



## **Dr. Shaykh `Umar Khayāta**

(1328-1409 H/1910-1988 CE)

*By Shaykh Mubammad Mujāhid Sha`bān <sup>1</sup>*

Translated by Shaykh Shoayb Ahmad

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He was born in the Jalūm suburb in Aleppo, Syria in 1328 H. (1910 CE) in a family of piety and virtue. His father, al-Hāj Muhammad Khayāta, was known for his piety and he was someone who memorized the Qur`ān, and loved religious knowledge and the `Ulemā. His mother's lineage reaches Fatima ؑ.

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<sup>1</sup> Shaykh Muhammad Mujāhid Sha`bān, the author of this article, is Shaykh `Umar Khayāta's son-in-law.

His father was very particular on educating his children with knowledge of the Islamic sciences. Among his children was Shaykh Najīb Khayāta, who was the Shaykh of the *qurrā'* (reciters) of Aleppo, and the one responsible for introducing the qira'a as per Tayyibat al-Nashr to the city.

Shaykh `Umar memorized the Qur`ān under the guidance and supervision of Shaykh Nūr al-Misrī when he was eight years old. After completing his primary schooling he joined the famous al-Khasrawiyya school, which at the time was known as the Faculty of Sharī`ah. Many prominent `Ulemā were affiliated to this school. After completing his studies there, he enrolled at the Faculty of Medicine in Damascus.

### **His Teachers (Shuyūkh) and his Studies:**

- He studied Hadīth and Sirah under Shaykh Muhammad Rāghib al-Tabbākh. Shaykh Rāghib was particularly concerned about him after he observed his intelligence. Shaykh Rāghib granted him *ijāza* with his *thabt* titled *mukhtasar al-atbbāt al-halabiyya*.
- He studied the *fiqh* of the Hanafī school under Shaykh Ahmad Zarqā, the son of Shaykh Muhammad Zarqā. He read and studied *bāshīyyat ibn `abidīn* and other books of the Hanafī school.
- He studied the Arabic Language under Shaykh Muhammad al-Nashīd.
- He studied *usūl* and *tafsīr* under Shaykh Asad al-Abjih, who was the senior Shāfi`ī Muftī of Aleppo.
- He studied *tawhīd* and logic with Shaykh Faydullāh al-Kurdī.
- He studied inheritance under Shaykh Muhammad `Abdul Mu`tī.
- He received *ijāza* from his brother Shaykh Najīb in the recitation of Hafs.
- He took the Naqshbandi *tariqa* from Shaykh Abūl Nasr Khalaf al-Himsī.

In 1937 he travelled to Damascus to study medicine, but he punctually attended the lessons by the `Ulemā there. He attended lessons by Shaykh Badruddīn al-Hasanī, Shaykh Abūl Khayr al-Maydanī, Shaykh `Alī al-Daqr, Shaykh `Abdul Wahhāb Dibs, Shaykh Sa`īd al-Burhānī and Shaykh Abūl Yusr `Abidīn.

After completing his medical studies specializing in internal medicine, he returned to Aleppo where he opened a surgery to serve the community. Even in his surgery he never abandoned his religious knowledge, and there were always book around him. He never missed the opportunity to attend the lessons conducted by the `Ulemā in Aleppo.

He even taught Hadīth at the Sha`bāniyya school, which was later known as the Dar al-Ta`līm al-Shar`ī. In addition to his knowledge of the Islamic sciences and medicine, he was proficient in French and English and he an authority in astronomy and calculating the birth of the moon and the Salāh

times for the city. He wrote some articles for some academic journals and participated in some medical conferences like the one in Cairo in 1960 and another in Khartoum in 1965.

### **His `Ibāda and Character**

People used to speak highly about his devotion. He was never seen except that he engaged in *dhikr*, recitation of the Qur`ān or in Salāh. He only slept a little at night and strictly observed the fast on a Monday and Thursday of every week. He performed Haj more than twenty times. Some people said that they thought what used to be mentioned about the devotion of the pious scholars of the past was far fetched until they saw him. He followed the Prophet's Sunnah and was a humble person despite his vast knowledge and he respected all people. Very often he attended lessons that were conducted by his students and he sat with utmost respect in front of them. He never spoke ill of anyone and as never heard backbiting or slandering anyone.

He as pleasant in his speech and only got angry if the laws of Allah were transgressed. He disliked debate and argumentation. He was very generous and very often he never took any remuneration from the poor and the students and very often he gave them medication for free. While on Haj he carried a bag filled with medicines and he treated people for free.

Due to his immense fear of Allah and his responsibility to the poor he used to try the medication on himself to establish its reaction before administering it to anyone.

He refrained from the pleasures and luxuries of the world. He was an example of justice and fairness between his wife and children. In fact he carried a small notebook wherein he wrote whatever he gave to any of his children so he would remember to give the same to the others.

### **His Return to His Lord**

While he was conducting a lesson in Hadīth after the `Asr Salāh on the 1988 (17<sup>th</sup> Rabi` al-Awwal 1409 H) at the mosque close to his surgery, he suddenly stopped and repeated the great name Allah! Allah! ... and he passed away, *rahimahullah*.

