that time, also, quite a number of local-born persons acted as religious leaders. The most popular of them appeared to be one Carel of the Cape, who usually styled himself as 'the first pilgrim and priest'.[142]

From the eighteenth century onwards, the organization of Islamic education in which this "clerical element" played the most significant role, took three forms. These forms were formal adult schools primarily in mosques, smaller schools for children in the homes of some of the religious instructors or in mosques, and individual religious teachers going to the homes of their students to give private lessons. Many of these teachers, if they did not already have the title of *imam* or *shaykh*, were called *khalifahs*. The three forms of Islamic education mentioned have continued, with certain changes, up to today.

The first formal adult school was established as early as the 1790s by Imam Abdullah al-Mazlum (commonly referred to in the community as Tuan Guru) and a group of religious teachers in Dorp Street, Cape Town. By 1807 the school had an enrolment of 372 "free black" scholars and slaves,[143] a number that had increased to 491 by 1825.[144] The educational work started by Tuan Guru spread so that by 1861 it could be reported that "*... there are two large (Muslim) schools in Cape Town, in which the reading of al-Koran in Arabic is taught*".[145]

The schools for children were held either in private homes or in mosques. One such teacher was Imam Ahmad who said: "*I was formerly a fishmonger but being old, I confine myself to the instruction of children in the mosque every day*."[146] Another teacher was Abdul-Wasi' who remarked in his application for burgher rights that "*... his friends, in consideration of his advanced age, and the little service he is doing them, by*

[142] Rochlin, 1939, pp. 214-215
[143] Davids, 1987, p. 46
[144] Imperial Blue Book, 1835, p. 210
[145] Mayson, 1963, p. 23
[146] Snell, 1961, p. 16

instructing their children" wished to help him in the buying of a small house.[147] There were many people who referred to themselves as "Malay schoolmasters" in the directories and almanacs of the time.[148] By 1850 this type of educational structure had become firmly established and the curriculums broadened to include "secular subjects":

In several of the priests' houses there are smaller schools, at which ... boys and girls receive an equal instruction in English, Dutch, reading, writing, and the rudiments of their belief.[149]

This does not mean that slave children and the children of "free blacks" did not attend other schools. A survey of schools in Cape Town in 1779 (see Table 1) showed the following number of children attending:[150]

[147] Ibid.
[148] Rochlin, 1939, p. 217
[149] Mayson, 1963, p. 23
[150] de Kock, 1950, p. 106

Table 1: Number of children attending school in Cape Town, 1779

Teacher	Slave	Other	TOTAL
Meyer	6	71	77
Mellet	8	54	62
Knoop	25	111	136
Dureng	2	54	56
Wydeman	3	95	98
Redelinghyus	5	97	102
Jacobse	16	34	50

Besides these, there were also in the Slave Lodge, 44 lodge slave children and 40 burghers' slave children. It is highly probable that the figures for other children "included non-European as well as European children".[151] However, the "free blacks" used to remove their children from these schools at the age of about ten years and would then send them to the Islamic schools for an additional five years.[152] Even "white" converts to Islam were drawn into the local Islamic educational network. They were instructed in schools under the supervision of one of the local *imam mootas*.[153] It appears that an *imam moota* was a type of overseer of education.

The establishment of schools created the need for instructional religious literature in addition to the Qur'an. The literature produced during the 19th century was mainly translations from the Arabic.[154] Some of the writers whose works have to a large extent been preserved by the community were Imam Abdullah (Tuan Guru), Shaykh Abu Bakr Effendi, Shaykh Abdurrahim ibn al-Iraqi, Shaykh Abdullah Abdur-Ra'uf, Hisham Ni'matullah Effendi, Imam Abdurraqib ibn Abdul-Qahar, and Shaykh Abdullah Ta Ha Gamieldien.[155] The works produced were used as textbooks in the Islamic schools, and, being primarily translations from original Arabic sources, assisted considerably in protecting Islamic doctrines from adulteration. In addition, these works gave uniformity

[151] Ibid.
[152] Davids, 1979, p. 11
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid. p.1
[155] Davids, 1987

to the teachings of the religion because they formed a printed reference for an increasing literate community, and had the effect of public behaviour regulation.

This whole system of alternative education was strengthened by the training of young men from the Cape in the Islamic religious sciences at Islamic centres of learning, such as Mecca and Cairo. In the latter half of the 19th century, an anonymous observer of the Muslims at the Cape wrote:

They have of late been brought up to a higher standard of orthodoxy by more frequent and direct communication with the centre of authority at Mecca. Many young men now proceed thither for education ...[156]

This communication was later facilitated by the opening of steam communication with Zanzibar, which made visits of teachers from Islamic centres easier.[157] As early as 1820 and 1821:

... a number of distinguished Arabs from the island of Joanna in the Mozambique Channel, visited the colony. They were kindly received by the government, and were hospitably entertained by the Malays, whom they further instructed in the faith and practice of Islam, and with whom they have since constantly corresponded, sending them also supplies of the Koran and other books.

It was further recorded that during the 1880s missionaries from Mecca had come to the Cape to "teach orthodoxy".[158] In addition to this, the community had started to send young men to Cairo for religious studies during the 19th century.[159]

The opening of steam communication with Zanzibar and also Aden encouraged pilgrimages to Mecca from the Cape. This helped considerably in the strengthening of Islam by the diffusion of orthodox Islamic practices to the Cape. And this, in turn, had a beneficial impact on the system of *madrassah* education. According to a dispatch received at the Cape from the British Consul-General in Zanzibar at the time:[160]

Advantage is now being taken by the (Muslims) of the Cape of the continuous steam communication established between the Colony and Aden to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca ...This year (1877) 70 (Muslim) pilgrims have returned by Mail Steamer ...

[156] Anonymous, 1861, p. 353
[157] Lightfoot, 1900, p. 39
[158] Laidler, 1939, p. 325
[159] Fairbridge, 1927, pp. 108 &161
[160] Rochlin, 1939, p. 219

FOUR MAKERS OF CAPE MUSLIM HISTORY

Aspects of madrassah education at the Cape during the 20th century and later

The system of *madrassah* education as structured during the 18th to 19th centuries has continued, to a large degree, during the 20th century and later. There have been, however, a number of factors which have had a very positive impact on this system, and which have contributed to its partial restructuring:

* The first factor has been the large number of young Muslims who have gone to "sit at the feet of religious scholars" and/or who have gone to Islamic educational institutions, especially overseas, for training in the Islamic religious sciences. Many of them, on returning home, either came to teach in the prevailing *madrassah* structures or opened their own schools. Some of those who studied under individual scholars or/and attended school in Mecca include, *inter alia*, Shaykh Muhammad Salih Hendricks and later his sons (Shaykhs Ebrahim, Mahdi and Mujahid), the Booley brothers (Shaykhs Ganief and Yusuf), the Abdur-Ra'uf brothers (Shaykhs Abdullah and Qasim), and Shaykhs Muhammad Salih Solomon (Abadi), Yusuf Salam, Ahmad Behardien, and Nazim Mohamed, and Imam Isma'il Taliep

Some of the products of Egyptian educational institutions include the Gamieldien brothers (Shaykhs Shakir and Ihsan), the Gabier brothers (Shaykhs Omar and Abdul-Gamiet), and Shaykhs Isma'il Edwards and Salih Din. Amongst those who had been to institutions in Mecca and Medina are Shaykhs Muhammad Amin Fakier, Muhammad Moerat, Abdurahim Sallie, Abu Bakr and Ebrahim Gabriels, Shahid Esau, Siraj and Ahmad Hendricks, Irfan Abrahams, and Mahdi Hendricks (of Grassy Park). Those who had studied at other Middle Eastern institutions include Shaykhs Abu Bakr and Abdur-Razzaq Najjaar, and Abdul-Karim Toffar. And the products of institutions from the Indian sub-continent include Mawlanas Ebrahim Moosa, Yusuf Keraan, and Ahmad Mukaddam. Here and there one may find someone who had studied at "Western" institutions, such as Drs Abdul-Qadir Tayob and Rashied Omar who had done their doctoral studies on Islam in the U.S.A. There are also isolated cases of those who had studied in institutions in different parts of the world, such as Shaykhs Dhafir Najjaar and Abu Bakr Abdur-Ra'uf who had studied in Medina and Cairo, Maulana Qutubud-Din Kagee who had done studies in Pakistan, Medina and Cairo, and Shaykh Fa'ik Gamieldien who had studied in Cairo and Pakistan, and later furthered his studies in

Malaysia. Large numbers of students have also studied at local *Darul-Ulooms* and are running *madrassahs* and occupying positions in mosques.

Perhaps the most important impact of many of the individuals mentioned here is that some of the local students who either attended the schools opened by them or took private lessons from them, came to play major roles in *madrassah* education in different parts of the western Cape. Many of the "products" of Shaykh Muhammad Salih Solomon, for example, have opened their own *madrassahs*; such as Imams Shamsuddin Ebrahim (in Salt River), Abdurahman Salie (in Wynberg), Shaykh Abdurahim Sallie (in Surrey Estate) and Imam Omar Abdullah (in Goodwood).

* The second factor was the establishment of Muslim primary schools at which Islamic education was provided as part of the curriculum without any interference from the State. Table 2 gives the names of the Muslim primary schools in the Western Cape, and the dates on which they were established.

Table 2: Muslim primary schools in the Western Cape

Name of school	Date est.
Douglas Road (Wynberg)[161]	1941
Habibia (Athlone)[162]	1946
Muhammadiyyah (Wynberg)	1929
Muir Street (Cape Town)[163]	1930
Paarl Muslim[164]	1923
Rahmaniyah (Cape Town)[165]	1913

[161] This school, whose original name was Rahmaniyah Anglo-Urdu School, was founded in 1941 by a group of Muslims who came largely from Morba in India, the *Morba Anjuman*, to cater for Muslim children from India who could not speak the local languages, and was run as a private school. In 1948 the school was taken over by the Cape School Board and it was opened to all children. In 1956 the school was condemned by the health authorities because of inadequate toilet facilities, and the society which built the original school (the Rahmaniyah Anglo-Urdu Society) built a new school that has been hired out to the state. Thus, the school is a state school (and not a mission school) in hired accommodation. Islamic Religious Instruction is provided for the children by the teachers. At one stage the school premises was also used in the afternoon for *madrassah* classes run by Muhammad Nur Kagee (Kamies, 20:04:94).

[162] Although the "ordinary" teachers on the staff of Habibia Kokanie Educational Institute (as the school is officially known) teach the Religious Instruction, the principal of the school, Rafiq Gasant, and some of the teachers are responsible for co-ordinating the religious instruction programme for the school (Gasant, 20:04:94).

[163] At the inception of the Muir Street Muslim School, Imam Abdullah Behardien was appointed to teach Religious Instruction (Ajam 1986: 312). The school closed at the end of 1977 (Ajam, 1986: 388).

[164] The Paarl Muslim School was closed in 1974 as a consequence of the application of the Group Areas Act to the town of Paarl (Nackerdien, 20:04:94).

Salt River[166]	1917
Schotsche Kloof (Cape Town)	1931
Shaykh Yusuf (Cape Town)[167]	1936
Siddiqi (Elsies River)[168]	1956
Simonstown[169]	1923
Strand Muslim	1929
Talfalah (Sherwood Park)[170]	1916
Worcester Muslim	1928

Some of these schools (such as Rahmaniyah, Salt River, and Talfalah Primary Schools) have had special teachers employed mainly to teach Islamic Religious Instruction and who have either been paid by the State or by the community. At the other Muslim schools, Religious Instruction is given by the "ordinary" teachers on the staff, as is the case in State schools. In many cases the premises of these schools have been used in the afternoon for community *madrassahs*.

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[165] Rahmaniyah Primary School is considered to be the oldest Muslim school in the country. The first Religious Instruction teacher at the school was Shaykh Abdullah Ta-Ha Gamieldien, and he was paid by the Moslem Education League (Ajam, 1986: 215). Two teachers who were also later specially appointed to teach Islamic Religious Instruction at the school but who were paid by the State, were Shaykh Isma'il Jamodien and Shaykh Ihsan Gamieldien. The school premises have also been used in the afternoons for community madrassahs (Adams, 20:04:94).

[166] Those who taught Religious Instruction at Salt River Muslim School from the time of the establishment of the school are, in chronological order, Imam Abu Bakr Gamieldien, Imam Abu Bakr Abdurouf, Abd al-Aziz Latif, Fadil Behardien, Salie Abader, Idris Behardien, Shaykh Isma'il Jamodin, Shaykh Abd al-Hamid Gabier, Shaykh Amin Davids, Muhammad Haron and Husayn Kriel (The origins ..., 1994; Slamdien, 22:04:94). During the initial stages of the school, the Religious Instruction teachers were not paid by the State, and each child had to bring three pence per week to cover the salaries of these teachers. There were also two lady-teachers who taught some of the Religious Instruction; Asa Jaffer, and Sara-Bibbi Haffegee of Simonstown (Brown, 13:03:94).

[167] Shaykh Yusuf Primary School closed in 1969 after a fire had destroyed most of the school (Ajam, 1986: 389).

[168]The Siddiqi Primary School eventually closed in 1971. This school was the only Muslim school with a large percentage of children from non-Muslim homes; about a quarter of its children being from such homes (Davids, 18:04:94).

[169] Simonstown Muslim School closed at the end of 1968; another victim of the Group Areas Act (Ajam, 1986: 403).

[170] The teachers who taught Religious Instruction at Talfalah Primary School from the time of the inception of the school were Imam Ma'awiyyah Sedick [who did mainly voluntary teaching], Shaykh Isma'il Moos [who was later paid by the State], and Imam Ibrahim Davids [who was also paid by the State] (Galant, 20:04:94).

The establishment of Muslim primary schools added a new dimension to the structure of *madrassah* education prevailing at the Cape, and it was within this restructured system that the *Nurul-Mubin Madrassah* of Shaykh Muhammad operated in Dorp Street.[171]

The Nurul-Mubin Madrassah

Muhammmad Hayr grew up in Cape Town. His parents were Hay-rud-din, a fishmonger, and Khalimah Isaacs. Other than Muhammad, they had another three children; Hashim, Gouwa, and Zaynab. There was another brother, Yusuf, from a previous marriage by his father.[172] As was the practice of large numbers of Muslims at the Cape, from the time of their arrival here up to the first few decades of the 20th century, they did not send their children to *Christeskole* (Christian mission schools) where the children would be indoctrinated with *Christegeleerte* (Christian doctrine). This did not mean that the children grew up illiterate. They attended *madrassah* where they received *Slamsegeleerte* (an Islamic education), and could read Arabic and *Afrikaanse-Arab* (Afrikaans written in Arabic script).[173]

Thus, the young Muhammad (like the rest of his brothers and sisters) could neither read nor write English and Afrikaans, although he could sign his name. His Islamic education he received at the hands of Shaykhs Abdurrahim ibn Muhammad al-Iraqi (d. 1942) Ahmad Behardien (d. 1973), Muhammad Salih Hendricks (d. 1945) and Uthman Najjaar. Quranic recital he studied under Imam Sa-eirien.[174] In recognition of his local studies he was granted the title of *shaykh* by the community, an honorific usually granted in the community to those who had obtained qualifications in the Islamic religious sciences overseas.

About 1916 he married Jawahir Shahibo, a descendent of Imam Abdullah (Tuan Guru).[175] At the time his parents were living at 49 Dorp Street in Cape Town and the

[171] Interview: Booley, 07:04:94
[172] Ibid; Interview: da Costa, 03:05:94
[173] The level of literacy in the Muslim population at the Cape was always considered to be very low. Although many Muslims at the time could not read and write the official languages (and were, therefore, arrogantly assumed by the authorities to be illiterate), they could read and write their national origin languages, and even Afrikaans in Arabic script.
[174] Interview: Booley, 07:04:94
[175] Jawahir was the daughter of Salamah, the daughter of Abd al-Raqib, the son of Abd al-Ra'uf, the son of Tuan Guru (da Costa, 03:05:94).

young couple went to live elsewhere in the same street. Later they moved back to the parental home, and his parents moved to District Six. The marriage produced nine children, six daughters and three sons. Three of the children (Fatimah, Salmah and Muhammad Hashim) died young. Four daughters (Janab, Latifah, Abdiyyah, and Galimah) and two sons (Adil and Fadil) survived.[176] With the birth of Galimah, he only had daughters as children and he wanted to adopt his nephew:

When I was a young boy Shaykh Muhammad wanted to adopt me because he had no sons up to that stage of his marriage, only the three daughters. The only son he had, had died young. He then had some sheep sacrificed for Allah to grant him sons. His next two children were both boys.[177]

Early in the marriage he acquired the property at 49 Dorp Street where he had established his *madrassah*. The teaching day was divided into three sessions; a morning session for those not or not yet attending school, an afternoon session for those at school, and an evening session for adults. Children from all over the Cape Peninsula attended the school, and two even came from Bulawayo.[178] Included amongst the children were a few who boarded with the family during the period they attended the *madrassah*. Some of these children attended normal school during the day. According to one of the students who boarded in the house in this way:

My father wanted his children (my brother and sister, and me) to have an Islamic education, and he placed us in the madrassah in Dorp Street. This was in 1934 when I was about six and half years of age. We stayed in the house, and Shaykh Muhammad and his wife became like our parents. We called them boeya (father) and oemmi (mother) respectively. My father paid for our stay there. He used to visit us twice a month, once just for a visit and the other time to take us home for the weekend. He had to be careful that he brought us back in time, otherwise there was trouble.[179]

Speaking about the sleeping and eating arrangements, he said:[180]

There were about eight children who boarded there at the time. We used to share beds but on very hot nights we used to sleep on reed mats in the langar. During meals, he

[176] Interview: da Costa, 03:05:94
[177] Interview: Isaacs, 26:04:94
[178] Interview: da Costa, 03:05:94
[179] Interview: Adams, 15:04:94
[180] Ibid.

would allow his own children and each one of those staying in the house to take turns to eat out of the same plate with him. Every night a different one would eat with him in this way, and each one of us took it as a great honour and privilege to share his food.

The curriculum and methods of teaching used in the *Nurul-Mubin Madrassah* were common in most of the *madrassas* in the Western Cape. Children were taught Arabic reading, simple *fiqh* and *adab*. For the Arabic reading, the major textbooks were *Qa'idah al-Baghdadi* (called a *su-rat*) and the Qur'an. The former book was used as a first stage reader for the Arabic language. From this reader the pupil learnt to recognize and pronounce the Arabic letters individually, and in combinations in simple Arabic words (a process covered by the word *ay-ya*). To learn and/or memorize any work was covered by the expression "*om faam te maak*", and to *batcha* meant to recite the Qur'an.

A large part of the learning consisted of the memorization of litanies, invocations, and chapters or sections from the Qur'an needed for the proper performance of the formal prayers (the *salah*) and other forms of worship. Most of the rules governing these forms of worship were written down by the students in Afrikaans using Arabic script. The rules concerning the proper recitation of the Qur'an (called rules of *tajwid*) were recorded in the same way.[181] All these rules had to be memorized and recited.

Other than all these "formal" matters which the children had to study, Shaykh Muhammad also took them for visits to the graves of the *Awliya* (the *kramats*), and introduced them to the practices of schools of sufism; practices which he had most probably been taught by two of his teachers, Shaykhs Muhammad Salih Hendricks and Abdur-Rahim ibn Muhammad al-Iraqi. Both these shaykhs were steeped in sufi (*tasawwuf*) practices especially those practices of the *Ba Alawiyyah Order*. One of the students reported:[182]

When I went to school there, I had great difficulty in learning. Shaykh Muhammad took me to the grave of Tuan Guru. He made du'a that Allah should grant me the ability to learn through the barakah of the salihin.

And according to Shaykh Muhammad's daughter, Janap:[183]

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[181] Hadji Ahmad Isaacs, a nephew of Shaykh Muhammad, showed the author his exercise book in which he wrote these lessons while attending the *Nur al-Mubin Madrassah* as a young boy (26:04:94).
[182] Interview: Isaacs, 26:04:94
[183] Interview: Booley, 07:4:94

My father made the Ratib al-Attas every Thursday and Sunday evening with a large group. This was either done at our home or at other people's homes. The group comprised his students, both children and adults.

Part of the learning process was a very strict system of discipline:

Discipline was very severe in the madrassah. In the corner of the room stood the falaka, the presence of which alone frightened us. The falaka consisted of a long rod, about the length of a broomstick. Attached to each end of the rod was a pair of wooden rings through which a piece of rope was looped. One's feet had to be placed through the loops of rope, and the rod was turned in such a way so that one's feet were lifted in the air. Pupils were hit on their behinds, or, in very severe cases of misbehaviour, on the soles of their feet.[184]

According to oral tradition in the community, the *falaka* was used very commonly in the *madrassahs* in the Western Cape.[185]

Once the children in the *Nurul-Mubin Madrassah* had completed all the work required of them, a special *tammat* or graduation ceremony was held. The word *tammat* appears to be derived from the Arabic verb *tamma* that means "to be or become complete". One of the students described the *tammat* ceremony in the following way :[186]

I went to study under Shaykh Muhammad at the age of about eleven or twelve, and took two and half years to complete all my studies. I was part of a group for which a tammat ceremony was organised in the Shafi'i Mosque in Chiappini Street, Cape Town. All dressed up, I was taken by open carriage from Observatory, where I lived, to Cape Town. Many of the leading imams and shaykhs were there, such as Shaykhs Ahmad Behardien and Abduragiem, and Imams Shadley and Sa-eirien. Shaykh Abduragiem was in charge, and we were tested on the basics of fiqh, the twenty sifats (attributes of Allah), and rules of tajwid, and we had to recite passages from the Qur'an.

Other than his duties as a *madrassah* teacher, Shaykh Muhammad serviced the community in a number of different ways:

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[184] Interview: Adams, 15:04:94

[185] The *falaka* described by Adams appears to be only one version. There were also other versions. The *falaka* was also used on girls. They had to put their hands through the loops. The rope was tightened around their wrists, and they were beaten on the hands (Charles, 01:05:94).

[186] Interview: Isaacs, 26:04:94

My father was not only a teacher. He was also a community person. People used to call on him at all times of the night and day to make du'a for the sick, to solve family problems, mantra babies, prepare banaa or make medicines for the sick.[187]

And then in addition to all this, he was appointed as imam of the Palm Tree Mosque in about 1935, in succession to his uncle, Imam Muhammad Yusuf. He held this position till his death in 1952. This brought additional duties and community responsibilities. He then also had to deliver lectures on aspects of Islam to the congregation on Sundays and certain nights of the week.

The fact that Shaykh Muhammad and his wife spent the largest part of the day teaching the children and adults of a very poor Muslim community in their home necessitated that other means had to be found to supplement the family's income. Shaykh Muhammad ran additional *madrassahs* at the *Shafi'i* Mosque in Chiappini Street, in Pentz Street and at Rahmaniyah Primary School in the afternoon. His wife had to resort to the selling of goods obtained from auctions and to the making of cakes and sweets, which were sold in the neighbourhood by their children and some of the pupils:[188]

Every Friday after Jumu-ah Salah, we used to collect pinecones in the quarry. From the pine kernels oemmi made tamaletjies. These tamaletjies, and also lallie-malas, koesiesters and toffie apples, were sold by us in the neighbourhood. We earned an olap each for our efforts.[189]

It appears from this description by Adams that the *madrassah* was much more than an educational institution. It had its own particular social dynamics. The children in the *madrassah*, especially the boarders, participated actively in the social life of the home:

In winter the house leaked very badly. We used to sit at the coal stove in the evening playing dam, and listening to stories of the Prophets and aspects of Islamic history from Shaykh. On other occasions we learnt to jiekke. He showed us a lot of love and care, and was very protective over us. We were his children.[190]

On his death in 1952, his wife and daughters continued some of the *madrassah* activities but with the marriages of the daughters these activities eventually came to an

[187] Interview: da Costa, 03:05:94
[188] Interview: Booley, 07:04:94
[189] Interview: Adams, 15:04:94
[190] Ibid.

end. His daughter, Galima Ajouhaar, now resident in Lansdowne, appears to be his only child that has continued their father's tradition of teaching people and conducting congregational *dhikrs*. She has become an icon in the community. There is no doubt that in the history of the Muslim community the contribution of Shaykh Muhammad to the Islamic education of the community has left an indelible impression. Without people of his calibre and dedication it is difficult to see whether Islam could have survived the onslaughts of the dominant discourses of the colonial society at the Cape.

During the historical period under consideration (1900-1950), a number of *madrassahs*, other than the *Nur al-Mubin Madrassah*, were also operating in the Bo-Kaap and other areas where Muslims were living. Many of these *madrassahs* were housed in private homes and in Muslim schools, and carried on most of their activities in the afternoons (after the normal day school) and early evenings. Each teacher or *khalifah* virtually decided on his/her own the curriculum for the *madrassah*, and parents had very little say in what was taught and how it was taught. This whole system has continued, with certain structural changes, into this century.

Other than the community *madrassahs*, there have also been isolated cases of teachers travelling from house to house to teach the children of the families concerned. This has occurred primarily in the "Indian" community. Examples of such "travelling *khalifahs*" include, *inter alia*, Sies Joggie (Zahrah Newman) in Kensington, Imam Gasant Abduragmaan in Claremont, Sulayman Safodien in Maitland,[191] Abdullah Abdullah in Cape Town, and Shaykh Amin Fakier in Elsies River.[192] And then there has also been cases of a teacher taking a few children to stay with him, and he would teach them *hifz* and aspects of the Islamic religious sciences. Both Imam Isma'il Taliep of Salt River and Shaykh Muhammad Salih Solomon (Abadi) of Cape Town used to do this.

An interesting "modern" development has been the establishment of fairly sophisticated *madrassahs*; generally using secularly trained teachers, teaching a broad range of religious subjects, and making use of a wide assortment of audio-visual aids. These *madrassahs* function either in the afternoons or over weekends. One such *madrassah* is the *Al-Jami'ah Sunday Madrassah* in Claremont. It makes use of twenty-four mainly

[191] Interview: Patel, 13:05:94
[192] Interview: Abdullah, 14:05:94

secularly trained teachers who receive no remuneration, and the school has a roll of 350 children. All instruction is free. The *madrassah* operates on a Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.[193] The *Azzawiyah* Children's School in Walmer Estate, on the other hand, uses nine mainly professionally-untrained teachers, and has a roll of about 90 to 100 pupils. This *madrassah* meets on a Saturday from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.[194]

There is very little doubt that the *madrassah* system of alternative education established by the Muslims was a major factor in the survival of Islam, and the protection of its teachings and practices. The teachers in these *madrassahs* were, to a large degree, very simple professionally-untrained people, and many without any in-depth understanding of Islam. Despite these shortcomings, they played a major role in protecting the teachings of Islam from being swamped by the dominant religious discourses at the Cape.

[193] Interview: Gasant, 15:05:94
[194] Interview: Slamdien, 15:05:94

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Abdullah, Abdullah (Fairways): 14 05:94.

Abrahams, M.S. (Schotsche Kloof Primary): 21:04:94

Abrahams, Khadijah (Cape Town): 05:05:94

Abrahams, Tahir (Manenberg): 07:05:94

FOUR MAKERS OF CAPE MUSLIM HISTORY

Achmat, Riedwaan (Surrey Estate): 06:05:94

Adams, Abdullah (Lotus River): 20:04:94

Adams, Yusuf (7th Avenue, Kensington): 15:04:94

Bardien, *Imam* Muhammad Zayn (Salt River): 30:04:94

Bassier, *Imam* Abd al-Rahman (Cape Town): 06:05:94

Booley, Janab (Athlone): 07:04:94

Booley, Faridah (Kensington): 06:05:94

Brown, Khadijah (Salt River): 13:03:94

Charles, Wahidah (Kensington): 01:05:94

da Costa, Abdiyyah (Cape Town): 24:04:94

28:04:94

03:05:94

da Costa, Sulayman (Cape Town): 27:04:94

Daggie, Foziah (Retreat): 18:04:94

Davids, Fatimah (Kensington): 18:04:94

Davids, Sedick (Kensington): 18:05:94

Gasant, Rafiq (Habibia Primary, Athlone): 20:04:94

15:05:94

Hendricks, Hasan (Azzawia Mosque): 30:04:94

Isaacs, Ahmad (Athlone): 26:04:94

Jedaar, Muhammad Rashaad (Athlone): 18:04:94

Johaardien, Hanif (Kensington): 01:05:94

Kamies, A. (Douglas Road Pr., Wynberg): 20:04:94

FOUR MAKERS OF CAPE MUSLIM HISTORY

Karriem, Abd al-Rahman (Kensington):	07:05:94
Misbach, Yusuf (Maitland):	05:05:94
Moosa, R (Worcester Muslim School):	20:04:94
Nackerdien, Shaykh Rafiq (Paarl):	20:04:94
Patel, Ibrahim (Kensington):	13:05:94
Salie, Abd al-Karim (Kensington):	01:05:94
Slamdien, Abd al-Aziz (Salt River):	22:04:94
	04:05:94
Slamdien, Hafsah (Kensington):	15:05:94

SHAYKH MAHDI HENDRICKS (1908-1981): LIKE FATHER LIKE SON

Introduction

My first contact with Shaykh Mahdi was in 1969. Deeply concerned at the time at what appeared to me to be certain very disturbing discrepancies in the "case" of being an "*Ahmadi* sympathizer" against Shaykh Muhammad Jassiem, I decided to approach Shaykh Mahdi on the matter because of the reputation he had in the community as a scholar of Islam. Although I did not know him personally at the time, I took advantage of

our "family connection" - we have a common grandfather - to approach him directly on the matter. I can still very clearly remember the lesson he gave me in Islamic scholarship. Speaking without any notes, and for about an hour, he outlined the whole subject of *riddah*, at an academic level, that left me speechless and humbled. Quoting profusely from the Qur'an and the Traditions, and from the work of Imam Ghazali (r.a.), he provided for me with a step by step outline of the rules governing *riddah*. In that hour I developed a respect for him as a scholar that has remained with me up to today. There also developed a special attachment between us, which I also cherish considerably.

During 1971 and 1972 I attended his classes on *haj*, which were held in the front room of the house at the mosque. For two years I sat in these classes, gaining for the first time an understanding, and an insight into, aspects of jurisprudence according to the different Schools of Thought. And coming to understand how one should use the different teachings within the bounds of the four schools to facilitate one's religious observances. At the end of the final lesson, as I was leaving, he remarked to me: "I give you *ijazah* to teach *haj*." At the time, there was no clear realization as to the blessing of this. I just thanked him, and left. Today the appreciation of this runs deep within me, and through his inspiration I have been conducting classes on *haj* for more than twenty years. At the time when I attended his classes, I always kissed his hand as a token of respect, love and appreciation. The mistake I made was that I should have kissed his feet for what he taught me, and the understanding of Islam he gave me.

The preparation of a scholar

Shaykh Mahdi was born in 1908, one of fifteen children, to Shaykh Muhammad Salih and Kubra Hendricks of the Al-Zawiyah Masjid in Walmer Estate. He attended Trafalgar Junior Primary School, and from there he went to Trafalgar High School from where he matriculated. (According to oral accounts in the family), even as a young child he played little and concentrated primarily on his books. At a very young age he had demonstrated the qualities of a scholar, and was mainly concerned with his studies.

In the meantime he and his two brothers, Ibrahim and Ahmad, had commenced religious studies under their father, and recital of the Qur'an under Shaykh Muhammad Hayr of Dorp Street. Their schooling under their father was very strict and very thorough so that

prior to their leaving for Mecca, they had already mastered Arabic and had at their disposal a considerable body of religious knowledge. In 1928 the three brothers left for Mecca. Tragically, Ahmad died the year after from typhoid fever. Shaykh Mahdi also contracted the disease but survived.

Life as students in Mecca was not easy. According to his son, Muhammad Salih:

My father told me that times were very hard. They had to study by candlelight, and sometimes there was no food in the house. It was for this reason that later he used to eat every crumb from his plate. Every year they would wait for the pilgrims from Cape Town to bring them funds from their father. At times he was reluctant to speak about this aspect of their stay in Mecca.

While in Mecca, they studied the Islamic Religious Sciences under some of the most renowned scholars of the time such as:

* Shaykh Muhammad Sa'id Bab-Sayl (the *Shafi'iyyah Mufti* of Mecca) who taught them Islamic Jurisprudence.
* Shaykh Umar ibn Abu Bakr Ba Junayd who also taught their father, and who gave them considerable guidance in Islamic Spirituality.
* Sayyid Bakr ibn Salim al-Bar from whom the two brothers obtained *ijazah* to teach, *inter alia*, Islamic Jurisprudence, *Tasawwuf*, and *Tafsir* of the Qur'an.
* Shaykh Bakr Bab-Sayl.
* Sayyid Abbas al-Maliki, a judge.
* Shaykh Sa'id Dakhlan.

From all these scholars the brothers obtained *ijazah* to teach most of the Islamic Sciences. In addition, they had obtained *ijazah* in Islamic Culture and the Arabic Language from an array of secular and religious scholars in Medina, according to a certificate dated 2 *Rabi al-Awwal*, 1355 A.H. In 1936 the two brothers returned home from Mecca; perhaps of the most highly qualified Islamic scholars, other than their father, to have returned back to South Africa. Their impact on those with whom they had made contact in Mecca is summed-up in the word of Shaykh Abdullah Mufti (of Mecca) in a letter to their father:

Dear Sheik, the parting of your sons was not a pleasant ordeal for me and my family, and neither for them too, it is practically 8 years which we were together ... their exist

between us a firm and deep friendship, as a matter of fact, its almost my brothers which has departed with me.

At the same time, I feel very proud with them, as I think I am the 1st student of theirs, as I have finished 2 ketaabs (books) in Fik(Islamic Jurisprudence) by Sheik Mahdie. May Allah grant them a long life, and you too, and give them a successful future, for the benefit of the Moeslimeen of Cape Town, and the rest of the world. You will find enclosed their certificates from their Sheiks.

When they came home, they were welcomed with a mixture of great expectation and grief. Their sister, Faizah, related:

My mother and father watched from our house as the boat came in with them on board. We waited patiently for them to come. The bags of Ahmad were brought in first. We all wept. It was like a funeral. Mujahid and I refused to leave their sides. We sat on their laps, and where they moved we moved.

Almost from the very next day they became involved in the heavy teaching and administrative programme at the Al-Zawiyah. In these activities, they were joined by another brother, Hasan. He had been taught by his father and had not gone overseas to study. There was one other brother, Mujahid, who was about eight years of age when they returned from Mecca. He was to leave for Mecca in 1948 for further studies, three years after the death of their father. When their father died the full responsibility of carrying and directing the teaching programme rested on the shoulders of his sons.

In the meantime, Shaykh Mahdi married Khadijah Jacobs, the daughter Ali and Hasinah Jacobs of Balmoral Street, Woodstock. They eventually had four children; Muhammad Salih, Haazim (d. 1997), Fadl and Naylah.

Cultivating a culture of "non-sectarian" learning

Other than the teaching programme of his brother, Shaykh Ibrahim, Shaykh Mahdi spent most of his time teaching the large number of people who attended his classes. One of his students, Achmat Fakier, reported:

I attended the first classes of Shaykh Mahdi in the 1940s. (The males) had classes at night from Mondays to Wednesdays. We started with the Risalah al-Jami'ah, a work on

jurisprudence, and the Ihya Ulum al-Din of Imam Ghazali. On Sunday mornings he did Tafsir al-Qur'an. On Thursday evenings Shaykh Ibrahim taught Ahadith.

All in all their students received a minimum of five lectures a week. This was not done anywhere else in the Cape Peninsula. In addition, special classes were held for women every fortnight. A few months before *haj* he would conduct classes on the jurisprudence governing the *umrah* and *haj*. During the day and on certain evenings he had individual students. Some of those who received individual tuition from him were Imam Ali Gierdien and Shaykh Mu'ti (of Paarl) in the mornings, Kamal van der Schyff, Tahir Naserodien and Umar Salasa whom he taught *Tawhid* on a Friday evening, and the lawyer, O. Karjiker, and Dr. Abdulhamid Sayyid on a Saturday afternoon. He taught Karjiker the relationship between Roman-Dutch Law and Islamic Law.

Perhaps the individual student whom he taught the most intensively was his brother, Shaykh Mujahid, before the latter left for Mecca for further studies:

I studied a number of works under him, such as the Risalah al-Jami'ah, Tafsir al-Jalalayn and Kifayah al'Awam. He was a very strict teacher. I recited Qur'an by him, and if I could not pronounce a letter correctly, he would push the pen into my mouth. Today I appreciate all this.

His whole approach to Islam was innovative (for Cape Town) and "non-sectarian" as he tried to give maximum exposure to its teachings from a variety of perspectives and schools of thought.

His son, Muhammad Salih, said:

My father exposed us to all the schools of thought. He gave rulings in terms of circumstances, and investigated the reasons behind the juridical rulings. This meant that his application of rulings was not rigid. He used to say: "Do not ask me a ruling on a matter. Detail the circumstances, and I will explain to you the different points of view. You can then choose." In most matters he would give as many possible views on the matter (from the different schools of thought) as he could.

His understanding of and respect for the different schools of thought came out in a variety of ways. In explaining this, his son said:

He always said that if he had his way he would let his students practise the Malikiyyah school of thought because many matters were easier by that school. He did not do this

because he was afraid of the dissension that it might cause. He allowed us to swim in trunks according to the teachings of Imam Malik (r.a.).

This was confirmed by Fakier:

His favourite imam was Imam Malik (may Allah have mercy on him) although he was a Shafi. He said that if it were not because of his father, he would have switched to the Malikiyyah school of thought because Imam Malik made the practice of Islam more relevant and easier for women. He respected all the schools of thought, and considered them as "good fortune" for us, and often quoted the Qur'anic words: ***No soul shall have a burden laid upon it greater than it can bear*** *(ii:233).*

His attitude towards the different schools of thought was demonstrated in his teachings on *haj*. He drew opinions from the different schools in order to make matters easy for the pilgrims. Thus he taught, for example, that one could pelt the three *jamarat* after *Subh* on the *Days of Tashriq*, that one could enter into *ihram* at Jedda, and that one could perform as many *umrahs* as one desired after Ramadan and only give one dam. He based these views on intensive research into the different views within the schools of thought. These teachings sent shock waves amongst the teachers of *haj* and others in the Cape Peninsula, and there was considerable opposition, based on unfounded opinion, to what he taught. The scholar in Shaykh Mahdi refused to give in to views based on the lack of scholarship that came from different quarters in the Cape Peninsula.

His scholarship was generally recognised, here and overseas. When three students from Cape Town were unable to complete their studies in Mecca, their teacher sent a letter to him requesting that they complete their studies with him. And that he should grant them permission (*ijazah*) to teach only after they had completed their studies. Only one came and completed. On another occasion, a shaykh from Morocco came all the way to Cape Town to obtain *ijazah* from him to teach a certain book. He granted it to him. Shaykh 'Umar Abdullah of the Comoros, an internationally-recognized scholar of Islam, who had completed two doctoral studies, considered him to be one of the best scholars "on the continent of Africa, at whose feet I would sit every day if I should be living in Cape Town".

Perhaps his whole attitude to serious scholarship was best stated by Fakier:

Shaykh Mahdi was solely concerned with knowledge. His whole life was (the search for)

knowledge. To him there was no better religious observance than acquiring knowledge. He never made dhikr with us, and I have also not ever seen him making a Jumu'ah. To him only the search for knowledge mattered.

This recognition as a serious scholar in no way interfered with an intense humility that emanated from him, and that generally characterised his personality. His daughter, Naylah, in talking about this, said:

He was exceptional as a father and a teacher. One could always relate to him, and in discussions he never condemned one or called one's ideas expressions of polytheism. He did not like the limelight or that his name should appear in newspapers. It was for this reason that he refused a position at the University of Cape Town. He did not want to impress others. His love for Allah and His Messenger (s.a.w.s.) was too intense for all this.

Yet he sometimes showed extreme impatience with intellectual pretence. On one occasion in one of his *haj* classes a student asked him what Allah, the Most High, said about a certain matter after Shaykh Mahdi had explained the matter in detail. The student implied in his question that Shaykh Mahdi had ignored the Qur'an in his explanation. His anger was clearly visible as he re-explained the sources of the *Shari'ah*. After that few of us ventured to ask any questions despite his imploring that we should ask if we could not understand. On other occasions, in private discussions with him, I was amazed at his patience with one and with the manner in which he dealt with problems, and how he would generalise an issue so that one would not feel that he was talking directly to one. Prior to leaving for Mecca, I went to greet him and asked if there was any book that I could bring him. He took me to his bedroom and his library to show me his books. I did not repeat the question.

His love for learning was also reflected in his concern with the impact of Christian cultural elements on the lives of young Muslims. It was primarily for this reason, and the need to teach Islam to young children, that he encouraged the establishment of the Al-Zawiyah Children's School in the late 1970's. According to his son, Haazim:

We went to my father, and he gave us permission to start the school. He opened the school formally, and we taught the children History, Tawhid, Fiqh, and Qur'anic recital. He remarked at the time: "Without this school, the Al-Zawiyah would be four empty

walls. This school is the backbone of the Al-Zawiyah."

This school must have been the only *madrassah* in the country that used music as a medium of instruction. Children's songs with religious themes were used to teach valuable aspects of Islam. The only limitation Shaykh Mahdi placed on this was that the tunes used should not be common melodies. Unfortunately the use of music was dropped after Shaykh Mahdi's death.

Other interests

Despite his heavy teaching and reading programmes, Shaykh Mahdi (and Shaykh Ibrahim) still found time for a number of other intellectual interests and pursuits to satisfy their hunger for knowledge.

*Music: his interest in music ranged from very serious classical music (such as Beethoven, Mozart and Strauss) to pop music. His son, Haazim, described this love of music as follows:

He had a wide spectrum of music tastes. He loved "Malay liedjies", "Boere Musiek" and even the music of Percy Sledge. He bought copies of "Dont cry for me Argentina" and gave some of us copies.

Every day after breakfast he would listen to classical music. He also tried to encourage a love for music amongst his children by making them sit down with him on a Saturday to listen to music.

He used to drill us in the music of artists such as Beethoven. He had a full collection of records on most composers, and he knew their lives and works. He could even differentiate between different versions of the same music. He loved "liedjies", and when the murids sang "liedjies" downstairs, he would listen secretly to them. He bought for himself the latest sound equipment so that he could have the best clarity.

*Photography: was used by him as means of studying and recording what was beautiful as part of his appreciation of the beauty of the creation. He would photograph aspects of nature such as mountains, clouds and insects. He saw *Tawhid* in the beauty of nature, and would photograph beautiful things. He also did his own developing.

*Gardening: his love for gardening stemmed from his studies of Botany. He used to make detailed pencil sketches of plants, and made extensive studies of the nature and

composition of soils. He had a beautiful garden, which he saw to himself. Because he would develop a rash when he worked in the soil, he obtained the services of one of his murids, Ali Adams, to do the planting under his supervision.

*Psychiatry and Psychology: he was an avid student of these disciplines, and had reached such a high level of competence in them that doctors, such as Dr A. Abrahams, used to refer patients to him. He became a competent user of hypno-therapy, and many people came to him for assistance. His concern with the mind in the above disciplines lead him to search for the bridge between the physical and the spiritual. According to Muhammad Salih:

My father had a large selection of books on the occult, which he kept locked up. He was always searching for the link between the physical and the soul. I used to encourage him to speak about the matter but I do not know whether he found the answers to the questions in his mind.

His spirituality

Although it appears from discussions with his children that Shaykh Mahdi was involved considerably in *tariqah*, he never mentioned the subject in his public lectures, which he used only to teach the other religious sciences. His understanding and involvement in *tariqah* came out in private discussions with certain people, especially with his sons and nephews. However, even in these discussions he was very cautious when he spoke. A part of him was always submerged and never exposed. On this he remarked: "*If you must know how I believe, my blood would become permissible to you*." On another occasion, when asked by his son, Haazim, who he was, he replied: "*I do not know who I am. I only know I am, and that is (a special) knowledge*."

He saw *tariqah* as the inner dimension of the *Shari'ah* to which one on the path has to adhere to very strictly, and for which one requires, as a guide, someone who had already travelled that path:

Tariqah is the marrow of the bone - a formal discipline that requires an ustadh. It is contained in the Shari'ah, and one must adhere strictly to the Shari'ah if one wants to find this inner road. On this road, one must have a method of approach, and ijazah (for the practice of this method).

He considered the making of dhikr an essential practice on this road:

Allah does not forget one. One is His remembrance. How can one forget Him. One must remember Him as part of one's experience in time. Dhikr is the centre of all acts of ibadat. Ibadat without dhikr have no soul. Without dhikr the salah would be empty.

It was not only the making of dhikr, *per se*, that was important but also how it was made. He insisted that it had to be made in a certain form and in a special manner. It was for this reason that he was reluctant to hold public dhikr sessions. According to Fakier:

Shaykh Mahdi never made the Ratib al-Haddad with us or the"Seven Days". Only when the father of Sayyid Mansur died in Mecca, did he make the "hajah". It is the only time that I know of that he did something like that.

This lack of public display, did not mean that he did not have strong views on the arrangements within circles of *dhikr*. He said:

In the circles of dhikr throughout the world women are sitting. They participate in the same circles as the men. There will only be dissension if those who are involved in the dhikr are not attached to the Shari'ah. One transcends masculinity and femininity in the Oneness of Allah. In the depth of dhikr plurality disappears and we return to the primordial aspects of our being. When one says: "There is no god other than Allah alone, no partner has He", how can there be groupings of people when the One being worshipped, the worshipper and the act of worship become one.

In this process of dhikr, the reality of the Attributes of Allah becomes known to one. You should constantly seek the truth of La-ilaha-illallah (There is no god other than Allah) until that inward knowledge, the real Tawhid, which is enshrined in Surah al-Ihlas, becomes a reality to you.

It is clear from these few remarks by Shaykh Mahdi that he must have had a very in-depth understanding of *tasawwuf*, and that part of this understanding must have flowed from his practice within the confines of a *tariqah* order. According to documentation in the possession of his son, Muhammad Salih, Shaykh Mahdi had received *ijazah* in *tasawwuf* from As-Sayyid Bakr al-Bar, one of the luminaries in the *Alawiyyah Order*. This confirmed his attachment to that Order. This Order, of course, has its origins in Hadramawt, and was founded by Muhammad ibn 'Ali of the Ba 'Alawi tribe (1178-1255) who was initiated in *tariqah* by Abu Madyan Shu'ayb, but he eventually took an

independent path. The *Ratibs* which we do in Cape Town, such as the *Ratibul-Haddad* and the *Ratibul-Attas*, come from this Order. Shaykh Mahdi's father, Shaykh Muhammad Salih, was in this Order, which appears to be the characteristic order of the Al-Zawiyah Mosque.

Shaykh Mahdi himself was very reluctant to publicise his attachment to this Order. According to his nephew, Shaykh Seraj:

I asked Shaykh Mahdi once whether he belonged to the Alawiyyah Order, and he replied cryptically, "I prefer to call it the Ghazaliyyah." It is only today that I know about the particular status of Imam Ghazali in that Order. He knew what he was talking about. At the time I could not make the connection. The Ba 'Alawi is in its origin Ghazaliyyah. The whole silsilah (chain of authorities) goes through Imam Ghazali.

His attachment to the *Alawiyyah Order* through the chain linking it to Imam Ghazali was revealed on another occasion when he responded to a remark by one of his students:

At a meeting of the Azzawiyah Study Group, one of the students, Umar Salasa, remarked, "I know (the work of) Imam Ghazali." Shaykh Mahdi retorted, "You will still have to read him another ten times before you would know. Only Ghazali knew Ghazali." I asked him, "Father, how do you then know Ghazali." He replied, "I am (a) Ghazali(an)."

Part of the *ijazah* of the *Alawiyyah Order* is to teach the works of Imam Ghazali and those of Imam Abdullah ibn 'Alawi al-Haddad. It is for this reason that the *Ihya al'Ulum al-Din* of Imam Ghazali has been taught at the Al-Zawiyah from its inception until recently. Shaykh Mahdi's teaching of this work places him squarely in the camp of the *'Alawiyyah*. According to Shaykh Siraj, his reluctance to call himself an *Alawiyyah* could be because of the reluctance of the *Ba 'Alawi shaykhs* in the Hijaz to refer to themselves as *Alawis*.

Shaykh Mahdi also recited the *Ratibul-Haddad* every day. He gave his son, Haazim, permission to do the *Ratib*, and told him that he was passing it on from one of his shaykhs. He, however, never recited the *Ratib* in public except when he once attended a group at the Al-Zawiyyah reciting it under the leadership of Haazim. Haazim was acting under the instruction and *ijazah* of his father at the time.

Shaykh Mahdi's reluctance to expose his *tasawwuf* extended to a reluctance to grant

people special *adhkar* to make and also to the induction of people into the *'Alawiyyah Order*. According to Shaykh Seraj:

He gave my brother, Ahmad, a dhikr to do but we got things with great difficulty from him. He would say, "Can you do it? Do you know what you are asking for? First perfect your salah." It would take us weeks to get something from him. Even with the Ratibul-Haddad he was very reluctant to give people ijazah to do it. He did, however, call us together once to record the Ratib for use in the townships. Shaykh Abu Bakr Najaar had complained to him about the state of Islam in the townships, and they had decided to distribute the Ratib in these areas so that the people could at least be doing something good.

It appeared that he might have had the status in the *Alawiyyah Order*, to induct people into the Order. However, his cautiousness to give people *adhkar* extended to a cautiousness to induct them. According to Shaykh Seraj:

Many people had come to him to ask him to be their ustadh but he refused. He told them, "When you are ready you will find your ustadh. You might have known him all your life."

Both he and Shaykh Ibrahim had become very disillusioned with people, especially with their behaviour during *dhikr* sessions, and they would rather not have something than have it done badly. This disillusionment resulted in a clear lack of confidence in the ability of people to carry out the responsibilities attached to being in a spiritual order. He would, however, constantly remind his students, "You are attached to the chain of my shaykhs." In a sense, this remark was an informal drawing of his students into the Order through him to his shaykhs such as Shaykh Umar ibn Abu Bakr Ba Junayd and then to the rest of the chain. It was in fact an informal induction process into the *Alawiyyah Order*.

The development of his own spirituality was primarily a private matter, and towards the end of his life he started to isolate himself more and more. He had a special room in which he moved most of his things, and he spent most of his time there. According to Muhammad Salih:

During the day he was a very rational person. At night he was totally different. My mother almost became a nervous wreck at times because most of the night he would be

busy with, what appeared to be, communication with the Unseen. My mother once told me, "I cannot sleep at night because the whole night he speaks in Arabic to people."

Attitude towards public organizations

In a sense Shaykh Mahdi was a very private person. His intellectuality (and submerged spirituality) made him like this. It was for this reason that he generally steered clear of public organizations although he was president for short periods of time of both the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC) and the *Majlis al-Ashura.* Although he was not a member of the MJC because of his intolerance of what the organization did, he never undermined the organization although he sometimes gave lectures on his differences with the organization. And he used to honour the members of the MJC when they visited him. He had also supplied the MJC with the *fatwa* on the *Ahmadies*.

Later the MJC bestowed the honorary position of life-president on him. He accepted the award, afraid to cause schisms in the community. His intolerance of ignorance and religious pretence made him break with *Al-Ashura* after having been made president. He had accepted the offer to be the president of *Al-Ashura* because he saw the possibility of the unity of the community in the organization. The organization, however, went overboard when people in the organization who had very limited religious knowledge, wanted to have a say in the passing of *fatwas*, and he resigned. He could not tolerate people who spoke on religious matters on the basis of ignorance. He was of the view that only those who were capable should speak on the *Shari'ah*.

After he left *Al-Ashura*, a number of his students approached him to establish a class for the training of religious teachers. In this way *Ad-Da'wah* came into existence, around 1985. Eventually many of those who were trained in these classes launched classes of their own. Some of these classes are still operating today.

Ad-Da'wah has brought out a number of publications, which are in fact transcriptions of lectures by Shaykh Mahdi. These publications include *Al-Nikah*, Inheritance, and a Compendium of *Fiqh*.

Shaykh Mahdi as a family man

"It is not that I do not love you; it is that I love knowledge more." (Shaykh Mahdi to his children a few days before his death.). It is obvious that his tremendous intellectuality and his enormous social commitments would have impacted negatively on his role as a husband and a father. It would have been almost impossible for him, and not through want of trying, to have struck an even balance between the demands of his congregation, his enormous intellectual and spiritual appetite, and the needs of his family. Yet he tried very hard, but not always succeeding, to give them the quality time they needed. Commenting on his father's relationship with his mother, Muhammad Salih stated:

My mother was a very simple woman. She could hardly speak English, and he was this overwhelming intellectual giant. Yet every morning she would read the Cape Times to him, reading as she thought the words had to be. He would listen to her patiently and affectionately, and enjoy her reading.

Because of the wide variety within his intellectuality, he came across to each one of his children in a different way. Muhammad Salih saw him as an individual who found it difficult not to be aloof:

My father looked after us as a father but because of his position there was a certain aloofness (at times). Every morning before we left for school we had to go to his bed so that he could check whether we were properly dressed. Although he was very fair to his children, we hardly saw him as a warm father. There was a certain gap between him and others, which was difficult to cross.

His only daughter, Naylah, saw him differently:

He was exceptional as a father, and very special to me. He had a fantastic way of handling people, and was very humble even to drunkards at the door. He always related to me.

At other levels he impacted in a very special way on his children. His primary concern was to make his children self-sufficient. They were expected to do well, and although he seldom praised them, he would thank Allah, the Most High, for their achievements. His whole attitude towards them was reflected in the fact that he never beat them to perform their Islamic obligations. He believed they would do these obligations because of the

hidings and not because they were convinced they had to be done. And so he tried by convincing argument and not harsh words or hidings to lead his children along a certain path.

Even with regard to his spirituality, he did not expose himself to all his children. To Muhammad Salih he was a highly scientific individual, trying to bring together the scientific with Islam:

My father's mind was very scientific. I do not know whether he had a specific tariqah or whether he had formed his own. My father did not copy his father's work. I never came across him doing the Hajah or the Ratib.

To Haazim he had exposed his spirituality, and had encouraged him to follow that path in Islam. He had advised Haazim, for example, to obtain *ijazah* from the late Abd al-Rahman da Costa to do the *Qherwee Sharif* of the *Qadiriyyah Tariqah*. And after Hazim had asked his father *ijazah* to do the *Ratib al-Haddad*, his father said to him: "I have been waiting for you to ask me. This is your call! (And taking Haazim by the front of his shirt, he continued) Be like your grandfather! Will you be (like him)?"

On another occasion he had remarked to Haazim: "You should go the route of your grandfather, Shaykh Muhammad Salih, because you belong to that *silsilah*." It appears from this that he wanted Haazim to walk the path of spirituality.

Final moments

In August 1981 at the age of seventy-three years, Shahkh Mahdi had a heart attack and was rushed to hospital. Very few people knew about his heart condition, perhaps only his doctor. The members of his congregation wanted him to be placed in a private ward but he refused. He also refused that family should bring him food from home. In a sense he did not wish to be treated in a special way. At the beginning he was placed in an Intensive Care Unit but he asked to be sent to a general ward, and told his children to tell the doctors that they should not exert themselves over him any more.

A few moments before his death at the end of that month, he remarked to his son, Muhammad Salih: "My child, I am very tired. Death is an agony and exhausts one." He smoothed all his clothes and bedding, placed his hands over his chest, and passed out quietly while the *tahlil* was being recited for him. He had told his children he would be

coming home the Monday. He came home on that day but as a corpse. When they brought the body in, they all said, "*Alhamdu lillahi rabbil alamin*" (All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds). This made them strong. They were satisfied.

Interviews

Gamieldien (nee Hendricks), Faizah

Fakier, Achmat

Hendricks, Haazim

Hendricks, Muhammad Salih

Hendricks, Shaykh Mujahid

Hendricks, Shaykh Seraj

Solomons (nee Hendricks), Naylah