



## Introduction

Biography of Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah  
By His Son: Salmān

My father passed away at a time when there remained no East  
nor West except that it had in it one who praised him.

I did not know the abundant virtues of his open hand toward people  
until the metal plates concealed him.

He came to rest, dead, in a niche of the earth,  
while vast open lands had once felt constricted with him alive.

I will weep over you as long as my tears continue to flow; and if they dry,  
then what my heart conceals within is sufficient from me.

I am not impatient over any calamity, however great,  
nor do I rejoice in any joy after your death.

It is as though no living being died but you,  
and as though the mourners rose for no one but you.

If elegies and their remembrance are beautiful for you,  
then praise for you had already been beautiful before that.



### **Name, teknonym (agnomen), lineage, and affiliation:**

He was Abū Zāhid and Abū al-Futūḥ ‘Abdul-Fattāḥ ibn Muḥammad ibn Bashīr ibn Ḥasan Abū Ghuddah, Halabī by birth, Ḥanafī by legal school, and Qurashī, Makhzūmī, and Khālīdī by lineage, tracing back to our master Khālīd ibn al-Walīd al-Makhzūmī, may Allāh be pleased with him. May Allāh benefit us through loving him and through following his path and way.

This lineage is recorded in the documented family genealogy that preserves the ancestry of the household, and it is also what I heard directly from him, repeatedly and continuously.

### **Birth:**

He was born, may Allāh have mercy on him, in the middle of Rajab in the year 1336 AH, corresponding to 1917 CE, as he heard from his mother, may Allāh have mercy on them both, in the radiant city of Aleppo.

### **Family:**

His family was of moderate means and held a recognized standing within their community.

His father and grandfather, may Allāh have mercy on them, were engaged in trade through the manufacture of woven textiles known as ṣāyāt. These were fabrics woven on hand looms, sometimes with warp and weft of spun thread, and at other times with warp and weft of silk. Their products were among the highest in quality, precision, elegance, and durability. Because of their excellence, they were specifically sought after in the marketplace for their own merit, and hundreds of them were exported to Anatolia in Turkey. The people of Anatolia, men and women alike, wore garments made from these fabrics.

Despite conducting this craft and trade, his father and grandfather were regarded as people of limited means rather than conspicuous, widely recognized wealth. They were known for modesty, chastity, and firm adherence to religion and its rites, constant remembrance, and regular recitation of the Qur’ān. They raised their children upon these same values. May Allāh reward them abundantly on their behalf.

After the decline of the ṣāyāt industry, caused by the shift in Turkish dress from traditional garments to European-style suits, his father transitioned to operating a shop in Sūq al-Zahr in Aleppo, located on a branch of Bānqūsā Street. There he sold various fabrics worn by the rural population of Aleppo.

A strange occurrence is that the day my father, may Allāh have mercy on him, was born, his father and grandfather sold one thousand ṣāyāt of the highest grade.



They rejoiced greatly at this success and named the newborn ‘Abdul-Fattāḥ (servant of the One who grants openings and victory), in reference to what Allāh opened for them on the day of his birth.

The family’s primary residence was in the Jubaylah district. There was a plot of land there upon which stood a modest house. This land originally belonged to the Ghuddah family and some of their relatives as joint heirs.

His grandfather Bashīr, who was among the distinguished notables, known for intelligence, eloquence, nobility, perceptiveness, and composure, acquired this land through amicable settlement. He brought a legal scribe from the Shar‘ī courts, along with several community notables, then summoned all those who held shares in the land and gave them what they requested until they were satisfied, thereby securing ownership.

He then renovated and rebuilt the house beautifully, so that it came to contain seven rooms and four cellars. The house became spacious, expansive, and beautiful, to the extent that some people would even hold wedding celebrations there because of its beauty and openness. My father witnessed this process of acquisition when he was between six and eight years old.

My father used to say about his grandfather Bashīr: “He was more far-sighted than his son Muḥammad.” His grandfather passed away at approximately 85 years of age when my father was about twenty-years old. My father was devoted to his grandfather and would accompany him wherever he wished after he became incapacitated.

When his grandfather passed away, my father was at the beginning of his pursuit of knowledge, which he had undertaken relatively late, at approximately nineteen years of age.

His father, may Allāh have mercy on them all, passed away on the night before an examination while my father was studying at the Khusrawiyyah School, two years before his departure to al-Azhar. At that time, my father was approximately twenty-five years old, in the year 1361 AH, corresponding to 1942 CE.

My grandfather, may Allāh have mercy on him, had five children: three sons and two daughters.

The sons were :

1. ‘Abdul-Karīm ,the eldest among them, among those who resisted the French occupation and subjugated them. Among his children was Dr. ‘Abdul-Sattār, who authored works and participated in scholarly studies in the Islamic legal sciences, particularly in matters of transactions and Islamic banking.
2. ‘Abdul-Ghanī, among whose children was Dr Ḥasan, the author of *Aḥkām al-Sijj wa Mu‘āmalat al-Sujanā’ fī al-Islām*, the first work authored on this subject, as well as other books.



3. My father may Allāh have mercy on them all.

The daughters:

1. Sharīfah, whose husband was al-Ḥājj Muḥammad Sālīm Bayraqadār, may Allāh have mercy on him.
2. Naʿīmah, whose husband is al-Ḥājj ʿAlī Khayyāṭah, may Allāh grant them enjoyment of health and well-being.

### Upbringing and scholarly formation:

My father grew up under the care of his father, who frequently recited the Qurʾān and remained constant in reading it directly from the muṣḥaf. He held the scholars in deep reverence, deliberately sought attendance at their gatherings and lessons, and drew benefit from their knowledge and guidance.

When my father reached eight years of age, his grandfather, may Allāh have mercy on him, enrolled him in the private Arabic Islamic school. The school required high fees and instalments, and it was distinguished by its elevated standards, firm administration, and rigor in both instruction and morals. Admission was only afforded to the elite and notables.

He studied there from the first through the fourth grade with disciplined study. His education therein erased illiteracy from him and granted him accuracy in reading and writing, despite weakness in his handwriting.

Due to the excellence and natural soundness of his reading, the elders of the neighbourhood and its notables would invite him to their regular weekly evening gatherings so that he might read to them from *Tārikh Futūḥ al-Shām*, attributed to al-Wāqidi, and from other books that people would pass the evenings listening to being read.

Thus, from this young age, he came to enjoy the company of the senior notables and a select circle of discerning and virtuous men, even while he was still regarded among the younger children of the locality. Owing to the excellence of his reading, lightness of his presence, and his young age as well as the elevated standing of his father and grandfather within the community, he was permitted to the evening gatherings of the elders.

After he left the school, he turned to the study of fine handwriting. He secured admission in the school of Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Khaṭīb in Aleppo. The shaykh maintained a private institution which taught only the Qurʾān, jurisprudence, and fine handwriting. Although his handwriting improved slightly, he did not persist long in the study of handwriting refinement and left the school after a few months.



Once his frame had strengthened, his father and grandfather considered that he should learn a craft or trade. They advised him: 'a craft or trade in one's hand is security against poverty.' At that time, he was not in financial need due to the ease of his family, praise be to Allāh. Rather, his grandfather and father wished that he should possess the skill of a craft, out of fear of the uncertainties of days and their vicissitudes even upon people of social standing.

Consequently, he learned the craft of weaving on the hand loom as mechanical looms had not been yet introduced. He acquired sound proficiency in this craft. His two brothers, 'Abdul-Karīm and 'Abdul-Ghanī, had learned the same craft before him, may Allāh have mercy on them all.

This craft yielded a good income that brought satisfaction. Through his learning it, he saved some Ottoman gold liras, which were his own. His expenses and livelihood were fully supported by his father. He worked successfully in this craft for approximately two or three years.

Subsequently, his grandfather and his father decided that he should learn commerce. They chose for him to learn trade, buying and selling, with their friend, the merchant 'Abdul-Salām Quddū, who conducted business in the al-Ṭaybiyyah market near the northern gate of the Great Mosque. He was a merchant who dealt with shirts and ready-made garments, selling both wholesale and retail. My father remained with him for approximately two years and more. The merchant was a religious, upright, chaste man. Both women and men purchased from him and he appreciated the presence of my father due to his young age. My father, may Allāh have mercy on him, would observe the condition of some male or female buyers or from whom he suspected the possibility of theft while they were examining the goods for purchase.

Afterwards, he moved to another merchant who was both a relative and friend of his grandfather and father, al-Ḥājj Ḥasan at-Tabbān. May Allāh have mercy upon them all and grant them spacious gardens. al-Ḥājj Ḥasan at-Tabbān was a merchant who conducted both wholesale and retail trade in his shop in Sūq al-Jūkh al-'Arīḍ, one of the covered markets of Aleppo. Under him he acquired further experience in commerce and in presenting goods to buyers, whether men or women. He remained with him for three years.

Thereafter, as my father approached the age of sixteen, his grandfather and father considered that he should begin trading independently. They arranged for him to work as a partner in labour, not in capital, with the merchant al-Ḥājj Muḥammad Dunyā, who was a trader in Sūq al-Zahr, branching from Bānqūsā Street. He partnered with him for about two years undertaking sales on his behalf for most of the day and purchasing replacements for the depleted stock from the city's wholesale merchants in Khānal-Kumruk and elsewhere.



When my father reached the age of nineteen, he developed a desire to seek knowledge by enrolling in the al-Khusrawiyyah School, which had been established by the ottoman minister, al-Ṣadr Khusraw Bāshā, and which later, after its standing declined, came to be called the Shar‘ī Secondary School.

Initially, my grandfather was not pleased. Some of his acquaintances from among the notable figures interceded on my father’s behalf. They said to my grandfather: “he should be encouraged due to the nobility of this matter.” Eventually, my grandfather relented and permitted him.

When my father applied to the al-Khusrawiyyah School, his application was at first accepted but later rejected because his age was nineteen. At this point, his brother-in-law, al-Ḥājj Muḥammad Sālim Bayraqadār, interceded on his behalf with some of his acquaintances. His brother-in-law was the director of awqāf at that time. He spoke to those responsible on the admissions committee, and they accepted him.

At the time of admission, my father and Shaykh ‘Abdul-Wahhāb Jadhbah, may Allāh have mercy on them both, were both competing for the same available seat. If one was admitted, the other would remain until the following year. Eventually, my father was accepted. There was a bond of affection between them. Shaykh ‘Abdul-Wahhāb would affectionately nickname my father “al-Aṣma‘ī” because of his evident preoccupation with the science of linguistics.

In their neighborhood, there lived a virtuous man named Maḥmūd Salḥadār who was keen to have the Qur’ān recited in the home and completed every day. This practice was known as a *rab‘ah*. He would award a gold lira to anyone who completed the recitation in this manner. During his study at the Khusrawiyyah, my father would participate in this recitation.

My father, studied at the Khusrawiyyah for six years, from 1936 to 1942, during which he excelled among his peers. He then completed his studies at al-Azhar ash-Sharīf. In 1944, he entered the Faculty of Sharī‘ah at al-Azhar Mosque in Egypt and graduated in 1948 obtaining the *Shahādat al-‘Ālamiyyah* from the Faculty of Sharī‘ah. He subsequently pursued studies in Specialisation of Teaching Methodology at the Faculty of Arabic Language at al-Azhar Mosque for two years, graduating in 1950. During this period, he also obtained a license in psychology. Thereafter, he returned to his homeland.

Following the death of his father, my father fell into severe poverty. At one point a day would pass in which he possessed nothing except the clothes he was wearing. During his period of study in Egypt, he also denied himself fruit so that he could purchase books with its price instead.

## Legal School:



My father, may Allāh have mercy on him, adhered to the Ḥanafī school of law. He was well-versed in the Ḥanafī tradition, having been raised in it and having studied it under several distinguished scholars. Among his notable teachers were the two jurists, Shaykh Muṣṭafā az-Zarqā' and the Muftī Shaykh Aḥmad al-Ḥajjī al-Kurdī al-Ḥanafī, the Muftī of the Ḥanafīs in Aleppo.

He also had many personal readings and independent studies through which he would delve into the depths of books, annotating their pages with his notes and views. He also had strong engagement and sound familiarity with the Shāfi'ī school, these being the two predominant schools in the lands of Greater Syria.

His senior student, Shaykh Muḥammad 'Awwāmah, may Allāh preserve him, said in *al-Ithnāniyyah*:

I recall numerous instances where he would alert the questioner to subtle subsidiary issues in the marginal corners of Shāfi'ī jurisprudence. He also then participated strongly in Islamic jurisprudence in general. This was further supported by his lengthy engagement in teaching the aḥādīth of legal rulings. As a result, those close to him observed breadth of understanding in legal rulings and leniency, without laxity, in fatwā and application. However, he detested the pursuit of dispensations and the adoption of anomalous opinions.

Shaykh Salmān says:

My father, may Allāh have mercy on him, detested the pursuit of dispensations and the adoption of anomalous opinions, as Shaykh Muḥammad 'Awwāmah, may Allāh preserve him, mentioned. However, he was also not a rigid partisan of the Ḥanafī school. Rather, he detested such partisanship intensely and criticised it.

He had many positions in this regard in which he departed from the Ḥanafī school, some of which occurred between me and him, and others which I witnessed. In this regard, he published two treatises: *Risālat al-Ulfah bayna al-Muslimīn* by Ibn Taymiyyah, and *Risālat al-Imāmah* by Ibn Ḥazm, on the subject of juristic differences.

My father was asked the following in *al-Ithnāniyyah*:

Differences of opinion among scholars on juristic matters are inevitable. Each affiliate himself with one of the four schools and is reluctant to depart from its established fatwās, often adhering to them closely. This has contributed to greater complexity in juristic matters. What is your esteemed view on this?

He replied:

Firstly, adherence to a juristic school is necessary for anyone who does not belong to the ranks of those qualified for *ijtihād* and lacks comprehensive knowledge of the rulings of the Sharī'ah, its branches, and its principles. This is



in accordance with what Allāh, Exalted is He, has ordained: *"So ask the people of remembrance if you do not know."* However, rigid and inflexible adherence to a single school is not mandated by the Sharī'ah.

It is permissible for me to learn or act upon a particular issue according to the Ḥanbalī school, and in another matter to follow the Shāfi'ī school. If I encounter difficulty or hardship in a ruling according to the Ḥanbalī school, I may move and act upon it according to the Ḥanafī school. All of this falls within abiding by the guidance of Allāh, Exalted is He, and the guidance of His Messenger ﷺ.

There was no division among these imams. Each exerted his utmost effort to ensure that his ijtihād came as close as possible to the speech of Allāh and the speech of His Messenger ﷺ. For this reason, we find that an Imām might reach a ruling on a given occasion, then later, after days, months, or years, revise his view when a clearer understanding or stronger evidence became apparent to him without any hesitation. And if he did not know, he would say: "I do not know," without reluctance. Why? Because, in his view, the Sharī'ah was more precious than his own existence.

Imām Mālik, may Allāh be pleased with him, was approached by a man from Iraq who presented him with forty questions. Imām Mālik, may Allāh be pleased with him, answered only six questions. The man said to him: "O Abū 'Abdullāh, I have traversed across lands, deserts, and wastelands to reach you, and you are the scholar of Madīnah. I wish to know to know the answers to all these issues. What shall I return to the people with and tell them"? He said: "Tell them: Mālik said: I do not know." It did not trouble him that it be attributed to him that he said: "I do not know," because the religion, in his view, was more precious than to feel embarrassed for its sake.

Accordingly, adherence to a school in and of itself, when it stems from partisanship or ignorance, is a deficiency in a person. It is not correct for a person to believe that if his father was Ḥanbalī he must be Ḥanbalī, or if he was Shāfi'ī, he must be Shāfi'ī. He may follow this school or that. This is the breadth and flexibility of Islam, because following any school is adherence to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

This ijtihād is probabilistic. It is permissible for a person to adopt the opinion of one scholar or that of another scholar. As for fanaticism and factional partisanship, these are not from the principles of Islam, nor from the principles of jurisprudence.

For this reason, the companions of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, may Allāh have mercy on him, would differ with him and record their disagreements with him in his presence, without objection. This is because this is the religion of Allāh, and ijtihād should be exerted to attain what is most correct. Therefore, what is



described as fanaticism, factionalism, or clinging rigidly to a school with unwillingness to move beyond it, is a psychological deficiency. A person should be willing to move beyond it and be broad in understanding, outlook, and heart, appreciating every imam for his virtue, generosity, knowledge, and lofty rank. None of the imams is inherently superior to another; all of them derive from and seek guidance from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. And Allāh knows best.

### **Journeys:**

My father, may Allāh have mercy on him, travelled to many countries and numerous cities. In addition to the cities of his homeland, al-Shām, he visited Jordan; Palestine before its occupation; Iraq; Saudi Arabia; Kuwait; Qatar; the United Arab Emirates; Bahrain; Yemen; Egypt; Sudan; Somalia; Tunisia; Algeria; Morocco; South Africa; Indonesia; Brunei; India; Pakistan; Afghanistan; Uzbekistan; Turkey; and many countries in Europe and America. These journeys were either scholarly, undertaken to visit shuyūkh, meet scholars, acquire knowledge, and visit libraries and manuscript repositories, or da‘wah-oriented, for attending conferences, delivering sermons and lectures, and calling to Allāh. Often, he combined both purposes. May Allāh have mercy on him and forgive him.

### **Positions, lectures, and lessons:**

After my father, may Allāh have mercy on him, returned from Egypt to his homeland, he applied for the 1951 Ministry of Education competitive examination for teachers of religious education and Islamic culture, where he ranked first place. He then taught Islamic studies in Aleppo’s secondary schools for eleven years, as well as various Islamic legal sciences at the al-Sha‘bāniyyah School and Shar‘ī Secondary School, from which he himself graduated. During that period, he delivered sermons at Jāmi‘ al-Ḥamawī and the mosque of the Shar‘ī Secondary School in Aleppo.

His hour-long post-Friday prayer lessons, which he called “The Session of Juristic Understanding of the Religion,” became a focal point for the hearts of Muslim youth, and multitudes of people benefited from it. People attended from the outskirts and suburbs of Aleppo, with some even coming from as far as the governorate of al-Lādhiqiyyah, which lies 180 kilometres from Aleppo by a difficult route. His weekly schedule included a second lesson in jurisprudence on Monday night, a third lesson on Thursday devoted to ḥadīth, upbringing, and ethics, and private lessons he conducted for outstanding students of the Islamic sciences.

Following several public lectures at Dār al-Arqam, he was elected as a member of the Syrian parliament in 1962, serving for as long as the political circumstances allowed the parliament to remain. Despite facing a coalition of opponents from every affiliation,



he was elected to represent Aleppo by a sweeping majority. That same year, he joined the Faculty of Sharī'ah in the University of Damascus, teaching Ḥanafī jurisprudence, uṣūl al-fiqh, and comparative jurisprudence for three years (1962–1964).

In 1385 AH, he began a twenty-three-year tenure at the Faculty of Sharī'ah in Riyadh, later known as Imām Muḥammad ibn Saud Islamic University, until 1408 AH. He taught at the Higher Institute of the Judiciary and spent a decade teaching postgraduate level Prophetic ḥadīth and its sciences in the Faculty of Uṣūl al-Dīn. He remained working with the university for twenty-three years, until 1408 AH, and received every form of honour and appreciation from the administration and its faculty. Before retiring in 1411 AH, he spent two final years at King Saud University in Riyadh, where he taught the sciences of ḥadīth in the Faculty of Education, in the final undergraduate year and at the postgraduate level.

During his tenure at Imām Muḥammad ibn Saud Islamic University, he was frequently seconded to teach elsewhere. He was appointed as a visiting professor at Omdurman Islamic University in Sudan in 1396 AH; Yemen in 1398 AH; and in 1399 AH, at Nadwat al-'Ulamā' University in Lucknow, India, which was headed by His Eminence Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan al-Nadwī, may Allāh have mercy on him and forgive him. He also held memberships at the Scientific Council of Imām Muḥammad ibn Saud Islamic University; the Scientific Academy in Iraq; and the Founding Council of the Muslim World League in Mecca.

He participated in a very large number of conferences and seminars in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Qatar, Sudan, Somalia, Morocco, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, South Africa, Europe, America, and other places. He was twice elected as General Supervisor of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria: from 1972 to 1976, and from 1986 to 1990. This occurred under difficult and exceptional circumstances, and my father, may Allāh have mercy on him, only accepted this position after intense insistence, resigning at the first possible opportunity.

This was because my father preferred knowledge and research over everything else. The dearest time to him was time spent investigating an issue, explaining a complex problem, or engaging in scholarly discussion. May Allāh have mercy on him and forgive him.

Among the subjects my father taught at the Faculty of Sharī'ah was uṣūl al-fiqh, which he taught with mastery, making it comprehensible to his students despite its well-known difficulty, as testified to by his students. He also taught the sciences of ḥadīth in their various forms, such as muṣṭalaḥ al-ḥadīth, analytical ḥadīth, and more, at the Faculty of Uṣūl al-Dīn, for the general body and postgraduate students.

### **Qualities:**



If some literary figures assign a “key” to every personality they study and write about, then the key to my father’s personality, may Allāh have mercy on him, was his love of perfection in all affairs, constantly striving to rise from what is good to what is better. This was especially in matters elevating the conduct, manners, commerce, industry, knowledge, and understanding of the Muslims, so that they may be foremost in every field.

My father, may Allāh have mercy on him, was a combination of virtues and noble traits. He was extremely generous and keen to honour his guests well, exerting his full effort in doing so. Often pardoning and overlooking, he was forbearing, refined, and well-mannered, harming no one with his speech. He would respect people and praise them, carefully choosing elevated and dignified expressions.

Prudent and discerning, no word ever left him except with measured judgment and in its proper place, and he never undertook any matter without weighing it with his intellect. He often advised me: ‘Use your mind in everything you do.’

Through his wit and refined spirit, he would engage his companions in humour to the appropriate degree, infusing both scholarly and informal gatherings with gentleness and refinement suited to the setting. He softened the weight of solemnity while always remaining within the bounds of decorum and respect.

He had a refined taste in his clothing, food, and dwelling, and within his books with respect to organization, handwriting, and authorship, extending even to the arrangement of his shoes and how he put them on. He displayed a refined intellect in every movement and pause.

My father was restrained in tongue and never insulted anyone. I do not recall ever hearing an obscene word from him except on the rarest of occasions, reserving his anger for the sake of Allāh, exalted is He. He was self-sufficient in spirit; he never sought anything from those in authority for himself, only for his loved ones and brothers, exercising patience through obedience and trial.

His devotion to prayer was absolute. Whether at home or travelling, in fatigue or illness, he rose to perform it at the earliest of its time, a quality he also instilled within his children and grandchildren. If he was ever asleep or exhausted and reminded of prayer, he would startle awake and rise quickly, often citing the statement of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb at his death: ‘there is no share in Islam for one who abandons prayer.’

A close companion of the Qur’ān, my father maintained a daily morning portion which he never abandoned except out of necessity, alongside abundant remembrance and litanies. If you did not find him engaged in scholarly work, authorship, verification, teaching, discussion, or issuing legal responses, you would find him glorifying, praising, declaring divine oneness, and magnifying Allāh.



He was tender-hearted, readily moved to tears, and profoundly reflective. His eyes would well with tears while reciting the Qur'ān, in the remembrance of Allāh, upon hearing the accounts of the early generations and the righteous, during spiritual moments, in response to the tragedies and sufferings of the Muslims, and even when he was praised. Those who attended the ceremony held in his honour at the gathering of Shaykh 'Abdul-Maqṣūd Khawjah, known as *al-Ithnīniyyah*, witnessed that he wept throughout the entire event.

My father experienced deep anguish and inner burning over the calamities afflicting the ummah and its condition. He lost hearing in his right ear after a visitor recounted to him the sufferings of Muslims in a particular area. Grief-stricken, he spent the night distressed and troubled; the following day, he felt blood flowing from his ear, after which he lost his hearing. How many nights did he spend sleepless; immersed in sorrow and reflection over the state of the Muslims.

After losing hearing in his right ear, Allāh tested him with weakening eyesight in the year 1410. I never saw him complain or express grievance, nor did this affliction deter him from scholarly productivity. Rather, he adorned himself with patience, acceptance, and steadfast perseverance in authorship and verification, driven by the fear that death might overtake him before he could release what his chest had long contained of books.

Towards the end of his life, four months before his death, he suffered retinal detachment in his right eye and lost vision in it. He underwent surgery, which proved unsuccessful and resulted in severe pain in his eye and head, pain he described as akin to being struck by arrows. Despite this, I never heard him cry out or groan. When the pain became extremely intense, he would only say: 'O Allāh. There is no deity but Allāh.'

My father was tireless in the pursuit of knowledge through reading, study, and authorship. The pen and book never left him in residence or travel, in health or illness. He composed and completed a number of his books during his many journeys, as he recorded in the introductions to some of them.

One day before he was admitted to the hospital, while contending with pain, he was adding to his remarkable book *The Teaching Messenger ﷺ and His Methods of Instruction*. While hospitalized, he frequently inquired about the book *Lisān al-Mizān*, and he composed its introduction twenty days before his death.

My father slept little, yet regarded even those few hours abundant, despite their minimality. In his youth, he would remain awake for a full day or two, as he told me on several occasions. These last two traits point to another quality: intense concern for time. He was more vigilant over his time than his wealth. This also reflects his vast scholarly appetite.



He never commanded anything without himself practising upon it, nor did he forbid anything without abstaining from it. He possessed keen intelligence, brilliance, exceptional memory and a penetrating mind, coupled with practical embodiment of knowledge, worship, piety, righteousness, scrupulousness, and immense humility toward his students and pupils, let alone his teachers and the scholars of Islam. In comparison to them, he regarded himself as nothing.

When the poet of Ṭaybah, Professor Muḥammad Ḍiyā' al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī, praised him at the "Ithnaynīyah", saying:

*'Abū Ḥanīfah, in judgment and in dialectical reasoning,  
ascends by the loftiness of his resolve to the highest ranks.'*

My father, may Allāh have mercy on him, responded:

The brothers who spoke and generously offered such words about me have indeed been gracious, yet they have gone to excess and overburdened me, to the extent that they set me face to face with Abū Ḥanīfah, may Allāh be pleased with him, as my brother, the poet Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Abū al-Ṣābūnī has done. This far exceeds my station: that I be even a grain of sand or a speck of dust beside Abū Ḥanīfah. Who is Abū Ḥanīfah? Abū Ḥanīfah is a mercy from among the mercies of Allāh, exalted and majestic, bestowed upon this Ummah, just as He bestowed Imām Mālik, Imām Aḥmad, Imām al-Shāfi'ī, may Allāh be pleased with them, and Imām Ibn Jarīr. These are the imams. If it were fitting that I be a small grain of sand beside them, that would be an immense honour and a noble favor, for which I am unable to offer adequate thanks. Thus, I excuse myself from such words directed toward me, for my soul cannot bear to hear them nor accept them, even if they come from a loving and sincere brother. Truth is more deserving of being followed.

He possessed keen insight into people and refined discernment. I never saw him praise or criticise an individual except that his judgement proved accurate, even if after some time. Likewise, his assessment in matters was sound, even if it became apparent after a while. I believe he was granted success through his piety and intellect, as he himself would say regarding Imām Ḥasan al-Bannā—may Allāh have mercy on all of them.

My father was dearly beloved to his wife, his children, and his grandchildren. He nurtured and guided them with gentleness, refinement, wisdom, and sound judgment. He departed from them while remaining dear and precious to their hearts; they would have ransomed him with their lives, their children, and their wealth. This was likewise the state of many of those who loved him, who wept for him as bereaved mothers throughout the inhabited world.

*'O dwellers of the depths of the earth, were ransom accepted,  
we would ransom you with the dwellers of the heights.'*



Thus, as has been said, he was a repository of virtues, and the poet's words aptly apply to him:

*'A whole garden is contained within a vial of perfume,  
and vineyards are contained within a single cup of nectar.'*

### **Books and scholarly contributions:**

Sixty-seven books were published by my father, may Allāh have mercy on him, ranging between authored works and critical editions, between shorter and longer works, and single volumes and multi-volume sets. They are well known among students of knowledge and admirers of the Shaykh, and they are listed at the end of each of his books, may Allāh have mercy on him and forgive him. I will mention some of his authored works and scholarly contributions that have received little attention, then briefly outline his methodology in writing and authorship.

During his tenure teaching religious studies in Aleppo beginning in 1951 CE, he authored, may Allāh have mercy on him, six textbooks for the secondary-school level with his close companion, the esteemed Shaykh Aḥmad 'Izz al-Dīn al-Bayānūnī, may Allāh Exalted have mercy on him.

They also jointly authored, may Allāh have mercy on them both, *Qabasāt min Nūr al-Nubuwwah*, one of the first works authored by my father, may Allāh have mercy on

him. They wrote it in response to a man known as Abū Shalbāyah who made disparaging remarks, claiming that the Noble Prophet ﷺ had been a shepherd of sheep.

While working at the Faculty of Shari'ah in Damascus, he also completed and brought to fruition the book *Mu'jam Fiqh al-Muḥallā li-Ibn Ḥazm al-Zāhirī*. Two professors had

previously begun the project, but they did not complete it; my father arranged, finalized, and serviced the text until it was published by the University of Damascus among its official publications in two large volumes. Furthermore, he participated in formatting curricula Syria, the Higher Institute of the Judiciary and the Faculty of Shari'ah at Imām Muḥammad ibn Saud Islamic University, and the postgraduate Islamic Studies department at King Saud University.

He passed away, may Allāh have mercy on him, while several books were still at the printing press, some not yet submitted for printing, and others that remained in his mind, unrealized. May Allāh have mercy on him and grant him the joy of seeing them published. He often remarked that a scholar rarely passes away without carrying regret for books he could not bring to publication.

### **Methodology in Authorship and Editing:**

As for his methodology in authorship and critical editing, it is represented in several points:



### **Vigilance and Precision:**

That is, the quality and solidity of critical editing and authorship. One rarely finds an unresolved difficulty, an unexplained ambiguity, or a weakness in chain of transmission in his work. Verifying a single word could take him extended spans of time and consultation with others from among the people of knowledge and specialization, which he took with an open heart, contentment, and delight. This is no surprise, for his constant concern and habitual practice was the service of knowledge and its people.

### **Clarity and Vocalization:**

He was meticulous regarding the vocalization and precise diacritical marking of problematic words and expressions throughout his books, particularly in his general works such as *Şafaḥāt min Şabr al-‘Ulamā’* and *Qīmat al-Zaman ‘inda al-‘Ulamā’*. This was despite the fatigue, time, and effort that this required, as he stated in the introduction to this unique and great book, *Şafaḥāt min Şabr al-‘Ulamā’*:

Some of the virtuous may notice that I have expanded somewhat in the vocalization of certain words. This is something I intended, in consideration of some readers who did not master Arabic, so that it may assist them in correct reading, accurate vocalization of the wording and its vocabulary, as well as assist in quicker comprehension.

He also said:

I marked with vocalization the names of notable figures, countries, and places; every word which I deemed likely to be misread or hesitated over, so that the reader’s mind may continue reading the report without stumbling in understanding it, or erring in its pronunciation, if Allāh wills.

### **Additions and Revisions:**

His books were always before him; he constantly added, revised, and clarified his texts to the point that it was said that every edition of one of his books amounted to a new book. In his later years, when books increased upon him while physical strength weakened and age advanced, he began issuing photographic reprints of out-of-print books so that they would not be lost from the hands of students of knowledge.

Although the photographic book had additions, revisions, and refinements, he did not find the time to issue it in an expanded new edition due to his preoccupation with other works that had not previously been published. Thus, even though it was printed in facsimile form, in reality it remained expanded and revised in his hands.



May Allāh have mercy on him and forgive him. I will strive to publish what he left behind and intended to undertake, by the will and aid of Allāh.

### **Rare Insights and Subtle Observations:**

Sometimes a single-line comment in his footnotes might have cost him three nights to a full week of careful scrutiny or years of study and continuous investigation. This was also evident in his citing certain quotations from unexpected sources and references one would not think to look at. He possessed a refined taste and sharp understanding in selecting, presenting, and placing texts. He avoided inflating books with redundant footnotes or filler content.

### **Incremental Compilation:**

This characteristic is clearly reflected in the works of my father. For example, he compiled the book *Ṣafahāt min Ṣabr al-‘Ulamā’* spanning over more than twenty years. Whenever he encountered material suitable to the topic, he would record it on a separate piece of paper and gradually collected these notes till they coalesced into a refined and engaging book for both readers and listeners. The same method was utilized in *Qīmat al-Zaman ‘inda al-‘Ulamā’* and in many of his other authored and edited works.

### **Attention to and Mastery of Indexes:**

My father maintained a concordant standard in this regard: any book exceeding one hundred pages would be furnished with indexes. He would prepare no less than five indexes, and often more, in order to facilitate swift access for readers and researchers.

This practice required great effort and sustained exertion, as my father himself noted in the introduction to the indexes of *al-Intiqā’*. Although indexing has developed into an independent discipline, few have dedicated themselves to it with sincerity and mastery.

### **Aesthetic Excellence in Printing and Design**

He also demonstrated discernment and a distinctive imprint in matters of printing and cover design. In this, he was assisted by discerning collaborators of sound taste with whom he worked closely to print his books. My father, may Allāh have mercy on him, is regarded as a unique exemplar and an independent school in the art of book production and indexing. This is particularly evident in his book *Taṣhīḥ al-Kutub wa Ṣun‘ al-Fahāris al-Mu‘jamah*.



### **Refined Taste in all the Aforementioned:**

His refined taste extended across all domains and examples have been omitted here for the sake of brevity.

### **Preference to Critical Editing over Original Authorship:**

This quality stemmed from his humility and self-effacement, as well his following conviction:

Completing the edifices constructed by the early scholars is far superior to initiating construction by the later generations. This is apart from the right they have over us and an aspect of fulfilling our duty toward them. They constitute the firmly rooted foundation, the guiding light, the sound understanding, and the upright knowledge. What remains incomplete in their works are only minor gaps that do not require us to bypass them or turn away from their invaluable legacies.

He articulated this explicitly in the introduction to his first published work, *al-Raf' wa al-Takmil fi al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil* by Imām al-Laknawī and adhered to it from the very beginning.

It should be noted that critical editing of texts often demands greater effort than original authorship, as he mentioned in that same introduction. This is clarified by the fact that he has fifty-one critically edited books compared to thirteen authored works.

He regarded original authorship appropriate in addressing novel matter for which no prior work by earlier scholars could be found. Otherwise, he would direct his efforts toward disseminating existent works, instead of producing a book of his own initiative.

### **His Mastery Across the Disciplines**

From the outset of his intellectual pursuit, Shaykh 'Abdul Fattāḥ exhibited lofty ambition, intense zeal, a keen and alert intellect, and remarkable brilliance. He immersed himself in a wide range of disciplines and fields. In the early stages of his studies, he showed particular devotion to Arabic grammar and language, to such an extent that some of his peers nicknamed him "al-Aṣma'ī," while others referred to him as "a speaking dictionary."

He also devoted himself to jurisprudence, legal theory, *sīrah*, and the noble science of ḥadīth. Following his move to Egypt, he pursued studies in legal theory, jurisprudence, ḥadīth, and other disciplines at al-Azhar in considerable depth. As a result, he emerged as a scholar of ḥadīth, jurist, legal theorist, grammarian, linguist, litterateur, and historian.

A notable illustration of his linguistic mastery is his production of critical annotations on al-'Allāmah Abū Fihr Maḥmūd Shākīr's commentary on *Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl al-*



*Shu‘arā’* by Ibn Sallām. This is despite that Maḥmūd Shākīr is regarded as one of the exceptional masters of this field in the modern era. May Allāh have mercy and forgive upon them both.

His numerous annotations scattered throughout his books provide the clearest testament to his mastery across these disciplines.

### Scholarly Standing and Recognition

In light of his breadth of knowledge, precision in scholarship, excellence in academic service, refined taste, and personal integrity and piety, Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāḥ secured a distinguished rank among the scholars of his time, even among those who differed with him.

I shall now present a selection of the commendations offered by scholars regarding him:

1 – The Shaykh al-‘Allāmah, versatile, great researcher, Muftī of the Egyptian lands, Ḥasanayn Makhlūf, may Allāh have mercy on him, said in his commendation of the first edition of the book *Risālat al-Mustarshidīn*:

The teacher, the great scholar, the verifying authority, ... And thereafter, I praise Allāh for granting you success in publishing *Risālat al-Mustarshidīn* by al-Muḥāsibī, through your valuable critical edition, which reflects the abundance of your knowledge and the precision of your research. Through it, the treatise has been enhanced with clarity, beauty, and increase in benefit and perfection.

In another letter, dated 4 Jumādā al-Ūlā 1389, he described my father as “one of the insightful and righteous scholars.”

2 – The Shaykh al-‘Allāmah, muḥaddith, precise verifier Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-A‘zamī, may Allāh have mercy on him, described him in a letter he sent to him as: “the erudite master scholar.”

He also composed two verses in his praise, which are:

Welcome, and greetings upon your blessed arrival,  
O scholar of Aleppo, leader of the scholars of Syria.  
No Syrian encompassed jurisprudence and traditions  
As you did, after that earlier Syrian.

By the second ‘Syrian’ he refers to the great scholar Ibn ‘Ābidīn, the author of al-Ḥāshiyah, as the people of India refer to Ibn ‘Ābidīn as “the great scholar al-Shāmī,” or simply “al-Shāmī.”

He also remarked: “O Shaykh, I hold you in the same esteem as my own teachers.”

3 – The Shaykh al-‘Allāmah, the jurist Muḥammad Abū Zahrah said in a personal correspondence with Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāḥ, may Allāh have mercy on them both:

My dear brother and honoured ...teacher. The blessed days I spent in your sincere companionship revealed to me the characteristic of devotion of



the Allāh-fearing, the grace of the believers, and the steadfastness of true friendship expressed with the eloquence of the righteous. These are days I shall never forget, for in you I witnessed exemplary moral character, gentle affection, and excellent companionship.

4 – The great scholar and muḥaddith ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Ṣiddīq al-Ghumārī, may Allāh have mercy on him, wrote to my father a letter in which he commended his research on *Those Whom Ibn Abī Ḥātim Mentioned in al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl and Remained Silent About*. Here, he described him as: ‘the great scholar, the muḥaddith.’ And he said: “In it (that is, in the aforementioned research) you demonstrated breadth of learning and sound knowledge.”

5 – His teacher and long-standing admirer, the discerning scholar, jurist, critical verifier, man of letters, and careful editor, Shaykh Muṣṭafā al-Zarqā, may Allāh have mercy upon him and bless his legacy and knowledge, wrote in his commendation of the book *Ṣafaḥāt min Ṣabr al-‘Ulamā’ alā Shadā’id al-‘Ilm wa al-Taḥṣīl*:

“My beloved and cherished brother, who occupies in my heart a love greater than my own heart, and who commands from me profound reverence, despite being younger than me in age ...”

In his nomination of my father, may Allāh have mercy upon him, for the Sultan of Brunei Hassanal Bolkiah International Award in the Noble Ḥadīth and its Sciences, he said:

I weighed and compared among the deserving individuals known to me, I found the preponderance to fall in favour of the distinguished professor, the eminent scholar, the reliable authority, the critical verifier, the precise examiner, and the trustworthy one, one whose equal none can rival in his precious investigations, namely, Shaykh ‘Abdul-Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah ... In addition to his scholarly qualifications, he possesses exemplary Islamic character, a respected standing, and embodied within his person are the traits of scholars: humility and firmness in religion without laxity ...

Furthermore, when he visited us to offer condolences, he said: “I know of no equal to him in this era.”

6 – The eminent discerning scholar, Shaykh al-Sayyid Aḥmad Ṣaqr, may Allāh have mercy on him, remarked: “Were moral excellence told to take human form, it would appear as ‘Abdul-Fattāḥ.”

7 – Shaykh al-‘Allāmah Muḥammad al-Shādhilī al-Nayfar, may Allāh have mercy on him, wrote in a letter of condolence:



The news of the passing of the noble scholar-imām, Shaykh ‘Abdul-Fattāh Abū Ghuddah fell upon us like a thunderbolt, on account of the faith, virtue, and abundant knowledge he embodied ...

He further remarked: “He was among those distinguished individuals of whom their epoch may justly be proud.”

8 – The erudite teacher, eminent jurist, and discerning scholar Muḥammad al-Ḥabīb Ibn al-Khawjah, may Allāh grant benefit through him, wrote to my father, may Allāh have mercy on him, stating: “His Eminence, the teacher, the great scholar, the guardian of the Prophetic Sunnah ...”

He wrote further in the letter of condolence: “We received, with the utmost sorrow and profound grief, the news of the passing of our venerable shaykh, the jurist, the muḥaddith ...”

9 – The devout scholar of learning, the educator and caller to the faith, the virtuous and discerning one, Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Nadwī al-Ḥasanī, may Allāh have mercy on him, wrote in his commendation of the second edition of *Ṣafaḥāt min Ṣabr al-‘Ulamā’*:

To proceed: it is a pleasure to record here my impressions of the book *Ṣafaḥāt ...*, in its second edition, by the devout scholar and educator, one who evokes the memory of the scholars of the pious predecessors in loftiness of aspiration, elevation of vision, versatility of the sciences, and excellence therein ...

He, may Allāh have mercy on him, also said to one of his students; while presenting and introducing him to my father, may Allāh have mercy on him:

In the years to come, you will recall the scholars you have encountered, and you will take pride over these meetings. The day shall arrive when you say: I had the honour of meeting the illustrious Shaykh ‘Abdul-Fattāh Abū Ghuddah.

10 – Shaykh al-‘Allāmah, the muḥaddith and jurist, Muḥammad ‘Abdul-Rashīd al-Nu‘mānī, may Allāh have mercy on him, wrote to my father, describing him as: “the learned shaykh, the ocean of knowledge, the ornament of the lands of Aleppo, the great discerning scholar, the meticulous critic and muḥaddith ...”

11 – Shaykh al-‘Allāmah, the accomplished Qur’ān reciter, the scrupulously pious jurist ‘Abdul-Wahhāb al-Ḥāfiẓ, known as ‘Abdul-Wahhāb Dibs wa Zayt al-Dimashqī, may Allāh have mercy on him, remarked:

“Were the office of iftā conferred by formal examination, Shaykh ‘Abdul-Fattāh Abū Ghuddah would have been its most deserving candidate.”



12 – The Shaykh al-Qurrā of Damascus, Karīm Sa‘īd Rājih, may Allāh preserve him, honoured him in his letter of condolence with the title: al-‘Allāmah — the great scholar.

13 – The leading scholar of Damascus, Shaykh Aḥmad Naṣīb al-Maḥāmīd, may Allāh have mercy on him, characterised him in his letter of condolence as: the great and precise researcher, the master of isnād transmission.

He further remarked:

He stands as a towering figure among the muḥaddiths, the scholars of legal theory, and the litterateur. He remained at once scholar, student, and teacher, embodying the character of Ibn al-Mubārak: from the inkwell to the grave.

14 – Shaykh al-‘Allāmah, the muḥaddith and educator ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abdul-Qādir al-Tilidī al-Maghribī characterised him as: the great scholar, the discerning muḥaddith, the widely read and broadly informed, one of the singular excellences of his age, rare in his knowledge, breadth of learning, critical acuity, virtue, and piety.

15 – The jurist and uṣūl scholar Dr. ‘Abdul-Wahhāb ibn Ibrāhīm Abū Sulaymān al-Makkī, member of the Council of Senior Scholars of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, honoured him with the epithet: the great scholar, the muḥaddith jurist.

He said of him:

He was, may Allāh have mercy on him, a singular exemplar among those scholars who combine the science of ḥadīth, in both its transmission and its comprehension, with the science of jurisprudence in its foundational principles and its detailed application, all within a conscious contemporaneity and committed flexibility.

16 – Shaykh al-faqīh ‘Abdul-Fattāh ibn Ḥusayn Rāwah al-Makkī, may Allāh have mercy on him, said of him:

The great scholar, the muḥaddith, one whose knowledge and practice evoke wonder, as do his refinement of character and humility, his command of transmission and comprehension, his critical precision, and his dignified bearing and conduct.

### **Factors Contributing to His Eminence and Distinction:**

1- His devout and religiously grounded family.

2- His moral rectitude, Allāh-consciousness, and righteousness of character.



- 3- His natural intelligence.
- 4- His innate refinement of taste.
- 5- His innate etiquette.
- 6- His gentle manner and gracious wit.
- 7- His excellence of character.
- 8- His profound humility.
- 9- His balanced judgment, intellectual discernment, and lack of fanaticism.
- 10- His ardent love for knowledge and insatiable zeal in its pursuit.
- 11- His soaring and ever-striving ambition.
- 12- His direct study under and companionship with the foremost scholars of his era across many lands.
- 13- His keen perceptiveness, and his selection from each teacher the finest that they had to offer.
- 14- His extensive and wide-ranging scholarly journeys.
- 15- His dedicated engagement in scholarly authorship and critical verification.
- 16- His lifelong commitment to teaching and instruction.
- 17- His devotion in the call to Allāh, which gave him both a local and a universal stature.
- 18- The excellence of his outward form and personal presentation.

### **Pillars of His Personality:**

- 1 - Righteousness and Allāh-consciousness.
- 2 - A finely attuned and refined aesthetic sensibility.
- 3 - An ardent desire and intense love for perfection.
- 4 - Refined taste.
- 5 - Excellence of moral conduct.
- 6 - Scrupulous attention of time.
- 7 - An all-consuming passion for knowledge, in its acquisition, reading, and authorship.



8 - Penetrating intelligence.

9 - A retentive memory.

10 - A rationality illuminated by the light of the Sacred Law.

11 - A fervent and luminous inner vitality.

### **From His Sayings:**

Islam is a matter of refined taste.

A book will not yield its secret to you unless you read it in its entirety.

Allāh has not gathered all goodness in any one person except the Prophet, may Allāh bless him and grant him peace.

The mark of the scholar is that he awakens the intellect under the shade of the Sacred Law.

A dirham of wealth demands a quintal of intellect to manage it, whilst a dirham of knowledge demands two quintals.

Knowledge is embraced through deep understanding.

### **Passing:**

He, may Allāh have mercy on him, departed to the proximity of his Generous Lord and the mercy of his Compassionate Creator at dawn on Sunday, the 9th of Shawwāl, 1417 AH, in the city of Riyadh, having lived eighty-one years and three months, less six days.

May Allāh shower him with His mercy, grant him His forgiveness, sanctify his soul, fill his grave with light, grant repose to his resting place, and make fragrant the earth that holds him.