

The Ramadan Discourses
of Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib



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Contents

Preface	ix
A brief summary of the life of Shaykh Sidi Muhammad ibn al-Habib, may Allah purify his secret, by Bashir ibn Isma'il	1
Endnotes	47
Surat al-A'raf 7:156-180	49
1 al-A'raf 7:156-157	51
2 al-A'raf 7:158	68
3 al-A'raf 160 – 162	81
4 al-A'raf 163 – 167	89
5 al-A'raf 7:168-171	97
6 al-A'raf 7:171-178	114
7 al-A'raf 7:178-180	128
Surat al-An'am 6:1-31	143

8 al-An'am 6:1-3	145
9 al-An'am 6:4-13	156
10 al-An'am 6:13-18	167
11 al-An'am 6:18-20	178
12 al-An'am 6:21-26	189
13 al-An'am 6:26-31	202
14 al-An'am 6:29-31	213

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
وَکَلَّمَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰی سَیْدِنَا وَوَلَدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ
وَآلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ وَسَلَّمَ وَسَلَامًا

Preface

The *tafsir* discourses in this book were recorded during Ramadan in October 1971 just two months before Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib died in Algeria on his way to Hajj. They are the only recordings ever made of the teaching of the Shaykh and, as such, represent an extremely precious element of his legacy. His teaching discourses almost always took the form of giving a *tafsir* of Quranic *ayahs* that had just been recited and these discourses follow that pattern. It was his custom in Ramadan year on year to remain in Meknes during the entire month and go through the Qur'an from end to end, starting in one Ramadan where he had finished the previous year. In this, his last Ramadan, he began half way through *ayah* 156 of *Sura al-A'raf*, which was where he had reached the year before.

It must be remembered, as can be seen from the short biography that introduces this volume, that Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib completed his studies at the very beginning of the 20th Century, certainly before 1905. This means that he was from the last generation of scholars whose entire education took place before the intervention of any colonial administration into the Moroccan education system. So he was the direct legatee of a traditional education process that had been continuing unbroken in Fez for more than a millennium and that was completely unaffected by the ethos of scientific materialism which the colonial powers brought in their wake and which now dominates the entire world.

THE RAMADAN DISCOURSES

This is clearly reflected in his teaching which comes across with a freshness and authenticity and freedom from any modernist influence that no scholar of subsequent generations has been genuinely able to achieve.

This is reflected in everything he says but is demonstrated particularly clearly in his continual insistence on a pure understanding of *tawhid*. This is something he emphasised generally throughout his teaching and, as can be seen, he returns to it again and again in these discourses. Something else that shines through in his words is his constant, almost urgent, awareness of the Divine Presence and the reality of the Next World, and his fervent desire to communicate that to his hearers so that they realise the true nature of the human situation and their need to act upon what he says. This has made these discourses as relevant, or even more relevant, than they were when they were first delivered fifty years ago.

The doctrines of scientific materialism, positing, as they do, the absolute reality of cause and effect, have now penetrated even more deeply into human consciousness and have made it vital that the true teaching of *tawhid* is once more made accessible to Muslims in the way it is through the Shaykh's words here. And the rampant secularism that now dominates virtually the whole world, which treats the Divine Presence and the realities of the Next World at best as myth and frequently as fiction, makes the Shaykh's certainty about them and vibrant awareness of them all the more inspiring and needed in the present time. May Allah greatly benefit all who read these discourses and increase the reward of Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib by the benefit they bring.

Abdalhaqq Bewley

A brief summary of the life of Shaykh Sidi
Muhammad ibn al-Habib, may Allah purify his
secret, by Bashir ibn Isma'il

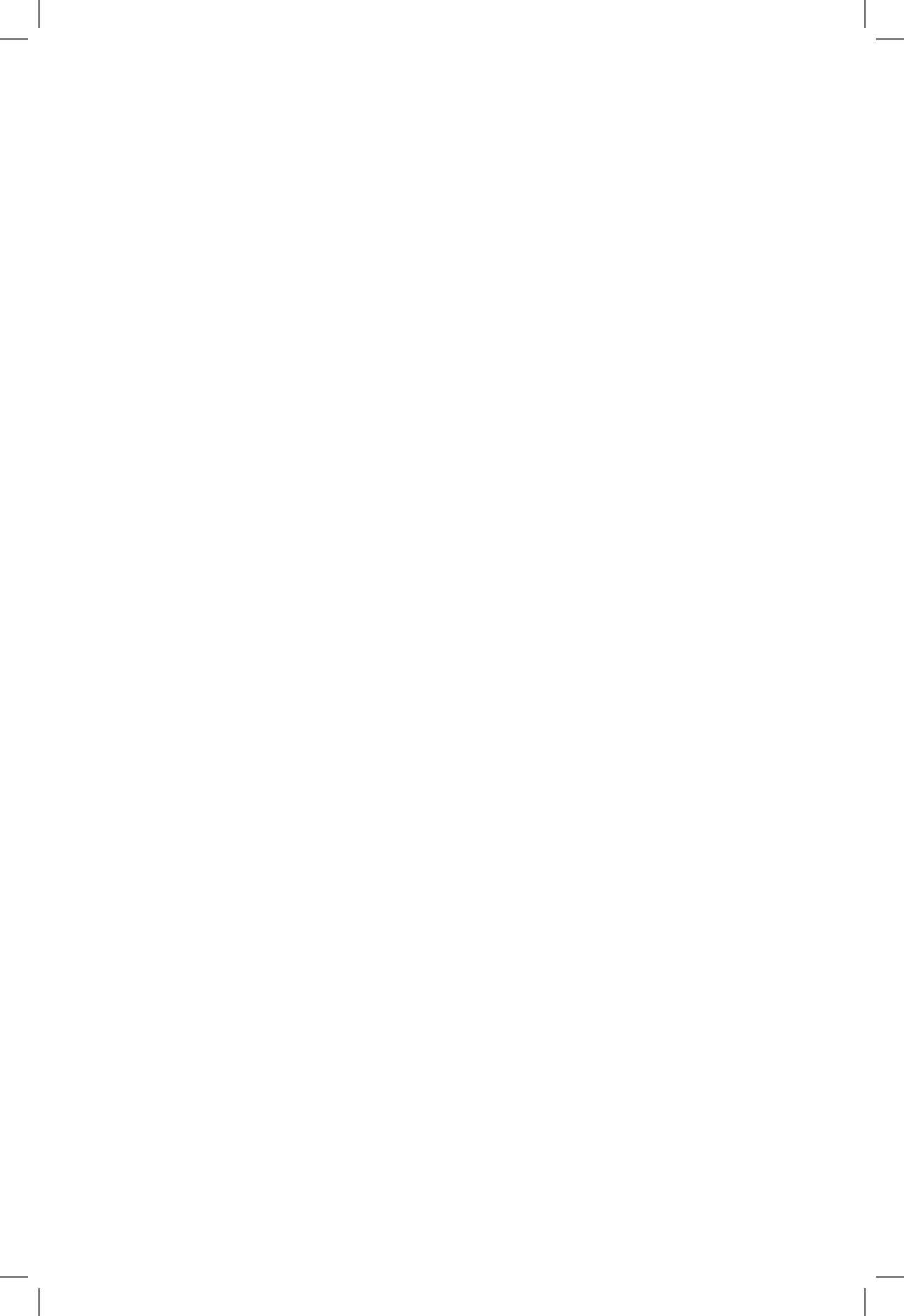
Praise be to Allah, the Generous Bestowing Helper, and blessings and peace be upon our Master Muhammad, the adornment of existence and glory of the worlds, and upon his pure good family and glorious Companions, and may He be pleased with those who love them and follow them, and those who follow them and who follow in their footsteps in the best way until the Day of Rising.

This is a brief biography written to act as a treasure trove for lovers to help them learn about the life of someone by whose clear light souls have been illuminated and by whose clear secret hearts have been guided: the spiritual Qutb and luminous Muhammadan man, our teacher, model and fount of our blessing, Sidi Muhammad ibn al-Habib al-Amghari al-Idrisi al-Hasani. May Allah purify his secret and soul and let us benefit from his *baraka!*

It is not concealed from any intelligent person that the biography of this gnostic of Allah – and that of those *awliya'* of Allah like him – is not just a matter of telling a life story or transmitting information. Such biographies are rather salutary reminders and extremely beneficial narratives, testifying to pure souls who have come into this world to transmit to other people a noble message they have been trusted to pass on. They perform that task fully and comprehensively and then travel on to a more resplendent

Surat al-A'raf

7:156-180



al-A'raf 7:156-157

وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۖ فَسَأَكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّءَ الْأُولَى الَّذِينَ يُجِدُونَهُ وَمَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَيْهِمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ فَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّتِي أَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

My mercy extends to all things but I will prescribe it for those who have taqwa and pay zakat, and those who believe in Our Signs: those who follow the Messenger, the Unlettered Prophet, whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Gospel, commanding them to do right and forbidding them to do wrong, making good things halal for them and bad things haram for them, relieving them of their heavy loads and the chains which were around them. Those who believe in him and honour him and help him, and follow the Light that has been sent down with him, they are the ones who are successful. (7:156-7)

Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* says in His Mighty Book: “My Mercy embraces all things, and I shall prescribe it for those who have *taqwa*.”

We have started with this *surah* which we were talking about last year when we reached His words, *ta'ala*: “And My Mercy embraces all things.” The name of this *surah* is *Surat al-A'raf*. Every *surah* gets its name from a word in it. So for example *Surat al-Baqara* is called *al-Baqara* because Allah mentions a cow in it. It is the same with *Al 'Imran* and with *an-Nisa'* and so on. The name of this *surah* is *al-A'raf* and Allah says in it: “on the dividing wall (*al-a'raf*) are men.” Every *surah* gets its name from a word in it. It was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ in Makka al-Mukarrama.

Anyway, we reached Allah's words, “And My Mercy extends to all things.” This mercy which embraces all things is a mercy without limit; but there is also a mercy which is restricted. This unlimited mercy encompasses animals, plants, angels, Prophets, Messengers, *awliya'*, and even the *mushrikun* and the *kafirun*. They all come within the scope of this mercy which entails existence and provision. Allah *ta'ala* gives everyone existence and sustains them. But then He makes them different in their beliefs. Among them are *muminun* and *kafirun* and *munafiqun*. But all of them share existence and sustenance.

This mercy even includes Iblis; even he shares in it. Once he was with one of the *'arifin* and he said, “I too claim a share in that mercy because Allah says: ‘And My Mercy extends to all things,’ and I am a thing.” The *'arif* said to him, “But Allah has limited it by His Words: ‘And I shall prescribe it for those who have *taqwa*.’” He said to him, “You don't know anything,” – this was Iblis talking to Sahl ibn Abdallah – “because how can something which Allah

has made unlimited then have limits imposed on it?" This mercy without limit is of existence and sustenance. Everyone is included in it. The *kafirun* have existence and sustenance, so has Shaytan and so has everything else.

However, differentiation does exist, so what is it in? It's in *iman*. The people who follow the Prophets and Messengers and believe in them have a special place. They will be among the people of the Garden. They will enjoy the vision of the Noble Face of Allah. But the people who only have existence and sustenance without any *iman* will have their repayment in the Fire forever. They will be forever in the Fire. Because Allah then says: "*And I shall prescribe it,*" in other words that mercy; but prescribe it for whom? "*for those who have taqwa.*" So the person who wants that prescribed, restricted mercy must have *taqwa*.

What is *taqwa*? It is obedience to all the commands of Allah and avoidance of all that is forbidden. The things that Allah has commanded us to do are the prayer, *zakat*, fasting, Hajj, and the things he has forbidden us are pride, envy, malice, hatred, bad thoughts about others. These people will taste that second kind of mercy because they have *taqwa*. "*And I shall prescribe it for those who have taqwa.*" We have said that *taqwa* means to obey Allah's commands, and the person who has *taqwa* of Allah in this way will receive mercy. They will experience mercy in this existence, in their grave, at their rising, and in the *akhira*. But all those who do not have *taqwa* will be in misery. They will be punished in this existence, in their grave, in the *akhira*, in everything of theirs. *Taqwa* gains for you every good quality.

He says, *ta'ala*: "**And I shall prescribe it for those who have *taqwa*.**" Sidi ibn 'Ashir says: