

Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Ensan Fi Ehsan

Charity Embodied in a Man

ترجمة الدكتور / محمد بدوي

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Foreword

By

His Excellency Prof Dr Abdullah Ibn Omar Nasif

Praise be to God Lord of the Worlds; He commanded His Messenger *Peace be upon him* to teach his followers to endeavour and do their best in work as their work will be observed by God, by His Messenger, and by all believers. They will ultimately return to God Who is All-Knowing and Who knows what is open and what is concealed, and He will tell them the worth of all their works (*Al-Tauba: 105*).¹ We send our best salutation to God's last Messenger and Prophet, Muhammad, to his household, and to his companions.

It gives me great pleasure to write the introduction to this book *Hasan Abbas Sharbatly: Ensan Fi Ehsan*, which recounts the achievements and accomplishments of His Excellency Hasan Abbas Sharbatly *God have mercy on his soul* and his support to projects of charity and aid efforts.

The book abounds with instances of the countless deeds of honour that he performed during his long blessed life; I pray that God will accept these deeds and have mercy on his soul.

If we follow the philanthropic projects that Hasan Abbas Sharbatly spent on with great unequalled generosity, we shall find that they were greatly diversified and covered numerous fields of charity both at home and abroad. These include: projects of publishing the Holy Quran and Islamic books; building of mosques, schools, orphanages, and widows' homes; and seminars for the studying of the Holy Quran. He also offered great support to projects of national interest in various Arab countries, and these are recounted in the chapters of this book.

His interest in the welfare of the cities of Mecca and Medina and his aid to their poor and needy – let alone his help to pilgrims there – borders on the unbelievable in terms of the immensity and the variety of the expenditures, not to mention the endowments that he made there.

Ever since its establishment, the Muslim World League had had a sizable share in the philanthropic interests of Hasan Sharbatly. He had donated generously to projects undertaken by the League of publishing the Holy Quran, its interpretations, exegeses, and translations of its meanings; in addition to the publication of beneficial Islamic books

¹ The text is only a rendering of the meaning of the Quranic verse in general terms. Due to its complex rhetorical structure, the Quran is untranslatable, as scholars of Arabic are aware. Any translation of the Quran is a rendering of one possible meaning in general terms, and it is impossible to give the intertwined shades of meaning in any other language than the original Arabic without a dangerous measure of misinterpretation or misrepresentation. This is why no accurate translation is attempted of the Quranic verses quoted in this book, only an attempted rendering of the general meaning in as near terms to the original as possible to explain the relevant message. The chapter and the verse number are cited in brackets after that, and an interested reader can follow it from there.

meant for distribution as gifts to individuals, libraries, and Islamic centres all over the world. He also provided extensive financial support to the projects undertaken or sponsored by the League, and to projects whose administrators were recommended by the League to people of charity in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

I had a close personal relationship with him, and I often used to visit him at home at his invitation. I knew that he was planning to establish a world charity foundation to organise his charity interests and activities, and he wanted me to be on the board of trustees of the foundation. He was planning to spend on the foundation from his own money in the hope of perpetuating his charitable accomplishments and making them last after his departure. However, circumstances prevented the completion of this project then.¹ Our brotherly relationship became closer and stronger with the passage of time and I became one of his constant visitors. My last meeting with him was two months before his passing away, when he came back from America after medical treatment there. In that visit, I was accompanied by my brother Muhammad, and we noticed that Hasan Sharbatly had retained both his sense of humour and his strong memory and was arguing with us about how long it had been since he last saw us.

All through my dealings with him, I have noticed how magnanimous, humble, and charitable he was. Also, I was astonished by his remarkably sharp memory, and how easily and admirably he was able to recall numbers, statistics, dates, and names of persons. He was, in a sense, a living record of an important historical era which witnessed the establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

It was a great favour from God Almighty that He directed and helped Hasan in his charitable interests and aid activities. As God has helped Hasan along this blessed path, we pray that He bestows on him the rewards that He has promised for those who perform such blessed deeds. The Prophet *Peace be upon him* gave the glad tidings to doers of good deeds when he said, ‘When a person dies, his work (register of deeds) will cease, except for three things: a continuous act of charity (whose effects go on after death), a scholarship that is beneficial to people, or a good child who supplicates for him.’²

I also pray to God the Most Sublime to honour Hasan’s sons and daughters in undertaking this noble message and in holding up the banner of charity and good deeds after their honourable father. A man once asked the Prophet *Peace be upon him*, ‘My parents are dead; is there anything I can do to honour them after death?’ He answered, ‘Yes, you can pray for them, seek God’s forgiveness for them, execute their covenant after them, join the blood relations (close relatives) that cannot be joined but through them, and honour their friends.’³

¹ The project did come through and a decree for the establishment of the ‘Hasan Abbas Charity Foundation’ was issued some two years after his departure. See Appendix 3.

² The hadith is narrated in Muslim, *Sahih*, vol. 5, p. 73; Al-Bukhari, *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad*, 238; Abu Dawoud, *Sunan*, 2880; Al-Nasa’i, vol. 2, p. 129; and Al-Tirmidhi, vol. 1, p. 359.

³ The hadith is narrated in Abu Dawoud, *Sunan*, ‘On being good to one’s parents’ vol. 13, p. 353, No 4476; Ahmad, *Musnad*, 15479; Al-Tabarani, *Al-Awsat*, 8207.

I also hope that this valuable volume will be of great use to readers, and that God will reward the authors and all who contributed to the making of the book.

Praise be to God

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Preface

This book contains glimpses from the unique experience of a self-made man. The man started as a phenomenon and turned to something of a symbol and role model in the world of finance, business, and trade.

With his tremendous will power and vision, he had his fingers on the pulse of happenings inscribing for himself a unique name in the pages of achievement and earning a distinguished place in the record of history. His name has become synonymous with charity, and he himself became a symbol of wisdom, magnanimity, and inspiration.

The man did not receive systematic learning or education and could not read or write but he managed to amass an enormous body of knowledge and penetrate to the depths of cultural issues by associating with scholars, thinkers, and men of letters and by keeping abreast of the current affairs everywhere over the globe.

Thus he lived with his mind and his heart open and keenly aware of the hot issues of his community interacting with the developments and this turned him from a mere tradesman – on whom God has bestowed an enormous wealth – to an active agent in the process of the development of his nation, and a bridge for the have-nots in many Arab and Muslim countries in the hope for a better future.

Introduction

On Heroes and Hero-Worship

Despite the tremendous advances in technology, despite the great variety in methods of entertainment, scholarship, and culture, and despite the constant changes in ways of life, many people still show great interest in biographies of heroes, pioneers, symbols of progress, and great people. It seems that ‘hero-worship’ – in different forms and varying levels – is part of human nature. Common people find stories and anecdotes from the lives of distinguished personages highly interesting not only as a pastime but also as source of lessons from the past. Such common people feel that the presence of those great heroes would surely help them in developing their talents towards a more fulfilling life. In spite of the fact that many of the anecdotes they recount may not match historical facts and human capabilities, they still like to think of their heroes as superhuman, immaculate, and above criticism. With the high frequency of these heroic anecdotes, many people may enter into exaggerations and competitions about the biography and traits of their favourite heroes; they may even invent new stories and traits and add them to the record of their heroes.

These are practices of commoners with respect to heroes and ‘hero-worship,’ but what about the response of the intelligentsia and the upper crust of the society? Many of the upper classes do have their own heroes and versions of heroism, exactly like the commoners do; however, they have a totally different approach to the issue. They would be interested in more academic questions like: how did the hero emerge? What factors were at play in his emergence? What were the characteristics of the historical era in which the hero emerged? Who was the ruler? How did this influence the community? Etc. Such questions and suggestions are usually based on an intellectual basis aiming to set or implement a certain standard, or check the correctness of a historical account, or probably formulate a moral lesson from the historical account. Each researcher will perform these processes in accordance with his own psychological nature, academic orientation, field of work, intellectual background, and what he seeks from the hero.

In any case, there has to be a hero, in order to have a biography or a history. Heroism is not a coincidence and it does not come from void; neither is it a specific piece of information or a trait that can be acquired at a set time in a certain manner. If this had been the case, all people would have been candidates for heroism. Heroism, rather, is the result of the interaction of several factors – time, place, language, religion, and traditions. These factors integrate and act on the soul of a specific individual who has the potential flame of the heroic legend in his soul. At historical junctures and turning points, the hero / symbol emerges, announces himself, and moves the masses who, in their turn, mobilise history, and the cycle of history moves on and on.

Heroes, then, are often the end products of a general crisis that strikes the whole community. However, the hero does not usually aim consciously to attain the ‘status’ of heroism. What usually happens is that the signs of his distinction and the circumstances

of the community push him to a position where people flock around him and look up to him.

A researcher in history can come up with a list of heroes and symbols of nations with relative ease. Moreover, the conclusion he is likely to reach is that such personages did not endeavour to attain that status or to attain personal glory. When a hero is 'born,' his individual self is forgotten, and he becomes the symbol in a community that needed a symbol and created it.

In spite of his utmost importance in the community, the hero cannot perform his part in the life of the nation singlehandedly. He has to have helpers and associates who share with him the same concerns and social interaction, and who have the same strength of resolve, will power, convictions, principles, and goals. With such men around him, the hero will be able to manage the course of history.

A fair researcher cannot ignore the influence and role of the elements of time and place in the life of the wide community in general, and the life of a certain group in the community in particular. This role is the agency of restructuring; it is the power capable of managing and dialectically bringing together seemingly contradictory concepts that are both interactive and mutually repulsive, that both build and destroy, and that push forward and hold back the efforts of change and development. These concepts vary in degree from one community to another, from one age to another, and from one place to another.

It may be the case that even if the same circumstances and conditions are prevalent in a specific community in a different period, the change may not materialise. Change might not come about either in the case of a change in place but in the same period of time. So, it seems we are in front of a triangular formula; no matter how much the angles may change, they still add up to the same amount, a fixed amount.

Only the Chosen Ones – infallible prophets and angels – are guarded from falling into gross mistakes and misdeeds; this is God's decree in those whom He has chosen for a message and a mission. The choice comes commensurate with the chosen. In judging heroes, we have to resort to a holistic moral and intellectual principle; we can do this by throwing light on their life achievements as a whole without surrendering to our prejudices, inner inclinations, and biases, with or against them; and without considering our points of agreement or disagreement with them. Moreover, throwing all light on certain points, through which the person and his life would be judged – while ignoring other points – is detrimental to truth and objectivity; the judgement should emanate from a comprehensive view of all points.

The reason for this is that the interaction between the factors of time, place, and the historical situation is likely to push a certain person in a certain era in a certain direction to do something that he sees correct. Others may have different thoughts about the same issue later and may criticise the person who took that decision. This is why, in fairness to the subject, they should take into consideration the movement of time and the change of place. They may even take the same decisions if they go through the same conditions themselves.

Objectivity is then an absolute necessity, and a fair historian or researcher should conduct a careful study of the circumstances and the internal and external influences in every age period that the subject went through during his life. Then he should strike a balance between positive and negative sides, and decide with absolute objectivity in which slot to place the subject of his study. Some researchers, unfortunately, make it their chief interest to give prominence to the negative sides and points of weakness and place them under the spotlight to demean the subject and cast derision on him.

Such people hate success and are always ready to brandish their pickaxes to destroy everything. In their arsenal, they also have long lists of false and carefully prepared accusations, to be drawn upon request by their masters, to be used for blackmail and slander when the need arises.

Biography and story-telling

In spite of the differences in the definitions of the novel, biography, and story as literary kinds, they all have things in common. These include the time and place, the characters, the events and the plot, which is the sequencing and arrangement of events. In the rising action of the story we have the conflict intensifying in a plausible manner, with one event leading to the next in a logical sequence, leading to the ultimate conclusion in a natural and realistic manner without artificiality in plotting.

Stories are an important aspect of human activity; they have their ultimate purpose in the moral lessons that can be drawn from them, and they serve mankind in providing examples and role models and in providing ethical standards in a lively manner. A good proof of that is the great amount of stories that we find in the Holy Quran and in the other Heavenly books, in the blessed Prophetic traditions, in the books of history, in biographies, in sagas, and in other literary productions involving stories as a means of conveying a moral lesson.

Successive generations are constantly in need of learning about the lives of the great heroes, leaders, and symbols of the nation. This will help inculcate the noble ideals and the good example in the souls of young learners. We have never been more in need of this than today as our nation is being tossed around with waves of contradictory ideologies. On one hand, there are efforts towards westernisation acting in the nation; these are complemented by the endeavours of orientalist to distort the history and the

ideological basis of the nation. On the other hand, the endeavours of materialists, existentialists, nihilists, atheists, forces of moral decadence, and other subversive elements are also working their negative course in the body of the nation. This is not to mention the efforts of acculturation by Christian and Jewish missionaries and activists.

However, the chronicles and the collective unconscious of the nation abound with the achievements of innumerable giant Muslim and Arab symbols. The Arab nation is still young and fertile and capable of producing new symbols of giving and sacrifice.

This is why it is incumbent on us to make known and publicise the great symbols of the nation and their achievements in every domain. Our nation is nowadays passing through a critical and serious stage in its long and glorious history, and it needs an expert guide from among its children to steer the ship to the land of safety where it can develop its capabilities, achieve its ambitions, and meet the challenges of the present and the future. This cannot be achieved but by fortifying the coming generations of the nation to enable them to face the challenges of acculturation and westernisation aiming to uproot the historical values of the nation, control it, subordinate it, and impose foreign values on it.

The symbol is never isolated from the movement of life and the world; it interacts with it with full awareness and deep insight. It makes use of its devices and techniques to acquire more mobility and influence in achieving a better future. The symbol ties the present with the past in its looking forward for a bright future with an enlightened insight that does not limit itself to the past and does not lose its head over the wonders of the present. It, rather, ties them together in an encompassing way in preparation for the future. In doing this, the symbol makes use of all the assets available: the impetus of knowledge, the ideology, the constant values, the instruments, sources, techniques, and above all, the justice of the cause he is fighting for. On top of all this, the symbol enjoys utmost inner peace and harmony, and integrity of spirit and mind, and purity of soul and body.

The strength of others is never a source of annoyance to the symbol. One of his top priorities in success is self restraint and careful management of his relationships with others. Strength with him is always tied to love, hardness to tenderness, and care to ease. This facilitates good relationships and good reception and sets the suitable mood for comprehension, adjustment, and interaction with others.

History does not move along by coincidences; it is, rather, a connected sequence of persistent work by specific people who have given themselves up totally to that task and endeavoured with all their might to write acts of heroism in the record of history. This specifically is what enables them to move in that influential manner in life. In their turn, these people are not the result of coincidences; they are the end product of interaction between several factors that helped them mobilise their powers and develop their talents and faculties to perform their destined role: a society, an environment, a faith, and an

intellectual climate. These are rare people; not all men are symbols, and not all events are history.

In this book, we shall go through the life story of one of these symbols / heroes, a phenomenal man who is a unique example of Arab / Islamic civilisation.

Why writing about this man?

Although illiterate and could neither read nor write, this man enjoyed an astonishing and rare talent and intelligence. For example, he was able to calculate small details as well as great amounts in his vast wealth. He also had the mental capability to make accurate unfailing mental budget calculations for huge projects and enterprises.

God has compensated him for his illiteracy with an exceptionally strong memory. With such memory, he was able to memorise every little detail, number, and account, which he would retrieve when need arose.¹ The astonishing thing about him is that he was able to do that despite his numerous and varied preoccupations and the hardships he had to face.

On top of that, he had wide reaching enterprises and projects. These projects were not controlled by the small army of employees – working day and night – as much as by his own diligence and outstanding planning.

It is really a miraculous thing that such an illiterate man would be able to keep track accurately and unfailingly, in an amazing manner, of all his complicated accounts. More astonishing still is his power – despite his lack of knowledge of reading and writing, let alone knowledge of economics and politics – in accuracy of calculations, expertise in facing changing circumstances, his expertise in merchandise, his knowledge of the movements of markets, knowledge of what should and what should not be offered or exhibited, and his deep and clear insight in all matters and fundamentals of trade.²

These innate characteristics of clear thinking and an open mind, coupled with his wide-reaching experience, led him to making enormous profits in his businesses. Moreover, his piety, god-fearing, self-denial, love of good, and reliance on God alone guaranteed that his huge profits were all legal, good, and in line with the teachings of Islam.³

His intelligence, insight, and achievements in the world of finance and commerce were such that they baffled experts from major well-reputed universities of the world. He had learnt the fundamentals of these sciences from experience in life itself. He had a hands-on direct knowledge of commerce; and through his innate talents and experience, he was able to acquire more effective knowledge about them than most scholars knew through

¹ See Mustafa Azmi. *Al-Sharbatly: Al-Muhsin Al-Sha'bi Al-Awwal* (The Outstanding Man of Charity). Cairo: 1949, p. 129.

² *Ibid.* 130.

³ *Ibid.*

their studies of theories and books. One is tempted to speculate that had he joined academic study to experience, he might have come up with new insights in the world of finance and economics and added much to the existing body of knowledge about world markets. When we say that he did not have the kind of systematic learning that was known in schools, we do not mean that he was not educated. Far from it, he did really have a far-reaching and enlightened education and knowledge of the world that helped him in the building of his wealth and in extending and managing his businesses. In addition to all his talents in trade and his innate characteristics, he enjoyed a rare luck that accompanied him in the moves he made; and as the Arabic saying goes, when he touched earth, it turned to gold, and when his hand passed by desert land, it would turn to an oasis of water, greenery, and shade.¹

Our man was privileged with a lot of admirable personal traits. He had an upright moral attitude, good manners in matters of religion and life, clear thinking, deep insight, deep knowledge of the little details and the wide trends of the world of commerce, and praiseworthy generosity. These were coupled with God-given success and luck. He seems to have possessed all that one might hope for. Riches, good manners, and piety have not come together in a single man except very rarely. When they do, he deserves to be a role model and a good example to be followed.

The man went through difficult circumstances of political turmoil and turbulences. He witnessed the treachery and disloyalty of certain sides that were greedily seeking their own personal benefits with no regard to the general good; he also saw how corrupt and unscrupulous people were wreaking havoc with the fabric of the community. Moreover, he lived through a string of princedoms and governments, leading ultimately to the establishment of the Saudi state. When the house of Saud came to power, he responded positively to their administration, joined it, and had close contacts with every single monarch of the Saudi dynasty, starting with the great founder, the late King Abdul-Aziz – who considered our man as one of his own children and most loyal supporters – and reaching the late King Fahd – the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. He loved them all and remained loyal to the end to the oath of allegiance that he swore to them with the great founder King Abdul-Aziz. In return, they all reciprocated his love, appreciation, and respect. They saw in him a loyal and strong man hardened by experience in life. Never in his life was he with a side other than that of his homeland; never was he an agent or a crony to any state or political side; and above all, he was unique in his love of charity, sacrifice, magnanimity, renunciation, and self-negation.

He was always extremely careful to spread an atmosphere of love, loyalty, and friendliness in any group he was with. He was specifically careful to share his food with those he loved. It was one of his great delights to see his guests stretching their hands to dishes on his banquet and to enjoy these dishes with them. In typical Arabic hospitality, he would offer each one of his guests some of the delicious kinds in front of him: ‘do take this from me ... do taste this ... try this and I’m sure you’ll like it ... do not disappoint

¹ *Ibid.* 132

me and reject my stretched hand ... do open your mouth and take this.' He was always seeking the warmth of family life and strengthening family ties.

However, towards the end of his life, he was embittered by an act of cruel disloyalty that caused him great suffering lasting up until his last days. It deprived him of much of his happiness and joy, but he never allowed it to change the way he looked to life and the way he behaved with others: he had always been an ardent believer in God and surrendered himself with full submission to His Will and to Fate.

He was a firm believer in the traditional Arabic saying that true wealth, in its reality, is in renunciation. This is why he was never concerned deep at heart about his wealth. His real wealth was not in his material riches but, rather, in his renunciation. He also believed that a person is nothing but a guardian of the riches in his hands, appointed by God Almighty to manage it in ways of good acts and devotions as prescribed by God the Glorious. He never relinquished his real spiritual wealth: his inner convictions, his faith, his moral values and principles, and his love of good and charity. This gave him great and profound relentless strength, honour, and dignity. Moreover, He enjoyed great bravery in defending his principles, and he never hesitated in fighting for what he saw was right. He was dauntless and never feared adversity as long as he was in the right.

Hasan Abbas Sharbatly having a meal with friends

(الصورة صفحة 21)

These traits rightly earned him numerous titles like ‘the Great Man of Philanthropy,’ ‘the Great Popular Man of Charity,’ ‘the Distinguished Man of Charity,’ and ‘the Great Islamic Man of Charity.’ It is remarkable that all his titles, which he earned deservedly, revolved around charity and doing of good.

Islam and charity

Charity is a most praiseworthy trait in Islam. God the Most Sublime praises people of charity and goodness. The Quran states that justice and goodness are human obligations (*Al-Nahl*: 90), the only reward for goodness (from man) is goodness (from God) (*Al-Rahman*: 60), and that God is pleased with the doers of good and those who follow them in goodness (*Al-Tauba*: 100). The doers of good will have the reward that they wish for with their Lord (*Al-Zumar*: 34), and on the Day of Judgement, God addresses the doers of good telling them to enjoy their food and drinks in Paradise; this is how God rewards those who stick to goodness in life (*Al-Mursalat*: 43-4).

Goodness and charity may take several forms. One prominent form of goodness is represented in a person’s true worshipping of God. The reality of genuine worship is that a person worships God as if he sees Him; if he does not see God, he should have the deep conviction that God sees him. Another form of goodness is having good relationships with people and doing good to them. A heart that is filled with benevolence and love to people is one of the best hearts; it is a heart that comes alive with piety, virtue, generosity, insight, and righteousness.

In the hadiths and traditions of the Prophet *Peace be upon him* we read that Owaimer Abu Al-Darda’, *God be pleased with him*, a venerable companion of the Prophet and a scholar in Quran and Islamic thought, and a prominent narrator of hadiths (d. 32 AH / 652 CE), relates that the Prophet *Peace be upon him* once said to him, ‘Owaimer, the more you grow in reason and mind, the nearer you get to God the Most Sublime.’ He asked, ‘May my father and mother be offered in ransom for you,¹ How can I get more of reason and mind?’ He answered, ‘Avoid what God has prohibited and perform what God has commanded and you will become a man of reason; then perform more of good works and you will attain higher reason in life and you will become nearer and more endeared to God.’

Worthy of mention in this respect are some verses of wisdom by Al-Imam Ali *God be pleased with him* in which he says:

Virtue and nobility are pure manners, of which reason comes first, and religion comes second.

Knowledge is the third and magnanimity comes fourth; generosity comes fifth, and sixth is the convention.

¹ This is a traditional Arabic expression of endearment and reverence.

Righteousness is seventh; patience is eighth; thankfulness is ninth; and tolerance is its tenth.

An eye perceives from looking into the eyes of an interlocutor whether he is a friend or a foe.

My soul knows that I do not go along with it [in matters of perversion and satisfying of base instincts], and that I am not in the right except when I go against it [in these matters].

Any researcher would be happy to have more knowledge about men in this category, the category of men of virtue, nobility, and charity. However, it is often the case that a researcher is filled with awe in front of such a task and with fear of not being able to do full justice to such great men and symbols. It is not an exaggeration to say that it is impossible to confine the actions and feats of great men between the covers of a book, especially if we are talking about a man in the category in which belongs the man who is the subject of this biography. He had achieved in his life what many other, richer, stronger, and better equipped men could not achieve. In his soul converged the strength of real men, the resolve of heroes, and the will power of symbols. On top of all this, he enjoyed deep faith in God and had heart-felt reliance on Him. His major asset was success granted from God.

In spite of the abundance of the material available for this study, the research and the writing up are extremely difficult. Had our subject been a man of letters or a scholar in any field of scholarship, researching his life and writing his biography would have been a lot easier. This is because in such cases the biographer would touch only lightly on the details of his subject's life and would use scattered and separate incidents from here and there to draw the sketch of the subject and would then proceed to direct his attention to the subject's productions.

In most cases, a well-trained and experienced biographer does not usually find great difficulty in gathering and organising his material in accordance with a previously set methodology to draw the general framework and the personality traits of his subject. However, in certain cases, the researcher may experience confusion especially when his subject is of the calibre of the man who is the subject of this study. The nearer you get to this man in thought, feelings, philosophy, and conduct in life, the more awe you feel, and you will sense that you are in the presence of a multi-faceted personality, which is difficult to control and organise in accordance with a previously drawn pattern.

It would be unfair to the great men of this nation to claim that our man was unique in what is attributed to him of noble manners, acts of charity, and virtue: the Arabic environment has always been wealthy and fertile in producing great men and symbols. However, these pages are a humble attempt to throw some light on certain aspects of the

life of this great symbol, who – though not unique in his achievements – was always distinguished in his accomplishments.

However, he is but human: he misses and hits, he fails and succeeds, he shines and is sometimes dimmed. Nevertheless, his instinctual intelligence has enabled him to make use of all that he has experienced in life in a correct and practical manner. He used always to correct his mistakes and redeem his failures. Thus he was able to face adversities and weather the storms of life to achieve his goals and reach with his boat to the land of safety. After all, only the infallible – chosen by God – are able to avoid errors. Other humans will always have their strengths and weaknesses.

If a researcher puts down in his book every bit of information he gathers in his research, the end product would reach voluminous accounts reaching multivolume sizes. However, researchers usually find it extremely difficult to do away with material, notes, quotations, and stories that they have gathered and toiled in digging up, checking their suitability, and their organisation. This is why he has an ardent desire to use the greatest amount possible of materials he has gathered, first to pacify his anxiety, and to show his reader how much effort was put into the research. Nevertheless, at the end of the day, each work has its own technical standards and limitations that govern its layout and final shape, and the researcher has to abide by them.

Al-Imad Al-Asphahani has a beautiful saying describing this state of affairs:

I have come to the conclusion that every one who writes a book on a certain day would say on the next, ‘If this had been changed, it would have become better; if I had only added this, it would have become more appreciable; if I had brought forward that, it would have made the book clearer; if I had left out that, it would have been more beautiful.’ This is a great lesson to all and a great indicator of the error in which all humans are steeped.

Thus these pages are but an attempt, and the door is open for more contributions and for those who would like to add, change, or improve. Another researcher may find another approach more suitable; however, we see that all approaches that lead to the goal are acceptable as long as truth and accuracy are the ultimate standards.

It is our consolation that there is no perfect book except the Book of God; man, by nature, tends to mix correctness and error; the best of those who err in the Eye of God are those who repent and seek forgiveness. We do seek God’s forgiveness for any error and shortcoming.

SECTION ONE
THE BACKGROUND

Chapter One

The Place

It has already been stated that the place, in its effect, cannot ever be considered apart from the movement of the time. Conversely, the movement of time has neither effect nor value without interaction with the details of the place. It can be said that they are the two sides of the coin. Thus, we can say that value is to be attached to both time and place in interaction as they are closely interrelated and inseparable.

The man who is the subject of this study was closely connected to a specific place at a specific time. It can be safely argued that these were the axes of his build-up in his formative years and his whole life. Had it not been for the dynamic interaction between his character and these two factors – and these are the three complementary angles of his personality – he would have been a mere addition to the numbers of humankind, in their tens, or hundreds, or millions, impressed without leaving an impression, affected without having an effect, on the receiving end of life, receiving orders without any positive effect. He would have been a common person, and he would have been overlooked by the movement of life that sheds light only on heroes acting on its stage.

The place in which our man was born and grew up had a unique place in the history of mankind. It was the birthplace of humanity as we know it.¹ From that place emerged the first heavenly call to the worship of God; in it the foundations of the first house for the worship of God were laid, and in it God the Exalted sent the last one and the most beloved to Him of His messengers to mankind,² and in it God sealed His messages to earth.

There is no spot on earth that belongs exclusively to Muslims except this spot. Hundreds of millions of people have their hearts, souls, and aspirations attached to this specific spot; and visiting it is their ultimate ambition.

God has willed that faces are turned five times everyday in the direction of that spot in prescribed prayers, not to mention in other recommended acts of devotion. If we take into account the time differences in time zones in all quarters of the earth, we notice that this spot – as God has decreed – is continually the direction of worshippers over day and night. It has become something of a nucleus around which the whole planet revolves in accordance with a unique law of attraction and gravity.

¹ Major histories and exegeses of the Holy Quran make the point that Adam, the first human being, was brought down to earth from Eden on that point. They also mention the story of the building of the Sacred House (the Ka'ba). See, for example, the *History* of Al-Tabari, *Al-Bidaya wa Al-Nihaya*, *Bada'i Al-Zuhour*, *Tafsir* of Ibn Kathir, and see also *The Chronicles of the Quran* (the story of Adam) by Muhammad Abu Al-Fadl et al.

² For a detailed account of this and for the life and emergence of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*, and of his companions, see *Al-Raud Al-Unuf* by Al-Suhaili, and the *Prophet's Biography* by Ibn Hisham.

However, this place has passed through different phases of stability and unrest, of dominance and subjugation. Nevertheless, all this was in line with a heavenly law of change controlled by the principles of Divine Justice, which gives no special favour to any ethnicity, race, colour, or language, on any spot on earth, and in any stage of the life of humanity for all eternity.

This spot has been known by different names over the passage of time,¹ like the Peninsula of the Arabs, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Land of the Arabs, among other names. To be noticed is that the land had always been attached in its different names to the Arabs ever since the dawn of history.

The known history of the Arabs in the Arabian Peninsula dates back to around a hundred thousand years BC, as can be told from the rocky remains of man-made structures in the central peninsula, and which date back to the Old Stone Age.

The Arabian Peninsula and Islam: a brief account

This peninsula, stretching from the Arabian Gulf in the east to the Red Sea in the west, and from Syria and the Mediterranean in the north to the Indian Ocean in the south, did not experience political unity except a few times during its long history. The first time was in the days of the Prophet *Peace be upon him* after the conquest of Mecca in the eighth year AH / 620 CE. This unity was preserved by the Well-Guided Caliphs and some Muslim governors in the coming ages, when the call to monotheism and unity was dominant and when the strength of faith was the foundation of the Islamic state. To be remembered is that the coming of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula was the dawn of a new era that turned the page of the age that came to be known as *Jahilia* (Pre-Islamic times).

From the simplicity and impecuniousness of desert life there emerged a new civilisation that took the world by surprise and astonished all historians. It continues to do so now with the enlightenment and tolerance that it advocates and the strength of the faith on which it is built in the One God and Creator. This civilisation emerged at a time when great and powerful states dominated large areas of the Old World. However, these states were suffering from deep-rooted corruption, ignorance, and internal factional struggles, which caused their resounding collapse later on. The Arabs, who were made a strong unified community with strong filial ties through the efforts of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*, emerged as the torch bearers of civilisation and of the Message of monotheism to all the quarters of the Globe. They laid the foundations of their new state and spread to new lands, which they turned to strongholds of their call and their fresh civilisation.

The Islamic call was in itself the greatest miracle and the greatest historical event that history had ever known; it changed the ways of life and the course of history and put an

¹ See *The Birth of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, p. 9 ff.

end to the chaos and disorder of paganism for good as it was the last message that Heaven sent to earth.

The Prophet *Peace be upon him* laid the foundations of the new state, and the well-Guided Caliphs completed the building of the great edifice of Islam. They spread the call of monotheism, built the civilisation, and helped the movements of enlightenment in the cultures of the lands wherever they went. They, moreover, built a network of inter-related and cooperative states, made laws suitable for all mankind, and opened avenues for an enlightened scientific movement and wider horizons for the whole world.

That was the first instance ever of political unity that the peninsula experienced in its history. The last instance came about with the late king Abdul-Aziz Ibn Abdul-Rahman of the Saud dynasty (1297-1373 AH / 1880-1953 CE), the founder of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.¹

In between these two periods, the Peninsula went through uneven and extremely difficult days. However, it preserved its identity and character in the face of all adversity, depending on what God has bestowed on it. The fall of the capital of the Islamic civilisation Bagdad to the Tartar invasion in 656 AH precipitated a serious state of confusion in the ranks of the whole nation: original principles collapsed, misguided movements made a bold appearance, and harmful innovations in religion spread everywhere.² As a result, corruption and social ailments took root in entire communities, and it looked as if the *Jahilia* had come back. The Arabian Peninsula was not free from these ailments, and it experienced the same problems as other Muslim lands did. It became the place of political disorder, conflicts, and wars between different tribes under weak and flimsy leaderships and in the presence of stalking enemies everywhere, waiting for the opportunity to attack and invade.

Thus, disunity and disorder ruled; and in one of its periods, the Peninsula was divided into three major regions: Najd, Asir, and Hejaz. Najd was under Saudi rule, Asir under the Idrisis, and Hejaz remained under the Ashraf for about a thousand years.

There were some serious attempts to bring about some form of unity in the Peninsula. One such attempt was the one undertaken by Saud Ibn Abdul-Aziz (Saud the Great) (1218-1229 AH / 1803-1813 CE). In fact, the attempt was about to achieve success were it not for the efforts of the Ottoman State which sent huge armies to fight him and incited Muhammad Ali, the Governor of Egypt, to move against him. Muhammad Ali launched a large military campaign that aborted the attempt and killed Saud the Great. Following that, the invaders divided Najd into two parts: the northern part was taken up by the Family of Rashid, and its capital was the town of Ha'el. The Saud Family took the other

¹ For a detailed account, see *Osoul Al-Bonoud fi Tarikh Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud* (History of Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud).

² See *'Onwan Al-Majd fi Tarikh Najd* (The History of Najd), vol. 1, p. 6.

part, and their capital was the city of Riyadh, after the destruction of their original capital Al-Dar'iyah.

Another attempt came about with Turki Ibn Abd Allah Al-Saud (1240-1249 AH / 1824-1833 CE). However, the factional differences that arose between the sons of Faisal Ibn Turki gave the opportunity to the Rashid Family to capture the whole of Najd. Abdul-Rahman Ibn Faisal Al-Saud had to flee to Kuwait with his son Abdul-Aziz in 1309 AH / 1891 CE.

In the year 1319 AH / 1901 CE, Abdul-Aziz came back to the Peninsula and worked towards the unification of the land to realise the dream of his forefathers. He had only a few supporters, loyal friends, and brothers around him to help with this task.¹ However, God granted him success in his endeavour, and he was able, with the resolve of his leadership, to finish the disunity, close the ranks, and unify the people.² His cause eventually turned in nature from restoring the glory of forefathers to persistence in unifying the Muslim community in the land of the Arabs and the birthplace of Islam.

King Abdul-Aziz achieved what he aimed at by God's Will and he announced the establishment of the Saudi state and took every possible measure to care for the new-born giant state. He put an end to all harmful innovations and heresies, treated people with equality and justice, and minimised the differences between classes. His efforts resulted in the propagation of justice, peace, and prosperity among the peoples of the land.

The successors of King Abdul-Aziz followed in the footsteps of the great builder of the nation,³ and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia witnessed a phenomenal surge in development in all aspects of life. Thanks to the economic policies of the Kingdom, the interest-free lending institutions, investment facilities, economic openness, freedom of movement of capitals, and wise exploitation of material and human resources, the Kingdom was able to make great achievements and to realise the Saudi citizen's aspirations in peace, stability, social justice, health care, and continual progress in the fields of industry and agriculture. This resulted in a deep sense of satisfaction under the umbrella of Islamic laws ensuring absolute justice.

¹ See *Shibh Al-Jazira* ('The Peninsula'), vol. 1, pp. 84-5; *Al-Bilad Al-Saudia* ('The Saudi Lands'), p. 21; *Mu'jiza Fawq Al-Rimal* ('A Miracle on the Sands'), p. 49; *Saqr Al-Sahra* ('The Hawk of the Desert'), p. 162; *Tarikh Najd Al-Hadith* ('The Modern History of Najd'), p. 124; *Tawhid Al-Mamlaka Al-Arabia Al-Saudia* ('The Unification of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia'), 359-360; *Tarikh Al-Daula Al-Saudia* ('The History of the Saudi State'), vol. 2, p. 24; *Tarikh Al Saud* ('The History of the Family of Saud'), p. 58; and *Asdaq Al-Bunoud*, 51-2. These references differ on the number of the men who were with King Abdul-Aziz at the time. Some say that they were fifteen; others say forty; and still others sixty men.

² The late King Abdul-Aziz fought numerous battles, over twenty in number, to unify the land. See *Abdul-Aziz fi Al-Tarikh* ('Abdul-Aziz in History'), p. 25 ff.

³ See *Min Hayat Al-Malik Abdul-Aziz* ('From the Life of King Abdul-Aziz'), pp. 280-297; *Shibh Al-Jazira* ('The Peninsula'), vol. 3, pp. 1402-1414; *Ma' Ahel Al-Jazira Al-Arabia* ('With the Monarch of the Arabian Peninsula'), p.57 ff; and *Al-Bilad Al-Saudia* ('The Saudi Lands'), p. 36 ff.

The Saud Dynasty¹

Muhammad Ibn Saud Ibn Muhammad Ibn Muqrin

<u>The First Saudi State</u>	<u>The second Saudi State</u>	<u>The Third Saudi State</u>
<p>Muhammad Ibn Saud 1158-1179 AH / 1745-1765 CE</p>	<p>Turki Ibn Abd Allah 1240-1249 AH / 1824-1833 CE</p>	<p>Abdul-Aziz Ibn Abdul-Rahman Al-Faisal 1319-1373 AH / 1901-1953 CE</p>
<p>Abdul-Aziz Ibn Muhammad 1179-1218 AH / 1765-1803 CE</p>	<p>Faisal Ibn Turki 1250-1254 AH / 1834-1838 CE</p>	<p>Saud Ibn Abdul-Aziz 1373-1384 AH / 1953-1964 CE</p>
<p>Saud Ibn Abdul-Aziz 1218-1229 AH / 1803-1813 CE</p>	<p>1259-1282 AH / 1843-1865 CE</p>	<p>Faisal Ibn Abdul-Aziz 1384-1395 AH / 1964-1975 CE</p>
<p>Abd Allah Ibn Saud 1229-1234 AH / 1813-1818 CE</p>	<p>Khalid Ibn Saud 1254-1257 AH / 1838-1841 CE</p>	<p>Khalid Ibn Abdul-Aziz 1395-1402 AH / 1975-1981 CE</p>
	<p>Abd Allah Al-Thanyan 1257-1259 AH / 1841-1843 CE</p>	<p>Fahd Ibn Abdul-Aziz 1402-1426 AH / 1981-2005 CE</p>
	<p>Abd Allah Al-Faisal 1282-1288 AH / 1865-1871 CE</p>	<p>Abd Allah Ibn Abdul-Aziz 1426-to the present time AH / 2005 – to the present time CE</p>
	<p>1292-1307 AH / 1875-1889 CE</p>	
	<p>Saud Al-Faisal 1288-1291 AH / 1871-1874 CE</p>	
	<p>Abdul-Rahman Al-Faisal 1291-1292 AH / 1874-1875 CE</p>	
	<p>1307-1308 AH / 1889-1890 CE</p>	

¹ See *Milad Al-Mamlaka Al-Arabia Al-Saudia* ('The Birth of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia') by Talal Muhammad Nour Al-Attar, first edition, 1420 AH, p. 22. The Christian dates have been added to the table.

A short account of the city of Jeddah, Al-Sharbatly's hometown

Specifically, the city of Jeddah was the hometown of Hasan Abbas Sharbatly: he was born there, grew up and lived his life there, and passed away there. Jeddah was once called 'the city of prosperity and stress,'¹ due to what it experienced and suffered during its long history of hardships and crises. It is a city with a long history: life in it dates back to more than three thousand years. It is reported that the first to take lodging in it were the fishermen, who used to take rest there after their fishing trips in the Red Sea; then they liked the place and settled there. This lasted until the tribe of Quda'a came and settled in it. It is reported that the place took its name from the name of one of Quda'a tribesmen, Judda Ibn Juram Ibn Rayyan Ibn 'Iran Ibn Ishaq Ibn Quda'a, the second son of Mu'idd Ibn Adnan, the nineteenth grandfather of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*.

There is more than one version of the name of the city in Arabic: Juddah, Jiddah, and Jaddah. According to the authoritative *Mu'jam Al-Buldan* (Dictionary of City Names) by the ancient Arab geographer Yaqout Al-Hamawi, the correct version is 'Juddah,' which means the way in water or in the mountain – and the city is near to both sea and river – or the long stretched road. In Egypt, it is pronounced Jaddah, while Jeddahns themselves pronounce it as Jiddah. It is noteworthy that Jaddah signifies the large road, while Jiddah means bliss and luck.

Regardless of the way the name is pronounced, the city of Jeddah is that coastal city, 'The Bride of the Red Sea,' which welcomes pilgrims coming to the Holy Land and receives all kinds of merchandise coming to the kingdom. It has the honour of being the Gate of the Holy Sanctuary and the meeting place for the travellers to the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Mecca is seventy-three kilometres away, while Medina is 425 kilometres away. Meccans have used it as a commercial port ever since the year 26 AH during the caliphate of Osman Ibn Affan *God be pleased with him*.²

The old city is divided into three parts or neighbourhoods.³ The first is Al-Yemen, so called because it lies in the direction of Yemen; the second is Al-Mazloun (oppressed, wronged), so called after Abdul-Karim Al-Barzanji Al-Madani, who was killed unjustly by the Ottoman authorities; the third is Al-Sham (Syria), which lies to the north (the direction of Syria) in the old city.

All three neighbourhoods are still extant, and are frequented by visitors of the city mainly for their historical remains, especially the unique stone structures and their beautifully crafted wooden skylights and niches, whose accuracy of craftsmanship is a clear proof of

¹ This exposition is adapted from an article by Mona Al-Jaafarawi, on Dar-Al-Hayat website, entitled *Bawwabat Al-Dhahab wa Al-Tarikh* (Gate of Gold and History), dated 26. 08. 2004.

² Osman Ibn Affan was a respected companion of the Prophet and the third Caliph

³ See *Jeddah: Tarikh wa Hadara* (Jeddah: History and Civilisation), p. 16; and *Al-Hirafiyoun fi Madinat Jeddah* (Craftsmen in the City of Jeddah) in the fourteenth Century AH, by Wahib Al-Fadili Kably, Saudi Arabia, 3rd ed., 1425, p. 53.

the high skill and taste that the ancient craftsmen enjoyed. Add to this the clever architectural techniques that allowed the air currents and sunlight to interact and fill the whole house.

Jeddah, moreover, has always been a favourite target for invaders throughout the ages. This necessitated the building of a protective wall around it. In the tenth century AH, the Portuguese had their eyes on it after discovering the Cape of Good Hope, and saw that it would be a suitable naval base for them on the Red Sea. However, the Jeddahns defended their city with great courage and worked altogether to rebuild the wall, a feat which they accomplished in an extremely short time in spite of the lack of resources and despite the adverse circumstances at that time. The city resisted the ferocious Portuguese attack with equal ferocity, and the attackers laid siege to it for three months. When they could not conquer it, they went back to where they came from.

The northern side of the protective wall of Jeddah was 630 metres long, and the southern side was 830 metres long. Integrated in the wall were six towers, which were sixteen-arms each in circumference. The wall had six gates: The Mecca Gate, the Sharif Gate, the Sarif Gate, the Bont Gate, the Medina Gate, and the Maghareba Gate. Two more gates were added early in the fourteenth century AH: the Jadid Gate and the Sabba Gate.

Jeddahns again cooperated with great enthusiasm and took it upon themselves to rebuild Dar Al-Niyaba (The Deputy Residence), build The Mina (Port) Mosque and the Eid (Feast) Prayer Place, as they had done before when they rebuilt the wall that repulsed the Portuguese.

Since time immemorial, Jeddah had been considered the most important gateway for commerce in the Arabian Peninsula; traders dub it 'The Gate of Gold.' It has been famous for its marketplaces with a large variety of merchandise.¹ The marketplaces were concentrated in the central region of the city. Many of these marketplaces still retain their old traditional form: stalls and raised wooden platforms and narrow shop houses with wooden ceilings.

From among the most prominent marketplaces of the old city we may mention: Souk (Marketplace of) Al-Haraj, where used and second-hand merchandise are traded; Souk Al-Nada, also called Souk Al-Hout (Fish) due to the many fried fish shops in it; Al-Khaskieh; Al-Qumash (cloth); Al-Badu (Bedouins); Al-Olwi (Upper); Qabel Street; Sharbatly Street, Souk Al-Mawashi (Cattle Market); Souk Al-Sagha (Jewellers Market); Souk Al-Lohoum (Meat Market), among others.

These marketplaces are favoured among both inhabitants and visitors of the city as they represent the flavour of history and the details of traditional daily life. However, minor improvements and rebuilding works have been done during the current development

¹ See Jeddah: *Tarikh wa Hadara* (Jeddah: History and Civilisation), pp. 36-40.

projects, encouraged by the Saudi Government, who took great care to preserve the historical features of the city.

The mosques of the old city did not go over six in number due to the small size of the population then.¹ The oldest of these mosques is the Shafe'i Mosque in Al-Mazloum quarter, which is still extant today. It is the most beautiful with its ancient Arabic architecture. Its minaret was built back in the seventh century AH / thirteenth century CE. In the same quarter, we can find the Osman Ibn Affan Mosque, also called the Ebony Mosque because of the two ebony pillars in it.

In Qabel Street, we can find Okasha Mosque; in Olwi Street, Al-Mi'mar Mosque. In Al-Sham quarter, there were two mosques: the first was the Basha Mosque, built by Bakr Basha (Pasha), the Ottoman governor of Jeddah. The mosque was distinguished by its minaret that was a unique architectural feat and that stood until the mosque was demolished, and a new mosque was built in its place in the year 1398 AH / 1978 CE. The other mosque is Al-Hanafi Mosque, which is still standing, a witness to an important era in the history of the establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The founder of the kingdom, the late King Abdul-Aziz, used to perform *Jumu'a* (Friday) prayers and meet people there, during the period when Jeddah was made the contemporary seat of the government.

Just like ancient Jeddah was famous for its ancient mosques; modern Jeddah takes pride rightfully in its standing mosques, numbering over a thousand. These mosques were built in different styles and according to various architectural schools, which made them a distinguished Islamic feature of the city. In them, you can sense the flavour of history and originality mixed with the modernity and complexity of the present. This helped Jeddah preserve its historical features while at the same time emerging as a typical modern city to be counted among the major modern cities of the world.

The population of the city of Jeddah in ancient times never exceeded ten thousand, with a seasonal increase to twenty five thousand during the pilgrimage season. In the year 1391 AH / 1971 CE, the population surged to 350 thousand; in 1400 AH / 1979 CE, it went up to a million; then to one and a half millions in 1407 AH / 1986 CE. At present the population of Jeddah stands at over four million. Likewise, its area has grown hundreds of times of its original area, and stands now at over 1,300 square kilometres, and is in constant growth.

In old times, up to sixty years ago, Jeddah had a single tree, which was sixty years old then. That tree was the distinguished feature of Jeddah for a newcomer, and it stood in

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23 ff.

front of the house of the Nasif family. The tree is still standing now, and is more than 120 years old.¹

However, now, with the surge of development – costing hundreds of billions – in the Kingdom, and in Jeddah in particular, the city is witnessing a special interest in planting trees and greenery. It prides itself now with the trees and greenery that fill its streets and avenues making of it a pleasant looking garden. Thus, after a period in which Jeddah was an arid desert place, it now enjoys the beauty of seven million trees.

Jeddah is one of the major cities in the kingdom and houses the King Abdul-Aziz International Airport and the Jeddah Islamic Port. The latter is a major port, one of the most important in the Red Sea. Through it come passengers and merchandise from all over the world, not to mention millions of pilgrims. It also houses the King Abdul-Aziz University in addition to hundreds of schools and institutes and other commercial and service organisations and institutions.

Due to the immense development activity in different domains in the kingdom, the Royal Decree No A 211, dated 02. 09. 1418 AH – as a part of the administrative reorganisation of the kingdom – established the governorate of Jeddah.² In fact, the decree came as a response to several geographical, security, population, and environmental considerations. His Royal Highness Prince Mash'al Ibn Majed Ibn Abdul-Aziz was appointed as the first Governor of Jeddah, and he still occupies that position today.

¹ See *Jeddah: Tarikh wa Hadara* (Jeddah: History and Civilisation), p. 18. The Nasif house – or palace – lies in the heart of the old city. It was built towards the end of the thirteenth century AH (1289), by Omar Effendi Nasif. The palace is built of stones and has four storeys. Its front is decorated with gypsum and intricate ornamental woodwork on doors, windows, and niches.

² See *Jeddah: Tarikh wa Hadara* (Jeddah: History and Civilisation), p. 6.

Jeddah as it looked about a hundred years ago. The picture shows a part of the wall that surrounded the city then.
(الصورة العليا، صفحة 39)

A part of Jeddah after the surge of development and growth
(الصورة السفلى، صفحة 39)

Souk Qabel (The Qabel Market), one of the distinctive features of old Jeddah; the Okasha Mosque appears in the foreground of the picture and the Mi'mar Mosque in the background.

(الصورة العليا صفحة 41)

(الصورة السفلى صفحة 41)

Souk Qabel (The Qabel Market) today

Chapter Two

The Time

The time for our story started in Jeddah. Jeddah is a part of Hejaz; and Hejaz – as we have seen – was under the rule of Al-Ashraf,¹ which had lasted for about a thousand years before the coming of King Abdul-Aziz.

The Lineage of Al-Ashraf

Al-Ashraf (literally, the noble ones) are the offspring of Prophet Muhammad *Peace be upon him*. Every student of Islamic history knows that Lady Fatima *God be pleased with her*, the Prophet's daughter, was wife of the respected companion (and the fourth Caliph) Ali Ibn Abu Taleb *God be pleased with him*, and their Descendants are limited to two men: Al-Hasan and Al-Husain *God be pleased with them*, and from them descend the progeny of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*.

Al-Hasan passed away in Medina in the year 50 AH / 670 CE. As for Al-Husain, he was asked by the people of Iraq to come and lead their revolution against the Omayyad rule. He went there but was martyred in what came to be known as the battle of Karbala in the year 61 AH / 680 CE. No one survived from his offspring except his son Zain Al-'Abidin, who devoted himself to worship and his descendants followed him in that.

The offspring of Al-Hasan and Al-Husain *God be pleased with them* are known collectively as Al-Ashraf, irrespective of whether one is a descendant of Al-Hasan or Al-Husain. However, in Hejaz, the term Al-Ashraf was the name given commonly to the descendants of Al-Hasan Ibn Ali in particular, while the term Al-Sada (the Masters) was the name given to the offspring of Al-Husain. Nevertheless, this was not a general regular practice as we read in books of some Meccan historians the title Al-Sada used in reference to the descendants of Al-Hasan *God be pleased with him* as well.

Al-Ashraf ruled Hejaz for about a thousand years, between 358 AH / 968 CE and 1344 AH / 1925 CE, and their rule came to an end with the coming to power by King Abdul-Aziz.

Historical background of the Arabian Peninsula in recent times

One reason behind the end of Al-Ashraf's rule was the radical changes that the world had witnessed with the beginning of the twentieth century. The concept of the unity of the Arabian Peninsula was still new and needed to be tackled with a lot of care and tactfulness, especially in dealing with the circumstances of the time, keeping in mind particularly that most countries of the Arab world were still under European colonial rule.

¹ See *Al-Ishraf ala Tarikh Al-Ashraf* (The History of Al-Ashraf), p. 9 ff; and '*Allimu Awladakum Mahabbat 'Al Al-Bait* (Teach Your Children the Love of the Household of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*) by Dr Muhammad Abdo Yamani, pp. 26-30.

While European influence was expanding in the region, the Ottoman State, representing the Islamic Caliphate, was becoming exceedingly weak. In the year 1321 AH / 1903 CE, the English fortified their positions in the Arab region and occupied the port of Kuwait under the pretext of safeguarding the security of the Gulf region.¹ In 1907, Persian lands were divided into two spheres of influence: the British and the Russian. Russia had the upper hand in the northern regions, starting from Qasr Shirin and reaching to the Russian borders, while Britain had the sole influence in the southern parts beginning with the Anfaq borders up to Bandar Abbas. This division was the result of a treaty concluded between the British Monarch Edward VII and the Russian Tsar Nicholas II in Reval, the capital of Estonia.

The partition of Persia incited great fear in the souls of the Turks of having their empire partitioned as well. At that time, the Young Turks movement had been active and had penetrated the Ottoman army. The two officers Anwar (Enver) Bey and Niyazi Bey reached an agreement with civilian supporters like Talat and formed what came to be known as the Committee of Union and Progress in 1908. The Committee received financial aid from the Jews of Salonika who had announced their conversion to Islam and were known as the Donme.²

The Young Turk rebels declared the restoration of the 1876 Medhat Pasha constitution and marched against the Palace. They succeeded in achieving their goals, overpowered the government of Sultan Abdul-Hamid, and deposed him. The second march by the rebels against the capital came about in 1909 under the leadership of General Husain Husni and his Chief of Staff Mustafa Kemal. The rebels convened the National General Assembly in San Estefano and obtained a verdict (*fatwa*) from the Sheikh Al-Islam (highest religious authority), which authorised the deposition of the Sultan Abdul-Hamid. This was done on Tuesday, the sixth of the month of Rabi' Al-Awwal, 1327 AH / 1909 CE. In his place, his brother Muhammad Rashad was appointed Sultan (by the name of Muhammad V, 1909-1918). The new sultan was a weak and inexperienced ruler,³ and this led to the weakness of the caliphate and the administration. Thus the rebels, led by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), were able to assume complete control of the affairs of the state.

The new administration changed many of the laws and appointed Al-Sharif Husain Ibn Ali (1270-1350 AH) ruler of Hejaz in 1326 / 1908 CE without the consent of the Sultan and granted him the title of King of Arabia and Prince and Sharif of Mecca.

On the other side, the English never felt happy with the power of Ibn Saud. Were he to be left on his own, he would have the chance to build a large Arab empire. Many of the

¹ See *Al-Khalij Al-Arabi* (The Arabian Gulf) by Qadri Qal'aji, Beirut: Dar Al-Kateb Al-Arabi, 1385 AH / 1965.

² See *Abdul Hamid Al-Thani* (Abdul Hamid II) by Orkhan Muhammad Ali, and *Sahwat Al-Rajul Al-Marid* (The Awakening of the Sick Man) by Muwaffaq Bani Al-Marja.

³ See *Abdul Hamid Al-Thani* (Abdul Hamid II) by Orkhan Muhammad Ali, and *Sahwat Al-Rajul Al-Marid* (The Awakening of the Sick Man) by Muwaffaq Bani Al-Marja.

leaders and symbols of the Muslim world were impressed by the strength of his character, his statesmanship, and his political, religious, and administrative conduct. Many wished he would have the chance to unify the peoples of the nation.

No sooner had the Ottoman Empire fallen in the First World War (1914-1918)¹ than Britain hastened to surround the Arabian Peninsula for its own strategic reasons. King Abdul-Aziz did not remain a spectator concerning the Palestinian issue. He did his level best urging his Muslim brethren to stand up and defend their sacred sites and face the imperialist attack. However, his call did not meet attentive ears at a time when the Arab World was mostly in the grip of imperialist powers. Thus Abdul-Aziz became like one strong twig in a brittle bunch.

The British, along with their French allies, tried to draw Abdul-Aziz gradually to an unequal battle in order to finish off his armed force and destroy his military strength. They used all sorts of plots in a kind of war of attrition to exhaust his power. However, with his wisdom and insight, Abdul-Aziz sensed the danger surrounding his homeland and understood well the plan of the imperialist powers. This is why he resorted to slow, deliberate, and calculated moves and did not respond recklessly at the time. He chose to wait for the good opportunity to come in order to preserve the unity of the Muslim peoples and close the ranks of the Arab powers.

The English and the French went on with their plans and provocations and surrounded the Peninsula with enemies that they planted everywhere in lands under their control: Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and other Arab countries. Abdul-Aziz looked around and could not find a single Arab country to support or help him; not even Egypt, which was, like other countries, an English colony.

In Turkey, Muhammad VI succeeded to the caliphate in 1918, followed by Abdul-Majid II in 1922. However, the latter, who did not have any real authority, was deposed in 1343 AH / 1924 CE and exiled to Paris.² Abdul-Majid was the last of the caliphs of the Islamic state; after his deposition, the Islamic Caliphate was cancelled. Al-Sharif Husain Ibn Ali, by insinuation and suggestion from the English, tried to assume this position and declared himself Caliph despite the political complexities of the situation.

At this point, Abdul-Aziz saw that the danger has reached a critical point and that the time has come for him to stand up and settle the issue. He mobilised his forces and marched from Riyadh to Hejaz.

¹ The First World War started after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand the heir apparent to the Austrian Empire on 28.6.1914 by a Bosnian nationalist student called Gavrilo Princip. Later, Austria declared war on Yugoslavia, and Russia entered the war under the pretext of defending Yugoslavia. The Germans, in their turn, mobilized their powers to safeguard their interests, and these developments led to the building of two giant world fronts: England, France, and Russia on one side, and Austria, Germany and Magyar on the other. The war did not end until after the Russian Revolution in 1917 CE, and after America's intervention in the war. This led to the surrender of the Germans on 11.11.1918. See *Al-Harb Al-Alamiya Al-Oula* (The First World War) by Muammar Al-Duwaidi.

² Sultan Abdul-Majid II died in his French exile in 1944.

Sensing that the end for him was inevitably coming, Al-Sharif Husain hastened to abdicate the principedom. He appointed his son Al-Sharif Ali in his place, and left to the Emirate of East Jordan. Sharif Ali headed to Jeddah, where he built fortifications and declared himself king. King Abdul-Aziz, continued with his victorious march, and, by God's will, opened Mecca and resolved to annex the whole of Hejaz in order to unite the land, to enhance stability and secure the roads of the Holy Lands for pilgrims. Thereafter, he laid siege to Jeddah for about a year.

Sharif Ali found himself obliged to abdicate his position, and the Treaty of Jeddah was signed in which Sharif Ali handed control over Jeddah to King Abdul-Aziz. The King granted safety to Sharif Ali for himself, his family, and his possessions, excepting State possessions, which would be returned to the State. The treaty also stipulated that Sharif Ali should leave the land after the signing of the treaty.

King Abdul-Aziz entered Jeddah through the Medina Gate on Thursday, the first of the month of Jumada II, 1344 AH / 17 December, 1925 CE.¹ In the meantime, he had also annexed Medina, and the whole of Hejaz gave the pledge of allegiance to him as king and ruler on Friday the twenty-third of the month of Jumada II, 1344 AH, in a ceremony held at the Sacred Mosque. Abdul-Aziz was then granted the title of the 'Sultan of Najd and King of Hejaz and the attached territories.'² Thereafter, the King appointed his son Prince Faisal vicegerent over Hejaz and went back to Riyadh.

In seven years' time the area of the regions under King Abdul-Aziz's rule increased noticeably, and, in addition, his annexation of the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina gave him added power. People enjoyed a feeling of security under the King's rule, and stability and prosperity spread all over the land. Thereafter, people and tribes from all over came to declare their allegiance to the King and express their desire for unity and solidarity under his rule. This was the climax of Abdul-Aziz's long struggle, which had started in 1319 AH / 1901 CE. The King received a great many requests in this respect and, following that, he assembled his consultants and men of wisdom and sought their opinion on the matter. The result of his consultations came in the declaration of the establishment of the 'Kingdom of Saudi Arabia' on Thursday 21. 5. 1351 AH / 22. 9. 1932 CE.³ Thus the King's dream in unification was realised, and the Peninsula was

¹ See *Jeddah Tarikh wa Hadara* (Jeddah: History and Civilisation), p. 58.

² See *Tarikh Najd Al-Hadith* (Modern History of Najd), p. 26.

³ By the Royal Decree No 2716, dated 21. 05. 1351 AH / 22. 09. 1939, the land was given the name of the 'Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.' Following is the full text of the decree:

On God we rely ...

After requests raised to us from our subjects in the two kingdoms of Najd and Hejaz and attached territories, and in compliance with desires expressed by the public opinion in our homeland, and wishing to unify all parts of this Arab kingdom, we decree the following:

Article One: The name of the 'Kingdom of Najd and Hejaz and Attached Territories' is hereby changed to the 'Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,' and our title henceforth becomes the 'King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.'

Article Two: This change is effective starting from the date of its declaration.

united once again, and people attained what they had long dreamt of: justice, safety, security, and stability.

Article Three: This change will not have any effect on international treaties, conventions, and commitments, which retain their value and effect. Neither will it have effect on individual contracts and transactions, which remain effective as well.

Article Four: All previous regulations, instructions, and orders issued by us will remain effective after the change of the name.

Article Five: The current administrative and governmental structures in Hejaz and Najd and their attached territories will temporarily remain in their current form until new structures are formed for the Kingdom as a whole based on the newly achieved unification.

Article Six: The current board of deputies is charged with the immediate responsibility of drawing a fundamental constitution for the Kingdom, a system for the succession to the throne, and a system for governmental and administrative formations, to be raised to us in due time to issue our decrees in this respect.

Article Seven: The Head of the board of deputies is given the authority to add to the board any individual or individuals of opinion and sagacity in drawing the above-mentioned constitution and systems to seek their learned opinions on the matters under discussion.

Article Eight: We have chosen Thursday on 21 Jumada I, 1351 AH as the day for the declaration of the unification of this Arab Kingdom. We seek success from God.

Issued at our Court in Riyadh on the seventeenth of Jumada I, 1351 AH

Signed (Abdul-Aziz)

See *Qalb Al-Jazira Al-Arabia* (Heart of the Arabian Peninsula), p. 394; and *Shibh Al-Jazira fi Ahd Al-Malek Abdul-Aziz* (The Peninsula under King Abdul-Aziz), vol. 1, p. 565, ff.

The late King Abdul-Aziz, founder of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

(الصورة في صفحة 49)

Chapter Three

The Event

Life in Jeddah

The event we are discussing in this book took place in Jeddah. A little more than a century ago, Jeddah looked like a little town divided into quarters by narrow and twisting alleyways. It was surrounded by a protective insulating wall. The sea knelt at its knees like a guardian. Sometimes, the sea would get angry and obtrude. At other times, it would try to sneak in ashamedly through its gates or through the cracks created by time in its wall. At still other times, it would get hysterical, rage, and leap over the wall in a defiant surge.

The items of life in Jeddah in those days were numbered. All around the city, the desert, the sands, and the mountains stood moaning, scorched by the heat of the sun with no let up and with no sign of anything to quench the deep thirst. There was only the sea water; there was no alternative.

In spite of all adversity, Jeddah – having suckled in its infancy from a bountiful Arab breast – remained noble, proud, and steadfast. She quenched her thirst with the salty sea water, colouring it with the white of the hearts of her people: a pure white leaf, a symbol of her for all visitors, welcoming and urging them to become a part of her life; this part would dissolve in the being of the city and become an organic part of her fibre. Again, there was no alternative.

In her alleyways, people would go along; here we can see someone hurrying to find his livelihood, there we see someone dragging his feet, tired with the long search and the lack, dreaming of a few breadcrumbs and a sip of fresh water. Life, from time to time, would send their way a mouthful of meat or some seasoning to soften their dry bowels.

In spite of all this, and in spite of the insulation of their city, Jeddahns were attached to Jeddah; they adjusted to its life; they even came to fall in love with its hostile terrain, its cruel nature, its lack of all greenery, and a close, passionate, and profound attachment, reaching fondness, came to tie them to their habitat.

People in Jeddah were a curious mixture of various ethnicities and nationalities. A good portion of them were from among those who came to pilgrimage or *omra*, loved the place, found home in it, and relinquished their original homes to stay there close to the Sanctuary. These communities dissolved in the melting pot of Jeddah; they even wished to share the natives of Jeddah the roughness of their life.

This is not strange coming from people who had deep love to the House, and who wished to stay close to the birthplace of the Message and the Noble Messenger. The Messenger *Peace be upon him* was their role model and example; they followed his footsteps despite their various ethnicities, languages, and cultures. This is why they did not find it disagreeable

to suffer hunger and thirst as long as this was the way of life of their beloved Prophet *Peace be upon him*. Lady Aisha *God be pleased with her*, the Prophet's wife, reports that he *Peace be upon him* never had a full stomach, and never complained of this to anybody. Lack and need were more akin to his disposition than wealth and riches. How often he spent his nights writhing with hunger and spent his days on fast; if he so wished, all the bounties, treasures, and fruits of life would have been his just by asking God for them. Aisha reports that she used to weep with hot tears for him and rub his abdomen with her hand to alleviate the pangs of hunger. She would say to him, 'May I be offered in ransom for you, if you only take your sufficiency of food and the bounties of life.' He would answer, 'Aisha, what do I need from life? My brother messengers have suffered tougher conditions and were steadfast in face of adversity and proceeded in life. They went to their Lord and He honoured them with His noble and generous rewards. I am ashamed to ask my Lord ease of life, and I would be below them in status tomorrow. I love nothing more than joining my beloved brethren.' Aisha *God be pleased with her* mentions that he *Peace be upon him* passed away a few months after that.

Zaid Ibn Arqam relates that the venerable companion of the Prophet *Peace be upon him* and his successor as chief of state Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq *God be pleased with him* once asked for water to drink. A cup of water and honey was brought to him. He brought it near his lips but, instead of drinking from it, he started to weep so bitterly that all those around him started to weep with him. When they calmed down, they did not find the courage to ask him what caused him to weep thus. He started weeping again and when he calmed down again, he wiped his face with his hands and they asked him what the cause for his weeping was. He answered, 'I remembered I was once with the Prophet *Peace be upon him* when he started to move his hand in a manner as if he was fending off something that I could not see and said, "Keep away from me, keep away from me!" As I could not find anybody with him, I asked him, "O Messenger of God, I see you fending someone off but I do not see anybody with you!" He said to me, "Life, with all there is in it, has come to me personified as a woman, and I told her to go off," and she went away saying, "By God, you have been saved from my [temptation], but those who come after you will not.'" Abu Bakr added, 'I fear that she has caught me. That was the reason for my weeping.'¹

Zaid Ibn Arqam also reports on the authority of his father that he once heard Omar Ibn Al-Khattab (a revered companion of the Prophet and the second Caliph) *God be pleased with him* saying, 'The Prophet *Peace be upon him* once told us to give in charity, and as I had some money on that day, I thought, "Today I shall overtake Abu Bakr, if ever I hope to compete with him. I brought half of my money and the Messenger of God *Peace be upon him* asked me, "What have you kept for your household?" I answered, "I have left them the like of what I have brought here." Then Abu Bakr came with all he had and the Prophet *Peace be upon him* asked him, "What have you kept for your household?" and he answered, "I

¹ The hadith is narrated in *Kanz Al-'Ummal* (The Treasure of Workers), the section of *Shama'el Al-Akhlaq* (The Best of Manners), on the topic of the renunciation of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*, hadith No 18597, *Musnad Al-Siddiq*.

have left them [in the care of] God and His Messenger.” I [Omar] said, “I have no hope in competing with you.”¹

The roots: Sayyid Abbas, Sayyid Hasan’s father

In this small town of Jeddah there lived a man who was at around his fiftieth year at the time our narrative started. This man, who was from among the *Sada* (Masters), worked in trade and was known for his wisdom and sagacity; he was hardened by the experiences and adversities of life. He was closely attached to the place he lived in and interacted positively with his times. He loved people and they loved him. People used to come to him to settle their differences, make use of his renowned wisdom, and seek his advice on tough and complicated matters of life. Never did he falter or hesitate in lending a helping hand to people. Neither was he miserly in extending proper advice to them. He was also the entrusted keeper of their secrets and was straightforward and honest in sharing his visions with them.

Only a few anecdotes and scattered titbits are available about the early life and beginnings of Sayyid Abbas. These show clearly that his was not a calm, peaceful, and luxurious life. On the contrary, it was a life of toil and trouble and persistent efforts towards self-assertion. He endeavoured with all his might to build a name for himself amid tough and frugal conditions. The common factor in the life of the Jeddahns in those days was endeavouring for survival and subsistence in an impecunious land, where the only source of income was the revenues from the few months of the pilgrimage and *omra* seasons, when people from all over came to perform their devotions. The main essentials of life were imported from abroad as there were no industrial, agricultural, or other economic activities or resources. At the same time, all management of affairs was in the hands of a small class of tradesmen that controlled everything and monopolised all economic activities. This class – which, nevertheless, suffered from internal feuding – was the sole controller of all capital and wealth at a time when labourers used to carry water to houses on their backs in return for a daily wage of three or four piasters. In those days, a sum of a thousand riyals was a mere dream of a fortune for most people, and a man who possessed this kind of fortune was the subject of the talk of the town.

Sayyid Abbas was master in his own self-made little kingdom. He created this kingdom with his sagacity, his piety, and his spending on and helping all those around him. In this kingdom, we find the cultural roots of the man: a pure primeval nature mixed with hope and challenge to the hardships of life, all built on fixed values and principles that he acquired – in spite of being illiterate – with his insight, strength of faith, soundness of principle, and transparency in dealing with others. For these reasons he was deserving of the uniqueness and mastery that he had achieved in his domestic kingdom. This situation brings to mind the statement of the venerable companion of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*, Omar Ibn Al-Khattab *God be pleased with him*: ‘There is no kinship between God and any of His creatures; people in the sight of God are all equal: He is their Lord and they are His

¹ The hadith is narrated in the *Sunan* of Abu Dawoud, No 1429, and Al-Tirmidhi under (*Manaqeb Abu Bakr wa Omar*) (Feats of Abu Bakr and Omar), No 3608.

servants; they gain favour over one another with wellness and obtain what is in God's Hand of bounties with obeying Him.'

From among God's blessings on the man was a good wife coming from a noble house. The wife, with an instinctual disposition, realised that happiness in marital life is based on love and kindness. In such a happy house, the soul enjoys calm, tranquillity, and peace in spirit and body. In fact, this is what the teachings of Islamic law aim at: building a house in which love rules, and transparency among all its members prevails and beautifies life. In such a house, the seeds of mercy will grow into tall green trees with intertwined branches bearing fruits and leaves of love. That would provide a pleasant shade for the mistress of the house to lighten the burdens of caring for the family and the children and preparing them for life in different phases of their life. Thus, the loving wife would have the chance to care for the toiling husband and wipe his sweaty forehead after his toil in life to provide an honourable life for his family and save them from the pangs of hunger and poverty and the indignity of lack. In doing this, he would be discharging his duty towards God as well as towards his family. God the Most Sublime says that it is one of His signs to people that He created for people mates from their own souls so as to live in tranquillity and peace with them, and that He has made love and mercy prevail between them. In this, verily is a sign for those who reflect on the affairs of life (*Al-Rum*: 21). God the Most Sublime also commands all people to have fear and awe of the Lord Who created all humanity from a single soul; He has created from this soul a mate for it and created from them many men and women (*Al-Nisa'*: 1).

The full name of the husband was Al-Sayyid Abbas Ibn Al-Sayyid Ali Ibn Al-Sayyid Ahmad Al-Sharbatly; the wife was Zeinab Matbouli. Both came from the town of Jeddah.

The family name of 'Al-Sharbatly'¹ goes back to Al-Sayyid Ahmad, the grandfather of Al-Sayyid Abbas, who was known for his habit of distributing sherbet (drinks) to pilgrims and visitors of the Sanctified House in Mecca. This nickname became his proper name, and later his family name.²

The name of Al-Sayyid Abbas was mentioned in some writings,³ in which he was described as

a wealthy tradesman, a man of good character, noble attributes, straightforward in his dealings, charitable, extremely generous, magnanimous, tender-hearted with the poor and needy, humble, modest, and with extremely good insight, and strong and

¹ See the Al-Sharbatly family tree in the appendix at the end of the book.

² This piece of information was provided by the engineer Al-Sayyid Hasan Ibn Al-Sayyid Abdul-Rahman Ibn Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Al-Sharbatly, in an interview with him in Cairo in Ramadan, 1425 AH.

³ See Mustafa Azmi, *Al-Sharbatly: Al-Muhsin Al-Sha'bi Al-Awwal* (Al-Sharbatly: The Outstanding Man of Charity), 1949, pp. 15-17; and Muhammad Abdul-Mon'em Al-Khafaji, *Al-Sharbatly: Al-Muhsin Al-Islami Al-Akbar* (Al-Sharbatly: the Great Islamic Man of Charity), 1955, p. 60 ff. To be noticed here is that Al-Khafaji relied heavily and quoted extensively from Mustafa Azmi's book without acknowledging the source.

brilliant reasoning. In addition to this, he was extremely and genuinely hospitable. In fact, he was so generous-hearted that he could not have a meal alone; he often had his meals with his guests and visitors. When it happened that he had no guests at mealtimes – and that was a rare occasion – he used to go out in search for a guest outside with whom he can share his meal. The guest – if needy – would, at the end of the meal, leave with a handful of money as well.¹

Although he was illiterate, he was by no means ignorant. In fact, he was of strong and brilliant intelligence and deep insight. These attributes made him an *ipso facto* judge to whom many of the quarrels and disputes between local people were referred.²

The following incident will serve as an illustration for his sagacity and farsightedness. One day, two parties in a long-running dispute came to him. Each one of them provided evidence for his argument to prove that he was wronged by the other party. Al-Sayyid Abbas thought hard about the matter, and lastly, he asked to meet each one of the parties alone. In his separate meetings with them, he managed to persuade each one of them that he was in the wrong. In the meantime, he was able to arrive at a conclusion about who the transgressor was, but kept his conclusion to himself. In his final meeting with them for the judgement, he ordered the party that he knew was in the wrong to offer a number of sheep to his opponent and ordered the other party to invite his opponent to a meal in his clan and among his people. This way, he was able to put an end to a severe long-running dispute. The two disputants were content with his judgement and went out of his place as if they were old friends.³

For these reasons, and considering his status among his people, it happened so often that he paid from his own money for the settlements of disputes and for bringing disputants together in amity. He was also always lending helping hands to people in need to meet their commitments. In all this, he was seeking the Pleasure of God the Most Sublime and the reward from Him as his first goal.

A special and unique relationship tied him closely to the poor. He loved them and treated them with endearment, like real brothers. He felt favoured and privileged when they accepted his help and his offerings. In this, he was going by the teaching of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*, when he ordered his companions to help the needy: ‘Seek favours with the poor and seek their acquaintance as they have authority.’ He was asked, ‘O Messenger of God, what is their authority?’ He answered, ‘On the Day of Judgement, they will be told, “Look who had given you a crumb of bread, something to drink, or a garment to wear, and take them by the hand to Paradise.”’

¹ See *Al-Sharbatly: Al-Muhsin Al-Sha’bi Al-Awwal* (Al-Sharbatly: The Outstanding Man of Charity), pp. 15-17; and *Al-Sharbatly: Al-Muhsin Al-Islami Al-Akbar* (Al-Sharbatly: the Great Islamic Man of Charity), 1955, p. 60 ff.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid*, adapted.

Thus, the man could not find his comfort and peace of mind except in giving, spending, and reconciling people. He was also profoundly and genuinely religious and pious. He was known for his renunciation of worldly pleasures and for observing his prayers in congregation in mosques; he would not waste that for any reason.

God blessed him with seven children: six girls and one boy in the following order: Hafsa, Ali, Adila, Khadija, Misbah, Nour, and Aisha.¹

¹ This order was given by Al-Sayyid Ali Al-Sharbatly in the presence of his father Al-Sayyid Abbas Al-Sharbatly and Al-Sayyid Abdul-Rahman al-Sharbatly in a meeting with them in Jeddah on Wednesday 06. 10. 2004 CE.

SECTION TWO

THE LIFE

**SAYYID HASAN'S BIRTH, UPBRINGING, AND
LEAP TOWARDS SUCCESS**

Chapter One

Sayyid Hasan's Birth and Upbringing

His birth

The time was the morning of one day in the year 1333 AH,¹ Al-Sayyid Abbas woke up from his sleep at the sound of a repressed moan from his wife, who was in labour. She had tried hard not to let out any sound or make any movement so as not to wake her husband from his sleep; he had only just come to bed to catch some sleep after returning from the dawn prayer. He rose instantly and gave her a quick tender reproachful look and sent one of the daughters to call one of her neighbours to stay with her while waiting for the midwife to come. He also sent someone to call the midwife; doctors in those days were not known and their presence was not desirable in such cases.

Full of hope, the man rose to perform ablution and pray. He ardently prayed to God that his wife would come out safe from labour so that they can continue with their life and prayed that God would bestow on them another child – another source of happiness for them.

God answered the man's supplications, and shortly after, he heard the cries of his new born baby. Someone came and gave him the good news that it was a baby boy. His face brightened and he raised praise and thanks to God and went to check the condition of his wife. He was happy to see that she was as well as could be. Then he went out to receive the congratulations of his friends and neighbours. They asked him about the sex of the baby and he answered that it was a boy and that he would call him Hasan and that he hoped that God would make him *hasan* (good) in name as well as in character and life. In a few minutes, the house yard was crowded with well-wishers including a large number of the poor of the neighbourhood. He made a sumptuous banquet and gave away to the poor in charity; the whole place was overwhelmed with joy.

His Upbringing

The boy was the eighth in nine children, three males and six females. Al-Sayyid Abbas, the wise father, did not discriminate between a boy and a girl in treatment; he distributed his care and love among all his children equally. He was of the conviction that the home was the true school and place of education for the children, to make of them good members in the community and to form a good generation that would be able to push ahead with development in the society. He often talked with his wife about that, encouraging her to do her best in bringing up the children in accordance with sound religious and moral principles. In fact, the good mother never spared time or effort in educating the children, guiding them, and preparing them for a good life. Her instruction

¹ See *Al-Sharbatly: Al-Muhsin Al-Sha'bi Al-Awwal* (Al-Sharbatly: The Outstanding Man of Charity); *Al-Sharbatly: Al-Muhsin Al-Islami Al-Akbar* (Al-Sharbatly: the Great Islamic Man of Charity); *'Isamiyyoun* (Self-Made Men); Edition No. 5651 of the *Okaz* Newspaper, dated 19. 11. 1981, and *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* Newspaper, dated 02. 10. 1999; and see also Document 1 in the Appendix.

was performed spontaneously, effortlessly, and tenderly in what was conventionally acceptable in those days.

The father was a fruiterer, a trader in different kinds of fruits and vegetables. There were not many merchants in Jeddah in those days, and few of them held to the true principles of commerce and the traditions and conventions of commercial dealings. Such straightforward merchants followed the teachings of the Prophet *peace be upon him* that absolutely interdicted doing harm to others. In their trade, they dealt with one another with honesty and truthfulness. Those were the merchants who enjoyed the blessings of God and continued with their endeavours to become major businessmen and financiers not only inside the Kingdom but also abroad, in neighbouring as well as in far away countries.

In those days, tradesmen did not use invoices, bills, receipts, trust bonds, and other documents invented by modern trade to preserve rights. Rather, their dealings were all carried out verbally, and the sole guarantee of right was the word of honour and the name of the merchant. Moreover, it was never reported that rights were wasted or denied among merchants.

Al-Sayyid Abbas conducted his dealings at his shop at Al-Khaskieh,¹ close by to his house, where he used to trade in vegetables in the morning and fruit in the afternoon.² In his childhood, his son, Al-Sayyid Hasan, did not have the common tendency and passion of children of his age towards play and amusement. His main source of happiness was sitting near his father at his shop observing him in his dealings with people and admiring their appreciation and respect to him, and his kindness and help to the needy. Thus, the noble father was the example and role model for the young boy in his tender years.

Furthermore, the boy grew accustomed to prayers in congregation in mosques where he used to accompany his father. There, he would be elated by the compliments and salutations of the elders who used to approach him with endearing remarks like: 'How are you, Sayyid? How are you doing? We hope that you are doing fine!' Such compliments, ordinarily exchanged between grown-ups, filled the lad with the desire to behave like grown-ups and acquire the adult characteristics of reason and solemnity so as not to disappoint people's expectations of him.

The Jeddah coast was continually and energetically bustling in those days. Its harbour was always astir with ships, big and small. Some of those ships carried pilgrims and visitors to the Holy Lands, others came laden with merchandise, and still others belonged to fishermen. All along the coastline, there were marketplaces, most of which were wide shanty markets that opened to the sea on one side and to the town on the other.³ In some

¹ The Khaskieh quarter, which used to be called Al-Sha'tha, was used by the Turkish forces at one stage of their presence in Hejaz to store munitions and provisions.

² This piece of information was provided by Al-Sayyid Abbas Ali Al-Sharbatly, nephew of Al-Sayyid Hasan, in an interview with him held in Jeddah in the month of Sha'ban, 1425 AH, in the presence of Al-Sayyid Abdul-Rahman, son of Al-Sayyid Hasan.

³ See *Al-Jawaher Al-Mu'adda fi Fada'el Jeddah* (Merits of Jeddah), p. 31.

of these marketplaces there were coffee- and tea-shops with settees, which were frequented by the townspeople and the visitors alike.

Close by stood donkey stables and places for muleteers and donkey-drivers; donkeys were by far the most popular and widespread means of transportation. It is noticeable that a traveller from Jeddah to Mecca or vice versa, for example, would hire the mount for the travel; the owner of the mount would not accompany the traveller. Upon reaching his destination, the traveller would leave the mount somewhere. Muleteers and donkey-drivers used to have deputies in destination places, and the animals, through training and long practice, used to know the places of these deputies and used to go to them, and the deputies used to know their mounts by certain specific marks.¹

¹ *Ibid*, adapted.

438: Al-Sharbatly Residence

Al-Sharbatly Residence at Souk Al-Olwi, with a plate to show the name and the house number

(الصورة العليا صفحة 65)

One of the facades of the building

(الصورة السفلى صفحة 65)

Work at an early age

On reaching five years of age, the boy, urged by his love of work and of imitating grown-ups and by his desire to help his father, carried a box full of fruits and went to the coastal area of the city. He wandered among the in-coming travellers and sold his merchandise and came back happy and proud with the profit he had made and with the fact that he was now working like grown-ups. This led him to be attached to work and business and gave him great childlike expectations and innocent ambitions.

His father would have pity on the boy spending his early childhood in such a toilsome endeavour. However, his resolution, steadfastness, and perseverance led the father to support and encourage him in such endeavours and he used to give him the surplus and profit resulting from his little transactions as a bonus that he could use anyway he wished.

At the *Kuttab*¹

The boy's work did not last very long; upon reaching the age of six, his father (according to the acknowledged practice of the day) sent him to the *Kuttab* so as to learn verses from the Holy Quran, learn reading and writing and the principles of arithmetic. However, the boy had other plans and was saddened by his new experience. He dealt with the *Kuttab* / Sheikh as an enemy or an opponent who robbed him of his freedom and expectations. This is why he did not pay much attention to what was happening in the classroom and attained nothing of learning thereof. The day hours used to pass heavy, long, and bleak for him. He would not regain his vigour and liveliness except at the end of the class time; and from his school, he would head directly to his father's shop without going home. Thence, he would carry his fruit box and go to the coast, where his dreams of becoming a merchant had sprung.

The boy's truancy grew more frequent but his father did not treat him harshly on this account. The father saw that his son was still too young for that and that he needed more time to get accustomed and familiar with the place. The son took the opportunity of his father's lenience and went on with his truancy to the extent of dropping out. The father was still under the impression that the lad probably needed some more time to adjust to the atmosphere of the class and did not take any drastic measure to redress the situation.

Nevertheless, when he reached the age of eight, Hasan had to go back to the *Kuttab* before it was too late and before he lost the faculty for learning: it is a known fact that learning in the tender formative years is easier and more conducive to knowledge. The father tried his best to inculcate in the lad the desire for learning; he told him that reading, writing, and arithmetic were essential things for him if he wanted to become a successful merchant, and told him that his knowledge and memorisation of Quranic verses and Prophetic hadiths would bring him the blessings of God the Most Sublime.

¹ The *Kuttab* (sometimes translated as elementary or grammar school) was a particular institution – resembling the institution of the Dame school known in the west before the advent of schools and education – known and widespread in Islamic countries, where a sheikh or cleric would be given the charge of a number of children to teach them the basic principles of reading, writing, arithmetic, and Quran recitation.

The lad did go to the *Kuttab* again full of desire and passion to attain the necessary knowledge as his father had told him. The first few hours of the day went by peacefully and calmly, but then something happened and the sheikh beat the lad severely. The lad could not bear that and ran away resolving never to go there again.

He went to the seashore where he spent the remaining part of the day and a good part of the night weeping from pain and fear. He was filled with dread of going back to the *Kuttab* lest the sheikh beat him again. Well into the night, he remembered his family and thought that they would be anxious about his safety and that they must have gone into great difficulty in searching for him, and he felt guilty about that. When his father asked him why he was late – he who has never done anything like this before – he told him the whole story, and finished his account with saying, ‘By God, Daddy, I wished I were dead today and would never see that sheikh again.’ The tender-hearted father was greatly saddened by his son’s account and told him to stop going to the *Kuttab* until he has thought of some solution for this problem.

A similar situation from history

Worthy of our attention here is the fact that the situation just described is very much a copy of another decisive situation in Islamic history, concerning one of the most prominent caliphs and symbols of the Islamic state, the Abbasid Caliph Al-Mu’tasem Billah.¹ It seems that certain situations have a tendency to be repeated over the centuries; and the striking similarity between these two situations merits some reflection and a little digression.

At the end of his first day in schooling, Al-Mu’tasem came to his father, the Caliph Haroun Al-Rashid,² and the father asked his son about how he spent his day. Al-Mu’tasem did not hide his disappointment and said to his father, ‘By God, father, I wished I were dead and never to return to that place again.’ Al-Rashid was greatly upset and asked his son about the reason, and he answered that the sheikh was too cruel with him and beat him severely. Al-Rashid took pity on his son and said, ‘You do not have to go back to him, and you do not have to die for that.’ Al-Mu’tasem never went back to the sheikh.

Major histories³ report that Al-Mu’tasem grew up to be a courageous, strong, and noble person. It is reported that the Roman Emperor Theophilus son of Michael II raided

¹ Muhammad Ibn Haroun Al-Rashid, given the name of Al-Mu’tasem Billah (the one seeking support from God), is the eighth caliph in the Abbasid state. He was born in 179 AH / 795 CE, and succeeded to the caliphate after his brother Al-Ma’moun in 218 AH. He was the one who built the city of Samurra in 223 AH / 837 CE to accommodate his troops when they became too large in number for Baghdad. He died in Samurra in 227 AH / 841 CE.

² Haroun Al-Rashid Ibn Muhammad Al-Mahdi is the fifth and most prominent of all the Abbasid caliphs; he died in 193 AH / 809 CE.

³ See the *Tarikh* (History) by Ibn Khaldoun, vol. 3, p. 262; *Al-Kamel fi Al-Tarikh* (Complete History), vol. 6, pp 148-167; *Tarikh Baghdad* (The History of Baghdad), vol. 3, P. 342; *Murouj Al-Dhahab* (Meadows of Gold), vol. 2, pp. 269-278, *Fawat Al-Wafayat*, vol. 2, p. 270; *Qasas Al-Arab* (Histories of the Arabs), vol.

Muslim lands in his reign and reached the town of Zabatra,¹ which he looted, put its men to the sword, and took captive its women.

One day, a man came to Al-Mu'tasem and told him that he had been in Amorium (Arabic: Ammouria)² where, while passing by the marketplace, he saw an Arab woman being driven harshly by a Byzantine soldier who was beating her on the face. She was crying at the top of her voice, 'O Mu'tasem! O Mu'tasem!' The soldier sarcastically said to her, 'What can this Al-Mu'tasem do for you, will he come to rescue you?'

Al-Mu'tasem was infuriated by what he heard. He stood up and asked his courtiers, 'Where is this Ammouria?' He was informed of its location, and he shouted at the top of his voice, facing the direction of the town, 'O sister, o woman, here I come to answer your call!'

He mobilised the army and made the necessary preparations for war. He summoned the judges and asked them to testify to his will: he divided his fortune into three parts: a third for his household, a third for his servants, and a third to be spent in charity.

He marched to Ammouria at the head of his army. He found out that the town was heavily fortified and found great difficulty in breaking through its fortifications. He laid siege to the town for a long time. At long last, he broke through and entered the town. He ordered the man who told him the story of the woman to be brought to him and asked him to guide him to the place where he witnessed the incident. The man took Al-Mu'tasem to the marketplace and pointed the place to him. He found the woman, who was still in captivity there; he freed her, punished the soldier who was torturing her and gave him to her as a bondsman and asked her, 'O woman, has Al-Mu'tasem answered your call?' The woman was full of thankfulness.

In an ironical and strange twist of events, it so happened by God's arrangement that Haroun Al-Rashid had excluded Al-Mu'tasem from succeeding to the caliphate because of his illiteracy, and gave it to his sons Al-Amin, Al-Ma'moun, and Al-Mu'taman. By God's will, the caliphate returned to Al-Mu'tasem and, after him, to his offspring exclusively.

In this respect (illiteracy and its effects), Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Al-Sharbatly is reported to have said,

I thank God for not proceeding with my studies; otherwise, I could not have fulfilled what I had done so far with the help of God. I had at that time started to familiarise myself with many of the affairs of commerce, the times and dates of

3, p. 449; *Muhadarat Al-Abrar* (Lectures of the Virtuous), vol.2, p. 63; and, for his biography, see *Al-A'lam* (Biographies of Important People), p. 351.

¹ A border town in Syria

² One of the major fortified and most important Roman border towns.

shipments and goods and their arrival times; the prices, the market needs, storing of merchandise, and other related matters. I never learnt something and forgot it; God has bestowed on me a very strong memory, for which I am extremely grateful to Him. I have trained myself in doing mental calculations and committing them to my memory until I perfected that art; I could even do that faster than someone using a pen and paper in his calculations could do.¹

Under the care of the father

At the age of ten, and after having displayed remarkable talents in commercial activities, his father thought it was fitting for Hasan to join his brother Ali in managing the family business that had extended greatly. He was now importing fruits and vegetables in great quantities from many quarters like India, Egypt, and Turkey, among other countries. Hasan learnt a lot and admirably digested the experiences of the father. Al-Sayyid Hasan worked with all his might and energy, and the business extended and reached unprecedented levels, and they attained a great reputation and a name both inside the Kingdom and abroad. They appointed agents in many of the major commercial cities of the world to provide them with continuous shipments. In this respect, Al-Sayyid Hasan says,

Trade in those days depended mainly on the word of honour, honesty, and trust between dealers. When the source merchant trusted his agent, he would ship to him all the merchandise he needed; we used to send the costs to them later in instalments. We used to place the money in wooden boxes that we would seal with red wax from all sides, and send them to the source merchant. Shipping agents used to charge fees up to 1.5% in return for transporting the merchandise to us. At a later stage, a number of money dealers entered the stage of commercial transactions, who took it upon themselves to transport the money in return for a set percentage fee, like Muhammad Attar, Saleh Ka'ki, Muhammad Saklou', Hashem and Saleh Ghamri, and Al-Sairafi among others, *God rest their souls*.

In those days, we did not know banknotes and paper money, and there were no banks. The prevalent metal currencies were the golden guinea – and there were different kinds of it: the English, the Ottoman, and the Rashadi, and there were the Majidi riyal and the Husaini riyal, the Saudi, the French, and the Yemeni. There were also the Egyptian guinea and the Indian rupee.²

Al-Sayyid Hasan persisted in his work with his father leaving his personal print in every piece of work he did, and in his work as well as in personal and human relationships. He never forgot the fact that he was a descendant of a noble house who knew God and worshipped Him,³ and who knew people's dues and treated them with good manners, and

¹ See *'Isamiyyoun (Self-Made Men)* and interviews with His Excellency Hasan Abbas Al-Sharbatly in *Okaz* and other newspapers.

² From an interview with Al-Sayyid Hasan in the *Okaz* newspaper, edition No 5651, dated Thursday 22 Muharram 1402 AH / 19 November 1981 CE.

³ See his family tree at the end of the book.

knew the due of the poor and gave them from what God has bestowed on them. They paid the charity due on them because they knew this charity was prescribed by God as the right of the poor; they paid it not as a heavy burden or a duty to be discharged; not with a depressed spirit, but with joy and self-contentment.

The father always reminded his children that true riches was not in having large amounts of money, but rather in being close to God and in lending helping hands to His servants. He always asserted to them that they should keep the tradition of their noble ancestry with truthfulness and honesty, as there is no kinship between God and any of His servants and that the best of people in the Sight of God are those who do the best deeds. He reminded them that they should never depend on their lineage for success as the line of descent never prevented the fulfilment of God's justice among people; a doer of good will be rewarded and a wrongdoer would meet with just chastisement from God.

Chapter Two

With His Two Brothers

Years passed and the lad grew up. His brilliance, genius, and solid character were becoming evident everyday. The father was full of joy in observing the goodness of his son and felt comfortable that eventually, when he departs, someone will be there to take care of his accomplishments and continue his march. Now he rested assured that he would have another life after his departure with his good name extended with the deeds of his son.

The father passed away,¹ leaving behind a strong cohesive family, far-reaching and prosperous business, and a good name in the community. Al-Sayyid Ali, being the eldest son,² took over the management of the business. Al-Sayyid Hasan and Al-Sayyid Abd Allah worked under his management exactly like they did when their father was around. The business prospered and extended and the fortune grew considerably, and each one of the brothers was discharging his duty with diligence as best he could.

In his youth, Al-Sayyid Hasan remained in his work with his two brothers. His innovative spirit was evident in his daily transactions leading to a strengthening of the business and of their position in the market and continually pushing towards new horizons. He was always working with great passion, diligence, resolution, and self negation and without complaint.

In those days, the political situation in the Arabian Peninsula was going through a critical historical juncture. The developments were ushering in a new era that had been the dream of the youth for long; he saw in it a turning point that would carry the country to a new horizon of progress and an unprecedented surge in economic activity that the country had never experienced before. He wanted to be ready – with his brothers – for this stage, to prepare for it with new strategies to match the developments. He intuited that each stage had its own characteristics and should be dealt with using different tools and means. He felt that they had at least to create the correct atmosphere for success by rearranging their priorities, and leaving the end result for the development of the circumstances.

Unfortunately, it seems that at that point of time, the visions of the brothers went different ways and this thwarted the young man's ambitions. Observations in matters of daily life seem to leave us with the impression that it is extremely difficult for someone – especially if they are past the age of youth and its enthusiasm – to consider changing their course of activity. They would see that reason is on the side of being careful, slow moving, and sticking to the traditional tried ways and the trodden path. Thus Al-Sayyid

¹ Al-Sayyid Hasan mentions that his father passed away in the year 1341 AH; see *'Isamiyyoun* (Self-Made Men).

² Al-Sayyid Ali Al-Sharbatly says that his grandfather Al-Sayyid Ali is thirty five years older than Al-Sayyid Hasan, as he passed away in 1351 AH. Most probably, the difference in age is exaggerated and does not stand to reason especially taking into consideration that a woman is not likely to bear children after the age of fifty; keeping in mind that Al-Sayyida Hafsa is older than Al-Sayyid Ali, and Al-Sayyid Hasan is two years older than his brother Al-Sayyid Abd Allah.

Hasan's brothers opted to stick to the tried and safe ways thinking that this would ensure the continuity of their late father's march and ensure the safety of the family against the perils of the adventurous spirit of youth. They were encouraged along this line of thinking by the fact that the field of commerce was no longer as it used to be: too many people became involved in it and competition was not as honest and straightforward as it used to be. Any mistake, no matter how slight it might be, could be exploited by unscrupulous competitors.

On the other hand, Al-Sayyid Hasan was of the opinion that the traditional working techniques would not be able to match the developments of the coming era; new working systems had to be developed. He felt that they had to venture into new domains which they had not experienced before, especially that now there were new kinds of unscrupulous competition that did not have any respect for the principles of work and the ethics of the domain of commerce. Add to this that the emerging society was badly in need of new things that were not available on the market, and he felt that they could be pioneers in providing these goods and introducing the community to them. He also was of the opinion that trade needed courage and daring, and probably – sometimes – adventure and calculated risks.

Al-Sayyid Hasan insisted on his point of view, and the brothers went different ways ten years after the passing away of their father. He resolved to stand on his own feet in order to bear himself all the responsibilities for his decision and for whatever risks his daring views might entail in case his venture went wrong. He wanted to keep his family and his brothers away from his new risky line of action, which might not bear the desired fruit.

The decisive hour

To show his good intention, Al-Sayyid Hasan started his own business from step one, with nothing in his credit except his name. However, his name was not a slight asset in the world of business: he was a trader well-known for honesty, for keeping promises, generosity, and openness. His generosity and donations in charity were so great that they had oftentimes caused him problems with those around him. However, in this he was following the example of his father despite of his young age, urged on by his strong faith and religious enthusiasm.

Nevertheless, his task was not an easy one as the world of business was a wild jungle of competition. There were stalkers standing by watching from afar waiting for a slight mistake to capitalise on. And there were those who were haters of success. Pushed by their jealousy, these were always more than ready to smother any blossoming success that they could not achieve themselves.

Al-Sayyid Hasan did not spend much time contemplating on how to start his newly acquired independent business life. It was true that he had no financial backing, but he did not allow the problem of financing to obstruct his march. He went back in memory to some quarter of a century ago and remembered his work in the days of his early youth and how happy and thrilled he was in his freedom in actual work. He had opted to live

free as a bird in the open air searching for food and lodgings rather than staying captive in a golden cage enjoying food brought to him without effort.

However, with his open mind and keen awareness of what was going on around him he started his new business with calculated steps and great caution: he did not want to do any harm to the memory of his father or to the careers of his brothers. He would go to his acquaintances from among traders in the market and they would provide him with small amounts of vegetables and fruits in the mornings, which he would pay for after selling the merchandise in the evenings. In those days, the sum of five hundred riyals was enough for a trader to start such an enterprise; a thousand riyals was a dream for many merchants then.¹

With strong faith and seeking support from God, the young merchant went on steadfastly in his new business. In his straitened circumstances, Al-Sayyid Hasan never forgot the charity he used to do in his more prosperous times. Thus he used to provide for the needy, give away to the poor, treat his relations with kindness, and sponsor orphans. He knew that God would not let him down and God answered his invocations; God supported him, helped him and bestowed on him success in his dealings. His business expanded gradually, and in a few years' time, he was standing on equal footing with the prominent merchants in the market. He was able to do this through patience, steadfastness, paying attention to the little details of his work, and following sound managerial principles.

¹ See *Okaz*, edition No 5651, on Thursday, 22 Muharram, 1402 AH / 19 November 1981 CE.

Chapter Three

The Great Leap

Then luck came his way and the expected great leap took place with the political changes in the country. The political conditions in the country stabilised after king Abdul-Aziz managed to unify the ranks in the Peninsula and put an end to disputes and factional strife. Thenceforward, the King dedicated his time to listening to his subjects, consulting with them, and caring for their needs. In the meantime, his consultants would inform him of the requirements of the country as they occurred. The King, being a distinguished statesman, was intent with great enthusiasm on providing for his people to let the population live in honour, safety, and security. The consultants were making recommendations to the Monarch concerning appointments and as to which man should be given which task in the building of the new kingdom. The new-born state needed strong and honest men, who would participate in the process of state-building with truthfulness, honesty, and wisdom.

One day, someone came to Al-Sayyid Hasan to convey to him an invitation for an interview with the Minister of Finance, Sheikh Abd Allah Al-Suleiman Al-Hamdan *God rest his soul*.¹ The Minister was a wise man and a good judge of people. He knew how to choose his men with extreme care. Never did a word of praise to someone passed his lips unless the person he is praising was rightfully deserving of it. Never did he announce a decision except after profound meticulous study and analysis. Never did he appoint a man for a job except after ascertaining, with personal search and after consultation with trustworthy aides, that the would-be appointee is suitable for the job with respect to his reputation, moral conduct, and career.

Al-Sayyid Hasan went to the interview at the assigned time. Towards the end of the interview, and after lengthy discussions, the Minister offered Al-Sayyid Hasan the appointment of importing the Kingdom's requirements of fruits and vegetables, in view of his great and long experience in the field and his good reputation in the community. Add to this the fact that the King was confident that he was the suitable man for that job. Al-Sayyid Hasan willingly accepted the appointment and started to make his preparations by consulting with his connections in various places. He discharged his duty with great diligence and with great success and without error. He was even able to meet all the requirements in less than the assigned time.

Trials of life come commensurate with a man's faith²

Al-Sayyid Hasan went from success to success and made a considerable fortune. He tried to expand his business and entered into new fields and activities to meet the requirements

¹ In the days of King Abdul-Aziz, the Ministry of Finance was the only ministry in the administration.

² This is a reference to a hadith by the Prophet *Peace be upon him* stating that God tests people's faith and steadfastness by subjecting them to trials in life; prophets and the virtuous are subjected to the hardest trials. (Tr.)

of his clients and his compatriots and he started to import from India and from other countries.

It happened once that he imported a great amount of goods from India, in which he invested the greater part of his savings. The merchandise was shipped on board a ship called Al-Rahmani, bound to the port of Jeddah. At that time, King Abdul-Aziz went to the town of Al-Ta'ef with some of his assistants. The Director General of the Ministry of Finance, Abbas Sairafi, sent an invitation to Al-Sayyid Hasan to spend a few days in Al-Ta'ef close by the quarters of the Monarch. Al-Sayyid Hasan answered the invitation and went to Al-Ta'ef; but on arriving there, he discovered that he had lost his briefcase in which he had put some precious and expensive pieces of jewellery. In vain he and his companions tried to find the briefcase, and his financial loss was great, but he felt resigned to God's will, thanked God for this trial, and proceeded to his meeting with the Director General of the Ministry of Finance.

On his way to meeting the Director General, he was met by Sheikh Ahmad Al-Musalli, the secretary of the Ministry of Finance. The Sheikh asked him about Al-Rahmani ship and the expected date of its arrival, and Al-Sayyid Hasan answered that it was expected on that day or the next. Al-Sheikh Ahmad Al-Musalli asked him about the size of his business on that ship, and Al-Sayyid Hasan answered him. Al-Sheikh was upset and the colour of his face changed when he heard the number and the great value of Al-Sayyid Hasan's merchandise on board that ship and muttered a few words; when Al-Sayyid Hasan asked him what the matter was, he took leave and went on his way hurriedly.

When Al-Sayyid Hasan met with Abbas Sairafi, the Director General of the Ministry of Finance, the latter informed him that Al-Rahmani had sunk with all the merchandise on its board. Sairafi tried to comfort Al-Sayyid Hasan and lighten the effects of the loss on him, but he found him smiling with great contentment. The man thanked God for this further trial, spoke good words with those who were present, and took his leave for prayers. He stood facing the Qibla and started his prayers. In prayers to God, he found the utmost comfort, and in the presence of God, he experienced the feeling of profound heart-felt safety and tranquillity.

The men at the meeting were amazed at the strong faith and solid character of the man; he did not show any sign of complaint, anger, or indignation against fate or God's will. He did not even ask how this happened or why though he had lost the greater part of his fortune, and the fruit of his long struggle in life had sunk with Al-Rahmani.¹

On that same day, and as if the man had some appointment with the disasters of fate, or as if all his trials were to be gathered on that day to test his solidity and strength of faith, he was destined to receive more hard blows. He had a pre-arranged meeting with some of his agents to discuss matters related to work. The day was one of the days of the month of

¹ See *Okaz*, in the edition referred to above. Also, his secretary Muhammad Hasan, who accompanied him in the last two decades of his life, narrated the incident of Al-Rahmani and how Al-Sayyid Hasan lost a huge amount of money in the sinking of that ship in an interview with him in Jeddah in the month of Sha'ban, 1425 AH.

Ramadan, the month of fasting. At the time of sunset, the time for breaking the fast, the meeting was still on, and Al-Sayyid Hasan, as was his habit, asked his visitors to stay on for the *iftar* meal. In the course of the meal, someone – who looked extremely upset and distressed – came in and approached Al-Sayyid Hasan and told him something in private. Al-Sayyid Hasan mumbled a few words and asked the man to join them for the meal. He neither moved nor showed any sign of perturbation. Then he addressed one of his assistants and instructed him: ‘After you finish your meal, go back to Jeddah and do what is required and convey the trust to its destined place; do not wait for me.’

His guests enquired from him about the matter but he told them that it was a simple thing and they need not be troubled with it. He attended to his guests as best he could and was kind in serving them until they finished their meal and left. Thereupon, he headed to the mosque where he prayed,¹ and travelled to the Holy Mosque in Mecca, where he prayed also. Thereafter, he went to Jeddah, where he received the news of a big fire that broke out in his stores and consumed all that was in them.² Again, he raised prayers and invocations to God, praising His Will and seeking His forgiveness. He raised his hands in supplication to God to grant him patience and steadfastness in the face of this calamity, and to let this be in his credit of good deeds. He went home and switched on the radio set and listened to a Quran recitation. The recitation, on that day, included the verse that commands believers to be steadfast in the face of adversity (*Luqman*: 17); it was as if the verse was meant to remind him of that Islamic principle of patience and as a comfort to him, and especially in the disaster of losing his beloved son Ghazi, who was three years of age when he passed away. He was the ‘trust’ that Al-Sayyid Hasan was referring to in his instruction to his assistant.³

The bereaved father had preferred to have his son buried without his presence, despite his great love and attachment to him, to troubling his guests and spoiling their meal. In any case, after the meal, each one of them would go to his home or business. Moreover, his hospitality and munificence prevented him from bothering his guests with his personal calamity and ruining their time with him. One may wonder how he was able to do that, how his steadfastness could reach such levels of strength, how he managed to control his feelings and hide his grief, how strong his munificence was to decide to hide his grief rather than to cause annoyance to his guests. These questions have only one answer: it is the strength of faith and solidity of character. This incident has a parallel also in ancient Arabic history.

A parallel situation from history: the magnanimity of Al-Ahnaf Ibn Qais

Al-Ahnaf Ibn Qais⁴ was an example of magnanimity and munificence. He used to say, ‘Whenever someone does me any harm, I think of the matter according to one of three

¹ This incident was narrated by Muhammad Hasan, the secretary of Al-Sayyid Hasan, in an interview with him. See also *‘Isamiyyoun* (Self-Made Men), p. 81.

² This incident was also narrated by Muhammad Hasan in an interview with him.

³ See *‘Isamiyyoun* (Self-Made Men), p. 81.

⁴ Al-Ahnaf Ibn Qais Ibn Mu’awiya Al-Minqari Al-Tamimi was one of the great sages and orators of the Arabs. He was also known for his proverbial magnanimity. Born in Basra in the year 3 AH / 619 CE, he was living during the days of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*, but he did not meet him. However, he met with

ways. If he is above me in status, I tell myself I should recognise his status and privilege; if he is equal to me, I tell myself I should show favour to him; and if he is below me, I tell myself I should keep myself from falling to his level.' He was once asked how he came to achieve such a high degree of forbearance and clemency, and he answered, 'I learnt it from Qais Ibn 'Asem; we used to learn it from him like people learn jurisprudence from scholars. While we were with him in his house one day, a maidservant came with a skewer with hot roast meat on it. She took the meat off the skewer and threw the skewer behind her back; it fell on one of his sons and killed him immediately and the servant was about to die of dread. However, the father was not the least perturbed .He rather comforted the servant: "Do not be afraid, and I give you your freedom for the Face of God (seeking God's pleasure)." He then gave instructions for the funeral of the boy. He did not move from his place until he honoured us fully and performed the duty of host by us.'¹

In the world of business and finance

Al-Sayyid Hasan started anew with no abated ambition and resolve. He still had in his heart the strength of faith that pushed him along his march with steady steps.

This time, however, the start was relatively easier than at the beginning due to the strength of his name in the market, his reputation of being honest and truthful, and his presence that was the greatest guarantee for trade transactions. However, the task that he was charged with was enormous: providing the requirements of the country of fruits, vegetables, and other necessities. His ultimate hope was not to disappoint his King.

He never lost a minute; he rearranged his files and attained great successes with great diligence, steadfastness, faith, and wisdom. His achievements were the talk of merchants and officials for a long time. In all his transactions, he took great care to fulfil his promises on time and never to postpone the due of someone beyond its time; that is if he could not pay it even earlier. His fortune grew again, and he came out of his crisis stronger and wiser and nearer to God and more attached still to serving the poor and the needy.

The expected time came and King Abdul-Aziz met him and charged him with additional tasks of providing other necessary materials needed by the state especially that the state was going into a new phase of development. In addition, the administration was entering a new stage full of stormy changes not only in the Kingdom but also in the whole region and the whole world with the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939.² In

Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, the second caliph and attended many of the Arab conquests. He, nevertheless, did not participate in the battle of Al-Jamal (the Camel) between rival Muslim factions. He died in Kufa in 72 AH / 691 CE. See *Tabaqat* (Classes) by Ibn Sa'd, vol. 7, p. 66, *Wafayat Al-A'yan*, vol. 1, p. 230, and *Al-Qamous Al-Islami*, vol. 1, p. 43.

¹ See *Al-Mustatraf*, vol. 1, p. 80, adapted. In another version in the same source (vol. 1, p. 272), it is reported that it was his brother who killed his son.

² The Second World War broke out when Nazi Germany, led by Hitler, invaded Poland on the first of September 1939. This invasion caused England, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa to declare war on Germany in the week between the third and the ninth of that month. Many countries entered the war

this new stage, the Arab region was intensely involved in world developments as most Arab countries were colonies of one or another of the parties of the war.

Al-Sayyid Hassan was happy with his new appointment from the King, especially that the King used always to say, 'I want men who work with truthfulness, knowledge, and loyalty, so that when I have a problem I can refer to them for a solution; I would go by their opinion and have an easy conscience; they would bear the responsibility before God; I also need them to be frank and straightforward in their speech.'¹

Al-Sayyid Hasan was also happy being one of the men chosen by the King to be in his confidence and to take part in building the revival of their country. He worked day and night out of love and loyalty to the King and of devotion to the country, whose love had taken roots in his heart. He never found a more beautiful place on earth and could find no joy except in being close to the Holy Mosques.

A unique chemistry was working between the two men, and a special kind of language joined them together until death parted them. On top of all this were the common interests between the two men: love of giving, generosity, munificence, tolerance, and love of helping others, especially the poor and the needy. Al-Tabarani narrates that Ibn Abbas *God be pleased with them* relates that the Prophet *Peace be upon him* said, 'When someone endeavours to help his brother (fellow Muslim) in a need of his, this would be better for him [in reward] than *'itikaf* (retiring for devotions) for ten years; and when one performs *'itikaf* for one day seeking God's pleasure in it, God will make [a barrier of] three trenches between him and Hellfire, between each trench and the next is a distance equal to the distance between the heaven and the earth (or between the east and the west).'² It is also reported that Omar Ibn al-Khattab *God be pleased with him* relates that the Prophet *Peace be upon him* said, 'God has created certain people for taking care of people's needs; to them people come in their times of need and they are safeguarded from God's chastisement.'³

Thus, Al-Sayyid Hasan quit his work in trading in fruits and vegetables and started work in importing materials for the state, as he had relinquished before to his brothers the business of importing for the 'Quarantine' islands [Abu Al-Sa'd, Al-Wasita, and Abu Ali]; and this has been the work of the family ever since.⁴

successively. This war caused unprecedented destruction and tragedies that humanity had not witnessed before in its history. Upon the ending of that war in May 1945, there were great changes in policies of many states and balance of power in the world.

¹ See *Al-Malek Abdul-Aziz fi Al-Sahafa Al-Arabia* (King Abdul-Aziz in the Arabic Press: Selected Readings to commemorate a hundred years of the founding of the kingdom), prepared by Nasser Ibn Muhammad Al-Juhaimi, Darat Al-Malek Abdul-Aziz, Saudi Arabia (1419 AH / 1999 CE).

² See *Al-Tarhib wa Al-Tarhib* (Inducement and Warning), by Al-Imam Al-Mundhiri, edited by Mustafa Muhammad Amara, Cairo: Dar Al-Rayyan Li Al-Turath.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ These are islands off the south coast of Jeddah, where ships used to lay at anchor for between ten and fifteen days before resuming their voyage. Pilgrims used to stay there outside Jeddah. Al-Sayyid Abbas and his sons after him were charged with providing life necessities for these islands.

His attitude towards profiteers

In Islam, the basic economic principle is freedom of the market; however, Islamic law has placed certain restrictions on this freedom in accordance with the overall economic system in Islam and in a way that would realise justice and stability in allowing legal profit – not exceeding the third – and reasonable standards of living. The Prophet *Peace be upon him* used to say, ‘Let people receive their shares of livelihood from one another,’¹ and he prohibited regulation of prices. Anas Ibn Malek relates that prices went high during the days of the Prophet *Peace be upon him* and people asked him to put a limit on prices. He said, ‘God is the One Who constricts and the One Who expands and the One Who sets prices.’² The Prophet *Peace be upon him* is also reported to have said, ‘He who withholds a kind of food (commodity) for forty nights will have caused himself to fall out of God’s favour,’ and ‘When someone withholds food from Muslims, God will afflict him with leprosy and insolvency.’³ The Prophet *Peace be upon him* also said, ‘When someone manipulates prices of commodities of Muslims, God will cause him to sit in a great place in Hellfire.’⁴

Accordingly, Al-Sayyid Hasan never practised the shameful monopoly practised by other traders. In this respect, he repented and rectified his past misconduct, seeking God’s pleasure. Whenever prices went high in times of crises, he would publish advertisements in all newspapers to the effect that all the merchandise in his stores is offered for sale at original prices without increase, and that his offer would hold as long as the stocks lasted.

It happened sometimes that his stores went empty, and then he would import new quantities at far higher prices than those he sold them at and pay the freight and transportation charges. In spite of that, and in spite of the costs that would run as high up as millions, he would insist on selling the merchandise at normal conventional prices. This practice used to earn him the enmity and ill-will of evil minded profiteers, disappointed at not being able to make their expected profits from the crisis-induced high prices. Nevertheless, he was at all times satisfied with his lot and happy with God’s fate; and God’s support was always on his side, rewarding him, doubling his profits, and augmenting his income. One reason for that was the fact that he stood in opposition to monopolisers who were trying to make profits out of people’s disasters; it was his belief that ‘The bringer [of foodstuffs and commodities to a community] will be blessed in his livelihood and the monopoliser is cursed.’⁵

¹ The hadith is narrated by Al-Baihaqi in his *Al-Sunan Al-Kubra*, vol. 4, p. 346.

² The hadith is narrated by Al-Tirmidhi in his *Sunan*, in the section on ‘Narrations on pricing,’ vol. 5, p. 141, under No. 1235.

³ The hadith is narrated by Ahmad in his *Musnad*, the start of ‘Musnad of Omar Ibn Al-Khattab,’ vol. 1, p. 134.

⁴ The hadith is narrated by Ahmad in his *Musnad*, hadith of Ma’qil Ibn Yasar, under No. 19426.

⁵ This is a hadith that Al-Sayyid Hasan *may God rest his soul* used to repeat always. See *Okaz, op. cit.*

Al-Sayyid Hasan's munificence and practice in fighting monopolies was duly appreciated by officials, who used to send him telegrams of appreciation for his noble endeavours.¹ These telegrams were published in newspapers,² to show appreciation to the man and display his example to other prospective people of charity.

Ministry

In appreciation of Al-Sayyid Hasan's efforts in serving the motherland and his compatriots, his diligent endeavours to raise the status of Muslims everywhere, and his contributions and donations in charity, King Abdul-Aziz granted him the title of Minister of State in the Royal Decree dated 14. 10. 1367 AH. The Decree stated, 'In view of the public services rendered by Hasan Sharbatly, we have decreed that he be granted the title of honorary Minister of State,'³ making him the first person to hold this title in the history of the Kingdom.

His countenance and bodily features

It is appropriate at this point to have a brief description of how our man looked like in terms of physical features. Al-Sayyid Hasan *may God rest his soul* was a tallish and thinnish kind of person, with an erect posture. His countenance displayed solemnity and reverence, and his complexion was tannish, nearer to white than to dark in colour. His face tended to be longish, his hair was black, his eyes were wide and honey-coloured, and his fingers were longish. He had a cheerful look and a smiling face. His anger, whenever this occurred, found expression in silence and redness in face colour.

He had a quiet voice and did not talk much; except probably when the late King Abdul-Aziz was mentioned in his presence. Then, he would talk at length about his memories with him, their intimate relationship, how the King used to treat him, how he considered him like one of his own sons, and how His Majesty managed the affairs of the Kingdom with great wisdom and ability both in the interior and the external affairs.

¹ See Document No. 10 in the Appendices.

² See Document No. 11 in the Appendices.

³ See Document No. 2 in the Appendices.

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan managing some affairs in his youth
(الصورتان صفحة 83)

Al-Sayyid Hasan managing his business affairs at a later stage in life
(الصورة صفحة 87)

Chapter Four

Al-Sayyid Hasan's Family

It seems that the effort for building his name, business, and career consumed the greater part of the early life of Al-Sayyid Hasan; and it was not a short time. His preoccupation with this and with asserting himself in the world of business probably caused him to be oblivious for some time of the merits of family life. He wanted first to build a solid basis for the family that he wanted to have and to provide for his coming children the conditions for success. He wanted to build an edifice that he would be able to call his own, so that his progeny would be able to continue his march in life and to build upon what he had started. They would add their beautiful touch to it from their own noble characters and conduct as he hoped.

Most probably, Al-Sayyid Hasan got married after reaching the age of thirty. In those days, this was not the normal practice; early marriage was the norm then. However, his awareness of the responsibility for the legacy of his father made him spend ten precious years of his life after his father's death in continual work to preserve the legacy and make it grow. Thereafter, and with his separation from his brothers, and with striving for building his own business, he had to double his efforts and give more of his time to stand on his own feet and assert himself, as his new start was from scratch. When he was almost there, and after hard years of toil and struggle, he was hit by catastrophic fluctuations of the market and lost almost all of his possessions, and had to start from square one all over again.

Had it not been for this man's phenomenal will power and strength of resolve, his life in the market would have ended with his first big loss, or he might have ended up as a number in the statistics of those beaten by the psychological ailments of our modern world, vanquished by anxiety, depression, and despair. All his losses were of the big and back-breaking kind, but his faith in God and strength of resolve were stronger; and he grew more solid with each adversity and with each crisis.

His marriages

Al-Sayyid Hasan married three times, and in the arrangement of each of his three marriages we find the hand of fate at play in choosing the right woman for him, the woman who could share his dreams and help him in building the kind of house and family he longed for.

His first marriage was a traditional one. He looked around, asked, and sought the opinion of more informed people in the neighbourhood until he found a young lady from a noble house in Jeddah, a lady who would meet his requirements as a partner for life and whom he would be deserving of. That was Saleha Muhammad Shalabi. This blessed marriage produced good blessed children who remained faithful to their father up to the end when

he passed away. Saleha, with great loyalty and love, remained at the side of her husband all his life, and he chose for her a residence close to his place of work in Jeddah.¹

His second marriage, several years after his first, was in Mecca. He used to stay in Mecca for lengthy periods of time, especially when King Abdul-Aziz was there.² It so happened that Al-Saqqaf, a Meccan friend of Al-Sayyid Hasan's, played a role in this marriage when he introduced him to a noble Meccan family by the name of Mu'mina. Al-Sayyid Hasan had often expressed his need and desire to marry a lady from Mecca as he was spending long times in the city, and his first wife did not wish to leave Jeddah for such lengthy periods.³ His life with Khadija Hamed Ahmad Mu'mina was a good and happy one and they had sons and daughters, and she moved with him to Jeddah some time later. Their life remained happy and peaceful until something happened and disturbed it. They separated a few years before he passed away, and she chose to stay with her children.

His third marriage, like his second, was also not planned. He was in Egypt then,⁴ where he was introduced to a family of Meccan origin. He married Karima Mahmoud Ali Makkawi in Cairo, and she then moved to live with him in Jeddah. They had sons and one daughter, and remained together up to the end of his life. Like Mrs Saleha, she is living now in Jeddah with her children.

His philosophy in bringing up his children

Al-Sayyid Hasan had his own philosophy in the education of his children. He never interfered in their options in life and never imposed on any of them a subject for study in their academic life. Moreover, he gave freedom to each mother to bring up her children the way that she saw fitting and the way that suited her character and nature.⁵ However, this was within a framework that they had agreed upon based mainly on principles of religion, worshipping God, self-reliance, love between family members, hard work in school, empathy, virtue, and truthfulness. He was always careful to inculcate noble manners in his children and watch over them and follow them from a distance to ensure their success, straighten what might go wrong, and support them in their endeavours of righteousness so that they can all continue the march along the same path of virtue. He wanted them all to be enlightened and able to face all possible contingencies.

¹ See *'Isamiyyoun* (Self-Made Men); and edition No 5651 of the *Okaz* Newspaper, dated Thursday 22 Muharram 1402 AH / 19. 11. 1981 CE.

² One of the workers in Al-Sayyid Hasan's firm, Abd Allah Mousa, and he is a citizen of Mecca, in an interview with him in Jeddah in November 2004, mentioned that he used to see Al-Sayyid Hasan in the vicinity of the Haram (Sanctuary, Holy Mosque) very often. Al-Sayyid Hasan had an office close by the Gate of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*. The office was open all week days for all those who wished to visit Al-Sayyid Hasan there. It was furnished with all requirements for accommodation, furniture, food, and drink. Mousa also mentions that prominent people from Jeddah used to visit the office on Fridays for the prayers. When the expansion of the sanctuary was being planned, Al-Sayyid Hasan gave up his office to the project free of charge.

³ See *'Isamiyyoun* (Self-Made Men); and the edition of the *Okaz* Newspaper referred to above.

⁴ This happened in the early 1960s.

⁵ This is what Al-Sayyid Hasan asserted more than once. See *'Isamiyyoun* (Self-Made Men) and the edition of the *Okaz* Newspaper referred to above.

His grandchildren

Al-Sayyid Hasan's grandchildren still have sweet memories of their days with him. They remember how he used to enjoy their presence and how he interacted with them. Those who lived with him still have numerous childhood memories about their days with him, and miss those days in which their grandfather inscribed in their soft hearts something from his character and from his experience.

His grandson, engineer Al-Sayyid Hasan Abdul-Rahman Sharbatly, remembers¹ that his grandfather used to love the colour green in everything; so much so that:

We used to collect numerous green rosaries that he used to give to us during our visits to him. I lived with my grandfather for some time in my childhood at his residence at Kilo 4, in the Mecca Road in Jeddah, and I remember how often he used to pray and how he used to supplicate and recite invocations to God continually. He never tired of prayers, and never ceased except to attend to some urgent business. He never failed to enquire about the well being of his relatives, children, and grandchildren. I do not remember him ever frowning in the face of any one of us, punishing us, reproaching us, or hurting us with a cruel word. My grandfather was always careful to do good and pay in charity in the hope of being closer to God and attaining His Pleasure.

We always took great care to perform Friday prayers with him. We – my cousin Muhammad Raffa and I – used to come to him early and we used to take great joy in preparing the special clothes that he used to wear for his prayer. He *God rest his soul* reciprocated our feelings, and used to enquire from us about how we were doing in life and at school. He never tried to impose on us any special subject for specialisation when we grew up and joined university. What was important for him was that we persevere in performing prayers, especially at the mosque in congregation. He always used to emphasise this to us.

Al-Sayyid Hasan's family life was always the focus of his attention, and he took it upon himself to provide for all those who belonged to his extended family. He ensured they had proper livelihood and bore their expenditures; he never forgot to lend a supporting hand even to those who were not in need.

Furthermore, he was always loyal to his married sisters and treated them with kindness and took care of them and their children. As for his sisters who remained unmarried, they were an integral part of his life; he used always to care for them, ensuring that they were having sufficiency and more.

In his dealing with his children, he was, in fact, inspired by the treatment he had received from his parents. They had helped him in building his character with natural spontaneity,

¹ This was mentioned in two interviews with him, one in Jeddah in the month of Sha'ban 1425, and the other in Ramadan of the same year in Cairo.

without coercion or imposition, and he implemented the same principles in the bringing up of his children, grandchildren, and nephews and nieces. He gave them freedom to lead their lives in a way befitting their circumstances and their ages. In this, he was also inspired by the statement of Omar Ibn Al-Khattab *God be pleased with him*: ‘Do not teach your children your customs; they are born for an age different from yours.’ Whenever he wanted to teach one of them something related to devotions and acts of worship, he used to perform it in front of them, to let them see in him the good practical example of what he wants them to be like. He had acquired this wisdom from his long experience in life and from his sittings with scholars and wise people. He was perfectly aware that violence, reproach, and coercion were not a good way for education and character building. Nevertheless, he was of the opinion that the process of education may sometimes necessitate disciplinary action, but this has to be in the narrowest possible limits.

His Descendants

1. His children with his wife Saleha Muhammad Saleh Shalabi (1343 AH / 1924 CE)			
Children	Grandchildren	Great grandchildren	Remarks
1.1 Sayyida Soraya	1. Muhammad ¹ 2. Hanin	1. Dania 2. Hashem --	
1.2 Sayyid Abdul-Rahman ²	1. Sayyid Hasan ³ 2. Sayyida Mariam	1. Sayyida Nour 2. Sayyid Abdul-Rahman 1. Saleh 2. Abdul-Rahman	
1.3 Sayyida Fatima (d. 1423 AH / 2003)	1. Bandar 2. Sultan 3. Abd Allah	1. Abdul-Aziz 2. Rima 1. Khalid 2. Yara --	
1.4 Sayyida Malaka 1.5 Sayyida Amira	--	--	Twins (died after birth)
1.6 Sayyid Ali	--	--	(Died after birth)
1.7 Sayyid Ghazi	--	--	(Died at age 3)
1.8 Sayyid Ibrahim ⁴	1. Sayyida Abir 2. Sayyida Dalal	1. Siraj 2. Tareq 3. Dara 1. Sama	

¹ Born in 1391 AH / 1971 CE, he specialised in aviation like his father, but chose to work with Samaco Car Company.

² He was born in 1364 AH / 1944 CE, and he is the head of the Hasan Sharbatly family. He studied in Saudi Arabia and travelled to Egypt to pursue his studies at Victoria College (Al-Nasr College presently) towards the end of 1951. He was present there during the July 23rd 1952 Revolution and the turning of the country from monarchy to republican rule. He continued his studies in England in the domain of business administration. He is a participator in many enterprises and business activities. Currently, he is a member of the Council of Administration of the City of Mecca, a member of the Administrative Board of the Port of Jeddah, a member of the Administrative Board of the Bank of Riyadh. He is also the guardian and overseer of the third of the legacy granted by his father to charity, stipulated by his will and testament accredited by the Ministry of Justice under No 12/3/1/51/50 dated 19. 1. 1419 AH. See the registration of Hasan Abbas Sharbatly Charity Organisation in Document 3 in the Appendices.

³ Born in 1373 AH / 1973 CE, he graduated with distinction from the College of Engineering, King Abdul-Aziz University in Jeddah. Currently, he is co-manager of a tourism project for his family in Cairo.

⁴ Born on Monday 9 Dhul-Hijja 1373 AH / 9 August 1954 CE, studied in Saudi Arabia and in Victoria College in Egypt, then, like his brother Abdul-Rahman, in England. He has private enterprises and businesses that he manages, and is honorary consul for the state of Panama in Saudi Arabia. He succeeded his brother in overseeing the implementation of Al-Sayyid Hasan's legacy, and he is the founder of the Samaco Company.

	3. Sayyida Hiba 4. Sayyid Muhammad 5. Sayyida Noura	2. Sadin 1. Sayyid Adnan 2. Sayyida Hala -- --	Wife of Nayef Adnan Sharbatly
2. His children with his wife Khadija Hamed Ahmad Mu'mina (1345 AH / 1925 CE). They separated a few years before Al-Sayyid Hasan passed away.			
2.9 Muhammad Adnan	1. Sayyid Nayef 2. Sayyida Nujud 3. Sayyida Nauf 4. Sayyid Muntaser 5. Sayyid Ahmad 6. Sayyid Abdul-Aziz 7. Sayyid Adi 8. Sayyid Hasan 9. Sayyid Ali 10. Sayyida Maha	-- -- -- Mashhour -- -- -- -- --	Nayef is husband of Hiba, and their children are mentioned in front of her name in the table above.
2.10 Sayyid Saud	1. Sayyid Sultan 2. Sayyida Samar 3. Sayyid Salman 4. Sayyida Samaher 5. Sayyid Sa'd 6. Sayyida Sarah	-- -- -- -- -- --	
2.11 Sayyida Hayat	1. Sayyida Nahed 2. Sayyid Hasan 3. Sayyid Ahmad 4. Sayyid Abdul-Ilah	1. Faisal 2. Nawal 3. Ali -- 1. Sayyida Wad 2. Sayyid Faisal Sayyida Hayat	From his first wife Uhoud Masoud From his second wife Uhoud Sharbatly
2.12 Sayyida Layla	1. Sayyid Khalid 2. Sayyida Basma 3. Sayyida Sarah 4. Sayyid Abd Allah 5. Turki 6. Abdul-Aziz	-- Luluah Gave birth to twins who died at birth -- -- --	
2.13 Sayyid Faisal (d. 1406 AH / 1986 CE)	1. Sayyida Uhoud		Wife of Sayyid Ahmad Kamal Sharbatly; their son is mentioned with him in the table
2.14 Fahd (d. 1412 AH / 1992 CE)	--		
2.15 Sayyid Mansour	1. Sayyida Khuloud	--	

	2. Sayyid Turki 3. Sayyid Fahd 4. Sayyid Khalid	-- -- --	
2. 16 Sayyida Nadia	1. Lina 2. Sultana 3. Saud 4. Haya	-- -- -- --	
3. His children with his wife Karima Mahmoud Ali Makkawi (1354 AH / 1934 CE)			
3.17 Sayyid Yasser	1. Sayyid Abdul-Aziz	--	
3.18 Sayyid Muhammad Wajih ¹	1. Sayyid Hasan 2. Sayyid Yusuf 3. Sayyida Reem	-- -- --	
3.19 Sayyid Ahmad	1. Sayyid Khalid 2. Sayyid Abdul-Rahman 3. Sayyid Ibrahim 4. Sayyida Masa	-- -- -- --	
3.20 Sayyida Shalimar	--		
3.21 Sayyid Majed	1. Sayyida Jouri 2. Sayyid Al-Hasan	-- --	

(يوجد صورة صفحة 96 ليس تحتها تعليق)

¹ Born in 1386 AH / 1966 CE, finished his university studies like his brothers then travelled abroad to pursue higher studies; with his brothers, he manages the Samaco car trading company and other enterprises.

Al-Sayyid Hasan with his son Abdul-Rahman in his Cairo residence in the 1960s

(صورة صفحة 97)

Al-Sayyid Hasan in his *ihram* garments with his son Muhammad Wajih and his grandson Bandar Al-Turki (son of Al-Sayyid Hasan's daughter Fatima) in his lap

(صورة صفحة 99)

SECTION THREE

AL-SAYYID HASAN'S BUSINESS LIFE

Chapter One

Al-Sayyid Hasan's Trade Activities

Al-Sayyid Hasan's trade activities were widely varied in nature. From among the items that he traded in we may mention: building materials, timber, food supplies, spices, nuts, cars, precious stones, tobacco, mineral waters, conserved foods, home appliances, household chemicals and detergents, electrical appliances, cereals, and sheep among many other things. It has been commented that he left nothing out of his trading list. This list approached a thousand items.¹ His trading activities extended all over the globe and his name was mentioned everywhere, and he made friends and acquaintances and had agents and assistants in innumerable places in the whole world. This is not to mention his relationships with leaders, heads of state, and public personages everywhere.

Some time after the start of his business life – and during the last quarter of century of his life – Al-Sayyid Hasan chose to turn to trading in real estate and land development. It is reported that the reason for this turning was a dream that he had had and in which he saw his mother holding a fistful of earth that she placed in his hand saying that his livelihood is in earth. Another – more down-to-earth – reason for that change can be found in the fact that Al-Sayyid Hasan wished to put a pious distance between himself and any activity that may have a dubious element in it, even a slight trace of it. In his sittings with scholars and men of religion, he came to know about religious principles about a person being responsible for everything in his charge. The Prophetic hadith states, 'Each one of you is an overseer over something, and he is responsible for everything in his charge ...'² He saw how he would be responsible in front of God for any mistake that might be made by any of his employees or agents or for any fault or malfunction – and this is unavoidable in trade activities as human beings are always liable to fall prey to temptation. The Quran reports that even the prophet Joseph said that he would not feel immune from temptation (*Yusuf*: 12). God the Most Sublime has warned those who manipulate the balance in cheating of severe punishment (*Al-Mutaffifin*: 1-6).

Most probably, the reason behind this turning in Al-Sayyid Hasan's trade activities in the last phase of his trading life is that trade in those times had changed immensely from previous times with respect to work ethics, kinds of trade, and ways of management. Add to this the change in people's morals and the change in their needs and requirements. Probably also, that was because trade has become open for an increasing number of less-than-scrupulous traders who glutted the market with merchandise in a way that supply far exceeded demand and the competition lost many of the covenants of honour that used to rule the market. In such an atmosphere, signs of cheating and embezzlement prevailed and became entrenched in the transactions and conduct of some traders. This is why Al-Sayyid Hasan chose to distance himself from the corrupt practices that broke out in the market and to turn to a clearly-defined kind of trade, especially that his estates and lands

¹ Muhammad Hasan reports that Al-Sayyid Hasan used to say that he traded in nine hundred and ninety nine items of merchandise.

² The hadith is narrated in *Sahih* of Al-Bukhari, in the section on 'Friday Congregation prayer in villages and towns,' vol. 2, p. 414, No 844, and also under No 2232, No 2368.

needed more attention than due to their great number and area and varied localities. He would not have had time to care for them if he had other businesses and interests to attend to. In this respect, we should keep in mind that he preferred, even from his earliest times in business, to take personal care of his enterprises and projects, down to the smallest details. He never relied on others to take care of his enterprises except in the narrowest possible limits, and that only in matters that necessitated muscular effort or purely routine follow up that can be done by ordinary employees, clerks, and accountants, who would not be involved in drawing general work plans, decision making, or signing important documents. 'He was a man of centrality in managing his business, and he stayed like this up to the end of his life.'¹ He was an ardent believer in the wisdom of the ancient Arab poet who said:

Nothing can scratch your skin like your fingernail
So handle all your affairs with your own hands.²

His character

The deeper a researcher goes into the character and life of this man, the more obvious his image comes up as a real ascetic, a man who has renounced the world after attaining great success in it. He has devoted his life to three main things: work, worship, and benevolence. Each one of these things complements the others and communicates with them in a general framework of love to God, awe to Him, and fear of Him. He was always constantly endeavouring to strengthen his relationship with his Creator, and in all his conditions he was in a state of continual work, constant worship, and incessant benevolent endeavours.

During some stages of his life, he may have been, like other merchants, striving after profit and making money; but, later in life, he certainly had other goals in life and was no more interested in profit or in knowing the size of his fortune as much as in caring for finding ways for spending in charity. His major concern seems to have been spending in philanthropic fields, in helping the needy, caring for the sick, helping fatherless children and families, spreading knowledge, helping scholars and students, supporting poor communities, and supporting fighters in the cause of justice and in repelling aggression and occupation forces in Muslim lands. He was firmly resolved to continue with these activities even if he were to lose all his fortune – which was huge – for the love of God and in seeking His Pleasure. This caused him numerous problems and earned him the jealousy and enmity of many, including some who were very close to him, some of whom reached the limits of ingratitude and rebelliousness in the face of a man who wanted his contributions to be a strong step in the march of benevolence and the progress of the community.

Following the example of the Prophet even with swindlers

¹ The statement is by his son Al-Sayyid Abdul-Rahman Sharbatly, describing his late father's business management ways, in the interview with him in Jeddah referred to above.

² The verse is by Al-Imam Al-Shafe'i; the next verse in the poem is also of interest: If you go to someone for a need of yours / go to someone who knows your worth.

In his philanthropic endeavours, Al-Sayyid Hasan was inspired by the practices of the early Muslims and companions of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*, who saw their possessions and belongings as a loan granted to them from God and that all possessions are, in their reality, God's, and that earth, in its entirety, belongs to God, and He bestows from it on whomever He wishes from among His servants. This is why they used to compete in giving in charity to attain God's Pleasure.

Anas *God be pleased with him* relates that Abu Talha *God be pleased with him* was the richest man in Medina in terms of palm trees. His most cherished property was the orchard Bairuha', which was opposite the mosque. The Messenger of God *peace be upon him* used to enter it and drink from its fresh water. When the Quranic verse was revealed which states that God the Most Sublime tells believers that they would not attain piety until they spend from the kind of money they like ('*Al 'Imran*: 92), Abu Talha came to the Messenger of God *peace be upon him* and said, 'O Messenger of God, God has revealed to you the verse stating that we would not attain piety until we spend from that which we like. I like best my Bairuha' orchard and I am giving it away in charity for the sake of God the Exalted; and I seek recompense from God for it. You may dispose with it any way God directs you.' The Messenger of God *peace be upon him* said, 'Good for you! That is a winning deal, that is a winning deal; and I have heard what you said, and I see that you divide it among your kindred.' Abu Talha said, 'I will, o Messenger of God,' and he divided it among his relatives and cousins.¹

The Holy Quran stipulates that spending in charity and in the Way of God should be made from the most favourable kinds of possessions that the spender has. It teaches Muslims that the money in their hands, in its reality, belongs to God the Glorified, and that it should be spent in ways that He prescribes and in seeking His pleasure. This teaching had its impact in abating feelings of greed and ambition in the souls of the venerable companions and keeping them safe from stinginess and rushing madly upon material possessions; it inculcated in them the feelings of contentment and satisfaction with God's blessings. This way a Muslim acquires magnanimity, generosity, and munificence, and has his heart at ease with the world. The Holy Quran has numerous verses to make clear this teaching. God the Most Sublime teaches His Messenger to inform believers that the effects of the world are but little in value (*Al-Nisa*: 77). God also teaches believers not to be distressed by what they miss and not to be overjoyed by what God bestows on them (*Al-Hadid*: 23). God also instructs believers to spend from that which He has loaned to them (*Al-Hadid*: 7). God also encourages believers to spend, telling them that they would be lending money to God when they spend in His way and help the needy; such a loan would grow manifold with God (*Al-Baqara*: 245). God likens spending money in the Way of God to a seed that bears seven ears of corn, in each ear there are a hundred seeds; God doubles the reward for whomsoever He wishes; God is All-Knowing, All-Hearing (*Al-Baqara*: 261). He also encourages those who have surplus of money to give to their kindred, to the needy, and to immigrants in the Way of God;

¹ The hadith is narrated in the *Sahih* of Ibn Habban, in the section of 'Voluntary Charity,' No 3409. The hadith was cited by Ibn Kathir in his exegesis in commenting on that Quranic verse.

they should forgive and pardon those who do them harm, as in this way, God will forgive them; He is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful (*Al-Nour: 22*).¹

The Holy Quran also contains numerous verses that inculcate in the souls of believers the feeling that God is always with them and watching over them. God asserts that He is with people wherever they are (*Al-Hadid: 4*), and that He is nearer to a person than his own vein (*Qaf: 16*). He addresses His Messenger and the believers saying that He oversees their devotions, their recitation of the Quran, and every other deed; nothing escapes God's knowledge, not even the like of an atom, or smaller or bigger, in earth or in heaven, they are all registered in a clear book (*Yunus: 61*).

The Prophet *Peace be upon him* urged believers to make good use of the blessings and bounties that God has bestowed on them before a day comes when neither their children nor their money will be of any use to them (on the Day of Judgement); only those who come to God with a sound heart will be winners on that Day. The Prophet *Peace be upon him* says,

Make good use of five things before five other things come over you: your youth before your old age, your health before your sickness, the time when you are free before you are occupied, your life before your death, and the time when you have (riches) before the time comes when you do not have.

The noble companion of the Prophet (and the fourth Caliph) Ali *God be pleased with him* once asked his companions, 'How are you doing?' They answered, 'We have hope (in God's mercy) and we have fear (of God's punishment).' He commented, 'He who hopes for something will work for it, and he who fears something runs away from it.'

One of the prominent sages of the Arabs, Al-Hasan Al-Basri gave this piece of advice to his friends: 'Hasten in doing good deeds before your appointed time (of death) comes; in your credit will be the deeds that you *have* done not the deeds you *plan* to do but do not do.' He also used to say, 'Fast before the day comes when you cannot fast; on that day, if you have thirst, it will be like you have never had water to drink; and if you have your fill of water, it will be like you have never suffered thirst.'

It seems that our man has grasped the lesson well and chose his course of action in life accordingly. He would never swerve from that course regardless of obstacles and suggestions made by others: save your money for your little children who need your care; they need your money as a support in life. Those who make these suggestions would go as far as citing the Prophet's hadith: 'It is better for you to leave your children having sufficiency than leaving them poor begging from people.' They forget the influence of profound faith and having firm belief in God's promise; they forget that Abu Bakr *God be*

¹ The last cited verse carries a mild reproach to the respected companion Abu Bakr, who used to spend on one of his relatives, Mistah Ibn Athatha, but stopped his help when Mistah took part in the calumny against Abu Bakr's daughter Aisha. When Abu Bakr heard the verse, he responded: 'By God, yes I would love to have God forgive me,' and he reinstated his help to Mistah promising not to stop it again.

pleased with him once came with all his money to be given in the Way of God, and when the Prophet *Peace be upon him* asked him what he had left for his children, he answered, ‘I left them [in the care of] God and His Messenger.’

They also forget that the man had graduated from a house whose master – Al-Sayyid Hasan’s father – never enjoyed a meal except when someone poor shared it with him, and whose mistress never gave her children food from which she did not give away to her neighbours. How often she sent her children to specific houses in the neighbourhood with foodstuffs, clothes, and money stressing to them that these donations should not be known to anybody, telling them that all these things are the dues of the poor in their money and that they should treat the recipients with good spirit and kindness. They also seem to forget that he graduated from a house whose master had graduated in turn from the school of King Abdul-Aziz, who was an example and a role model. It is a widely known fact that King Abdul-Aziz was a school in munificence and benevolence and that he had great influence in all those who were connected to him or had any dealings with him.

It is unfair to the man to deal with his richly varied life within the two covers of a single book. His achievements and his personality leave us with the impression that he is a social phenomenon worthy of in-depth studies in more than one field: in munificence, magnanimity, will power, commerce, intelligence, natural talents, steadfastness, strength of character, faith, reliance on God, worship and devotion, patience, forbearance, love, and empathy. Even his occasional self-willedness is worthy of a study on its own if only to throw light on the reasons behind it.

The correspondences in our hands between him and numerous leaders, heads of state, heads of government, organisations, and institutions, public personages, and individuals – in which they were either seeking donations from him or expressing gratitude for donations he had made – are enough to fill a voluminous book. This is not to mention other affairs in his life and character.

By saying this we do not aim to sing the praises of the man – in spite of his deservedness of it – but to throw some light on a symbol of our Islamic world, and the Arab world in particular, at a critical time and a historic juncture. In such circumstances, where dangers loom large, we all need to have more knowledge of our symbols, as our Arabic environment, despite its fertility, currently lacks examples and role models. It is our duty then to raise our voice against the alien cultural currents that have invaded us and swept away the ideals of the previous generations that had characterised all their conduct. It seems that the wealthy in our communities have become parsimonious and tight-fisted with their resources; it is as if they now have a peculiar cast of mind, thinking that they live forever in this life and that their possessions are their own self-made earnings. They seem to be oblivious of the fact that these earnings are a grant to them from God and that the poor have their dues in them. God the Most Sublime bestows whatever He wishes on whomever He wants. He has stipulated that the needy have their dues in these

possessions, and that He oversees the actions of people, and that He will reward the doers of good and will punish the doers of evil.

It is very difficult to form a clear idea of how Al-Sharbatly – an illiterate man – was able to grasp all those lessons. Above that, it is extremely difficult to conceive how he had the resolve to spend the way he did. We can safely assert that no one – not even he himself – can calculate the sums of money that he had spent in the ways of charity; here we are talking of astronomical figures as his spending was incessant in many varied ways of benevolence. This illiterate man has made his life a school, which was attended by many, even from among those who had differed with him. His life events give ample proof that the man was not like others who used to spend in charity. Such spenders would ordinarily set aside a portion of their possessions to be spent in charity; when this portion expires, they wait for a new previously planned cycle to start again. He, on the other hand, used to search incessantly for new ways of spending, and his whole fortune was the limit. The man was like someone sitting on the peak of a mountain trying to reach down to the valley by bringing the mountain down through removing chunks of the mountain from the summit downwards. His fortune was that mountain and he was trying to erode it gradually by huge spending. However, God had willed otherwise; the more he removed from the peak, the greater the increase came from the bottom, and the mountain was increasing, rather than decreasing in height. Oftentimes he was exploited in the name of religion by unscrupulous and unprincipled people, and the proofs for that are too many to be numbered. In this he was inspired by Omar Ibn Al-Khattab *God be pleased with him* who said, ‘When someone deceives us in the Name of God, we go along with him in his deception.’

It so happened that one year, on the night of the twenty-seventh of Ramadan,¹ a good-looking, well-attired man came to him and talked with him in private about certain things. Al-Sayyid Hasan called one of his employees and asked him to write down what he was going to dictate. Al-Sayyid Hasan turned to the man and asked about his name, as the man was a total stranger. Then he dictated a note to be sent to the guardian of the stores: Hand to Mr So and So, the distinguished community leader in Yanbu’ seventy thousand bags of rice, the same number of bags of sugar, the same number of cans of margarine ... The clerk tried to draw Al-Sayyid Hasan’s attention that these were greatly exaggerated quantities but Al-Sayyid Hasan did not pay any attention to the clerk’s words, and told him that the man was a distinguished person in both maritime Yanbu’ and land Yanbu’, and that he was speaking about the extreme poverty that the population there were suffering from. Al-Sayyid Hasan told his clerk to go on writing. The clerk tried to test the man’s honesty by addressing him insultingly. He said to Al-Sayyid Hasan, ‘Your Excellency, this is a cheat, a thief, and an impostor.’ However, the man did not move and his face showed no signs of indignation. Rather, he addressed Al-Sayyid Hasan saying, ‘Your Excellency, I hope you will get ample reward for your charity on this blessed night, the Night of Power (*Laylat Al-Qadr*), and good deeds on this night are better in reward than deeds in a thousand months.’

¹ This is *Laylat Al-Qadr* (Night of Power), the night when the Quran was revealed, and when performing good deeds is highly recommended.

Al-Sayyid Hasan did not need to have the importance of that special night to be brought to his attention; He was always attached to devotion and was knowledgeable in matters of religion. He called his secretary Abd Allah Abu Anza and asked him to overlook the preparation of the list that he had dictated and ordered a large sum to be paid to the man for transporting the provisions. Three days later, the man came back and said that there were seven thousand people who could not get a share of the provisions. Al-Sayyid Hasan ordered seven thousand shares similar to those in the first list to be handed to the man, in addition to transportation charges. Some time later, and while the same man was in Al-Sayyid Hasan's office, the director of civil rights in Jeddah Abd Allah Jan came to pay a visit to Al-Sayyid Hasan. On seeing Jan, the man was embarrassed and his face turned pale; he stood up, took his leave and left in a hurry. Abd Allah Jan asked Al-Sayyid Hasan about the reason for this man being in his office and he told him the story. Jan said, 'This is the biggest swindler the Kingdom has ever known; he is always getting in and out of prison.' Al-Sayyid Hasan commented, 'What I did was for the sake of God, and I hope I shall get my reward for it.'¹

The following story took place also in Ramadan. Someone called and claimed that he was the Minister of Interior of the Kingdom of Jordan and asked for an appointment with Al-Sayyid Hasan. Al-Sayyid Hasan welcomed him when he came with two companions. After a lengthy conversation the man said that he was planning to build a large mosque in one of Amman's neighbourhoods in which there are absolutely no mosques. Al-Sayyid Hasan summoned his secretary and dictated to him an order to a bank to hand to the man a large sum of money that would be more than sufficient for building the mosque.

The workers in Al-Sayyid Hasan's office did not feel comfortable with the man. The bank order needed a number of signatures by a number of workers in the office, and one of those workers was not around. Abd Allah Abu Anza took the opportunity of the waiting time and called the Jordanian embassy in Jeddah and asked the Ambassador to come to the office immediately for an emergency case. Meanwhile, Al-Sayyid Hasan was asking his workers to expedite the bank order and get the necessary signatures, while they apologised for the delay saying that one of the would-be signatories was absent and was on his way to the office.

A few minutes later the Jordanian ambassador arrived; and when he entered Al-Sayyid Hasan's office, he headed immediately to the man who was claiming he was the Interior Minister and gave him two hard knocks, apologised to Al-Sayyid Hasan, and asked the man's companions about their identities. They told him that the man had hired them and bought them those valuable clothes to play that role.

The man was a famous swindler and the ambassador recognised him the moment he laid his eyes on him. In spite of what happened, Al-Sayyid Hasan took pity on the man and interceded on his behalf with the ambassador. He gave him ten thousand riyals and said to him, 'Repent your misdeeds and quit swindling, and whenever you are in need, come to us and I shall give you what you need.' Then he turned to those who were present and

¹ The story is selected from the archives of Al-Sharbatly.

said, ‘God willing, our reward is safe with God the Most Sublime and Glorified; the Prophet *Peace be upon him* has said,

He who intends to commit a bad deed, and refrains from committing it, God will write it with Him as a full good deed; and if he intends to commit it, and does commit it, God will write it as one bad deed. He who intends to perform a good deed, then fails to perform it, God will write it with Him as a full good deed. If he intends to perform it, and does perform it, God will write it with Him as ten good deeds, up to seven hundred times, up to numerous times, and God doubles the reward for whomever He wishes.’¹

One day, he received a scholar who had a high status in a certain Arab country and he treated him with exceptional generosity and respect for his scholarship and status, rented a luxurious residence for him, and gave him stipends.

Some time later – and it was during the last ten days of Ramadan, when charity and devotions are greatly recommended – the man came to Al-Sayyid Hasan and told him that he had been in Mecca where he found thousands of poor Jawi (from the island of Java, Indonesia) pilgrims performing their devotions around the Ka’ba finding nothing to break their fast with. This moved Al-Sayyid Hasan to empathy and he grasped a briefcase that was at his side and that contained more than three hundred thousand riyals and which he had ordered some time before the coming of the man. He gave it to the man and said to him, ‘Take this case and give a hundred riyals to each poor person.’

Mustafa Mukhtar, Al-Sayyid Hasan’s nephew, and Muhsin Al-Attas, a worker in his office, were present and observed what had transpired between Al-Sayyid Hasan and the man. They wanted to check the conduct of the man and followed him without Al-Sayyid Hasan’s knowledge. The man entered his house where he stayed for about five hours while they were waiting outside. When he went out, they followed him, and he headed to Al-Sayyid Hasan’s office again. He came in holding a hundred riyals note saying, ‘Your Excellency, may God bless you and grant you all the supplications that the thousands of the poor in the mosque raised for you. I distributed all the money you had given to me and this note remained; I could not find some one to take it, and I thought I should return it to you.’ Mustafa Mukhtar and Muhsin Al-Attas were infuriated at what they heard, and said to Al-Sayyid Hasan, ‘This man is a liar; when he left the office, he went directly to his house and did not leave it except to come to the office again.’

Al-Sayyid Hasan smiled, tried to calm their anger, and said, ‘I knew that before you told me your findings, when he returned the hundred riyals note and said that he had given sufficiency to the poor of the Mosque and could not find a poor person to give it to. However, unfortunately, he is from the class of scholars and I do not show disrespect to scholars; they are role models for people and Muslims learn their religion from them. Enemies of Islam are always trying to fight Islam by showing disrespect to its scholars

¹ The story is selected from the archives of Al-Sharbatly. The hadith is narrated in the Exegesis of Ibn Abu Hatem, vol. 4, p. 268, under No. 1071.

and smearing their image so as to incite distrust in people against them. This way, there will be no one to teach people their religion and remind them of their Lord.’

Al-Sayyid Hasan considered the matter as good as forgotten and tried to find excuses for the man, although he does not deserve this. He invited the man to a *suhur* meal (pre-dawn meal before fasting in Ramadan). When he came, Al-Sayyid Hasan received him with kindness and respect and with exaggerated hospitality, and served food for him with his own hands, as if the man did nothing wrong and as if he heard nothing about his misconduct. He even increased his stipend and grants.¹

This is why it was extremely strange that this supposed scholar – later – colluded with some swindlers against Al-Sayyid Hasan and gave a false testimony in a court case that cost Al-Sayyid Hasan millions.

I am convinced that Al-Sayyid Hasan was not a simpleton in behaving this way, though some of his critics accuse him of stupidity especially in his hastening to give away his money in charity without ascertaining the reality of the seekers or recipients of his charity and without due investigation of the circumstances or the expenditure required.

A hadith by the Prophet *Peace be upon him* has a fine statement to describe this state of affairs: ‘I have looked into Hellfire and found that most of its inhabitants are from among the rich and the women; and I have looked into Paradise and found that most of its inhabitants are from among the simpleminded; and *‘Illiyoun* (the highest grade in Paradise) is kept for those who have reason.’ The simpleminded should not be understood as the imbecile or idiotic; rather, they are those who are willing to let themselves be cheated in the Way of God. It has been reported that Jesus *Peace be upon him* once saw a thief in the process of stealing and called him and rebuked him saying, ‘Why do you steal? Do you not know that God has forbidden stealing?’ The thief answered, ‘O Spirit of God, I swear by Him Who has sent you with the right message, I have not stolen.’ Jesus *Peace be upon him* said, ‘I believe you and I will not believe my eyes.’

This is exactly what Al-Sayyid Hasan was doing; he would see someone stealing his money, the thief would deny, and Al-Sayyid Hasan would overlook this and would even give the man as if nothing wrong has happened. When asked about that, he would say, ‘he has cheated us in God, and we allowed ourselves to be cheated in God.’

¹ The story is again selected from the archives of Al-Sharbatly. By behaving this way, Al-Sayyid Hasan probably wanted to conceal the misconduct of the supposed scholar to prevent disrespect to scholars in general; and the man is grouped with scholars after all. Al-Sayyid Hasan’s exaggerated hospitality, again, was probably an attempt to quieten the man’s greed or a polite form of reproach.

Chapter Two

His Status

His standing as a national symbol of charity

It is part of God's Way in the universe – and He is the Glorified Lord with the perfect ways in His creation – that all creatures are classified in a hierarchical manner; He creates whatever He wishes and He selects from among His creatures (*Al-Qasas*: 68). His is the absolute and ultimate Knowledge, Wisdom, and Power.

God the Glorified and Sublime blessed Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly with a great many things; but above all He bestowed on him the blessing of the love of good deeds and charity. He was one of the prominent charity lovers who helped with his contributions in alleviating the sufferings of the miserable.

The man was distinguished with his philanthropic undertakings in the community, and these earned him deservedly the honour bestowed on him by the founder of the kingdom King Abdul-Aziz when he made him the first honorary minister in the history of the kingdom.¹

The man was born in an age when registering the birth date was an advanced exception; but he founded for himself and for his great family an extended history of achievements. He was thus both a cogwheel in the process of development and a brick in its wall. For this reason he remained a star in the sky of his motherland up to the end of his life, in spite of the ebb and flow that characterised his career. King Abdul-Aziz himself testified for his sacrifices in this respect and described him as 'offering himself and his money.' In an epistle from King Abdul-Aziz to Prince Saud Ibn Jalawi, Prince of the Eastern Region, the King says, 'Concerning Al-Sharbatly, you are aware of the deeds he is doing for us; nothing you grant to him is to be seen too much; he is offering himself and his money for our sake without seeking reward; what hurts him hurts me ... I want you for my sake to attend to what he demands, to what is useful to him, and to make him satisfied and happy.'²

His standing with King Abdul-Aziz comes out clear also in a letter sent by the King to the Minister of Finance Abd Allah Al-Suleiman: 'As for Al-Sayyid Hasan Al-Sharbatly, you are aware of our affection to him and his position with us; we have previously recommended him to you; we would like you to do whatever is good for him, consider that we are one with him.'³

Probably King Abdul-Aziz's concern for Al-Sayyid Hasan is most apparent in the two letters he sent to his two sons Princes Faisal⁴ and Mash'al¹ in which he advises them as

¹ See Document 2 in the Appendices.

² See Document 4 in the Appendices.

³ See Document 5 in the Appendices.

⁴ See Document 6 in the Appendices.

follows: ‘As for Al-Sayyid Hasan Al-Sharbatly, it is incumbent upon us, God willing, to be careful in honouring and appreciating him. I do not need to recommend him to you, do keep him in your care at all times.’

The King’s successors went by his recommendations and followed his footsteps and accorded the man his due of respect and appreciation.² In fact, this was not limited to the Royal Family; it was also the attitude of the courtiers and the statesmen around the King. Al-Sheikh Abd Allah Al-Suleiman, upon remembering Al-Sharbatly, once said, ‘We cannot but show the greatest respect and appreciation to Al-Sharbatly because he never did but what was good for the country and offered great services to the population. He was never greedy or covetous; the poor and the needy had their due shares in his possessions, which he had made with the sweat of his forehead. ... Al-Sharbatly is no longer with us now, but I always have the sweetest memories of him in his absence as I had in his presence.’³

When Al-Sayyid Hasan was once asked about the title *Al-Muhsin Al-Kabir* (The Great Man of Charity), and why he cherished it so much – it was the title given to him by King Abdul-Aziz – he responded by saying,

When you read what God has said about the pious being accommodated in gardens and among springs enjoying what God has bestowed on them because they had been doers of good (*muhsinin*); they used to sleep but little, spending their nights in devotions and raising prayers for forgiveness to God in the early hours of dawn (*Al-Dhariyat*: 15-18), you will know the secret of King Abdul-Aziz bestowing this title on me; his testimony – *may God rest his soul* – is sufficient for me in this world; but he even called me *Al-Muhsin Al-Kabir* (the Great man of Charity). ... However, my main concern is that of the Hereafter, and my deeds should attest to the truthfulness of my title; if my action does not live up to my title, then I shall not obtain God’s Pleasure and the blessings He has stored for the doers of good; God asserts that He is with those who fear Him and those who do good (*muhsinin*) (*Al-Nahl*: 128). Then, if – God forbid – something blemishes my piety, I hope that my charity would make up for that.

Following that, Al-Sayyid Hasan built all his actions in life on two main pillars prescribed in Islam: piety and charity. In fact, he derived his philosophy in life and his attitudes from these two pillars. That was why he endeavoured in acts of worship and devotions, cut his sleeping time and woke up in predawn hours to raise supplications for forgiveness, performed fasting frequently, and made charity the mainstay of his daily life. This way, he believed, his piety would be complemented by his charity and his piety would complete his charity. In all this he was seeking happiness in this world and the blessings of the Hereafter.

¹ See Document 7 in the Appendices.

² See Document 8 in the Appendices.

³ See *Al-Sharbatly: Al-Muhsin Al-Islami Al-Akbar* (Al-Sharbatly: the Great Islamic Man of Charity), p. 58

In this respect, Al-Sayyid Hasan opened a path in which very few had stepped in before. He took great care for spreading scholarship, published books, and showed the greatest respect to scholars. Moreover, he gave liberally to those caring for the Arabic language and the sciences of the Quran everywhere in the world. Sufficient pride for him is his publication – at his own personal expense – of the classic book of *Al-Sihah* by Al-Jawhari and other Arabic dictionaries by Dr Abd Allah Darwish in London and Dr Husain Nassar in Cairo. In addition to this, he financed the publication of hundreds of books about the Arabic language, the sciences of the Quran, the blessed Prophetic Hadith, and numerous cultural books.¹ He also gave grants and scholarships to many researchers to pursue higher studies in these subjects and helped many others in publishing their dissertations and researches in service to religion and in an attempt to preserve the language; and in all this he was seeking reward only from God.

By studying the man's life and his philosophy in it, one can reach the conclusion that he was not hasty in taking his decisions; he was rather careful taking his time to reflect on matters with patience and insight. His friends and acquaintances are unanimously agreed on that the man had a unique mental capability and strong memory; his mental faculties remained sound all his life right to the last moment. He is indeed a bright spot in the life of this country and a real patriotic plant that gave birth to bright offshoots: men and women, who have been contributing to various domains of progress, development, and knowledge. In their endeavours they were a real and worthy extension of their father, the produce of a good deep-rooted plant. They kept his tree living and green, extending their branches and shade wider and wider over the good land.

The tree is not blemished, however, if some of its branches went dry, if some of its leaves fell down, or if some of its branches had a twisted growth. It will preserve its shade and life, it will keep its fruit and luscious produce; it will certainly be compensated for its parts that had dried and fallen. Its numerous shady branches, watered by the good water of lawful income and nourished by the pure soil of piety, will live on and on.

¹ See Document 9 in the Appendices.

With His Majesty King Saud
(الصورتان صفحة 119)

His Majesty King Faisal, His Royal Highness Prince Fahd, His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Al-Sharbatly, and Abdul-Latif Al-Baghdadi, Member of the Council of Command of the July 23rd Revolution in Cairo Airport in 1380 AH.

(الصورتان صفحة 121)

With His Majesty King Khalid, His Royal Highness Prince Mut'eb Ibn Abdul-Aziz and their Royal Highness Princes Bandar Ibn Khalid and Abd Allah Ibn Khalid in Al-Sayyid Hasan's residence in Cairo.

(الصورة صفحة 123)

With the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Ibn Abdul-Aziz
(الصورة العليا صفحة 125)

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan (extreme left) with His Excellency Minister Al-Sheikh
Abd Allah Al-Suleiman (second from right), Al-Sheikh Muhammad Rida (first from
right), and Al-Sheikh Ahmad Yusuf Zeinal (third from right)

(الصورة السفلى صفحة 125)

Chapter Three

Al-Sayyid Hasan at Work

If you wish to know the man in his reality, you have to see him, at any hour of day or night, passionately bent on his work; where he would be giving some command, asking for something, giving some piece of guidance, asking about something, commenting on some point, or seeking some advice. At the same time, and all his time, day and night, he would be either in prayers, invocations, or supplications. In this, he did not recognise the difference between day and night, summer or winter, or holidays, weekend days, or working days.

His employees, as well, used to work in shifts twenty four hours a day. Groups of them would come when others were leaving. He used to act as coordinator between these groups, endeavouring with all his might and with unique ability both to grasp worldly power and seek success with God in the Afterlife. In his office, he would receive a phone call from some of his workers, answer the call, and return to his prayers. When he had performed his prayers – and he never had enough of prayers –¹ he would turn to his work or to his charity activities.

Everyday he used to receive tens of petitions for help: someone would be seeking monthly aid, another asking for help against hardships of life, another asking for help to pursue his studies, and still another wishing to obtain a scholarship for study abroad. He never neglected a request for help, never rejected someone seeking help, and never declined to help in something in which there is some good in religion or benefit for people. He would allocate monthly stipends, order for provisions to be carried to the needy (in shares containing quantities of rice, sugar, tea, margarine, oil, flour, etc), and make recommendations for scholarships and help for pursuing studies.

In the meantime, his agents and employees would be standing around him: one reading a memorandum that would be presented to a court of law; another would be making an exposition for a point that needed to be decided; a third would be sitting close by waiting for Al-Sayyid Hasan to dictate to him a letter to some official organisation; a fourth would be waiting for Al-Sayyid Hasan to give him the signal to continue reading some news story or commentary in a newspaper. Still others would be sitting in some corner of the room deliberating or discussing something or doing some calculations on their calculators for a feasibility study of some project that they had discussed briefly earlier with Al-Sayyid Hasan. Such discussions were always interesting occurrences that displayed Al-Sayyid Hasan's phenomenal mental abilities. He would invariably discuss projects with his aides, calculate their requirements mentally in the presence of aides, and give the results accurately in numbers, down to minute fractions. They would always try to match his numbers with the numbers in their project and would find them correct every

¹ Dr Abd Allah Basfar, Secretary of the World Institute for Preserving the Holy Quran, mentioned in an interview with him in Jeddah in Sha'ban 1425 AH, that, during his visits to Al-Sayyid Hasan, he used to find him sitting on his chair performing prayers at length. He used to perform his prayers in units of two *rak'as*, and would never tire from prayers.

time. Never once did his mental ability and his memory fail him in such calculations. His calculations were always accurate down to decimal numbers – even with respect to multiple calculations – and were always faster than the calculations of prominent accountants with their calculators.

Never did Al-Sayyid Hasan, in spite of his overwhelming preoccupations – probably needing tens to administer – forget or neglect his visitors. He would, from time to time, go to them, chat with them, tell them anecdotes, and entertain them with his witty stories.

One relevant incident in this respect took place when Al-Sayyid Hasan was with one of his visitors from Lebanon, a Christian man by the name of Cooka. Al-Sayyid Hasan wished to call his visitor to Islam and enumerated evidences for the unity of God and said that the Quran contained everything for both glory in life and happiness in the Hereafter, and that Muhammad *Peace be upon him* was the last one of God's prophets and messengers and that Jesus *Peace be upon him* himself foretold his followers of the coming of Muhammad *Peace be upon him*. At this point, the visitor surprised Al-Sayyid Hasan with a strange request. He said, 'Your Excellency, you say that the Quran came with everything; if, now, you can prove to me that my name is mentioned in the Quran, I will certainly declare that I am a Muslim.' Al-Sayyid Hasan did not hesitate a moment and instantly said, 'this is a simple matter; your name is mentioned in this verse: *'Wa tara cooka qa'iman.'*¹ Al-Sayyid Hasan's witty retort threw the man in confusion and he did not know how to respond.

When time for a meal came, all those present in Al-Sayyid Hasan's office would come around for the meal: his guests, visitors, and employees, high-ranking or low, great as well as small. That was his practice all his life. The banquet would invariably be on the floor, and Al-Sayyid Hasan would personally serve his guests and offer them from different dishes. His happiness would be great when nothing is left of the food.

Lunch time for him used to be between the midday (*zohr*) prayer and the mid-afternoon (*asr*) prayer, or sometimes after *asr* prayer, depending on work circumstances. His supper used to be after the evening (*isha*) prayer, and sometimes much later, again depending on work circumstances.

When you see him at work, dealing with his employees, or conducting a business transaction, you would think that he had no concern in life except his business and his projects and that he is immersed in worldly life to his ears and that he is trying to grasp of it as much as he could. However, if you see him attending to the requests for help that he used to receive, his efforts in getting his monetary and material donations he had ordered to their destinations, and his resolve to double incoming requests hundreds of times, you will get the impression that you are in front of a man whose sole concern in life was charity, that he has reached a stage in renunciation where he forgot all the pleasures of

¹ This is a part of a verse in the chapter of *Al-Jumu'a*: verse 11. That was a clever – albeit distorted – rendering by Al-Sayyid Hasan of the mentioned verse to match the unreasonable question. The original meaning of the verse is 'they leave you standing;' however, as cited by Al-Sayyid Hasan, using a clever pun, it would mean 'You see Cooka standing.'

life, that his wealth meant nothing for him, and that he was ready to offer it all in acts of benevolence in what he sees beneficial to Islam and Muslims without a moment's hesitation.

And when you hear his agents reading to him petitions and memoranda prepared to be presented at courts of law in seeking justice or in defending some of his rights, you would think that this man had no job in life but to follow up his cases at courts, that he was in an eternal struggle with everyone around, and that he had daily cases heard at courts – both as plaintiff and as defendant. However, when you know the size of what was robbed or extorted from him, largely without his knowledge, you would get the impression that the man had often been too lenient in watching over his rights, and that he should have devoted all his time to follow those cases and litigations to get back his rights.

His Philosophy in worship

The man was unique in the performance of his devotions, prayers, and fasting as much as he was distinguished in worldly affairs. Those who were close to him and those who wrote about him and followed his actions mention that he used to pray in abundance, sometimes he would pray a hundred *rak'as* in a night. He never tired from standing for prayers – or sitting, when he grew too old for standing. He was always ready for prayers and constantly in a state of ablution (*wudu'*).

Speaking about ablution, he was always careful not to use too much water in ablution. The Prophet *Peace be upon him* is reported to have advised his companions to economise in using water even if they were at a flowing river. It was reported that Al-Sayyid Hasan once found one of his employees performing ablution, leaving the water running abundantly from the tap. Al-Sayyid Hasan said nothing to the man, left him until he finished his ablution and went into the ablution chamber as if he was intending to perform ablution himself. As the employee was leaving, Al-Sayyid Hasan asked him to wait for him until he has finished his ablution as he wanted him in some business matter. Al-Sayyid Hasan turned on the water in a way that it would flow slowly and lightly just enough for the washing of the body organs in ablution. Whenever he finished washing a limb, he would turn off the water before moving to the next limb, and his ablution thus took some time. He did this to minimise the consumption and wastage of water. The employee, who was watching the whole process, realised that he was mistaken in the way of his ablution in wasting water. Al-Sayyid Hasan never addressed a word of reproach to the man, but talked to him about some office matters, after having made his point in giving him a practical example.

Al-Sayyid Hasan also used to fast in abundance. He used to fast every other day, in imitation of the fast of the prophet David *Peace be upon him*. In addition, he used to fast, as encouraged by the hadiths of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*, every Monday and Thursday, the first three days and middle three days of the lunar months, the ninth and the tenth days of the month of Muharram, and the first ten days of the month of Dhul-Hijja, in addition to many days in the months of Rajab and Sha'ban; not to mention the prescribed fasting of the month of Ramadan. Oftentimes, he would talk to his children and his employees

about the merits of fasting and urge them to perform it. From time to time, he would also praise some of his employees in front of his colleagues for fasting in order to encourage them to follow his example.

He also used to perform pilgrimage every year and perform *omra* frequently. He would, sometimes, even perform two *omras* in one day. People still remember his camp with numerous tents on Mount Arafat to which pilgrims used to come and enjoy his hospitality. There, he used to offer to his visitors foods, drinks, clothing, and even cash for expenditures and gifts.

Tens, even hundreds, of would-be pilgrims would come to him days before the pilgrimage season. He would ask them if they had performed pilgrimage previously; if they had, he would ask them to have the intention of performing this pilgrimage on behalf of prophets, virtuous people, and for the souls of his own parents. He would give each pilgrim two *ihram* garments and a sum of money that would suffice for the expenditures of his pilgrimage and for his dependents during his absence. As for those who had not performed pilgrimage earlier, he would give them *ihram* garments, clothes, and sufficient money for their expenditures. He would also instruct them on rulings of *ihram*, prayers, and invocations.

In doing this, he was emulating the example of the Prophet *Peace be upon him* in the Farewell Pilgrimage, when he *Peace be upon him* heard a man expressing his intention to perform pilgrimage on behalf of someone called Shibrima, and he asked him ‘Who is this Shibrima?’ He answered, ‘a brother of mine who could not perform pilgrimage and I am performing it on his behalf.’ The Prophet *Peace be upon him* asked him, ‘Have you performed pilgrimage for yourself?’ He answered, ‘No.’ The Prophet *Peace be upon him* said, ‘Perform pilgrimage for yourself first, then on behalf of Shibrima.’¹ Al-Sayyid Hasan learnt from this that a Muslim has the licence of performing pilgrimage on behalf of someone else who could not perform pilgrimage for some sickness or any other legal excuse.

It so happened that Al-Sayyid Hasan was once taken ill sometime before his passing away and he could not go to pilgrimage that year. He was greatly saddened by this and he expressed his wish to provide for thousands of would-be pilgrims to perform pilgrimage on his behalf. His managers informed him that the number he was mentioning was too great and that it would be practically impossible to manage it. It took them a lot of persuasion to convince him to accept a number in the vicinity of tens instead of thousands.²

It is worth our while at this point to have a reflecting look at Al-Sayyid Hasan’s concept of worship as derived from Islamic teachings. He was well aware that worshipping God

¹ The hadith is narrated by Abu Dawoud in his *Sunan* under No 1546 in the section on ‘Someone performing pilgrimage on behalf of others.’

² The incident was mentioned by Dr Abd Allah Basfar.

the Glorified was the main goal of all creation. God created all humankind and jinns to worship Him alone (*Al-Dhariyat*: 56). In a Qudsi hadith,¹ God says,

O My servants, I have not created you to give Me company against loneliness; neither to give Me plentifulness against insufficiency; neither to help Me against inability; neither to give Me any benefit; nor to defend Me against any adversity. I have created you only to worship Me at all times; to mention Me in abundance; and to glorify Me in mornings and evenings.

The prominent Islamic scholar Ibn Taimiya defines worship in the following manner:

Worship is the comprehensive name given to all that God loves of statements and actions, both concealed and visible. Thus prayer, alms, fasting, pilgrimage, truthfulness in speech, honesty and trustworthiness, kindness to parents and kin, keeping promises, enjoining good and interdicting evil, struggling against disbelievers, benevolence to neighbours, orphans, and wayfarers, kindness to animals, invocations, Quran recitation, love of God and His Prophet, fear of God, repentance, sincerity in religion, steadfastness and patience facing God's fate, gratitude to His bounties, having contentment with His fate, having reliance on Him, and having hope in His Mercy and fear of His punishment, all are examples of worship accorded to God.

True worship cannot be based except on submitting to God and having sincerity in actions in obedience to Him, in worshipping Him alone with no partners, by following His commandments and avoiding His prohibitions. God commands His Prophet *Peace be upon him* to inform believers that if they love God they should follow his teachings and God will love them and grant them forgiveness ('*Al 'Imran*: 31). God also asserts that people have been commanded to worship Him with sincerity and love, perform prayer, give away alms; that is the truly valuable religion (*Al-Baiyyina*: 5). The Prophet *Peace be upon him* says, 'Acts are by intentions; and every person shall have what he has intended.'²

Thus, Al-Sayyid Hasan's attempts for perfection in his work and in his worship was based on correct intentions and a genuine disposition. In his endeavour, Al-Sayyid Hasan was seeking to attain the bounties of both this life and the Hereafter.

Al-Sayyid Hasan did not use to sleep on a bed; rather, he used, in spite of his tremendous wealth, to sleep on a mattress on the floor near his desk.³ When he was asked about that, he quoted the Quranic verse stating that God's promise is right; man should not be taken in by the worldly life and should not be deceived by the Devil (*Luqman*: 33). He would

¹ A Qudsi hadith, as distinguished from the Quran (which is God's word in meaning as well as in letter) and Prophetic hadith (which is the Prophet's speech), is God's word in meaning but the Prophet's speech in wording.

² The hadith is narrated by Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih*, in the section of 'The Start of Revelation,' vol. 1, p. 3; and by Abu Dawoud in his *Sunan*, in the section on 'When divorce is intended and on intentions,' vol. 6, p. 118, hadith No. 1882.

³ I received this piece of information from the manager of his office and from other employees as well.

also mention Prophetic hadiths to that effect. The Prophet *Peace be upon him* is reported to have slept once on a mat; when he rose, the traces of the mat were visible on his body. His companions said to him, ‘O Messenger of God, shall we get you a soft mattress?’ He answered, ‘What do I have to do with this world? In this world, I am but like a rider who has made use of the shade beneath a tree then went away and left it.’¹ He is also reported to have said, ‘Had the world been equal in the Eye of God to a wing of a mosquito, He would not have given a disbeliever from it a drink of water.’²

Al-Sayyid Hasan would proceed to enumerate the distinctions and achievements of the Prophet’s companions, their self-denial and their reliance on God. He would take as his motto the answer of Abu Bakr when he came with all his money to be spent in the Way of God and was asked by the Prophet *Peace be upon him*, ‘What did you leave for your family?’ Abu Bakr answered, ‘I left them [in the care of] God and His Messenger.’

The teachings of Islam have made clear the devotions prescribed by God in prayers, alms, fasting, and pilgrimage. Nevertheless, Islam left the road open for voluntary and supererogatory devotions for the righteous, who know that voluntary devotions and acts of worship, commensurate with the individual abilities of the worshippers, are helpers on the Way to God and are indicators of his love. Al-Bukhari narrated in his *Sahih* a Qudsi hadith in which God states,

A servant of Mine would not come closer to Me with anything more favourable to Me than with what I have prescribed on him; a servant would keep approaching Me with voluntary devotions until I love him. When I love him, I will become his hearing with which he hears, his eyesight with which he sees, his hand with which he attacks, his leg with which he walks; and if he asks Me, I will surely grant him what he asks. I never hesitated in anything I wanted to do like My hesitation in taking the soul of My believing servant; he hates death and I hate to hurt him; but death is inevitable.³

Al-Sayyid Hasan then knew deep at heart that supererogatory acts of worship and devotions are real provisions that the traveller along the way to God should take care to carry. He did not use to go to bed except for short periods and rarely. Oftentimes, his naps would be on the thin mattress on which he used to sit near his desk. He used to describe how elated and happy he was and how pure he felt and how strong his faith would become with sincerity and closeness to God away from people’s eyes in *tahajjud* (voluntary night prayers). He considered it a great honour for a believer to be summoned by God in the latter part of the night to be close to Him and address Him in private. Archangel Gabriel *Peace be upon him* told the Prophet *Peace be upon him*, ‘O Muhammad, live as

¹ The hadith is narrated by Ahmad in his *Musnad*, at the beginning of Musnad Ibn Abbas, vol. 6, p. 140, under No. 2608.

² The hadith is narrated by Al-Tirmidhi in his *Sunan*, in the section ‘Narratives on humility of the world,’ vol. 8, p. 299, under No. 2242.

³ The hadith is narrated by Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih*, in the section on ‘Humility,’ under No 6021. Scholars comment on the last statement in the hadith on the issue of God ‘hesitating’ in actions by saying that it is inconceivable, from a monotheistic point of view, that God hesitates in anything; however, this is a rhetorical device to signify how much God hates to distress a believing servant of His. (Tr.)

long as you will, you will die; love whomever you wish, you will depart from him; do whatever you wish to do, you will get your reward (or punishment) for it; and know that a believer's honour lies in his rising at night (for prayer), and that his glory lies in his being in no need of people.¹

God the Most Glorified and Sublime describes those who perform voluntary devotions as those whose sides keep away from their beds and who invoke their Lord's Mercy out of fear and hope (*Al-Sajda*: 16). God also commanded His Messenger to try to obtain this honour by praying at length at night and to recite the Quran (*Al-Muzzammil*: 1-3), and told him that He knew that he was staying up praying for a part of the night with a group of his companions. God knows that they would not be able to stay up all night, and He commands them to read from the Quran (*Al-Muzzammil*: 20).

In his sitting with scholars, Al-Sayyid Hasan was strongly motivated by his desire to learn by heart the Quranic verses, Prophetic hadiths, and scholarly discussions that he heard in his presence. He often used to quote those verses, hadiths, and statements of companions whenever the need arose. He also frequently spoke about the merits of the Holy Quran and repeated scholars' opinions about it. He had an ardent desire to open in each neighbourhood in the cities and villages of the Islamic world schools for teaching the Holy Quran, citing the Prophetic hadith describing the Quran as

The Book of God, which contains the chronicles of past peoples, foretells what is to come, and gives judgement on matters of the present; it is the decisive judgement, and it is not in jest. When a tyrant abandons it, God will break him; and if someone seeks guidance outside it, he will surely stray. It is the firm rope of God; it is the wise remembrance; and it is the Straight Path. With it, souls will not go astray; by it, tongues will not become ambiguous; scholars are never satisfied from it; it never gets worn out by frequent repetition; its miracles are never depleted. It is the Book that was described by jinns as miraculous (*Al-Jinn*: 1); when someone speaks it, he will be telling the truth; when someone works by it, he will be rewarded; when someone judges by it, he will be fair; and when someone calls to it, he will be guided to the Straight Path.²

Al-Sayyid Hasan used to know by heart the verses that speak about the merits of the Quran, like the verse that describes those who recite the Quran, perform prayers, and spend in charity from what God has bestowed on them in private and in public; those do have hope in making a successful transaction (*Fater*: 29). Whenever the Quran was recited, he would ask those around him to listen to it with care to understand its meanings and act by its teachings in the hope of attaining God's mercy. In this he was acting by God's command to believers to listen carefully when the Quran is recited hoping to be covered by God's mercy (*Al-'A'raf*: 204). Listening to the Quran or reading it with care in order to grasp its meanings is greatly encouraged in Islam and God reproached those

¹ The hadith is narrated by Al-Hakem in his *Mustadrak 'ala Al-Sahihain*, in the section 'Live as long as you will, you will die,' Under No 8038.

² The hadith is narrated in the *Sunan* of Al-Darimi, in the section on 'Merits of the one who recites the Quran,' under No. 3394.

who do not use their minds in understanding the Quran (*Muhammad: 24*) as in the Quran is all good, and in learning it is real honour and glory, and those who learn the Quran and act by its teachings will be successful in the Hereafter and will be rewarded in Paradise. Numerous Prophetic hadiths signify these meanings. The Prophet *Peace be upon him* said, ‘the best among you are those who learn the Quran and teach it;’¹ and ‘The one who recites the Quran with skill will be with the noble righteous angels, and the one who recites the Quran with difficulty will have two rewards;’² and ‘Read the Quran as it comes on the Day of Judgement an intercessor for those who carry it;’³ and ‘The believer who reads the Quran is like the citron: its smell is good and its taste is good;’ and ‘This Quran is a banquet from God; take from His banquet as much as you can;’⁴ thus the ‘Quran will be a plea for or against you,’ for you if you learn it and act by it, and against you if you abandon it.

Al-Sayyid Hasan loved scholars and took special care to establish best relationships of friendship and love with them. Whenever he heard that a scholar was visiting the Kingdom, he would hasten to visit him and invite him to his place and provide accommodation for him at hotels. He used to bestow gifts on scholars and provide stipends for those who were in need for help. He used to say, ‘It is our duty to go to scholars and honour them,’ and they used to pay visits to him where they would exchange friendly talks and discuss various things. Whenever one of them encountered some difficulty, Al-Sayyid Hasan would hasten to solve it, and it never happened that one of them had a problem that was not solved by Al-Sayyid Hasan.

From among the numerous scholars who visited him we may mention: Sheikh Muhammad Abu Zahra, Sheikh Abdul-Halim Mahmoud, Sheikh Mahmoud Shaltout, Sheikh Muhammad Al-Fahham, and Sheikh Muhammad Khater, and they are all from among the most prominent scholars not only in Egypt but also in the whole Islamic world, and they all held the post of Sheikh Al-Azhar or Mufti in Egypt. From among prominent Syrian scholars who visited him we may mention Sheikh Hasan Habannaka Al-Midani and Sheikh Muhammad Al-Shamma’. Moreover, as for Saudi scholars, he never heard of a scholar but went to visit him or invited him to his residence.

¹ The hadith is narrated by Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih*, under No 4639.

² The hadith is narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih*, in the section on ‘The Merit of the skilful reciter of the Quran,’ vol. 4, p. 219, under No. 1329.

³ The hadith is narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih*, in the section on ‘The Merit of reading the Quran and the chapter of Al-Baqara,’ vol. 4, p. 231, under No 1337.

⁴ The hadith is narrated by Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih*, in the section on ‘The reading of the shameless and the hypocrite,’ under No 705; and Ibn Abu Shaiba in his *Musannaf*, vol. 7, p. 165.

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan with His Excellency Imam Sheikh Mahmoud Shaltout
(Sheikh Al-Azhar between 1958 and 1963)
(الصورة العليا صفحة 137)

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan with His Excellency Mufti of Iran Al-Sheikh Al-
Qummi at a celebration in Al-Azhar in Cairo in the early 1960s.
(الصورة السفلى صفحة 137)

SECTION FOUR
AL-SAYYID HASAN AND RELIGION

Chapter One

His Religious Life

From among Al-Sayyid Hasan's achievements, as narrated by Dr Abd Allah Basfar, is that related to his love of the Holy Quran. He learnt that invocations and supplications at completing the recitation of the Quran are encouraged and are likely to be answered. He has not learnt the Quran by heart, but he knew some of the shorter chapters and some oft-recited and quoted verses by heart and he used to listen to recitations of the Quran regularly. 'One day,' narrates Dr Basfar, 'he called me and asked, "Since supplications are likely to be answered at the completion of the recitation of the Quran, why do we not finish a complete recitation everyday?"' Dr Basfar answered, 'It seems to me that this is too hard, and you will not be able to persevere in it for long.' Dr Basfar continues, 'That was some fifteen years before he passed away. He asked me to get him a recording of the Holy Quran and to come to him after *maghreb* (sunset) prayers every weekend for a special session of end-of-recitation supplications. He used to listen to the recordings daily and to complete a full recitation by listening at least one time every week, no matter how engaged he was with his business matters. He was especially careful to hold the supplication session, and that in the presence of his children, grandchildren, and employees. He would be extremely angry if I happened to be late for that appointment, as he used to get ready for it hours before the assigned time.

The man loved the Quran passionately and was ardently hopeful for God's reward. That was why he endeavoured to make himself qualified for God's reward with his acts of benevolence and spending in charity with great humbleness, emulating the way of the early virtuous Muslims. He had profound faith in the teaching included in the Prophetic hadith: 'He will not enter Paradise who has in his heart an atom's weight of vanity.'¹ He believed that humility, without undue excess, coupled with patience, are likely to improve the heart and clean it of spiritual impurities and excessive love of worldly matters.

Whenever he went in a visit to either of the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina, he took special care not to take lodgings except on the ground floors out of his desire not to go above the Holy House and above the soil that embraces the body of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*. This was not a strange thing for him who had preferred to make the ground his bed and sitting place, and who behaved with extreme humbleness to scholars, and who treated the poor and the needy with great love and simplicity, and who practised a simple way of life in his meals, his clothing, and other affairs of life.

He often used to take time to hold his own private conversations with his Lord, to supplicate, to offer his thankfulness for the Lord's bounties, to declare his steadfastness in the face of adversities, and his heart-felt contentment with God's fate. His close associates would always hear him repeatedly reciting a few verses of poetry that he had learnt by heart and that he loved to use in his address to God:

¹ The hadith is narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih*, in the section 'Prohibition of Pride,' vol. 1, p.247, under No. 131.

Oh would it that you are sweet and that the whole life is bitter;
Oh would it that you are pleased and the whole world is angry.

Oh would it that what is between You and me is cultivated;
And what is between me and the whole world is laid waste.

If I can have Your true love on my side; everything would be slight;
And all that is on earth is mere earth.¹

In his conversations with acquaintances, he used to make a fine distinction between what is meant by *shukr* (gratitude) and the signification of *hamd* (praise, thankfulness). He would explain that while ‘praise’ is expressing gratitude by speech – in obedience to God’s command of talking in public about God’s bounties on someone (*Al-Doha*: 11) – gratitude lies in good management of God’s bounties. God the Most Sublime asserts that only few of His servants have gratitude (*Saba’*: 13). So, even though all that man has of bounties and blessings, and all that he is likely to acquire, are in reality from God – and God addresses His servants saying that all their bounties are but from God (*Al-Nahl*: 53) – who can manage and dispose all of God’s bounties – like health, safety, money, offspring, status, knowledge and reason, and above all religion – in acts of obedience to God?

Al-Sayyid Hasan was never ashamed to speak about his days of poverty in simplicity and spontaneity. He used to recount how, when he married his first wife Um Abdul-Rahman, he had no more than a thousand riyal. He used to say,

If, now, I turn all my possessions to gold, grind it into flour, knead it into dough, and eat from until I meet my Lord the Magnificent, they will not be exhausted; however, what is in God’s Hand is never depleted. I do wish I die not having a single riyal, and to have spent it all in the Way of God and in ways of benevolence; but what shall I do? The more I spend in charity, the more of God’s bounties I receive, and God doubles my possessions manifold; every time I open a door for charity, God opens up new doors for me from His coffers: I give away in charity and God doubles His blessings; I spend and He increases His blessings. This illustrates God’s statement that the case of those who spend their money in the Way of God is like to a seed that bears seven ears of corn, in each ear there are a hundred seeds; God doubles the reward for whomsoever He wishes; God is All-Bountiful, All-Knowing (*Al-Baqara*: 261). This is carrying out business with God.²

In order to discharge his duties regarding gratitude, Al-Sayyid Hasan used to pray in abundance. He never wanted a single hour of day or night to pass without him being

¹ The verses have been attributed to several different poets, the most prominent of whom are: Ibn Nabata Al-Masri, Abu Firas Al-Hamadhani, Al-Hallaj, and Abdul-Ghani Al-Nabulsi. See *Maktabat Al-Shu’ara’* (Poets’ Library), Dar Al-‘Obaikhan.

² The statement is taken from the Sharbatly archives.

engaged in some devotion or prayer, hoping that this would be his witness to God for his gratitude and obedience. When, at a certain stage, late in his life, those around him took pity on him and advised him to go easy in his devotions, he answered them that the prophet *Peace be upon him* used to stand praying at night until the skin of his feet would split. He was asked ‘O Messenger of God, Why do you do that, while God has forgiven your misdeeds, past as well as future ones?’ He answered, ‘Oughtn’t I to wish to be a grateful servant?’¹

Al-Sayyid also had firm belief that gratitude to God is not only for apparent blessings and bounties but also for trials, hardships, and adversities. This was the way of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*. Al-Tirmidhi narrates that the Prophet *Peace be upon him* said,

When the child of a person dies, God the Most Sublime says to His angels, ‘Have you taken away the child of My servant?’ They say, ‘Yes.’ Then He says, ‘Have you taken away the fruit of his heart?’ They say, ‘Yes.’ Then He says, ‘What did My servant say?’ They answer, ‘He praised You and said, “To God we belong and to Him shall we return.”’ Then, God the Most Sublime says, ‘Build for My servant a house in Paradise; call it the House of Praise.’²

We have already mentioned what Al-Sayyid Hasan went through of calamities in the course of one day on his way to Al-Ta’ef – calamities that would be back-breakers for other men. On top of all that, and when he returned to Jeddah, he received the shocking news that his stores had been incinerated in a large fire that consumed everything in them.³ It was established later, as stated by his office, that the fire was perpetrated by the then ward of the stores, who had misappropriated some of the merchandise in the stores, and, fearing discovery, he committed the crime of burning the stores down.

When Al-Sayyid Hasan heard that many of his beneficiaries feared that he would fail to pay the usual alms that year, he doubled his alms and said, ‘It was God Who had granted in the first place, and it is He Who has taken, and everything belongs to Him; we are nothing but agents in disposing the bounties of God the Glorified and Sublime.’

In addition, and to make things worse, his estates in the Eastern region were taken, and he was patient and sought compensation with God; his shares in the Riyadh Bank were also affected by adverse circumstances, and he was patient and sought compensation with God; he lost court cases worth billions, and he was patient and sought compensation with God; his two sons Faisal and Fahd died – not to mention those who had died earlier – Ghazi, Ali, Malaka and Amira – and he was patient and sought compensation with God. He would always quote the statements of God Almighty that those who are steadfast in the face of adversity and calamity are the true believers and the true God-fearing ones (*Al-Baqara*: 177) and that the steadfast and the patient will be granted their full reward

¹ The hadith is narrated in *Sahih* of Al-Bukhari, the section on ‘Night prayers of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*,’ vol. 4, p. 292, under No. 1062.

² The hadith is narrated by Al-Tirmidhi in his *Sunan*, in the section of ‘The merit of a calamity when a person is patient,’ vol. 4, p. 154, under No. 942.

³ The fire was the talk of the town for a long period of time, and it was known as the ‘Sharbatly fire.’

without calculations (*Al-Zumar*: 10). If the scholars specialised in delicate spiritual relationships (between man and his Creator) define contentment as ‘facing perils with a smiling face,’ then Al-Sayyid Hasan was a living illustration of that definition; he was fully contented with all the contingencies of life decreed by God.

Besides, he was known to be a regular performer of *istikhara* prayers¹ in all matters, large and small. So much so that *istikhara* was for him a confirmed practice before any project or enterprise he was planning to undertake.

In his thankful attitude towards God’s blessings as well as trials, he was emulating the attitude of the respected companion of the Prophet, Omar Ibn Al-Khattab *God be pleased with him*, who used to say, ‘Whenever a calamity befalls me, I know that God has sent four blessings to me to accompany it: first is that it was (in some worldly matter, and) not in my faith, second is that I have not been deprived of contentment with it, third is that it was not greater than it really was, and fourth is that I hope to be rewarded by God for it.’²

Also, he was rarely seen without his rosary in his hand, using its beads in his invocations, reciting his praising, gratitude, seeking God’s forgiveness, glorifying God, and invoking His support. The rosary was his constant companion in his devotions and his work, his meetings, his travels, when he was listening to news, listening to Quranic recitations or scholarly talks on his small radio set that was always beside him when he was chatting with his visitors, or dictating something to his clerks or listening to their briefings.

His hands were always raised in supplication to God. He used to supplicate in plenty and invoke God’s mercy and forgiveness at all times. In this respect, he used to cite God’s statement in the Qudsi hadith:

I am with My servant as he sees Me to be,³ and I am with him where (or when) he remembers Me. If he remembers Me in his soul, I will remember him with Me; if he mentions Me with some people, I will mention him with those who are better.⁴

And he would cite the Prophetic hadith:

Shall I tell you about the best things that you can do, the most favoured in the Sight of your Lord, the highest in your ranks, that would be better for you than spending gold and silver, and that would be better for you than meeting your enemies and striking their necks and they striking yours?’ They answered, ‘Yes, o Messenger of God,’ and he said, ‘Remember God the Exalted.’⁵

¹ *Istikhara* (Prayer for seeking favours) prayer is a special prayer of two *rak’as* followed by a specific supplication in which the worshipper asks God to grant him the good of things he plans to do.

² *Sharh Al-Tariqa Al-Muhammadiyya* (Explaining the Muhammadan Way), vol. 2, p. 5.

³ If a person thinks well of God’s Mercy and Forgiveness, God will fulfil this person’s expectation.

⁴ The hadith is narrated in various versions in *Shu’ab Al-Iman* (Branches of Faith) by Al-Baihaqi, in the section ‘On Manners of Worship,’ vol. 19, p. 233, under No. 8934.

⁵ The hadith is narrated by Al-Imam Malek in his *Al-Muwatta’*, in the section on ‘Narrations on Remembering God,’ under No. 441.

God also commands all believers to supplicate to Him and He will answer their supplications. Those who feel too proud to worship God (by supplicating to Him) will enter Hellfire in humiliation (*Ghafer*: 60). Al-Sayyid also used to cite the Prophetic hadith that ‘nothing wards off fated events except supplications, and nothing increases age except acts of benevolence.’

Then, Al-Sayyid Hasan would express his hope to be among those who are blessed with long life and good deeds.

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan in his office in Jeddah

(الصورة ص. 145)

Chapter Two

His Contributions in Building Mosques

The expansion of the Holy Mosque:

During the reign of King Abdul-Aziz *may God rest his soul* Al-Sayyid Hasan tried with all his might to obtain the honour of undertaking an unprecedented job. He made all his preparations and proceeded to obtain the permission of the King. That honourable job was to build the yards of the Sanctuary (the Holy Mosque surrounding the Ka'ba) and providing shades for them. He had always yearned to undertake that mission; however, the King saw that that mission was a job for the state and not for individuals, and said to Al-Sayyid Hasan, 'Sayyid, you have contributed a lot, and you have mosques and schools to take care of; but as for the Sanctuary, it is the responsibility of the government.'¹

At that point, Sheikh Ben Laden suggested to Al-Sayyid Hasan to buy up the empty squares and deserted and dilapidated buildings around the Mosque and give them up to the process of the expansion of the Mosque; this way, he would realise a part of his ambition. Al-Sayyid Hasan liked the idea and started to implement it.

However, he still cherished the idea of taking up the mission of the expansion of the Mosque at his own expense and used to make the proposition whenever there was a chance. The then Minister of Finance Sheikh Muhammad Surour Al-Sabban, accompanied by Sheikh Muhammad Ben Laden, paid him a visit and enquired from him whether he had the intention of undertaking both missions – buying up the lands around the Mosque and the construction works of the expansion – and he answered that he did. Then they said to him, 'Do not forget that you have many enemies and there are many who look covetously at your successes and achievements.'

Al-Sayyid then asked them, 'Whose House is the Mosque?'

They answered, 'It is the House of God!'

He said, 'If I build His House, will He destroy mine?'

Al-Sayyid Hasan's interlocutors had nothing to say in answer to his retort. He then added:

This money is but a trust that God had put in our charge and entrusted us with. Any success is a grant by God. Man would not like anyone to surpass him except his own child. If God has willed against something, what can man do? It is my belief that man is but a guardian over the money in his possession. It is not an issue of money; rather, it is an issue of faith, conviction, and strength of belief.²

¹ See *Okaz*, edition No. 5651, dated 22 Muharram 1402 AH / 19 November 1981 CE.

² *Ibid.*

Al-Sayyid Hasan persevered in making the proposition all through the reign of King Saud Ibn Abdul-Aziz as well, but without success, as the expansion of the Mosque was seen as a job for the State. However, he was comforted by the fact that he was able to buy up large areas around the Mosque that would be part of the process of the expansion, not to mention his spending on the carpeting of the Mosque.

The *Jumu'a* (Friday) Mosque

The city of Medina was endeared to Al-Sayyid Hasan. It had such a high status in his heart that no other city on earth had except Mecca. He always yearned to be buried in its blessed soil so that he would be close to his beloved Prophet *Peace be upon him* and his venerable companions *God be pleased with them*.

Spurred by this ardent desire, he bought a residence close by the *Jumu'a* Mosque, the first mosque in which the Prophet *Peace be upon him* performed *Jumu'a* (Friday congregation) prayers, and it lies on the road to Quba'.

The area of the mosque was small and it would not accommodate the increasing numbers of worshippers coming there from Medina or the visitors who wished to pray there in emulation of the Prophet *Peace be upon him* by praying in the places where he had prayed. In this, they would be seeking the blessing of the prayer there and remembering the example of the Prophet *Peace be upon him* in his life, his call, and his migration from Mecca (the most beloved city to God and to him) to his other beloved city, Taiba (later renamed as Medina), to whose visit the hearts of millions yearn.

Medinans tried to enlarge the *Jumu'a* Mosque but there were no empty spaces around it, and the mosque was overflowing with worshippers, who were a mere fraction of the visitors who desired to perform prayers in it. Al-Sayyid Hasan was greatly proud of his residence close by the mosque; but when he saw the urgent need for the enlargement of the mosque, he did not hesitate a moment in giving a part of his house up for the enlargement process.

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly with His Excellency Minister of Finance Sheikh Muhammad Surour Sabban

(الصورة ص. 150)

His philosophy in life

If the man was hardened by his experiences in life – a thing that burnished his talents in managing his affairs and business transactions – these were all tangible observable things. However, more important than that was the fact that his experience led to the formation of inner convictions amounting to a consistent philosophy in life. Al-Sayyid Hasan's philosophy was not the result of conventional education, wealth, or social status as much as inherent integral factors of his traits and behavioural qualities that qualified him to digest all these elements and process them in his own internal laboratory deep down in his soul. Once such interaction between these factors – inner convictions and outward conduct – is complete, and when a person's inner soul matches his outward appearances, he will be at peace with himself.

From among the aspects of Al-Sayyid Hasan's philosophy we may mention that he *may God rest his soul* never dealt in a miserly way with those around him or those working with him; he never spared anything in providing them with the highest quality in everything, especially in foodstuffs; he used to take special care to offer them the best of it. However, when it came to him personally, he did not treat himself with the same care: he would sometimes choose an overripe fruit from the fruit box, from which he would remove the decayed part and eat. This was his philosophy in expressing gratitude towards the bounties of God the Exalted and as regards the purification of the soul from such impurities as vanity and feelings of discontentment. This is why, from time to time, he used to teach himself the lesson of humbleness and self control.

He would enter his kitchen and collect with his hand what is scattered there of bread crumbs, rice seeds, tea leaves, sugar grains, and other remains. Then he would take his collection out to his garden and scatter it around the trees and shrubs aiming to provide for the ants in the garden – and ants are creatures of God that can make use of those remains – and allow the remains to decay around the roots of the plants so that the plants can make use of the decomposition of those organic nutrients.¹ Thus he reasoned: was it not better to allow those creatures to benefit from the remains than to throw them away with the rubbish?

Although some people may find this kind of reasoning strange and unfamiliar, we shall not find it strange when we know how Al-Sayyid Hasan felt about things in life. This attitude finds further illustration in the following incident. One day, he stopped to bargain with a child who was playing with a little bird. He offered the child tens of times the price of the bird aiming to buy it from him and set it free. Again, he was motivated by mercy towards the bird and by his desire to teach the boy a lesson in having mercy towards God's creatures with kindly words and tender bargaining.

Urged by this heart felt compassion, Al-Sayyid Hasan made friends with the pigeons of the two Holy Mosques in Mecca and Medina. The large numbers of pigeons that have made their home around the Mosques enjoyed his hospitality as he had made large

¹ This piece of information was mentioned by some workers in his office.

monthly allocations to buy seeds and cereals for the pigeons and provided special stores for them. Whenever he visited the Mosques in Mecca or Medina, he used to find great happiness with the pigeons gathering and hovering around him while he was hand feeding them. He used to do this so often that a strong bond tied him to the pigeons as if there was some common language between them. Whenever he came to the Mosques, they would gather in large numbers around him as if to celebrate his coming, and he would smile and stay for hours feeding them with his hands.

This same spirit of hospitality moved him to entertain as his guests the American fleet that visited the Kingdom during the reign of the late King Saud. His aim behind this was to honour the guests of his country and to acquaint non-Arab friends with the generosity and hospitality of Arabs and Muslims.

His philosophy of humbleness and paying homage to the Prophet *Peace be upon him* was also illustrated in his practice whenever he visited Medina, the city of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*. There, he never took dwellings but on ground floors, and never slept except on a mattress on the floor so as not to go higher than the burial place of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*.¹

Thus Al-Sayyid Hasan led an ascetic life based on gratitude towards God and His bounties, having heart-felt mercy towards God's creatures, generosity, and humbleness.

¹ This piece of information was mentioned by some workers in his office.

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly with the Commander of the American Fleet I. R. Kelly in a ceremony held by His Excellency at his residence in Jeddah during the visit of the Fleet to the port of Jeddah in the early 1960s. Also in the photo is Sheikh Abd Allah Al-Qusaibi.

(الصورة ص. 155)

His Excellency with Sheikh Muhammad Rida (to his right)
(الصورة ص. 157)

SECTION FIVE
HIS SPENDING

Before we expose in the following pages some of Al-Sayyid Hasan's expenditures in charity and aid, we need to explain the purchasing power of the currency in those days.

Up to the early 1960s, the Saudi riyal enjoyed a high purchasing power. In those days, the sum of two hundred riyals was enough as a monthly salary for an employee responsible for a medium-sized family. The Egyptian pound then was worth between ten and twelve Saudi riyals, while the gold guinea was worth about 97.5 Egyptian pounds. In spite of this, and in the non-inflationary days of the period prior to that time, the sum was enough for the monthly expenditure of a medium-sized family.

This brief notion would probably explain the size of the tremendous expenditures of Al-Sayyid Hasan, some of which will be exposed in due course, whether by citing their values at the time, or by comparing them to present-day values.

It would do no harm to Al-Sayyid Hasan in anything now if we put his achievements – or part of them – under the spotlight of publicity. With God's pleasure supreme in his mind, he tried hard all his life to keep his charity away from the public eye.

Al-Sayyid Hasan's experiences with charity began early in his childhood. How often he used to ask from his father clothing for a poor boy or help for some needy person and he used to spend all he had in this way. It has been reported that once a friend of his came to visit him – in his early childhood – in shabby clothes. He took him by the hand, spread all his clothes in front of him, and asked him to choose what he liked from them. His friend made his choice and he gave him all, and with them all the money he had.¹

When he grew rich and his business grew large, his character was not changed by wealth, and money was never able to change his manners from humbleness to vanity. With the increase in his wealth his noble character was strengthened, his humbleness increased, and his spending in benevolence was doubled, and his relationships with the poor and needy grew stronger. Moreover, his attitude to his Lord, his reliance on God, his thankfulness to Him, and his devotions increased and grew in strength.

Al-Sayyid Hasan opened new and hitherto untrodden paths in charity and reached unprecedented levels in it. In fact, he set such high records in his donations and contributions that his competitors in the field found very hard to match. So much so that some described one of his donations as a 'bombshell.' The news story that reported the donation added that it was 'not a bombshell of warfare; ... it was rather more like a humanitarian landslide in the community life, motivated by strength of faith and heartfelt love of benevolence ... It was fifty thousand riyals, an unprecedented sum donated in the inauguration of donations for the hospital.'²

This attitude was the result of a special vision in life based on having complete belief in God and reliance on Him, in the belief that God the Most Sublime has absolute control over all matters in the universe and that He disposes of them as He wishes. It is really a

¹ See *Al-Sharbatly Al-Muhsin Al-Islami Al-Akbar* (Al-Sharbatly: the Great Islamic Man of Charity), p. 62.

² See the Saudi daily *Al-Bilad*, on 22. 4. 1365 AH. See Document No. 12 in the Appendices.

matter evidenced by observations in daily life that when you renounce something it will come to you out of its own, and that it will run away in rejection when you endeavour hard in attempting to attain it.

A person cannot be called a true ascetic or renouncer unless he, in the first place, has the ability to acquire the thing he is forsaking. A person who lacks the ability of coming into possession of something or enjoying it cannot be described as ascetic as he has not had a real experience of the thing he is claiming to have forsaken.

He felt that he was tied to the poor and needy with a bond that was stronger and higher than the bond of kinship or neighbourhood, the bond of humanity taking roots in the deep faith associated with devotion to God and the endeavour to implement and propagate the principles of His Message.

May God have mercy on the soul of Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly as mercy filled his heart towards all. Sufficient for him is what he had done in the service of his motherland (the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and his association with the issues of his Arab Nation and the wide Islamic World. He has become a key figure in the events both of his country and abroad, always seeking the mercy of his Lord.

In what follows we have a brief look at some aspects of his munificence and spending in philanthropic pursuits both in the Kingdom and abroad.

(في صفحة 165 هناك صورة ليس عليها تعليق)

Chapter One

His Contributions inside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Is there any reward for good other than good?

One event that took place during the Second World War was deeply influential in shaping the personality of Al-Sayyid Hasan. It was so influential that it changed the course of his whole life. At that time, he bought up all the quantities of beans and lentils available in the market in preparation for war circumstances. His stores were thus filled up with hundreds of thousands of tons of these materials. But in a twist of misfortune, other traders imported the same kind of food supplies from Egypt and Sudan, thus flooding the market and causing a considerable decline in prices. Consequently, Al-Sayyid had to sell up his stored quantities at less than the actual costs. It was a tremendous loss to the point that some observers foresaw his collapse following some health problem or deep psychological shock that would render his life untenable.

However, his reaction came contrary to all expectations when he accepted his loss with marked quietude and courage. His profound faith in God helped him through this adversity, and he travelled to Medina where he gave away in charity all the returns of his transactions, leaving absolutely nothing of them. But God the Glorified willed that Al-Sayyid would not come back from the City of the Prophet *Peace be upon him* (Medina) except with good and doubled recompense for his loss and with an easy heart.

Upon his return to Jeddah, Al-Sayyid found a number of traders waiting for him to discuss with him a bargain concerning various kinds of goods in his stores. These were cheaply priced goods that he did not think much of during the war crisis. By God's Will, there was then great demand for them and their prices soared; some of them went up as high as forty times the original prices.¹ Al-Sayyid sold up all the contents of these goods in his stores, and thus God gave him recompense for all his losses and for what he gave away in charity also. His unexpected profits from this transaction were incomparably greater than all profits he had hoped to make when he made the lentils and bean transaction in which he intended to monopolise those commodities.

Ever since that incident, which became a landmark in his business life and in his relationship with his Lord, Al-Sayyid never made any calculations concerning his profits or losses nor his accounts and his wealth. He even deleted from his business book any term related to monopoly. He also went further on his road to his Lord and became closer to Him, and increased his charity spending. The more he spent in ways of benevolence, the greater were the profits he made. He even could not know whence wealth was coming his way, and God granted him success in abundance. God the Magnificent has promised those who do good with greater good in reward (*Al-Rahman*: 60).

¹ See *Okaz, op. cit.*

The Azizia Water Source

Before oil made its appearance on the scene of the Arab World, Saudi Arabia, like the other countries of the region, did not have enough financial resources to finance the infrastructure projects necessary for the state, especially that Saudi Arabia occupies a vast surface area and that the rulers who came before the Saud dynasty did not pay much attention to these resources.

Besides, the Kingdom lacks rivers and fresh water sources. Probably the most difficult task in this regard was providing the needful fresh water for the population, especially in Jeddah. In his book *Tarikh Al-Ain Al-Azizia* (History of the Azizia Water Source), Abdul-Quddous Al-Ansari, describes the situation as follows:

The area of Jeddah was confined by the narrowness of the range inside the wall that surrounded it from all sides. The wall had five sides; the length of the northern side was 576 metres, the maritime – western – side was 675 metres long, the south-eastern side was 315 metres in length, and the southern side was 110 metres long, and the wall was four metres high. The wall had nine gates: six in the maritime side and three in the other sides. We can conclude that the area of Jeddah before the introduction of the Source water was only three square kilometres.

The streets were dusty and muddy, and water was scarce. In spite of its small area, the city suffered from a long-standing water crisis, and people were worried for their livelihood on this account. Their rain-water tanks were always running very low and the ancient and dilapidated Kindasa desalination station, which used to provide them with what little fresh water they enjoyed, was damaged. As such, lorries and little vans with their large water containers going to and fro between Jeddah and Mecca carrying fresh water from Mecca to the Jeddahns to quench their thirst became a familiar scene ...

To illustrate the seriousness of the water crisis in Jeddah, Al-Ansari quotes a humorous poem composed by the usually serious poet Muhammad Said Otaibi describing the situation:

O people of reason and good opinion, You take water in abundance If you go thirsty as we do, you would Have mercy on the poor; they are weak They buy water at a riyal a cup	do find a way for us out of the Kindasa mess and disaster befalls us for a mere cup scream and fill the world with your noise and their senses are weakened by poverty after they had sold their chairs and pots. ¹
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Thus Jeddahns were at a loss how to manage their water requirements at a time when the state resources were limited and did not have the necessary financing for bringing fresh water to the city.

¹ See *Tarikh Al-Ain Al-Azizia* (History of the Azizia Water Source) and *Al-Hirafiyoun fi Madinat Jeddah* (Craftsmen in the City of Jeddah in the Fourteenth Century AH).

King Abdul-Aziz commissioned an American expedition to search for possible water sources for Jeddah and they found that if water from the Fatima Valley and the Khalis Valley could be drawn to Jeddah, it would provide the required water for Jeddah and quench its thirst for generations to come. Accordingly, the King concluded an agreement with the owners of the wells in the two valleys to buy the water from them and to give it as a grant to Jeddahns.

The Kindasa Desalination Station that works by distilling sea water

(الصورة ص. 173)

The Kindasa site by the sea in Jeddah in the year 1350 AH
(الصورة ص. 175)

The costs of the project of drawing the water to Jeddah were a big obstacle and the available resources were not sufficient.

Then the chief administrator of the Azizia Water Source Company then, Osman Ba Osman, had a brilliant idea: offering the state lands outside the Jeddah wall for sale to individual citizens and spending from their revenues on the projects of the city and drawing fresh water to it. He discussed his idea with officials including Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly and they agreed to it. Immediately following that, King Abdul-Aziz issued his royal command to his son Prince Faisal with the following instructions:

From Abdul-Aziz Ibn Abdul-Rahman Al-Faisal Al-Saud to the Honourable Son Faisal, may God grant him safety and security,

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace and God's Mercy and Blessings be with you)

In view of the expansion of the construction work in the port city of Jeddah, and in order to raise necessary funds for projects like repair works for the city's streets, old and new, we are issuing the following command:

First: The white lands located inside the city bordering its old wall belong to the Municipality.

Second: All the white lands located outside the city, whether mapped already or to be mapped henceforth, belong in their entirety to the Ministry of Finance.

Third: All the lands located at the two sides of the Jeddah Road, starting from the Sixth Kilometre to the beginnings of the water sources for Jeddah belong to the Azizia Water Source Project.

Sheikh Osman Ba Osman talked to Al-Sayyid Hasan about the project, and he, out of his public spiritedness and desire to serve his community, was the first buyer of those lands of the Azizia Water Source (title deeds Nos. 652 and 890), as there was little demand for them due to their large areas and to their distant locations.¹ Sheikh Abd Allah Al-Suleiman was also persuaded to buy some pieces of those lands at the same prices. The Azizia project to bring water to the city of Jeddah was thus energized by the sums of money raised by the land sales. Thus the city expanded and is still expanding, and has become one of the typical cities of the world, dubbed 'the Bride of the Red Sea.'

Desalination of Sea Water

After the huge expansion of Jeddah, especially after the appearance of oil in the Kingdom and the coming of people from all over to work and invest, and after the great increase in

¹Some people have transgressed against large portions of the lands that Al-Sayyid bought, and lawsuits are still being heard concerning these cases up to now.

the numbers of pilgrims, and with the soaring increase in the numbers of the population of Jeddah itself, the waters drawn from the Azizia Source became insufficient for the requirements of the city. That was why it was incumbent to look for new sources of fresh water; hence the plans of desalination of sea water.

Feasibility studies and plans were made and the budget was set aside for that tremendous project, and officials started looking for a suitable location for the proposed desalination station with its huge refinery. The search led them to a piece of land at the Jeddah coastal line called 'Ghubbat Ashra' owned by Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly.

The officials approached Al-Sayyid Hasan with the intention of buying that land from him. He asked Prince Muhammad Al-Faisal the manager of the Project about the reason for choosing this land, and he answered that it had been found the most suitable location for the planned desalination station for Jeddah. Al-Sayyid Hasan then said, 'Be my witness that I am donating the land for the project of the establishment of the desalination station for Jeddah.'¹ That was a huge donation. The land was about six million and two hundred fifty thousand (6,250,000) square metres in area.²

What follows is a translation of the letter addressed by Prince Muhammad Al-Faisal, President of the Public Institution for Desalination of Sea Water to Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly.

¹ The information is taken from documents related to the topic.

² *Ibid.*

In the Name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate

**The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources
Bureau of Desalination of Sea Water**

**No.: 101
Date: 27. 06. 86**

His Excellency the Honourable Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly,

After greetings and regards,

In reference to the legal document No. 1632, registered under No. 1564, on 05. 06. 06, concerning Your Excellency's donation of the land and construction of 'Ghubbat Ashra,' situated on the coastline north of the city of Jeddah for the establishment of the planned desalination station for Jeddah,

The Bureau of Desalination of Sea Water in the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources would like to express to Your Excellency the deepest gratitude for the donation that you have made, which is an indicator of your sublime generosity and your loyalty to your motherland.

We pray to God the Most Sublime and Almighty that He would always grant you success in doing good.

In conclusion, kindly accept our great regards

Muhammad Al-Faisal

Manager,

The Bureau of Desalination of Sea Water

(الرسالة ص. 181)

Al-Sayyid Hasan in his Ghubbat Ashra resort before donating the land to the Public
Institution for Desalination
(الصورة ص. 183)

Public Transport

The investment activities of Al-Sayyid Hasan extended to fields that would not normally be undertaken except by large institutions with great potentials and capabilities. Probably the best example for this extension is the field of public transport.

Public transport in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is not like transport in any other country as huge numbers of passengers are gathered to be conveyed at one time in the seasons of pilgrimage and *omra*. This calls for special preparations and an awareness of the religious responsibility in the process as the element of time is of critical importance, especially in the pilgrimage season, as any delay in conveyance can deprive the pilgrim from the chance of performing a key devotion in pilgrimage, and thus render his pilgrimage null. Also, hardships suffered by pilgrims may affect negatively their performance of their devotions in a satisfactory manner.

Al-Sayyid Hasan's first contact with this field was when he was elected member of the administrative board of the Arabian Car Company in its general assembly held on Friday the 13th of Rajab, 1370 AH / 20th of April, 1951 CE. The company was a private enterprise by a number of entrepreneurs and businessmen of which he was one.¹ Nevertheless, the company was not functioning properly: it needed an overhaul in its structure, and it lacked spare parts and drivers and was in need of a great many different services in order to be able to continue in its operations. At one stage, the shareholders neglected the company until it reached a point when it had to declare its inability to undertake the transportation services for pilgrims. At that point, Al-Sayyid Hasan was elected Chairman of the administrative board and he bought the shares of all shareholders who wished to sell up for fear of expected losses. Thus he became the greatest shareholder in the company. However, the losses doubled and the shareholders lost control of their reactions and the situation in the company became increasingly complicated and critical. The crisis was threatening total collapse with the first occurrence of the need for a massive public transport operation.²

The shareholders were fully aware of the dangerous situation and accordingly held a meeting under the chairmanship of the Minister Sheikh Abd Allah Al-Suleiman³ and discussed the issue of dissolving the company. Al-Sayyid Hasan had sensed that King Abdul-Aziz wished that the company continue with its operations as the State did not have alternatives for it at that time. Al-Sayyid then bought up all the shares of the company wishing to provide quality services to the pilgrims, and in this he was seeking God's Pleasure.

It was not an easy undertaking: it required huge financing and its expected monetary revenues were not tempting; in fact, they were not sufficient to meet its operating costs. However, Al-Sayyid Hasan undertook the job with great devotion and restructured the

¹ See the Saudi *Al-Bilad* daily, edition No. 1018, dated 15. 07. 1370 AH / 22. 04. 1951 CE.

² The number of pilgrims for that year reached 100, 578 as reported by the Saudi *Al-Bilad* daily in its edition No. 1037, dated Tuesday 29. 08. 1370 AH.

³ See *Isamiyyoun* (Self-Made Men), p. 84.

company and turned it into a transportation giant with a new fleet of hundreds of buses and vehicles. Moreover, he imported large amounts of spare parts and recruited sufficient numbers of drivers. In addition, he established a new transport company, Al-Tawhid,¹ to operate alongside its sister company the Arabian Car Company in the service of pilgrims and visitors of the House of God. Another envisioned task for the new company would be caring for postal services all over the Kingdom.

The two companies continued operating in a perfect way for some three decades. This did not go down well with some envious businessmen who filed lawsuits and complaints to municipal and other authorities. In fact, they waged war against the benevolent enterprise of Al-Sayyid Hasan and continued until a verdict was issued for suspending the activity of the Arabian Car Company.

However, His Excellency, as is typical of him, did not give up, he went to court and presented the documents that refute all the fabricated lies and falsehoods. The court formed a high-level technical committee; and after the examination of the case, the committee presented to the court its report, which supported the statements of Al-Sayyid Hasan. Subsequently, the court reissued a licence of operation to the company. However, Al-Sayyid was too preoccupied with his other business pursuits to follow his activity in the company and decided to discontinue the operations. The company has been out of operation ever since.²

The Arabian Car Company

(الصورة ص. 187 ليس تحتها تعليق. النص أعلاه هو ترجمة لليفاطة في الصورة)

¹ Al-Tawhid Transport Company is not less important than the Arabian Car Company, with its capacity of around seven hundred buses in addition to a large number of small and medium-sized vehicles.

² The company stopped its operations for good in the year 1405 AH.

(الصورة ص. 189 ليس تحتها تعليق.)

Building of schools and contributing to the armament of the army

In his attempt to fulfil his duty towards his country, to take part in defending his Arab nation against aggressors, and to support his Islamic religion, Al-Sayyid Hasan willingly and happily undertook the task of providing everything he can in these respects. He donated four million riyals,¹ at a time when, as we have seen earlier, the riyal had a very high purchasing power, and a few hundred riyals were sufficient for the monthly expenditures of a large family.

With his instinctual understanding of things, Al-Sayyid divided his donations into two parts: two million for furnishing the army with proper armaments and the other two million for building schools. This is because he firmly believed that the strength of the state is based on the strength of its army. Any possible aggressor would be either deterred by knowing the strength of the army and its preparedness or, in case they decided to transgress, they would be taught a lesson by the defending forces.

On the other side, he wanted to contribute to the process of internal development of the community by helping in building schools. That was because the upbringing of a generation on solid and sound scholarly and intellectual bases would enable it to bear the responsibilities of the future with great awareness and capability of overcoming adverse circumstances. In fact, such process would contribute to the building of the community and would be a strong force to push it ahead and catch up with the technologically advanced countries. Al-Sayyid Hasan was acting on his firm belief that Muslims and Arabs were not inferior to these countries in anything, and all they needed was having stronger will power and more organisation in their processes, and, besides, to learn lessons from their failures to push them ahead on the road to success.

Thus, Al-Sayyid Hasan envisioned proceeding in his support of his country along two parallel lines. The first was contributing towards building a strong army capable of defending the country when the need arises. The second was contributing to its internal development in building its revival on modern sound principles. This was hoped to bring up a new generation capable of going along with the requirements of the changing times and that would be qualified to stand up to the cultural invasion that was starting to take hold of Arab minds.

When the monarch sees that his subjects are willingly and happily offering sacrifices in the service of the nation without seeking any personal benefit, he feels obliged to offer them his gratitude and appreciation. This was what King Saud Ibn Abdul-Aziz did when he sent a letter to Al-Sayyid Hasan thanking him for his contributions. Following is a translation of that letter:

¹ The donation was made in the year 1375 AH / 1955 CE, at a time when Prince Fahd Ibn Abdul-Aziz (later King under the title Custodian of the two Holy Mosques) was Minister of Education during the reign of the late King Saud Ibn Abdul-Aziz.

In the Name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate

**The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Office of His Majesty the King**

No.: 6 / 14 / 1307
Date: 16. 03. 1375

From Saud Ibn Abdul-Aziz to the Honourable Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly, may God grant him safety,

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

We have received your letter dated 28. 03. 1375, with the two enclosed money orders of four million riyals, two millions for your donation towards the armament of the Saudi Arab Army, and two millions for building schools. We appreciate your good sentiments, love, and loyalty towards your Government and nation. May God grant us and you success in what He likes, and may He grant our nation more of the like of you.

Wassalam

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 193)

The Saudi *Al-Bilad* daily published the news story under the title ‘His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly makes a donation of four million riyals’:

Radio Mecca broadcast the following on Friday evening on 18. 03. 1375 AH: His Excellency Minister of State Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly addressed to His Majesty the King a letter announcing his donation of two million riyals towards the armament of the Army and another two millions towards the process of disseminating education in the country ...¹

He saw that any nation will not have a chance towards revival except through the powerful and holistic minds of its people, and that would not be achieved but through education and through raising the cultural and intellectual levels of the community.

The Saudi *Al-Bilad* daily had published in its edition on 24. 09. 1374 a story under the title ‘His Royal Highness Prince Fahd Minister of Education thanks Al-Sayyid Al-Sharbatly for his donation towards the building of eight modern schools’:

The prominent philanthropist Al-Sayyid Hasan Al-Sharbatly has made a donation towards building eight modern schools to be opened in different parts of the Kingdom. He placed his donation at the disposal of the Ministry of Education to be spent in the areas where such schools are needed.

His Royal Highness the Minister of Education has sent the following letter of appreciation to His Excellency Al-Sayyid Al-Sharbatly:

¹ In its edition No 1990 on Sunday the 20th of Rabi’ Al-Awwal, 1375 AH / 6th of November, 1955 CE; see also Document 13 in the Appendices.

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

The Honourable Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly

We send you our kind regards,

The good benevolent deeds that you are performing to this nation and your noble feelings that are obvious on every occasion towards education ... make me address this letter to you to express gratitude to your good actions and your noble sentiments towards knowledge and scholarship. When we were together a few days ago, you announced that you are donating towards the building of eight modern schools to be erected in different parts of the country. I assure you that this announcement has filled me with great joy and happiness.

For this action in serving the process of education, I extend thanks to you and I pray to God to grant to our beloved country the likes of you to participate in the revival of this noble land in encouraging scholarship under the sponsorship of His Majesty the King and in his guidance and encouragement.

In conclusion, I pray that God will grant us all success in good actions; and God does not waste the reward for someone who performs good deeds.

Wassalmu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah (Peace be with you).

Minister of Education

Fahd Ibn Abdul-Aziz

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 196)

With the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd when he was Minister of Education

(الصورة ص. 197)

His support to the Royal Guard

In the same manner that he supported his country's efforts towards the reinforcement of its armed forces, Al-Sayyid Hasan also endeavoured towards providing the necessary lands for erecting constructions and training fields for members of the Royal Guard in appreciation of their role in serving the country and in support of their efforts in spreading stability and security.

(صورة ص. 199 ليس تحتها تعليق)

What follows is a translation of a letter from the Chief of the Royal Guard to Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly in this respect:

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

**The kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Ministry of Defence and Aviation
General Command of the Royal Guard
Administration**

**No
Date**

His Excellency the prominent philanthropist Al-Sayyid Hasan Ibn Abbas Sharbatly *may God guard him*

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh, and may God fill your times with joy

It gives me great pleasure, with the coming of the New Hijra Year, to extend to Your Excellency my sincere congratulations, and I pray to God that this happy occasion will return to you always with continued health and happiness.

Your Excellency, your great deeds of benevolence have truly and deservedly earned you the title of the ‘Outstanding Man of Charity’ for your contributions in all fields. There is no doubt that such a title is not earned by any man from void or by mere pretence; on the contrary, you have deservedly earned this title of which you can be proud. Your numerous contributions, whether on the level of individuals or benevolent institutions and organisations, are noble deeds that earned you the love and respect of all people of various sections of the society who look up to you as a role model for humane actions. For the abovementioned reasons, I would like to mention your munificent gestures to the Royal Guard, which we still remember with great gratitude and appreciation, and which will be a landmark in the march of the Guard. It gives me great pleasure to mention that you have donated to the Guard since the year 1375 the land located east of the Medina Road behind the palace of King Khalid *may God rest his soul*, which Your Excellency owns by the title deed No. 693 dated 15. 06. 1375 from Prince Fahd Ibn Muhammad Ibn Abdul-Rahman. The Royal Guard have erected their constructions and training fields on that land ever since that date. This generous donation of yours has earned you a high status and great appreciation and respect in the hearts of all members of the Guard.

This donation was a great and direct help in graduating a great number of men who have played an outstanding role in serving our religion, our King, and our country. Through this generous donation of yours we still work in graduating new men in the service of His Majesty the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, may God grant him safety.

Your Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan, you are an outstandingly generous man; and the members of the Royal Guard and I aspire to make further use of your generosity by granting this unit the right to use the abovementioned land for continuing its works and training operations on that site. This great deed would be registered in your golden credit of benevolence, and we shall always remember it as a great example in this field. It is really very difficult for us to find among the wealthy in this country someone who can

stand up to your status in benevolence and humane activities. May God grant you success and long life and health and happiness. *Wassalamu Alaikum* (Peace be with you)

Your Brother

Field Marshal

Abd Allah Ibn Ali Al-Namla
Commander in Chief of the Royal Guard

(ترجمة الرسالة على الصفحتين 200-201)

(صورة ص. 203 ليس تحتها تعليق)

Building a Hospital in Jeddah: The Saudi Arab Hospital

Al-Sayyid Hasan was a pioneer in a number of business fields as well as in charity activities. The Saudi *Al-Bilad* daily published a story saying that ‘Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly and Muhammad Saleh Abu Zinada are taking part in an extremely important and noble project in the service of the country and humanity.’¹ Al-Sayyid Hasan explains the project by saying that ‘due to the pressing need of the country and in view of the great suffering of our countrymen who have to travel abroad for medical care ... we have resolved after relying on God’s help to establish a hospital in the city of Jeddah.’ The story proceeds to speak about the equipment, the work team, and the nursing team of the hospital. The hospital would be built at the Thallaja Street under the name of the Saudi Arab Hospital. It would have a capacity of a hundred beds, ten of which would be constantly allocated for the needy patients. Medical examinations in the clinics of the hospital would be free of charge for the needy as well each Friday. The hospital was opened in the month of Shawwal of the same year, and provided pioneering proper medical services. It helped a great number of needy patients, in fulfilling the aim that Al-Sayyid Hasan and his associate had behind establishing it.

Rejuvenating the Printing, Press, and Publication Firm

In our survey of Al-Sayyid Hasan’s services and achievements, we cannot ignore the pioneering role he played through the Printing, Press, and Publication Firm, which Al-Sayyid Hasan rejuvenated,² making it the first printing press in Jeddah in the history of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to enrich the cultural and intellectual movement in his country.

The Firm played an influential role in this respect, not only in the Kingdom but also in many other countries in the Islamic world, east and west, not to mention countries in the Arab region as well.³

The main goal that Al-Sayyid Hasan had in mind behind this enterprise was to facilitate the printing of newspapers and to provide thinkers, students, and intellectuals with their requirements of books and references with ease, at any time, and with the required quantities.

In its later stages, the function of the Firm was more or less restricted to the printing and publication of books and booklets of religious nature, which Al-Sayyid Hasan used to distribute free of charge both inside the Kingdom and abroad. In the following table we have samples of these books and booklets:

¹ In its edition No. 1037 dated 29. 08. 1370 AH / 05. 06. 1950 CE.

² The Firm was first established by Mr Ahmad Obaid at Kilo Five, on the Mecca Road, when he established *Majallat Al-Riyadh* (Al-Riyadh Magazine) in 1373 AH, with the start of the reign of King Saud Ibn Abdul-Aziz after the passing away of his father. When the magazine was discontinued, Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly bought the printing presses; he may have been one of the shareholders in the Firm. See *Hikayat Al-Fata Miftah*, p. 221, by Abdul-Fattah Abu Madyan, edition of Al-Nadi Al-Thaqafi Al-Adabi (The Cultural Literary Club) in Jeddah, first edition, 1416 AH / 1996 CE.

³ See: His role in supporting knowledge and his relationships with intellectuals in this book.

A List of some of the religious books published by the Printing, Press, and Publication Firm¹

No. and title of book ²	Name of author	Quantity	Individual price in Saudi riyal	Total cost in Saudi riyal
1. Issues about Pilgrimage	Abdul-Aziz Ibn Baz	250000	0.75	187500
2. Islamic Law is Complete	Muhammad Al-Osaimin	200000	0.30	60000
3. The Three Principles	Ibn Abdul-Wahhab	250000	0.60	150000
4. Judgement on Neglecting Prayer	Muhammad Al-Osaimin	200000	0.30	60000
5. Muslim Woman's Head cover	Dar al-Mujtama'	20000	0.20	40000
6. Important Questions	Muhammad Al-Osaimin	20000	0.30	60000
7. To the Saudi Girl and Her Guardians	Abu Bakr Al-Jazairi	200000	0.30	60000
8. Islamic Directions for Reforming Persons and Community	Muhammad Zaino	200000	0.85	170000
9. Al-Nawawi's Forty hadiths	Al-Imam Al-Nawawi	200000	1.50	300000
10. Exegesis of <i>Amma</i> Part (of the Holy Quran)		250000	1.40	350000
11. Exegesis of <i>Dhariyat</i> Part		250000	0.90	250000
12. The <i>Ya Sin</i> Quarter (of the Holy Quran)		100000	1.90	190000
13. Exegesis of chapters of <i>Saba'</i> , <i>Fater</i> , and <i>Ya Sin</i> (of the Quran)		100000	0.75	75000
14. Selection of Exegeses (Part 13)		50000	0.75	37500
15. Important Remarks on the Selection of Exegesis		40000	1.00	40000
16. Facilitated Rules of Recitation of the Quran		100000	0.50	50000
17. The Bad Gift	Imam Hasan Al-Banna	10000	0.90	9000
18. Al-Ma'thourat (Daily Supplications)		200000	0.23	46000
19. Manner of the Prophet's Prayer	Abdul-Aziz Ibn Baz	200000	0.175	35000
20. Virtuous Deeds	Al-Maqdisi	100000	2.50	250000
21. The Muslim's Fortress		100000	1.20	120000
22. Supplications after Prayer		100000	0.25	25000
23. Rulings on Menstruation and Childbirth	Muhammad Al-Amoudi	100000	0.10	10000
24. Early Islamic Marriage	M Ali Al-Sabouni	100000	0.40	40000
25. An Eye-Opener for People of Reason		4000	0.75	3000
26. Imam Tahawi Dogma	Commentary by Abdul-Aziz Ibn Baz	100000	0.50	50000
27. Pilgrimage and <i>Omra</i>		100000	0.40	40000
28. Blessed Supplications		20000	1.00	20000
29. Blessed are the Strangers		100000	0.80	8000

¹ For space considerations, I have chosen to use representative shortened forms of the titles of books and names of authors. (Tr.)

² This is a list of some of the books that Al-Sayyid Hasan published and distributed free of charge. The price list shows that they were printed at wide apart dates.

30. Provisions for the God-Fearing		10000	1.00	10000
31. Recommendations from the Prophet <i>Peace be upon him</i>	Comp. by Ahmad Tahoun	10000	1.25	12500
32. Zakat Due of Jewellery		5000	1.00	50000
33. Muslim Girl – Beware the Telephone		20000	0.60	12000
34. Beautiful Names of God & The Verse of the Throne (Poster)		10000	0.90	9000
35. Why We Embraced Islam (in English)		5000	2.25	11250
36. Tarawih Prayers		100000	0.80	80000
37. Journal of Islamic Jurisprudence Council (Issue 3, Part 1)		6000	23.20	139200
38. Journal of Islamic Jurisprudence Council (Issue 3, Part 2)		6000	40.30	241800
39. Journal of Islamic Jurisprudence Council (Issue 3, Part 3)		6000	29.50	177000
40. Uncovering of Falsehoods		30	25	750
41. The Legal Will	Prepared by Mansour Ashmawi	100000	2.90	290000
42. Ruling on Singing (Proof of its Prohibition)	Abdul-Aziz Ibn Baz	10000	0.35	3500
43. Youths and Joking		10000	0.85	8500
44. Return of a Girl		10000	0.85	8500
45. On Fatwas in Newspapers and Magazines		10000	0.67	6700
46. Letter to a Film Salesman (one paper)		100000	0.21	21000
47. Traditional Supplications		200000	0.29	58.000
48. Manners of Disbelief		200000	0.48	96000
49. Correct Dogma (in Arabic)		50000	0.45	22500
50. Correct Dogma (in Turkish)		100000	0.686	68600
51. Three Epistles on Prayer		100000	0.586	58600
52. Necessity of Sticking to Way of the Prophet <i>Peace be upon him</i>		100000	0.49	49000
...				
Grand Total: Four million, one hundred thousand and four hundred Saudi Riyals (4,100,400)				

The Plate showing the Name of the printing firm
(الصورة في أسفل ص. 211)

Printing machines (offset) in 1373 AH
(صورتان ص. 213)

Printing machines (Typo)
(صورتان ص. 215)

Establishing the Bank of Al-Riyadh

The case of the Bank of Al-Riyadh has been a mystery that took up a good deal of the attention and interest of Al-Sayyid Hasan in his life, and it continues to be a subject of discussion and investigation after his passing away. Many have tried to clarify its secrets and understand its aspects, but it has remained a puzzling mystery searching for a solution.

In order to have a sound and fair approach to this complicated case, we shall need to look at it in the light of Islamic principles. A brief exposition of relevant teachings of Islam is hereby necessary. Islam is God's last Message to humankind: it is a comprehensive way of life for all; it came to save people from ignorance, distorted beliefs, and perverted systems and guide them to the light of knowledge and reason. It established advanced social systems, organised transactions, set out rights, defined duties, and called to worshipping the One God and Creator in accordance with the rulings laid in His immortal Book the Quran. A fair researcher is most likely to reach the conclusion that the Message of Islam is in agreement with the teachings of the previous laws revealed by God to humankind and with the calls of all of His Messengers and Prophets. God the Most Sublime states that He has prescribed to Muslims the same law that He had sent to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses, and to Jesus; this law carries the simple Message to people to hold to religion and not to go separate ways in it (*Al-Shoura: 13*).

Being a comprehensive way of life, Islam does not neglect the economic aspects of life. Islam prescribes *zakat* (the poor due) and makes it the third of its five pillars; *zakat* is not a voluntary charity in Islam; it is, rather, a right due to the needy in the community to be taken from the wealthy. In addition, Islam encourages its adherents to pay charity in excess of *zakat*. On the other hand, Islam prohibits usury, exploitation, monopoly, and manipulation of the prices of basic foodstuffs. It also prohibits excessive luxury and squandering of monetary resources. It organises inheritance and prohibits embezzlement and greed; it preserves individual ownership and encourages social cooperation.

Islam never endorses, in any of its rulings, the communist practices that Marx, Engels, and Lenin, among others, called for concerning monetary policies and nationalisation of private ownership, and considers these practices illegal as Islam prohibits seizing of people's possessions without right. Islam gives freedom to individuals in managing their possessions as long as this freedom is within the framework of Islamic law and does not cause harm to others and to the structure of the community.

It is a known fact that Saudi Arabia is the only country in the Islamic World that implements Islamic law (Sharia) in all its details. Islamic Sharia has been the sole constitution of the Kingdom ever since its establishment at the hand of its founder King Abdul-Aziz. The kingdom has accepted neither the wrongful claims of the capitalists nor the luring slogans of the communists, and it has always resorted to Islamic law in all matters of the State or the affairs of citizens.

Going back now to the Bank of Al-Riyadh case, the whole affair, from the start, has been a tragic case that consumed a large portion of an honest man's fortune – money which he had earned legally and from which he paid away the part prescribed by God in charity. Had it not been for his remarkable and unmatched character traits the man and his course of life might have taken a different direction; no other man would have been able to stand in his shoes.

As is typical with Al-Sayyid Hasan, in the case of al-Riyadh Bank, he was trying to open a new avenue for the revival of his community and nation, which were the love of his life and to whose rulers he had given the pledge of loyalty. Accordingly, he, along with a group of investors, established the Bank of Al-Riyadh and bought shares in it.¹ The shareholders formed an administrative board and chose Al-Sayyid Hasan as chairman, according to articles 31 and 34 of the constitutional list of the bank. The Council of Ministers confirmed the choice through its decree No. 11, dated 01. 05. 1377 AH for a period ending on 30. 02. 1382 AH, with possibility of extension, in view of the fact that Al-Sayyid Hasan owned the greatest number of the Bank's shares – with 12608 basic shares under his own name, in addition to shares registered under the names of his minor children, from a total of fifty thousand shares – and in view of the fact that the board had voted unanimously on his chairmanship on account of his seriousness, good management, and wisdom. Al-Sayyid Hasan then fully supported the bank and provided personal guarantees in an attempt to get the bank across to success.

Most probably, there were people with hearts filled with envy at seeing the man accomplishing with great vitality what specialists in the world of finance were not able to do – this seems to be the fate of successful men in all ages. Subsequently, they fabricated falsehoods and spread lies in all directions. Following this, the Council of Ministers issued decree No. 577, dated 01. 08. 1388 AH –² six months before the expiry of the first tenure of Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly as Chairman of the Board – forcing him to resign his chairmanship; otherwise, he will be removed from office, although the decree did not give any reasons for this decision.

A legitimate question suggests itself here: how could such a man be removed from his office at a time when he has spent huge portions of his fortune in support of this enterprise? His shares – including those in the names of his family members – reached around 70% of the total shares of the bank. The reason behind this acquisition was that he – sensing his responsibility, as unanimously elected Chairman, of preserving the status of the bank – used to buy the shares of debtors who failed in paying their debts so as to avoid any undue crises likely to damage the status of the bank when large numbers of shares are offered for sale.

Two days after the issuance of the decree forcing him to resign, and on 03. 08. 1381 AH, the Council of Ministers issued decree No 418 freezing Al-Sayyid Hasan's assets. The decree included the following articles:

¹ See Document No. 15 in the Appendices.

² In the account of the crisis of the bank, we have depended on statements in the Sharbatly archives.

1. Informing the Board members, including the Chairman, of the necessity of paying their due debts to the bank within fifteen days; otherwise, their portfolios will be offered for sale to meet all, or part, of their debts due to the bank.
2. In view of the likelihood, in the current circumstances, that no prospective buyers may come forth to buy the shares, the said shares will be transferred to the Monetary Agency, on behalf of the Government, to be bought at their net price as assessed by a committee formed of a neutral accountant and Mr Ahmad Al-Muhajir Al-Pakistani. This committee has been commissioned to conduct a study of the actual status of the bank and define the real price of the share as it stands on the day that follows the expiry of the warning addressed to the debtor shareholders on 03. 08. 1381 AH.
3. The Government has taken these steps in view of the general interest and as a temporary measure to keep the bank registered as an independent institution; the ultimate intention is that the Government shares would be offered for sale to private parties at a convenient time.

Contrary to the explicit statement of the decree, His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan was not informed of the contents of the decree until 02. 09. 1381 AH,¹ that is after the expiry of the warning period set by the decree for the settlement of the situation of the bank shareholders. To be kept in mind in this respect is the fact that the second article of the decree stated that the bank shares should be assessed on the day following the expiry of the warning; that is on 19. 08. 1381 AH. The same article also stated that the bank shares should be assessed by a committee including an independent accountant after conducting a study of the bank status.

The actual happenings

1. The assessment stipulated in the decision did not take place on the day following the expiry of the warning period.
2. No neutral accountant was called to sit on the committee for the assessment. Subsequently, the assessment was done by Mr Muhajir and ‘Nawwar and Company’. In his report dated 10. 03. 1382 AH, Mr Muhajir relied on accounts dated 29. 07. 1381 AH – that is before the Ministerial decree – and assessed the share at Saudi Riyals 406; while Nawwar and Company, in their report dated 17. 11. 1382 AH, relied on the budget of 30. 06. 1382 AH, and assessed the share at Saudi Riyals 311. Thus the assessment went against the decree of the Council of Ministers.

¹ Al-Sayyid Hasan issued a statement entitled ‘Bank of Al-Riyadh is stronger than steel’ published in *Al-Bilad* daily in its edition No 911, dated 18. 08. 1381 AH. In this statement, Al-Sayyid Hasan talked in his capacity as Chairman of the bank, responsible for its management, and announced that everything was right with the bank. This proves that he did not have knowledge of the decision to remove him from office; or, someone had deliberately chosen not to inform him of the decision so as to make him miss the chance of a possible settlement.

3. The Ministry of Finance did not go by the reports of either expert, had its own assessment of the share at Saudi Riyals 350, and sold the shares for its own benefit without his agreement.
4. None of the three assessments of the share value was fair; as on the date of the freezing of accounts, the share had a much higher value, as assessed by the Arbitration Committee later appointed by the High Office.
5. The temporary step of the Government offering of shares for sale to private parties as stipulated in Article three of the decree has not been put into action up to now, forty five years after the issuance of the decree.

Al-Sayyid Hasan filed a complaint to the High Office about the damage done to him and explained his case. A command was issued by the High Office under No 3571 dated 20. 02. 1389 AH to form a specialised committee to look into the complaint of Al-Sayyid Hasan.

The Arbitration Committee was formed of a number of specialists who investigated the matter entirely, and saw that His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan was right in his complaint. However, the Committee did not issue a verdict concerning the complaint as the ownership of the bank had been transferred to the Ministry of Finance and the Monetary Agency, and these two parties were not represented in the case being heard by the Arbitration Committee and were not a party in the dispute. However, the Committee reserved the right for Al-Sayyid Hasan to file a lawsuit concerning his shares with specialised courts in accordance with proper legal procedures. The Committee further decided that the previous assessments of the share values were incorrect and that the measures taken were not valid and were not in line with the decree of the Council of Ministers No 4180.

In page 74 of the Arbitration Committee verdict, it states that ‘it sees it as its conscientious duty to reserve the right of the complainant Al-Sayyid Hasan Al-Sharbatly, in case he could not settle the case in a friendly manner out of court administratively, to file a lawsuit to get his shares back.’ In page 262, it states: ‘Since Al-Sayyid Hasan’s shares have been sold to pay for his debts to the bank; the aim of selling the shares is nullified if and when he pays back all his debts, and his shares would be returned to him’

Al-Sayyid Hasan had indeed paid back all dues owed by him to the bank by the cheque No. 113 / 4535911 dated 02.03. 1983 CE and met all his obligations. Subsequently, there was no reason to prevent his shares being returned to him. Thus, the goal of retaining his shares is rendered void, and all that remains to be done is that the Ministry of Finance should do its duty and return his shares to him as stipulated in the verdict of the Arbitration Committee.

The shares were doubled forty times over in the year 1988 CE to become 50432 in number; then five new shares were added to each share, and they became 3025920 shares

in the year 1992 CE; then they were doubled in the year 1994 CE to become 6051840 shares; they were also doubled in the year 1998 to become 12103680 shares.

The legitimate question that is still without an answer now is: till when will those shares remain locked up by a verdict half a century old, retained from their legal owners? This continues in spite of the fact that they are free from any debt or any financial or administrative restrictions whatsoever. The owner of these shares has passed away to meet his Creator with some kind of bitterness in his soul, not because of their monetary value – although he had every right to be concerned about this – but because the whole case caused him – initially and temporarily – a sense of bitterness for the time, money, and effort he had spent in this project wishing to participate in the revival of his country. It also caused a sense of failure and frustration – which ordinarily had no place in his soul – to creep into him and shake his sense of confidence, also temporarily, in all around him, as there were still people stalking to ensnare him in some trap unawares. There were also those who made public their heart-felt envy of the bounties God had bestowed on him.

Supporting the People of the Quran

Al-Sayyid Hasan's deeds in fields of charity were numerous and widely spread over many places. However, he was never as quick in spending in charity as he was in spending in serving the Holy Quran and supporting its people and encouraging its students in their efforts towards memorising and studying it. His spending in this field amounted to millions, and his donations always anticipated requests. His chief dream was to establish a Quranic school in every street.

He spent huge sums of money on Quranic groups both inside the Kingdom and abroad, and donated large areas of land in support of these endeavours. He encouraged students of the Quran not only by paying teachers' salaries but also by providing them with grants and scholarships to bring joy to their hearts. He even sent distinguished students from among them to pilgrimage each year at his own expense.

In what follows we have a translation of some of the correspondences that reveal the size of his spending in this respect.

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Benevolent Association for Teaching the Holy Quran in Qasim

Under supervision of

The Islamic Muhammad Ibn Saud University

P. O. Box 1823 – Tel. 3237781 Buraida

Permit No 3

No.: 438 / 12 / 75 / 91 F

Date: 05. 08. 1412 AH

His Excellency Sheikh Hasan Abbas Sharbatly *may God guard him against harm*

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Members of the Board of the Benevolent Association for Teaching the Holy Quran in Qasim and I have received with great appreciation and gratitude the donation of Your Excellency of the lands at Melida in Buraida for the benefit of the Association; and we would like to express to Your Excellency our deep thanks and gratitude for this generosity that is added to your great credit of benevolence towards charity organisations, and to our Association in particular.

All the sheikhs and chiefs of the region have received the news with great joy and appreciation as it is an outstanding support to the Association and it will enable it to proceed towards more care of the Honourable Book of God; and they all remember Your Excellency's generous donations to the Association and other associations and your favour – after God's – in their progress and prosperity.

Your support and standing by our Association have exceeded all our expectations and gone beyond all limits; and this is not strange coming from Your Excellency as you – may God guard you against all harm – have always been the man for benevolence and kindness and have had precedence in this field, God willing.

Regarding this great generosity, we cannot but raise our hands in supplicating to God the Most Sublime to register this deed of yours in your credit and accept it from you.

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh ...

Chairman and Members of the Board of the
Benevolent Association for Teaching the Holy Quran in Qasim

Signed for them by the Chairman

Abd Allah Ibn Muhammad Al-Ajaji

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 226)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

S. H. A. Abbas Sharbatly
General Merchants
P O Box No. 296
Jeddah –Saudi Arabia
Cable Add.: (SHARBATLY)
C. R. 713
Telephone: 6426433 / 6426596

No. 571 – Date: 04 / 07 / 1402 AH

His Excellency Sheikh Muhammad Ali Al-Harkan, Secretary General, Muslim World League

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

With this letter to Your Excellency we enclose a money order to Saudi Cairo Bank, Al-Faiha Branch, for two million and five hundred thousand Saudi riyals as the first instalment to meet the costs of printing five million *mushafs* (Quran books) for the Republic of Indonesia; and we are ready to send you the balance for the said costs on time, God willing. He who guides to an act of charity is as good as the doer of it, and the best act of charity is the fastest, and we pray to God to accept all your good deeds and let them be in seeking His pleasure and that He will double the reward to all; He hears all supplications and answers them. May God perpetuate your success; He is the One to grant success and the One to guide to the Straight Path. *Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh.*

Signed

Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 227)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Charity Organisation at Medina Al-Munawwara

No.: 959 / J

Established in 1379 AH

Date: 24. 08. 1412 AH

Registered with Ministry of Social Affairs under No 22 on 04 / 06 / 1397 AH

Telephone: 8224434 – 8224476 – 8224464

P. O. Box: 872

Medina Al-Munawwara – Fax 8238147

His Excellency the great man of charity Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
May God bestow on him more of His blessings and guidance.

We salute you with the salutation of the People of Paradise may God make us all among them, *Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh* (Peace be with you)

We write to inform Your Excellency that we have received one million copy of the paper of ‘Supplications after Prayer’ and one million copy of the epistle on ‘Rulings on Menstruation and Childbirth;’ and we pray to God to grant you doubled rewards for each letter in them, and to grant you more merit, good, and success to what pleases Him.

We await the remaining publications, especially the book on *Virtuous Deeds* and *Al-Ma'thourat* (Daily Supplications).

May God bestow on you more of His merit and guidance and interest in benevolence, and may He mention you with His angels with His thankful wealthy servants;

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh

Yours with love in God

Secretary General of
Charity Organisation at Medina Al-Munawwara

Muhammad Hamida

(ترجمة الرسالة ص.228)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Benevolent Association for Teaching the Holy Quran in Qasim

Under supervision of

The Islamic Muhammad Ibn Saud University

P. O. Box 1823 – Tel. 3237781 Buraida

Permit No 3

No.: 484 / 12 / S

Date: 20. 08. 1412 AH

A letter of gratitude and appreciation

Area donated: more than two million square metres

His Excellency Sheikh Hasan Abbas Sharbatly may God guard him against harm

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

It gives great pleasure to us, members of the Board of the Benevolent Association for Teaching the Holy Quran in Buraida and all its branches and members to express to Your Excellency our great appreciation and gratitude for your donation to the Association of your estate at Melida in Buraida.

Words of gratitude stand helpless in front of this noble generosity, and we cannot but raise our prayers to God the Most Sublime to accept it from you and make it a genuine act seeking His pleasure. Your noble deeds and support of this Association are increasing daily, and this is met with great appreciation in the souls of the members of the association and the whole community.

May God bless you and bless your actions and accept your charity and guide you to the Straight Path *Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh*

48 – 2 / 12 / d

(Members of the Board of the Association)

1. Sheikh Saleh Ibn Ibrahim Al-Tuwaijiri 2. Sheikh Muhammad Ibn Osman Al-Bishr

3. Sheikh Abd Allah Ibn Saleh Al-Hammad 4. Ahmad Ibn Abd Allah Al-Yahya

5. Ali Ibn Ibrahim al-Yahya 6. Saleh Ibn Osman Al-Bajadi

7. Ali Ibn Muhammad Al-Ajlan 8. Ali Ibn Abdul-Rahman Al-Omairi

9. Deputy President of the Association 10. President of the association

Osman Ibn Abdul-Rahman Al-Osaim

Abd Allah Ibn Muhammad al-Ajaji

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 229)

Association for the Teaching of the Holy Quran

Mecca Al-Mukarrama
Under supervision of
The Islamic Muhammad Ibn Saud University
Permit No 2

The Great Man of Benevolence **His Excellency Sheikh Hasan Abbas Sharbatly**

This holy and pure land has brought up noble men of generosity and benevolence; the master of all these generous men is our beloved Prophet Muhammad the Chosen One *Peace be upon him*, the example for the whole nation, the pride of all Muslims, and the glory of Islam.

God's blessings on this land have continued to be bestowed on its people, its neighbours, and far brothers by its generous men.

From among these men is His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly; God has bestowed on him great and abundant wealth, and he has extended helping hands to the needy and the disadvantaged. He has extended great help in supporting the Association for the Teaching of the Holy Quran in Mecca Al-Mukarrama with his munificence, and he donated to the Association a ten-thousand-square-metres piece of land facing four streets, one of which is Al-Mansour Street; and the Association has erected two buildings on a half of this land. He has also donated another piece of land named Al-Bizzam, whose area is 390000 square metres at the old Mecca-Jeddah road. In addition, he provides a monthly financial support to the Association of a quarter million Saudi riyals. With all gratitude, the Association receives this regular generous donation.

Yes ... he is a man on whom God has bestowed abundantly, and he has spent from his wealth without restraints, and his benevolence has spread to numerous Muslim countries; and out of gratitude, the Association expresses its thanks to His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan for his great help and support to the people of the Quran. The Prophet *Peace be upon him* says, 'When someone does a favour to you, you have to reward him.'

May God bless his life, guide his steps, bestow health on him, and grant him help in his spending in the ways of God.

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 230)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

**Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Ministry of Justice
Presidency of the Qasim Courts**

His Excellency Brother Hasan Abbas Sharbatly may God grant him success

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

It gives me great pleasure, having heard of your donation to the Benevolent Association for Teaching the Holy Quran in Qasim of the land owned by Your Excellency at the Melida Quarter in Buraida, to express to Your Excellency my appreciation for this noble benevolence.

I thank God the Most Sublime that there are men in our country who love charity and endeavour in its way like Your Excellency, on whom God has bestowed His blessings and they are thankful and spending from God's bounties in the Way of God seeking His Pleasure.

May God reward you for your good deeds, bless you, grant you success, and guide your steps along the path of good.

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

49-2 / 12/ d
President of the Qasim Courts

Abdul-Rahman Ibn Abd Allah Al-Ajlan

(ترجمة الرسالة ص.231)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

S. H. A. Abbas Sharbatly
General Merchants
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Jeddah –Saudi Arabia
Cable Add.: (SHARBATLY)
C. R. 713
Telephone: 6426433 / 6426596

No. 2855

Date: 22 / 07 / 1402 AH

Messrs Saudi Cairo Bank, Jeddah, Al-Faiha Branch

Regards,

We wish you to hand to His Excellency the Secretary General of the Muslim World League Sheikh Muhammad Al-Harkan the sum of two million and five thousand Saudi riyals as the first instalment of the cost of five million (*mushaf*) Quran books for the benefit of Indonesia.

Please accept our sincere regards

Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 232)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

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General Merchants
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Cable Add.: (SHARBATLY)
C. R. 713
Telephone: 6602926 / 6608896

Personal Office

No. 172 / H – Date: 25 / 11 / 1411 AH

Messrs United Saudi Commercial Bank

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Please hand the sum of thirty seven thousand and five hundred Saudi riyals to Sheikh Muhammad Saleh Bahareth for costs of the pilgrimage of one hundred and fifty students form the Association for the Teaching of the Holy Quran in Jeddah.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 233)

Al-Ta'ef 160 10 / 2/ 1413 AH Abd Allah Al-Thumali

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Al-Sharbatly may God guard him and
guide him
Cable Sharbatly
Jeddah

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

We would like to express our gratitude for your care and generosity in supporting the Benevolent Association for Teaching the Holy Quran in Al-Ta'ef, and we can find nothing to offer you in reward except what the Prophet *Peace be upon him*, the Chosen one, has taught us: 'When someone does a favour to you, you have to reward him; if you could not find that, then supplicate for him.'

May God guard you from harm and bless your life, and may your work be in your credit of good deeds in supporting benevolence, in that you have facilitated by this generosity the way for the teaching and learning of the Holy Quran. May God make you from among the people of goodness promised with goodness. We, members of the Administrative Board of the Association, pleased with your monthly support of one hundred thousand riyals to cover the deficit of the Association, pray to the Glorified Lord to reward you and grant you sincerity in works. We would like you to know that everybody here, teachers and students, supplicates for you. This generous act of yours will be a lasting act of charity for teachers and students through the successive generations. In conclusion, we supplicate for you again, and may God accept your good deeds and ours.

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Members of the Administrative Board of the Benevolent Association for Teaching the Holy Quran in Ta'ef

For them, General Manager of the Association

Muhammad Ibn Marzouq Al-Qurashi

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 234)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

**Association of the Holy Quran in Jeddah
Under the supervision of
Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University**

Date: 12 / 08 / 1407

Gratitude and Appreciation

Messrs: The Printing, Press, and Publication Firm may God guard you against harm

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

The Association of the Holy Quran in Jeddah is pleased to acknowledge with great gratitude and appreciation your generous donation this year of a collection of your publications, which was your donation in the service of the Book of God the Exalted, and we pray to God to reward you and make this deed in your credit of good deeds and a cover for you from chastisement.

May God guide your steps and bless your efforts and guard you against harm.

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Ahmad Muhammad Salah Jamjoum

President of the Association of the Holy Quran in Jeddah

Permit No. 9, P. O. Box 14811 Jeddah 21434 Telephone 6872710 / 6361400

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 235)

Supporting the pilgrims to the House of God

The spending of Al-Sayyid Hasan in the pilgrimage season every year was enormous. He was never satisfied with merely providing the expressed required quantities by the associations and organisations caring for the pilgrims. Such associations used to seek donations of milk, dates, fruits, soft drinks, and bread among other provisions, to be distributed among pilgrims. Al-Sayyid Hasan used to provide them with doubled quantities of their required provisions and used to assure them that he was always ready to provide any additional quantities that they may require when the need arose.¹ He even used to give orders to officials in his offices to provide the necessary quantities without referring to him in this matter. Add to this the great numbers of pilgrims that he used to sponsor every year at his personal expense.

In the following story we have but one example of his practice during pilgrimage seasons. In the late 1950s, a Turkish group of about two thousand men and women came to pilgrimage. When they finished their pilgrimage devotions, they got ready for their travel back home, but their ship did not arrive. They waited for their ship so long that their provisions and savings were depleted and they were suffering from waiting and hunger.

The chief of the group tried in vain to solve the problem and to obtain a loan from many merchants and influential people to enable the pilgrims to go back home. All his attempts failed until someone recommended to him to try with Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly, and accordingly he went to him with a delegation from the group.

Al-Sayyid Hasan received them with generosity and honoured them. The chief of the group then explained to Al-Sayyid Hasan the predicament that the group were in, and asked for a loan of ten guineas for each one of the pilgrims in his group to enable them to travel back to their country, promising that they would repay the loan upon their return in any way His Excellency found convenient.

At that point, Al-Sayyid Hasan asked him, ‘Will the ten guineas be sufficient for each one of you for provisions, accommodation, and travel costs?’ The man answered in the positive.

Al-Sayyid Hasan then said, ‘I think otherwise, I think that you need at least fifty guineas for each one in order to be able to go back home.’

The man said, ‘Where shall we get the fifty guineas from, sir, while we were not able to manage even ten?’

Al-Sayyid Hasan answered, ‘I will give each one of you a loan of fifty guineas on condition that each one should give me a written document for the loan.’

¹ See examples for this in the 1412 AH pilgrimage season in Documents 17 to 50 in the Appendix of this book.

The man readily and happily agreed and asked each one of the group to write the required document. When this was done, the man handed the documents to Al-Sayyid Hasan, who asked him, ‘You are going to pay me back my money as it is; what benefit shall I get from the transaction then?’

The man was dumbfounded and found nothing to say in answer.

Then Al-Sayyid Hasan said,

You see, if someone called me to a transaction in which my profit would be doubled, should I tarry in that? God the Most Sublime and Glorious has promised to double the reward for whomsoever He wishes from among His servants up to seven hundred times or more. With God’s promise I find sufficiency and I do not need your documents, and you will have all the money you need entirely for God’s sake in seeking His Pleasure.

He gave them all they needed and returned their loan documents to them.

Supporting charity organisations with monthly allocations

Ever since fortune found its way to him, Al-Sayyid Hasan made it his constant practice to spend it in causes of charity in legal ways prescribed in Islam and to direct it wherever he found there was need for it, be it for private expenses or for attaining a public goal. All he was interested in was to put his money where there was benefit for Muslims.

Naturally, he could not perform this tremendous task with his personal efforts alone, and he had to seek the help of others in distributing his charity expenditure; his tasks were numerous and his expenditure was huge, and the job of carrying the needed help to those who were deserving of it was extremely difficult; this needed big specialised organisations in order to get the required help to the greatest possible number both at home and abroad.

Accordingly, Al-Sayyid Hasan took special care to establish constant connecting links for cooperation with active charity organisations that undoubtedly had lists of the disadvantaged people in their regions. Furthermore, the charity activists in these organisations, who were mostly volunteer workers seeking reward from God, were not less careful than he was in love of aid and charity work.

Al-Sayyid Hasan allocated to these charity organisations and to some trustworthy workers in the field monthly sums to be distributed in benevolent activities in accordance with an agreement on ways of spending of these sums; and sometimes he used to give individual workers or agents freedom in choosing proper ways of expenditure.

In what follows we have samples of these allocations.

Encouraging youths for marriage

God gave our man deep insight and great ability of analysis and argument. However, he did not use his talents in this respect for purposes of pride or self-conceit but to reach a point of agreement with his interlocutors in a positive way.

He used to exchange visits with some scholars; and it once happened that some scholars met at his residence and discussed a number of issues, including the question of dowries. Some scholars suggested that the solution for the marriage crisis and for encouraging young men to marry lies in bringing down the level of dowries. However, Al-Sayyid Hasan disagreed and said that that was only a part of the solution, and it could not be a satisfactory total solution.¹

Some scholars retorted that that was the recommendation of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*, and cited some hadiths to that point, like the statements of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*: ‘The best marriage is the one with the least cost,’² and ‘It is a mark of blessedness for a woman having an easy betrothal, easy dowry, and ease in childbirth.’³

Al-Sayyid Hasan then cited the following story about the Caliph Omar Ibn Al-Khattab *God be pleased with him*, when he wanted to issue a decree limiting dowries and bringing them down. A woman came and argued with him saying, ‘You have no right to do this, Omar. How could you do such a thing when God the Most Sublime has stated that when a man has given a woman a huge dowry, he should not try to take back anything of it (*Al-Nisa*: 20). Omar then said, ‘The woman is right and Omar was wrong.’

Al-Sayyid Hasan was asked, ‘Then, what is the solution for this dilemma?’

He answered,

The solution is that the wealthy should give away from their money to encourage and help the youths to get married. My suggestion is that a marriage fund should be established to encourage the youths. When a young man wants to marry and he does not have the money for that, the fund would pay him a handsome sum of money to help him start his life and build his home; and I am the first to donate to such a project.⁴

Some scholars welcomed the suggestion and started the project by establishing the suggested fund and established branch organisations in the cities of the Kingdom to encourage the youths to get married. And as he promised, Al-Sayyid Hasan was the first to contribute to the fund with large sums of money in the cities of Al-Riyadh, Mecca, Medina, Al-Qasim, the Asir region, and other cities.

¹ The story is taken from the Sharbatly archives.

² The hadith is narrated by Al-Baihaqi in his *Shu'ab Al-Iman* (Branches of Faith), under No. 6295, and by Ahmad in his *Musnad*, under No. 23388.

³ The hadith is narrated by Ahmad in his *Musnad* under No 22338.

⁴ The story is gathered from the Sharbatly archives and from various letters in this respect.

As an examples of his contributions in this respect, We mention his contribution of fifty thousand riyals monthly to Dr Abd Allah Ibn Abdul-Aziz Al-Muslih for this project in Asir in addition to other donations, and the sum of three hundred thousand riyals monthly to Sheikh Said Ibn Abd Allah Al-Da'jani, and to other cities of the Kingdom in which this project was started.

He also used to say,

God has called the dowry a prescription and duty in His stipulation to men to give the prescribed dowries to women in marriage (*Al-Nisa'*: 24). The Prophet *Peace be upon him* also said, 'When someone has unveiled his wife and looked at her without her cover, he has to pay her the prescribed dowry whether he has slept with her or not.'¹ Khalid Ibn Al-Walid *God be pleased with him* used to say, 'I wonder how someone who does not find his day's food does not go out to face people with a drawn sword!' Hunger to sex is like hunger to food, if not stronger; and if a young man does not have what it takes to get married and commits adultery – God forbid – then, the wealthy who know about his need and do not help him will be his partners in sin. God has prescribed the dowry also as an indication of the significance of the marriage contract and a token of appreciation to woman; this is because if marriage was made legal without dowry, it will be a mark of disrespect to woman, the man would look degradingly at his woman and this will lead to a bad relationship between them.

Islam has also prescribed the dowry on man to show that the woman should be looked upon as a precious object of love, sympathy, and care, and that he should bear the burdens of life on her behalf, being created and prepared by God as the breadwinner of the family and for endeavouring towards winning subsistence. On the other hand, the woman, by her nature, is prepared to be the mistress and manager of the home, the man's comfort, to take care of the children of the family and to prepare the proper atmosphere for happiness at home.

¹ The hadith is narrated by Al-Baihaqi in his *Al-Sunan Al-Kubra*, vol. 7, p. 256, as an incompletely transmitted hadith.

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

S. H. A. Abbas Sharbatly
General Merchants
P O Box No. (296) JEDDAH 21411
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Cable Add.: (SHARBATLY)
C. R. 713
Telephone: 6602926 / 6608896

No. 140 / H – Date: 25 / 08 / 1410 AH

Messrs United Saudi Commercial Bank

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

With reference to our previous order No. 131 / H, dated 15. 08. 1410 AH concerning cashing two hundred fifty thousand riyals monthly to Sheikh Said Ibn Abd Allah Al-Da'jani president of the Committee for Encouraging Marriage among Youths, we wish to make the monthly sum at three hundred thousand riyals and we would like you to pay him immediately the sum of one hundred thousand riyals to complete the allocations for the months of Sha'ban and Ramadan, 1410 AH.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 242)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

S. H. A. Abbas Sharbatly
General Merchants
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Telephone: 6602926 / 6608896

No. 90/ H – Date: 14/ 07 / 1411 AH

Messrs United Saudi Commercial Bank

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Kindly hand the sum of fifty thousand riyals monthly to Dr Abd Allah Ibn Abdul-Aziz Al-Muslih, Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Law in Abha for the benefit of the project of encouraging bachelors to marriage in the region of Tihamat Asir starting from the month of Rajab and until further notice, and notify us of this.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 243)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

S. H. A. Abbas Sharbatly
General Merchants
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Jeddah –Saudi Arabia
Cable Add.: (SHARBATLY)
C. R. 713
Telephone: 6602926 / 6608896

No. 9 / H – Date: 25 / 01 / 1412 AH

Messrs United Saudi Commercial Bank

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Kindly transfer the sum of one hundred thousand riyals monthly to the Benevolent Marriage Project in Medina Al-Munawwara starting from the month of Muharram 1412 AH, and notify us of this.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 244)

Building Ten Mosques Every Month in Tihamat Asir

This is not an easy task to undertake: building ten mosques every month takes a special budget and great effort. In just one region in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Tihamat Asir, Al-Sayyid Hasan undertook to build ten mosques every month for a period of almost ten years, starting from the month of Rajab, 1411 AH.

Al-Sayyid Hasan spent tens of millions on this project alone, let alone his spending on other projects: he built thousands of mosques both inside the Kingdom and abroad.¹ Add to all this his establishing of Quran seminaries, schools, kindergartens, orphanages, and other charitable institutions.

In what follows we have a few of his achievements in this domain.

¹ Dr Muhammad Nasif mentioned in a meeting with him in Jeddah that the sons of His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan are still persistent in performing these tasks, after the example of their father, in loyalty to their late father, and in executing his will. They finish the building of one mosque after another and furnish it with proper fixture and furniture and hand it over to local committees.

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

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Telephone: 6602926 / 6608896
Personal Office
No. 89 / H – Date: 14 / 07 / 1411 AH

Messrs United Saudi Commercial Bank

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Kindly hand the sum of one hundred fifty thousand riyals monthly to Dr Abd Allah Ibn Abdul-Aziz Al-Muslih, Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Law in Abha for building ten mosques every month in Tihamat Asir, starting from the month of Rajab 1411 AH and until further notice and notify us of this.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 246)

... My visit to the great entrepreneur and administrator Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly gave me a pleasant surprise as I observed that His Excellency had noble manners and sublime character coupled with wisdom and well-guided sagacity. Add to this his noble exemplary generosity and munificence. His prosperous stores in the city of Jeddah are a symbol of constant progress and movement in the largest of Saudi cities: they are well-stocked with all kinds of merchandise and basic goods and materials in addition to foodstuffs. Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly is also distinguished by being close to His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and the honourable princes. He donates generously to many projects and endeavours with all his time and money towards the advancement and prosperity of the country.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly has noble determination and creativity in economic projects and in participating strongly in shares of companies in Saudi Arabia.

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(This is a translation of a page from the book *Ta'ala Ma'i ila Al-Hejaz* (Come with Me to Hejaz) written by Muhammad Al-Sallah (nicknamed the 'Flying Journalist'), printed in 1369-1370 AH.)

(ترجمة ص. 247)

**A Saudi Man Volunteered to Build Them and the Moving of the Road Stopped
Them:
Large Sunshades for Protection of Pilgrims**

Medina Al-Munawwara – 31 January 1950:

The Egyptian magazine *Akher Sa'a* published that the Saudi merchant Hasan Sharbatly has agreed to start rebuilding two large sunshades on the Medina Road: a philanthropic project he had started earlier for the protection of pilgrims from heat and sunstrokes. The project had been interrupted by the decision to alter the Medina Road usually used by pilgrims. The Saudi philanthropist had provided all the materials needed for the construction works and started the foundations but heavy rainfalls and subsequent rushing streams washed away the building materials in the site. In its edition yesterday, *Akher Sa'a* added that Sheikh Saleh Qazzaz, ex-general manager of pilgrimage in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, had persistently asked relevant authorities and philanthropists during the past years to build two sunshades on the Medina Road to protect pilgrims from heat and sunstrokes following the casualties among the pilgrims in the summer. The suggestion was studied by the relevant authorities, and when Sheikh Ahmad Musalli, personal secretary and advisor to His Excellency the Minister of Finance, was, one day, in a meeting with Sheikh Saleh Qazzaz discussing the subject of the sunshades, Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly arrived and took part in the discussion. This great philanthropist was impressed by the need to build the sunshades and declared, in the presence of Sheikh Saleh Qazzaz, his readiness to do whatever it takes to build large sunshades in the places that the pilgrimage management authorities see fit on the road. However, due to his numerous preoccupations, he expressed his wish that His Excellency Sheikh Saleh Qazzaz partake with him in the reward from God by supervising the actual building process. He made it clear that he is ready to provide all the costs needed by the project. Sheikh Saleh and Sheikh Ahmad Musalli liked the idea, and the relevant authorities approved of it. However, the Pilgrimage Management Authority undertook the actual building process in accordance with their agreement with Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly and agreed with one of the construction companies – one of the prominent shareholders in which was Sheikh Abdul-Aziz Jamil – in the country to do that.

Indeed, two large sunshades were built at Al-Musaijid, each one of which can accommodate some seven hundred pilgrims. Building materials were transported to the other sites and stations assigned by the Pilgrimage Authority for the building of the remaining sunshades. After the company had finished the excavation work and the construction of the foundations, the Ministry of Finance informed Al-Sayyid Hasan that the road is going to be altered and that the new road will be in the vicinity of Badr. This implies that the stations would become useless. Subsequently, he had to stop the building works until he had received new instructions from the Ministry of Finance and the Pilgrimage Authority on the prospective sites of the sunshades on the new road. During that period, there were heavy rainfalls accompanied by torrential streams that damaged all the building materials and washed away what remained of them. At the Fureish station, the construction works were interrupted for a long time by the appearance of some people who claimed ownership of lands in the site. While investigation was conducted concerning these claims, heavy rains and torrential streams also washed away

the building materials. In spite of all these interruptions, a knowledgeable source tells us, the great philanthropist was not moved by the losses and declared that he would go ahead with his project, since his ultimate goal was obtaining God's Pleasure. The source also informs us that the delay in finishing the project was due to the wish of the Ministry of Finance and the Pilgrimage Authority to take their time in assigning the new sites. Following that, Al-Sayyid Hasan would start construction works in the stations, which will include sunshades, mosques, water closets, and other conveniences for the benefit of pilgrims of the Sanctified House of God.

(ترجمة ص. 248)

Al-Sharbatly Donates to Building a Typical Kindergarten in Medina

His Excellency Al-Sharif Nasser Ibn Ali, Director General of Kindergarten Schools in Medina Al-Munawwara, announced that Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly has donated to building a typical kindergarten school at his personal expense on a piece of land granted by the state for that purpose.

Construction work in the new school is due to start after finishing the building of the massive site that Al-Sayyid Hasan has donated to the Quran School in Quba', which is expected to be completed shortly.

Al-Bilad, 22. 10. 1387 AH

(ترجمة القصاصة العليا ص. 249)

Al-Jazira, 29. 03. 1388 AH / 05 June 1968 CE, edition 200

Al-Sharbatly Donates to Building a Mosque in the City of Al-Riyadh

The community of the Habbounia quarter, south of the city of Al-Riyadh, to the north of Atika Hospital, have approached the philanthropist His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly with their desire to build a mosque in their neighbourhood where they can perform their prayers. They supported their request with studies and maps pertaining to that project from the Public Works Administration. His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan then gave orders to his agent in Al-Riyadh to build that large mosque whose costs are expected to go over two hundred thousand riyals. May God reward this great man of benevolence and grant the likes of him to our nation.

(ترجمة القصاصة السفلى ص. 249)

Al-Jazira, 15. 11. 1387 AH / 13. 02. 1986 CE, edition 182

Message of Medina Al-Munawwara

... Worthy of notice here is that His Excellency Sheikh Hasan Sharbatly has donated to building a typical kindergarten at Taiba at his personal expense. This gesture was warmly received by the community of the neighbourhood; may God reward him and grant the likes of him to our community.

(ترجمة الجزء المطلوب من القصاصة ص. 250)

Al-Nadwa, 27. 10. 1386 AH

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly has donated towards building a large mosque in Jeddah, and I hope that His Excellency has conducted a thorough study of the project; God asserts that those who build mosques for God's sake are those who believe in Him.

(ترجمة الجزء المطلوب من القصاصة ص. 251)

There is nothing more expressive than actual numbers in indicating the size of Al-Sayyid Hasan's expenditure and contributions to benevolent committees and organisations to be spent in charitable causes.

In what follows we have chosen samples of his allocations and correspondences in this respect. The sums amount to hundreds of millions.

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No.... – Date: 08 / 08 / 1408 AH

I, the undersigned, Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly, of Saudi citizenship, file No. 12132, dated 17. 01. 1378 AH, registered in Jeddah, hereby declare that I am donating the entire estate located on the Omra Road in the direction of Al-Tan'im, at about fifteen kilometres from the Arabian Car Company, ownership of which I had obtained by buying from Al-Sharif Jaridi Ibn Abd Allah Ibn Fatan by legal document dated 30. 04. 1396 AH, I am donating it to the Islamic Aid Association, the project of Sanabil Al-Khair, represented by His Excellency Dr Abd Allah Ibn Omar Nasif, or anyone delegated by him, to dispense of in any way he sees fit, by selling, relinquishing, or use for erection of projects related to the following activities:

1. The call to God
2. Homes for the poor and old
3. Orphanages
4. Building water wells in Muslim countries
5. Drawing water to the poor and needy
6. Building, refurbishing, and furnishing of mosques
7. Helping imams and workers in mosques
8. Publishing relevant religious books in different languages of the world
9. Helping needy Muslim youths in marriage
10. Providing aid services to victims of disasters like earthquakes, fires, volcanoes, and floods etc.

This is to be carried out as he sees fit. This is a correct legal grant, legally accepted and received; and the whole estate mentioned above is in the ownership and at the disposal of the Islamic Aid Association; and the grant has been duly accepted and received by His Excellency Dr Abd Allah Omar Nasif, and it is now in the absolute ownership of the Association.

I wish my declaration to be taken and that he is handed a legal title deed.

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Hasan Abbas Sharbatly
(ترجمة ص. 253)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

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(455) - Date: 07 / 07 / 1411 AH

His Excellency Dr Abd Allah Sadeq Dahlan, Secretary General for the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Jeddah,

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

We have received your fax No. 3420 / 46 / 411, dated 07. 07. 1411 AH concerning our stores in the container site on pieces Nos. 237 and 238, and we have delegated to our estate department to hand over to Your Excellency the store without a time limit and as long as its usefulness for you lasts. We have also issued orders to the Saudi Commercial Bank to hand to Your Excellency the sum of two hundred fifty thousand riyals monthly starting from the month of Rajab 1411 AH. We have as well issued orders to our agents in Al-Qasim to hand to Your Excellency a thousand measures of dates – each weighing between 25 and 30 kilograms – monthly. God willing, you will always find us ready for any other required contributions. In case no contributions are brought forth by others up to the assigned date, we are ready to undertake the whole project at our personal expense. If other contributions are made, then the abovementioned contribution will be ours. We are also ready to provide any foodstuffs that you may request.

God is our ultimate goal; He is the One to bestow blessings, to grant success, and to guide to the Straight Path.

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة ص. 254)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

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Personal Office
(464) – Date: 11 / 07 / 1411 AH

His Excellency Dr Abd Allah Sadeq Dahlan, Secretary General for the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Jeddah,
Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

We have received your fax No. 3482 / 46 / 411 today, and according to your expressed wish, we have delegated to the Saudi Commercial Bank to transfer the sum of two hundred fifty thousand riyals in the name of (Committee of Businessmen for Supporting Aid Teams) in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Jeddah (kindly find enclosed a photocopy). We have previously delegated to Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Beik in Al-Qasim (Tel. No. 5823089) to hand to the Committee a thousand measures of dates monthly, and we have changed it now to become 1250 measures. We have also delegated to him to provide any extra amounts that may be requested by the Committee. Kindly find enclosed also an order to the Badr bakeries in Mecca Al-Mukarrama, in all their branches, to hand to the respected Committee a hundred thousand loaves daily more or less according to the request of the Committee, so that the different kinds of bread or pastry would be available for you to choose from in accordance with your needs. The Committee will also be given the option as to the packaging and weights of packets.

We are also attaching an order to the United Saudi Commercial Bank to hand to the Committee the value of one thousand five hundred one-hundred-pound sacks of wheat or flour, more or less, according to the request of the Committee, inclusive of transport.

The one who guides to an act of charity is as good as the one who performs it, the best kind of good is the fastest, and we pray to God to accept all our deeds, make them pure, and add them to our credit and double the reward for us all.

May God grant you continued success and guard you against harm

God is our ultimate goal; He is the One to inspire and guide to the Straight Path.

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly
(ترجمة ص. 255)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

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No. 116 / H – Date: 01 / 09 / 1411 AH

Messrs United Saudi Commercial Bank

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Kindly transfer immediately the allocation for six months to the Charity Association in Al-Riyadh for the period from Rajab 1411 AH to the end of Dhul-Qi'da 1411 AH, and notify us of this,

Thank you for your cooperation

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 256)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

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No. 118 / H – Date: 12 / 09 / 1411 AH

Messrs United Saudi Commercial Bank

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Kindly transfer the sum of three hundred thousand riyals to Mrs Fatima Hasan Abbas Sharbatly in Al-Riyadh for the purpose of purchasing foodstuffs and kindly notify us of this.

Thank you for your cooperation

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly
(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 257)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

S. H. A. SHARBATLY

Personal Office

Date: 12. 07. 1412 AH / 16. 02. 1992 CE

No.: 38 / H

Messrs United Saudi Commercial Bank

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Kindly hand His Royal Highness Prince Mamdouh Ibn Abdul-Aziz, may God guard him, the sum of only one hundred thousand riyals for the purpose of charity works undertaken by His Highness.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 258)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

S. H. A. SHARBATLY

Personal Office

Date: 02. 08. 1412 AH / 05. 02. 1992 CE

No.: 39 / H

Messrs United Saudi Commercial Bank

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Kindly hand the sum of two hundred thousand riyals monthly to His Royal Highness Prince Mamdouh Ibn Abdul-Aziz, may God guard him, for the purpose of charity works undertaken by His Highness, starting from the month of Sha'ban 1412 AH. Kindly pay an advance payment of one million riyals for the months of Sha'ban, Ramadan, Shawwal, Dhul-Qi'da, and Dhul-Hijja, 1412 AH.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 259)

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Mamdouh Ibn Abdul-Aziz

No.: 737 / K
Date: 11. 10. 1412 AH

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Al-Sharbatly

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

You have with generosity donated for charity, and I pray to God the Most Sublime to raise your rank and double your reward with your benevolence; He is the one to answer our supplications. I have a wish to invest this blessed money in a project that would give good and constant returns for needy families; and this was a suggestion put forward by some of our righteous scholars.

Since you had donated these sums for distribution during the month of Ramadan, I wished to make this suggestion to you.

I am writing to you now to ask if you are agreeable to this suggestion or not.

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Mamdouh Ibn Abdul-Aziz

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 260)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

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Statement of Monthly Allocations

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 1. 250.000 riyals | Association for Teaching the Holy Quran in Mecca Al-Mukarrama |
| 2. 200.000 riyals | Association of Charity in Medina Al-Munawwara |
| 3. 200.000 riyals | Taiba Women Association in Medina Al-Munawwara |
| 4. 100.000 riyals | Association for Teaching the Holy Quran in Medina Al-Munawwara |
| 5. 50.000 riyals | Association for Teaching the Holy Quran in Al-Ta'ef |
| 6. 350.000 riyals | Association for Teaching the Holy Quran in Al-Qasim |
| 7. 100.000 riyals | Association for Teaching the Holy Quran in Jeddah |
| 8. 50.000 riyals | Sheikh Abd Allah Al-Bassam |
| 9. 50.000 riyals | Dr Abd Allah Al-Muslih for the project of encouraging youths to marriage |
| 10. 150.000 riyals | Dr Abd Allah Al-Muslih for the project of building ten mosques monthly |
| 11. 25.000 riyals | Dr Abd Allah Al-Muslih for the project of clothing the poor in Tihamat Asir |
| 12. 100.000 riyals | Association for Teaching the Holy Quran in Al-Qasim |
| 13. 355.000 riyals | Association of Charity in Al-Riyadh |
| 14. 300.000 riyals | Charity Project for Encouraging Youths to Marriage |
| 15. 50.000 riyals | Association of Charity in Al-Khubara and Al-Sahabin |
| 16. 100.000 riyals | Al-Makased Charity Organisation. And the sum of 50.000 dollars monthly |

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 261)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

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(117 / H)

13. 09. 1411 AH

Messrs Muhammad Anwar Abul-Jadayel Establishment

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Kindly dispatch the following kinds of foodstuffs to the recipients mentioned as per the following list:

Name of recipient	Kinds of foodstuffs			
	Rice	Sugar Piece	Tea	Milk Box
Charity Association in Medina Al-Munawwara	5000	5000	210	334
Taiba Women Association in Medina Al-Munawwara	5000	5000	210	334
Charity Association in Mecca Al-Mukarrama	5000	5000	106	---
Charity Association in Al-Ta'ef	2500	2500	53	---
Dr Abd Allah Al-Muslih in Abha	5000	5000	106	165
Sheikh Abd Allah Al-Bassam	2500	2500	54	167

Personal Office of

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

His open hand to the poor everywhere

Al-Sayyid Hasan was not one of those who waited for the poor to come to them for charity; he was, rather, careful to go to them wherever they were in order to save them the trouble of the travel and the embarrassment of asking. Oftentimes, he would go himself to distribute supplies, and/or would delegate someone to do this for him and help benevolent associations and organisations in their activities.

He used to be extremely happy when his allocations and aid materials were depleted; and would be even happier when more was asked of him. Never did he complain or hesitate in allocating required supplies or suggested sums of money for helping the poor and the needy. On the contrary, such allocations and additional sums used to be the subject of heated and lengthy discussions between him and the officials working in these benevolent projects, because he often used to double the allocations manifold and they found great difficulty in distributing them or arranging for large storehouses to take the huge quantities that he insisted on distributing.

Distribution of meat

One of the praiseworthy things that workers at the Arabian Car Company used to do was going out, as ordered by Al-Sayyid Hasan, to the camel market every morning looking for the best and most healthy camels therein – regardless of the number. They would bring the camels to the headquarters of the company, where they would be slaughtered and their meat cooked along with large pots of rice and distributed in the alleyways and poor neighbourhoods of Mecca with bread, dates, sweets, and fruits to the needy there and in and around the Mosque. The same thing used to take place in Jeddah and Medina and other villages and towns where there were communities of disadvantaged people.

The Sharbatly bread

In the early morning, people, in Mecca and Jeddah in particular, used to come across vans – some of them used to be parked at certain places, while others used to roam all over – to distribute various kinds of free bread to whoever wishes. This bread came to be known as the Sharbatly bread. Al-Sayyid Hasan had reached an agreement with the Badr bakeries in Mecca and all its other branches to supply people, and especially the poor, with all they need of bread. He went further by founding a large bakery with a large production capacity to double the distributed quantities of bread and meet the requirements of the needy of this supply, Saudi citizens as well as visitors from abroad, all the year round. However, due to certain circumstances, this bakery has not been put into action up to now.¹

Food supplies

¹ The Hasan Abbas Sharbatly Charity Foundation is presently trying to put the bakery in work; its production capacity is more than two million loaves daily as mentioned by some workers in Al-Sayyid Hasan's office.

The inhabitants of Mecca, Jeddah, and Medina, as well as other towns and villages in the Kingdom, will never forget the sight of the large convoy of lorries that used to come laden with all kinds of foodstuffs and supplies to be distributed among the poor and the needy. Al-Sayyid Hasan was so careful in this respect that he used to take great care not to leave out of these supplies anything that might be needed by a poor household.

Clothing

Al-Sayyid Hasan did not forget clothing in all its items, whether outerwear or underwear; and he used to distribute summer as well as winter garments in abundance, especially in Ramadan, along with sums of money, so as to enable the disadvantaged to celebrate and enjoy the *eid* feast as the wealthy do.

The following newspaper clip is just one example of these contributions. The clip is from the Saudi daily *Al-Bilad* on 28. 03. 1374 AH.

Contributions of People from Jeddah for Winter Aid First List

[The second item in the list shows that His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly has contributed a bale of Indian calico for the winter aid in Jeddah.]

(قصاصة صحيفة ص. 265)

The building of His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly Foundation in the city of Jeddah

(صورتان ص. 267)

Helping in paying blood money

God has honoured man and prohibited killing without right. This is why He stipulated chastisement both as punishment for transgressors and as a lesson and deterrent for possible transgressors to ensure peace and stability in the community, to preserve human blood, and to show how worthy the human soul is to God.

God the Most Sublime, however, gave a chance for forgiveness to replace chastisement in the building of the community; this is why He stipulated the payment of what is known as blood money as an alternative for capital punishment. This would lead to prevalence of goodwill and mercy among people. This can be taken from God's address to the believers that the law of equality is prescribed to them in the cases of murder: the free for the free, the slave for the slave, and the woman for the woman. However, if any remission is made by the brother of the slain one, then they should grant any reasonable demand, and to compensate him with handsome gratitude. God states that this is a concession and mercy from God. After this, whoever exceeds the limits will be subjected to painful chastisement. God addresses people of reason stating that in the law of equality there is saving of life to the faithful community (*Al-Baqara*: 178-179). God also states that He has ordained for the Israelites in the Torah the Law: life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, and tooth for tooth, and equal for equal in retaliation for wounds. But if anyone remits the retaliation as charity, it will be expiation for him; those who do not judge by what God has revealed are the transgressors (*Al-Ma'ida*: 45).

The blessed Prophetic Sunna emphasises the rulings of the Quran. In this respect, the Prophet *Peace be upon him* judges: 'When a person is killed, his family has the choice between two options: punishment by killing, if they so wish, or accepting blood money in compensation.'¹

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the only country that derives its rules from the laws of the Islamic Sharia. Subsequently, the penalty for murder in the Kingdom is death or paying blood money. The State chooses Friday as the weekday for executions and putting these penalties into effect, within strict security measures.

Before the execution takes place, it is the duty of the executioner to ask the family of the victim whether they are willing to drop their right; otherwise, the murderer will have to be beheaded. What usually happens in such cases is that people of benevolence and philanthropists throng and offer large amounts of money in compensation to the family of the victim so as to persuade them to drop their right. If they do, execution will not be put into effect. If they refuse, then it is the unavoidable fated end.

¹ The hadith is narrated by Al-Baihaqi in *Ma'rifat Al-Sunan wa Al-Athar* (Knowledge of the Ways and Traditions [of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*]), in the section on 'Remission without compensation,' under No 5084.

It is worthy of mention in this respect that Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly often used, after performing *Jumu'a* Friday prayers, to go out to the Penalty Square with large amounts of money to pay to the families of the victims in blood money to persuade them to forgive – without having knowledge of either party – and he was often successful in his endeavour. Thereafter, he would withdraw peacefully and without fanfare. Most often, the two parties did not even know who paid the compensation.

A strange story is worthy of mention here. Abdul-Wahhab Mirdad was a manager in the Arabian Car Company. Long before that, he had killed someone and was sentenced to death. Al-Sayyid Hasan intervened – and he did not know him at that time – and paid the blood money for him and persuaded the family of the victim to drop their right and forgive the killer. Years after that, Abdul-Wahhab Mirdad worked for Al-Sayyid Hasan in the Arabian Car Company. One day, he reminded Al-Sayyid Hasan of the incident and how he had saved his life. Al-Sayyid Hasan smiled and said, 'How can I remember that? Those whose lives I had saved in this way are numerous and I do not know them. I am content with the reward from God.¹ God says that saving a soul from death is like saving all mankind' (*Al-Ma'ida*: 32).

Sharbatly's special reverence to *Laylat Al-Qadr* (The Night of Power)

The benevolent spending of His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan is likely to give the impression that all his days were preceded by the Night of Power;² however, the days and nights of Ramadan had a special particularity for him in spending and devotions.

Starting with the beginning of the month of Sha'ban (the month that precedes Ramadan in the Hijra calendar) every year, Al-Sayyid Hasan would order the making of tens of thousands (and even hundreds of thousands) of clothing items to be made by tailors in the cities of Jeddah, Mecca, and Medina in different sizes; to each garment would be added matching undergarments and headdresses.

These garments – called complete outfit – would be distributed to the disadvantaged in the poor quarters of the cities of Mecca, Medina, Jeddah, and other cities. Each recipient would get between five and ten complete outfits, and sometimes more, as deemed suitable by the distribution workers or by him personally.

Some close friends suggested to him to order the garments to be manufactured in China or Japan or some other country whose factories can manufacture tens of thousands of garments in a record short time at a considerably lower cost. His answer was: 'Then how would those tailors and traders find work and their livelihood, and they wait for these orders from Ramadan to Ramadan every year?'

¹ The story is taken from Al-Sharbatly Archives.

² The Night of Power is one of the blessed nights of the month of Ramadan, believed to be the night when the revelation of the Quran started, and Muslims are greatly encouraged to spend it in devotions and acts of benevolence that would be amply rewarded.

In this regard, Sheikh Abdul-Rahman Al-Khayyat¹ remembers Al-Sayyid Hasan as follows:

He lived in Jeddah as a common trader in fruits, vegetables, and corn; and his extraordinary keen intelligence and his natural wit and common sense paved the way for him to evolve from this simple trade to the world of big business. God has willed for him to meet His Majesty King Abdul-Aziz, who saw in him marks of wisdom and shrewdness and gave him full confidence, and instructed Ibn Suleiman and Al-Tubaishi to depend on him in importing necessities of the State, and he granted him the title of ‘the outstanding man of benevolence.’

From among the tasks he was charged with was the job of supplying clothing items, which the King used to distribute among villages and desert places in his travels from Mecca and Al-Riyadh and vice versa.

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan was comfortable for dealing with the Meccan merchant Jamil Abdul-Rahman Addas in this undertaking. That was why Addas agreed with my uncle Ismail and my father Omar, and they were two of the prominent tailors, to make the clothing items ordered by His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan. On the other hand, he agreed with the Khoja family for making the garments of the King and the princes.

Some time later, Jamil Addas quit the job for some changing circumstances, and his place was taken up by Mahmoud Abdul-Majid Al-Baghdadi, who kept the agreement with my uncle and father for the making of clothing items for commoners and with the Khoja family for the clothes of the royalty.

Al-Sayyid Hasan was known for his slaughtering of camels, distributing of meats and bread, and he used to delegate the distribution of charity spending – especially in Ramadan, and particularly on the eve of *Laylat Al-Qadr* – to his in-laws from the family of Mu’mina, some judges, and the Jeddah notary in those days Jamil Abdul-Razzaq Ajib. He used to be comfortable with distributing his alms in gold; and he used often to travel to Mecca or Medina on Fridays for the *Jumu’a* prayers and for visiting the graveyards.

One Friday, while he was visiting Al-Hujoun cemetery, a curious thing happened to him when he learnt that the funeral was talking place there of one of his female relatives, and he had not learnt of her death. He was greatly surprised and asked why he was not informed, and that was how it happened.²

¹ He is a genealogist and relater of historical stories from Mecca, and he has interest in the folk tradition of Hejaz. I met him in Jeddah during the fifth seminar for textual reading held by the Literary and Cultural Club in Jeddah between the 19th and the 21st of Safar 1426 AH / 29th-31st March 2005, during the celebration for the selection of Mecca as a Capital for Islamic Culture for the year 1426 AH.

² The above quotation was written by Sheikh Abdul-Rahman Khayyat in his own hand, and only very minor alterations have been made for matching and convenience. He also mentioned that he did not know precisely the date of birth of His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly, although he thought it was most likely the year 1320 AH.

In addition to the huge sums he used to distribute among the poor and needy in the cities and villages of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, he also used to spend extensively in charity in various cities all around the Islamic World.

(الصورة ص. 271 ليس تحتها تعليق)

Chapter Two

His Contributions Abroad

His Support to the Cause of Palestine

Palestine stands high in the hearts of all Muslims: it is the land of holiness ... the land of peace ... the land of the Prophet's Night Journey ... the land of the blessed fruits. It is the birthplace of Jesus *Peace be upon him* and the land of prophets *Peace be upon them*. It is, further, the Home of Holy Struggle and defence of the frontiers.

In it is Jerusalem, the flower of all cities. In it is Al-Aqsa Mosque: the first *qibla* direction for Muslims in prayers, and the third most sacred mosque in Islam, and the second mosque ever to be built on earth. It is the mosque where the Prophet *Peace be upon him* led his brother prophets in prayer. It is a mosque which Muslims aspire to visit, and in it, prayers have doubled reward.

Palestine is the land where people will be crowded at the end of time and in it the dead will be brought to life at the time of Resurrection. It will be the place where the Caliphate Islamic rule will be established at the end of time. It will be the place where the Dajjal (Antichrist) and the destructive tribes of Gog and Magog will come to perish, as reported by traditions.

Numerous verses in the Quran refer to Palestine. It is the blessed land that God mentioned as the land to which He made His Prophet *Peace be upon him* travel in his 'Isra' (Night Journey) (*Al-Isra*: 1).

It is the sacred land that the Israelites were commanded to enter as their land; if they turn back, they will be losers (*Al-Ma'ida*: 21).

It is the land of truthfulness that God stated He made the beautiful dwelling place for the Children of Israel (*Yunus*: 93).

It is the land where God settled Jesus and his mother and gave them shelter on a high ground furnished with water springs, affording them rest and security (*Al-Mu'minun*: 50).

It is the land with whose plants God swore by: figs and olives (*Al-Tin*: 1).

It is the land which was the migration place of Abraham and Lot, the home of Jacob, the kingdom of Solomon, the worshipping place of Mary, and the niche of Zachariah; on it John and Jesus *Peace be upon them* were born.

The cause of Palestine as a national concern in the Arab World arose concomitantly with the later stages of the Great Revolution during the First World War. After the War, the

Arab World was partitioned in accordance with the articles of the Sykes-Picot agreement, and England occupied Palestine in 1917 in order to put into effect the promise of their Foreign Secretary Balfour to the Jews to help them in the 'establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.' Towards this end, they set up the British Jewish statesman Herbert Samuel as the first High Commissioner for Palestine where he opened the doors wide for Jewish immigration.

The Palestinians did not stand as mere spectators to watch the unfolding of events: there were several major uprisings in the years 1921, 1929, and 1933. Their great revolution, however, started in 1936 and lasted until 1939, in which they tried heroically to defend their homeland. Nevertheless, it became clear that the matter was not about facing the Jews in Palestine as much as it was resisting those who were behind them, supporting them and supplying them with weapons and money. This was a super power which neither the Palestinians nor their Arab neighbours were competent enough to confront.

Palestine thus remained an open bleeding wound for the Arab World; and it still is up to the present time. Israel unveiled its evil plans and the Arab-Israeli conflict drifted into armed struggle taking the shape of an open war in the years 1948, 1956, 1967, in the attrition war between 1967 and 1973, and in the decisive battle in Ramadan 1393 AH / October 1973 CE.

In this respect, it is remarkable that Al-Sayyid Hasan had full awareness of the goings-on in Palestine and knew all the dimensions of its cause, exactly like an experienced politician or a battle-hardened general.

With his penetrating insight, he was able six decades ago to see clearly the reasons behind the weakness of the Arab front and offered simple solutions for the problem.

The Europeans and the Americans will surely give full support to the Jews and will ignominiously let down the Arabs and their just cause. The reason behind this is that the Jews are migrating to Palestine from Europe and America; a European will not let down another European, and an American will not let down another American.¹

From the viewpoint of my occupation, I see that the Europeans and Americans are after markets for their trade; and they will find no markets like those of the Orient. The Jews are more greedy and more capable of controlling trade markets from both the Europeans and the Americans. In fact, their trade is under the control and the mercy of the Jews.²

If the Jews were to establish a state in Palestine, they would no doubt compete strongly with the European and American traders in their Oriental markets and they will come up victorious because they are extremely careful with their pennies and would not mind sacrificing principles and honour for personal benefits. With

¹ See *Al-Sharbatly: Al-Muhsin Al-Islami Al-Akbar* (Al-Sharbatly: the Great Islamic Man of Charity), p. 76

² *Ibid.*

their dirty devilish techniques they will be able to prevail and overpower European and American traders in all Oriental markets. This will no doubt upset Europe and America and will make them strong adversaries to the Jews.¹

I do not see this time far off; then, we shall see that Europe and America, who had supported the Jews, will be in the frontline against the Jews in a bitter battle. They will fight the Jews before the Arabs do in order to secure their interests. From this viewpoint, I feel optimistic about the cause of Palestine and I think that victory will fall to the free and honourable Arabs.²

Add to this that the Arabs will never accept a Jewish state in their lands, no matter what the super powers do; the coming days, or the near future will show that the final victory will be for the Arabs God willing.³

This victory is sure to come and I have absolute faith in God's word that the Jews will always be stricken with humility and they will go back with God's wrath (*Al-Baqara: 61*). We see now that the Jews have established a state, and that America and many other countries have recognised it, but this state will eventually collapse because it has not been built on solid foundations. What is not built on solid foundations will surely collapse; it has been said that falsity may have a round in a battle but right will have the final round; falsity will undoubtedly fall at the end even if its round is strong and impressive, and right is sure to have the last say and the endings are what counts.⁴

However, I see that the resolution of the Palestine cause is in the hand of the Arabs not the West. I cannot see myself accepting a foreigner taking control of a land and driving away the rightful owner.

As long as the Arabs – both old and young – are unanimous in their determination to fight the Jews to the end, and as long as they have faith in their cause and that it is a cause of justice, honour, and faith, they will surely not be vanquished.⁵

This clearly shows that Palestine and its cause were always in the heart and mind of Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly; and that it received the greater portion of his interest. He never wavered in contributing towards supporting the Palestinian people and helping them in their endeavours to find a solution to their problems.

His efforts in supporting the Palestinian cause provided a good example for all financiers and businessmen in the Kingdom as can be seen from the following story:

¹ *Ibid*, pp. 76-7.

² *Ibid*, p. 77.

³ *Ibid*, p. 77.

⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 77-8.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 78.

During the reign of King Abdul-Aziz, merchants and businessmen of the Kingdom called for a meeting to support the cause of Palestine. The meeting, which was held in Mecca and was attended by Sheikh Muhammad Surour Al-Sabban, started with speeches by eloquent orators condemning the Zionist crimes in Palestine and delineating their visions of the case. His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan was not satisfied with the theoretical course the meeting was taking and asked for permission to speak.

This surprised those who were present at the meeting: he was not known as a good orator or public speaker; however, their knowledge and appreciation of his attitudes and their respect to his person made them look forward to see what he had to say. He stood up and said, 'I offer half a million riyals as a first instalment of my contributions to the cause; and when need calls, I will put all my money and my possessions for this cause. I am ready to march with my children to perform jihad and struggle in the way of God in Palestine.'¹

In saying this, Al-Sayyid Hasan did not aim to boast or blow his own horn; rather, he intuited that the cause they were meeting to support needed all the help they could give and he wanted to give the good example for the subsequent contributors by donating a large amount so that they would find it difficult and embarrassing after that to give away meagre sums that do not match the seriousness of the case at hand. This was why, after Al-Sayyid Hasan had made his short statement and returned to his place among the audience, Sheikh Muhammad Surour Al-Sabban ascended to the pulpit and made the following announcement: 'What His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly has just said is the most eloquent speech that could be made; and we would not like to hear further speeches unless they follow in the same course.'²

What Al-Sayyid Hasan wished for did happen, and a handsome amount was collected, which matched the seriousness of the disaster that had befallen the whole Arab Nation. When news of this reached King Abdul-Aziz, he was extremely happy with how things went and said to his visitors, 'Didn't I tell you that Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly is a great contributor; and this is not the only contribution he has made; when the cause of Palestine was put under the charge of Ahmad Al-Shuqairi, he was the first to give support, and he allocated one million riyals monthly for this cause; and he persisted in his million-riyal monthly contributions.'³

When calls for peace with the Zionist aggressors came up from among the ranks of Arabs, many stood aside, watched the progress of events, and lamented the decline of course that the Palestinian cause was taking. That was not the choice of Al-Sayyid Hasan, however: he used to condemn in public all attempts aiming at wasting the Palestinian cause saying, 'There should be no peace between Muslims and Zionists; they are the enemies of humanity; and there could be no peace between them and anybody.'⁴

¹ The story is taken from the Sharbatly Archives.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

He used to add: ‘God has created the Jews from a different kind of clay than that He used in creating other humans. God states that their hearts were as hard as rocks, if not harder (*Al-Baqara*: 74), that their hearts went cruel and the Devil embellished their misdeeds for them (*Al-An’am*: 43), and that God has caused their hearts to become cruel for their breaking of their covenant (*Al-Ma’ida*: 13). Thus we see that God has not spoken about cruelty of the heart except in connection with the Jews, and woe awaits anyone who falls in their claws.’

Al-Sayyid Hasan never stopped supporting the Palestinian cause although he was sure that the greater part of his contributions were not going to the right intended destination; he always hoped, however, that the little that got through to the right place would fulfil something of what he wished for Palestine, its cause, and its people.

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

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C. R. 713
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Personal Office

No. 183 / H – Date: 09 / 07 / 1411 AH

Messrs United Saudi Commercial Bank

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Please hand the sum of one hundred thousand US dollars (US\$100000) to the Makased Islamic Charity Organisation in Jerusalem; and fifty thousand US dollars (US\$ 50000) monthly, starting form the month of February, and kindly notify us of that.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(الرسالة ص. 281)

Al-Bilad Saudi daily 17. 03. 1374 AH

**The First List of Contributions
To the Families of Martyrs in Palestine
From among the Members of the Arab Saudi Army**

(His Excellency the General Manager of the Department of Aviation made the following statement)

His Glorious Majesty the King *may God guard him* has donated thirty thousand riyals to the families of the martyrs of the Arab Saudi army who were martyred in Palestine, and this was a great encouragement for contributing towards that noble cause. His Majesty had decreed a promotion of one rank to each martyr to increase their salaries and pensions. The committee in charge of this mission contacted Saudi citizens and met with great encouragement and support, and the contributions were generous and indicative of the good patriotic spirit that Saudi citizens had towards their brethren in the army and their families. It was a noble gesture to comfort those families and let them know that Saudi citizens think of them and appreciate the sacrifices that their men had made towards the homeland and the nation. The committee is still at work in collecting citizens' contributions. Following is the first list of contributions, and the committee calls upon the population to contribute towards this noble cause.

Name in full	Contribution
2. His Royal Highness Prince Mash'al	15000
3. His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly	25000
4. Al-Sayyid Abd Allah Sharbatly	15000
5. His Excellency Sheikh Abd Allah Al-Suleiman	10000
6. His Excellency Muhammad Bakhshab Pasha	10000
7. His Excellency Sheikh Muhammad Surour Al-Sabban	10000

Part of the contributions of His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan to the Martyrs in Palestine

(القصاصه ص. 282)

Al-Sharbatly's support to Egypt in the face of adversity

After Egypt became a republic in 1952, Egyptians did not feel that they had attained freedom and that they were still under the influence of colonialist powers. That was why they stepped up their efforts until they forced the colonialists to acknowledge their wish in freedom, and Britain withdrew its forces from Egyptian soil and Egypt obtained its full independence in 1954.

Egyptians then continued their march towards attaining their national identity by spreading their authority over all Egyptian soil, and President Nasser announced the nationalisation of the Suez Canal to put it under Egyptian national authority after a long time during which it was under the control of an international limited company managed by France by a concession contract with the sons of Muhammad Ali, which was due to expire in 1968 CE.

Egyptians then tried to regain control of the situation but the superpowers of the world then did not find Egypt's efforts towards independence agreeable and they conspired to bring it back under occupation.

They waged an aggressive war against Egypt but were faced with the united front of the people, the armed forces, and all the agencies of the state. The aggression was then faced with heroic resistance and sacrifice, and the aggressors were forced to withdraw with great ignominy, frustration, and loss on both the political and military levels. The aim of the Egyptian resistance was not to break the will of the world powers and impose their own will on them; rather, it aimed to assert Egyptian identity and prevent these powers from achieving their aggressive goals.

Actually, what helped Egypt in facing the aggression was that it was not left alone in the battle for long: all Arab countries did their best supporting their Egyptian brethren until the aggression was broken and the aggressors had to withdraw with disgrace.

However, in spite of the military and political victory, war is war, and it inevitably leaves behind great destruction, suffering, and death; and there was a great number of martyrs and injured. The Suez Canal cities – Port Said in particular – were the most affected by the destruction, and there was urgent need for collective reconstruction efforts to start there.

The Sharbatly Quarter

Al-Sayyid Hasan followed with great interest the progress of events in Egypt; and when he learned the size of the losses that the Egyptians had suffered in the war, he hastened to give support to them by helping the injured and the families of the martyrs. He, further, donated a million and two hundred fifty thousand riyals for the reconstruction efforts in the city of Port Said. He sponsored the building of a neighbourhood in the city, which Egyptians later came to call 'The Sharbatly Quarter,' as a token of appreciation to the

efforts of the man who stood with them in brotherly support in their time of crisis and helped them in overcoming that crisis.

Following this, King Saud Ibn Abdul-Aziz, instructed the Kingdom's ambassador in Egypt to coordinate the broadcasting of the story over the Egyptian radio, and issued a command to the Saudi radio station to broadcast the news. The aim behind this was not only to celebrate the efforts of the man; neither was it to boast his being a Saudi citizen; rather, it was to set an example for all wealthy people in the Arab and Muslim world to follow in the footsteps of the man.

His Majesty also sent a letter to Al-Sayyid Hasan to salute his benevolent attitude. Following is a translation of the letter.

From Saud Ibn Abdul-Aziz to His Excellency the Honourable Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly, *may God guard him,*

Al-Salamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

We have received your letter dated 03. 04. 1376, and we have learned about your readiness to extend help to the families of the martyrs and the injured in Egypt after the latest events there with one million and two hundred fifty thousand riyals. With our great appreciation to the generous contribution, we hope that you will perform more of these noble feats to obtain more reward from God. As for the manner of sending the sum, we see that it is most suitable to send it as a cheque to our ambassador in Cairo, and he would hand it in your name to the Egyptian Government, and that it would be broadcast on both Saudi and Egyptian radio stations, as a token of appreciation to your generous contribution; may God grant us and you success in what pleases Him, *wassalam.*

(الرسالة ص. 285)

With the Egyptian President Gamal Abdul-Nasser

(الصورة ص. 287)

Al-Sharbatly's support to Egypt and Syria against aggression

After their defeat in the Suez Canal, the Israelis and the powers supporting them did not desist. They continued in their plots to fortify the Israeli state as an alien organism in the body of the Arab World. Neither did the Arabs fail in strengthening their resolution and preparing for facing the historic attack against their nation. However, every noble steed has a trip, and the Arab nation was facing such a hard declining path in anticipation of a revival where it would reformulate its concepts, strategies, and policies.

The June 1967 setback was a chance for Israel, fully supported by America and the West, to have a free hand militarily in Palestine, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt. If we are to believe the Israeli false propagandist claims, the Israelis also had the upper hand over most, if not all, Arab countries. The Arab masses felt deeply and bitterly disappointed by the humiliating defeat they had suffered at the hands of a dwarf who had turned into a ruthless unstoppable giant through the wicked plotting of super powers. There is nothing more bitter for a real giant who, in spite of having numbers and resources, suffers humiliation and defeat at the hands of an ignominious dwarf.

The Arabs had to drink the bitter cup of defeat, but they did not give up; they rebuilt their armed forces and rearranged their priorities. The battle with the Zionist enemy continued between ebb and flow for six years, which came to be known as the war of attrition. At last the moment came that they found fitting for avenging their wounded dignity and their usurped land.

The liberation war of Ramadan 1393 AH / October 1973 CE was not a war of a particular state; rather, it was a decisive and dividing battle fought on behalf of the whole nation. That was why all efforts and all capabilities converged at a single aim; everybody took part in the war effort and they all shared a single concern and a single cause and they had a single disaster to face. The failure of one party would mean defeat for all. On the day of the battle (the tenth of Ramadan 1393 AH / the sixth of October 1973 CE), the whole Arab World was united in the front facing the Zionist enemy and those behind him.

One night, while the battle was raging, Al-Sayyid Hasan was invited to have supper with King Faisal Ibn Abdul-Aziz *may God rest his soul*, and the King said to Al-Sayyid, 'Prince of Mecca Al-Mukarrama has informed me of your generous donation towards supporting jihad and the mujahidin in Egypt and Syria.' Al-Sayyid Hasan answered, 'We are all students in the school of Your Majesty; and if need arises I am ready to give away all what I have for this noble cause.' The King thanked Al-Sayyid Hasan and turned to a Syrian official who was sitting at the supper table with him and said to him,

Be my witness and mark my words, and inform your people – meaning the Egyptians and the Syrians who were at war with Israel – that if they persevere in the fight and if they do not throw down their weapons, I will not leave a single riyal neither in the state treasury nor in my own personal treasury, but I will give it away in supporting them.

Al-Sayyid Hasan donated seven million riyals towards the war effort in Egypt and Syria, in addition to all the contents of his storehouses and everything that was being shipped or going to be shipped to him by sea (with open credits).

He also announced that he was ready to provide transport for the jihad fighters aboard the transportation fleets of his two companies (the Arabian Car Company and the Tawhid Company), and that he was prepared to supply them with all necessary provisions when need arises.

He also promised King Faisal to do his best to provide all the necessary food supplies of the Kingdom and the Arab countries at war for as long as the war lasted. That was a tough undertaking, especially considering that navigation lines during the war were blocked or under threat of blockage.

Al-Sayyid Hasan's contributions continued as he, by nature, had a deep love to his Arab brethren, and he had tasted with them the bitterness of defeat after the setback of June 1967 CE. Between him – as an Arab and a Muslim – and the Jews – especially the Zionists in Israel – there was great enmity, and he saw no alternative to war with them. So much so that he expressed his readiness to go with his children to perform jihad in Palestine.

His spending in this course continued, and what follows is a translation of a letter to Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly from the Prince of the Region of Mecca and Chairman of the Committee for Supporting the War Effort, His Royal Highness Prince Fawwaz Ibn Abdul-Aziz.

In the Name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate

**The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Princedom of the Region of Mecca Al-Mukarrama
Personal Office**

**No.: M / 2906
Date: 11. 10. 1413**

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly,
Greetings,

With utmost gratitude we received your donation towards the support of jihad and mujahidin fighters in Egypt and Syria, formed of fifteen bank credits starting with No. 987 dated 07. 10. 93 AH and ending with No. 101 amounting to seven million riyals to be paid in instalments starting on the 21st of Dhul-Qi'da 1393 AH and ending on the 21st of Ramadan 1394 AH, and your donation of the revenues of your estates in Egypt and Syria for one whole year to be renewed automatically to support the war effort until God grants victory; in addition to your donation of the following supplies:

5125	bags of white sugar
11255	tea boxes
22121	bags of American rice
21211	bags of Canadian wheat

While we appreciate in Your Excellency this high and noble and constant Islamic and patriotic spirit that always urges you to benevolence, we pray to God to grant our nation many like-spirited people and we ask Him to reward you for your efforts, and we pray to Him to grant victory to His faithful servants and support them and grant Muslims their national aspirations, and may God guard you against adversity.

Prince of the Region of Mecca Al-Mukarrama and Chairman of the Committee for Supporting the War Effort,

Fawwaz Ibn Abdul-Aziz

(الرسالة ص. 292)
(مع الملاحظة أن الرقم والتاريخ في الأصل العربي غير واضحين تماما)

On 02. 01. 1974 CE, the Egyptian *Al-Ahram* daily published on its sixth page many stories with prominent headlines, all telling of the feats of His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly. Following are some of these headlines:

- The October War and the Genuine Nature of the Arab Man
- The Saudi Businessman Hasan Abbas Sharbatly gives huge donations in cash and kind to soldiers and families of martyrs.
- He declares: ‘If we were to acquire thousands of millions in money and gold, we would give it away in the way of God willingly and with faith and pleasure.’

From the stories we have the following quotations:

The glorious October War has strongly evidenced the capability of the Arab fighter in facing the challenges, his assimilation of contemporary know-how, and his competence and prowess in battle – as has been the case throughout the ages – thanks to his faith in God and in his nation. It has also uncovered the genuine nature of the Arab man on every Arab soil. This has been proven beyond any doubt when all Arabs competed in taking part in the battle with souls and with money, the two most precious things a person has.

Besides the solid and courageous stand of the whole Arab Nation amply represented in the decisions of the nation’s kings and presidents, the ordinary Arab citizen demonstrated equal solidity and courage in their attitudes during the October War through the sacrifices they offered and that ascertained the genuine nature of the Arab man.

One such citizen had a gesture worthy of record and of being presented as a living example to be displayed to the whole world so that it would know the real nature of the Arab who fought the October battles with unshakable faith and achieved victory with the help of God over the forces of evil and aggression.

This citizen is Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly, the well-known Saudi businessman, who has provided a bright example in sacrifice and giving in the Way of God; he has donated half the revenues of all his estates in Egypt and Syria through the rest of his life, whereby a quarter of these revenues will go to the jihad, and a quarter to the families of martyrs.

We can talk at length about the value and the meaning of the magnificent gesture of the Saudi businessman Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly, but let it suffice to cite his letter of contribution as an evidence for the capability of the Arab man and the extent of his faith in God and in his nation. The letter, addressed by Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly to His Royal Highness the prince of the Region of Mecca Al-Mukarrama, states the following:

In faithful adherence to the Covenant that God the Most Sublime has made with his faithful servants when He states that He has bought from the believers their souls and their possessions in return for Paradise (*Al-Tauba*: 111),

With absolute trust in God's promise when He the Most Sublime gives His faithful servants the good tidings of great success in return for their offerings (*Al-Tauba*: 111),

With full faith in God's statement that He has given precedence to those who fight in jihad in His Way over those believers who stay at home and do not perform jihad, and that He has granted a grade higher to those who fight in His Way over the rank of those who do not, and that He has promised good unto all, and that He has distinguished those who strive and fight above those who sit by a great reward (*Al-Nisa*': 95),

In faith in the promise of God the Most Sublime in his statement that spending in the Way of God is like a grain of corn that grows seven ears, and each ear has a hundred grains, and God grants manifold increase to whomever He wishes; God is all-Encompassing, all-Knowing (*Al-Baqara*: 261),

In obedience to God's command to the believers to spend in His Way, and in hope of achieving His promised reward when He tells the believers to support His Cause and He will support them (*Muhammad*: 7), that there is no victory except by God's help (*Al-Imran*: 126), and that it is a due from Him to support the believers (*Al-Rum*: 47),

In hope of achieving the success promised by God to His believing servants who are safe from the covetousness of their souls (*Al-Hashr*: 9),

In obeying the instruction of the Prophet *Peace be upon him* in his statement 'He who provides the equipment for a fighter in the Way of God is a fighter therein himself,'¹ and in following the example of the Prophet *Peace be upon him* and his venerable companions *God be pleased with them*, and in solidarity with Muslims and believers in their crisis, as the Prophet *Peace be upon him* has said, 'The believers, in their empathy, compassion, and love, are like a body; when an organ of it complains, the rest of the body will come to help it with care and fever.'²

And in response to the call of His Majesty King Faisal that makes it the legal binding duty of every Muslim to participate in this jihad war with his soul and money until the aggressors are evacuated from Muslim lands, especially that the enemies of Islam now hold in their hands Al-Aqsa Mosque, the first *qibla* of Muslims and the third holiest mosque in Islam,

I raise to Your Noble Highness, after the cessation of the actual fighting operations, and in reliance on God, a statement containing our preliminary donations to support the Islamic Saudi army and support the jihad fighters and the families of martyrs (here he cites passages from the speech of His Royal Highness the Prince of the region of Mecca Al-Mukarrama cited earlier), then he adds:

¹ The hadith is narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih*, in the section on 'Helping a conqueror in the Way of God,' under No. 3512.

² The hadith is narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih*, in the section on 'Compassion among Believers,' under No. 4685.

This is only the first instalment of our contributions, and we, along with our families – with the help of God – are determined to place ourselves and all our possessions at the disposal of jihad efforts to elevate the Word of God (There is no deity but God and Muhammad is His Messenger); and we see that this is only a part of our duty towards our sublime faith, our beloved motherland, our state, our Muslim and Arab brethren, and the martyrs and their families.

Under the title ‘Extended and Continual Contributions,’ *Al-Ahram* daily cited the following:

This is not the first benevolent gesture of the Saudi businessman Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly; his noble contributions in such conditions are known to all. In 1956 CE, and after the tripartite aggression against Egypt, the man donated the costs of building a whole neighbourhood in the city of Port Said as a token of his respect to the struggle and sacrifices of the Egyptian people, which was an example for the struggle and sacrifices of the whole Arab nation. Egypt has bestowed on him the Republic Badge of Honour in appreciation of his contributions to the battle of the Egyptian people against the Imperialist aggression.

When asked about his contributions, the man had nothing to say in answer but what God said to the believers in his glorious Book: whatever good you send forth for yourselves before you, you shall find it with God (*Al-Baqara*: 110). Then he added, ‘We have the best example in the Messenger of God *Peace be upon him* and his noble companions *God be pleased with them*; thus Abu Bakr left nothing for himself and his family, and when asked about that, he said, ‘I have left them [in the care of] God and His Messenger.’¹ Similarly Osman Ibn Affan provided full equipment for the Army of *Osra* (Adversity), and the Prophet turned the money brought along by Osman saying, ‘Nothing will harm Osman after what he did today.’²

This is the essence of faith in God and in the struggle in His Way; this is the truth of the Arab man as recorded throughout the ages.³

¹ The hadith is narrated by Al-Tirmidhi in his *Sunan*, in the section on ‘The Merits of Abu Bakr and Omar *God be pleased with them*,’ under No. 3608.

² The hadith is narrated by Al-Tirmidhi in his *Sunan*, in the section on ‘The Merits of Osman Ibn Affan *God be pleased with him*,’ under No. 3634.

³ See the text of the interview of His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan with *Al-Ahram* daily in its edition on 02. 01. 1974 CE.

With the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Ibn Abdul-Aziz, when he was Minister of Education, and His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Ibn Abdul-Aziz, and the Egyptian President Muhammad Anwar Al-Sadat, when he was a member of the Revolutionary Council in the 1960s CE.

(الصورة ص. 297)

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan in a Western outfit in the mid-1960s in Syria

(الصورة ص. 299)

His empathy towards members of the police force in Egypt

Once Al-Sayyid Hasan received a telephone call from someone in Egypt in whom he had confidence. The caller informed him that members of the lower ranks in the General Security service were living in dire poverty, especially during the times of religious feasts, due to the many family financial obligations then, and their salaries were not up to these obligations.

Al-Sayyid Hasan immediately called the relevant authority in Egypt and enquired about the numbers of the members of lower ranks in the Police force. The answer was that they amounted to around half a million. He immediately dispatched huge sums amounting to millions, and asked his deputies not to exclude a single member from the distribution of what he called the 'Feast Allowance' to bring happiness to their families in the feast with proper foods and clothing.

The project of the Night of Power in Egypt

Al-Sayyid Hasan took special care and encouraged those working with him to double their efforts in benevolence during the month of Ramadan every year. His ultimate hope was to leave no poor person he can reach in worry, and to fulfil their dear wishes and basic demands in life.

We have a good illustration of this in Al-Sayyid Hasan's participation in a project which was running in Egypt. The Egyptian journalists, the twin brothers Mustafa and Ali Amin, had established Dar Akhbar Al-Yaum in the 1940s and initiated in their newspaper a charity project that they called *Laylat Al-Qadr* (The Night of Power).¹ The aim of this project was to help the needy, provide medical treatment for those who needed it, and support the disadvantaged in going on in life without the humiliation of begging. The project did this mainly through allocating monthly stipends to widows, orphans, and other needy individuals. During Ramadan alone, Mustafa Amin used to receive from Al-Sayyid Hasan tens of millions to be distributed among the needy sponsored by the Project.

In an attempt to bring more happiness and joy to those who were badly deprived of them, Al-Sayyid Hasan put forth a suggestion to establish several yearly prizes that would be allocated through drawing lots to be done at Dar Akhbar Al-Yaum and would be called '*Laylat Al-Qadr* Prizes.' Everyone who had an ardent wish to fulfil would apply to the management of Akhbar Al-Yaum, naming his wish, be it to perform pilgrimage, to get married, or to buy a house for example. Dar Akhbar Al-Yaum used to draw the lots among these applications yearly, and the fortunate winner will have all his wishes fulfilled as long as they are legal, reasonable, and related to the basic necessities – not luxuries – of life.

Al-Sayyid Hasan's happiness was indescribable when he succeeded in bringing a family together in a house, helping a family in marrying their son or daughter, fulfilling the wish

¹ It is a popular belief in some Muslim communities that a person who sights *Laylat Al-Qadr* will have his wishes fulfilled.

of the elderly in performing pilgrimage or *omra*, or starting a small workshop for the family to earn a decent living, for instance. These things were some of the major sources of happiness in life for Al-Sayyid Hasan.

However, he used to instruct Mustafa Amin to keep secret the name of the donor, and to say that the prize was donated by an anonymous donor. In what follows we have a translation of some of the letters that describe a small portion of the sums that Al-Sayyid Hasan used to spend on the project.

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

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General Merchants
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Jeddah –Saudi Arabia
Cable Add.: (SHARBATLY)
C. R. 713
Telephone: 6602926 / 6608896
Personal Office
No. 115 / H – Date: 07 / 09 / 1411 AH

Messrs United Saudi Commercial Bank

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Kindly transfer the sum of (125,000) one hundred twenty five thousand US dollars to the care of Mr Mustafa Amin for the benefit of the *Laylat Al-Qadr* Project. Kindly notify him by fax and debit our account with you No 257634/6, and notify us of this.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 305)

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No. 132 / H – Date: 22 / 09 / 1411 AH

Messrs United Saudi Commercial Bank

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Kindly transfer the sum of (42,000) forty two thousand US dollars to the care of Mr Mustafa Amin in Egypt, and notify us of this.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 306)

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Personal office
No. 112 / H – Date: 24 / 11 / 1412 AH

Messrs United Saudi Commercial Bank

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Kindly transfer the sum of (100,000) one hundred thousand US dollars to the care of Mr Mustafa Amin in Egypt for the benefit of the *Laylat Al-Qadr* Project, and notify us of this.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 307)

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Personal office
No. 174 / H – Date: 06 / 12 / 1412 AH
Personal Office

Messrs United Saudi Commercial Bank

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Kindly transfer the sum of (210,000) two hundred and ten thousand US dollars to the care of Mr Mustafa Amin in Egypt for our contribution to the benefit of the *Laylat Al-Qadr* Project, and notify us of this.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 308)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

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Personal office
No. 171 / H – Date: 02 / 01 / 1413 AH

Messrs United Saudi Commercial Bank

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Kindly issue a bank cheque for the sum of (222,400) two hundred and twenty two thousand and four hundred US dollars to the care of Mr Mustafa Amin in Egypt for the benefit of *Laylat Al-Qadr* Project, and notify us of this.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 309)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

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Personal office
No. 170 / H – Date: 04 / 01 / 1413 AH

Messrs United Saudi Commercial Bank

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Kindly transfer the sum of (125,000) one hundred twenty five thousand US dollars to the care of Mr Mustafa Amin in Egypt for the benefit of the *Laylat Al-Qadr* Project, and notify us of this.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 310)

His contributions to poverty-stricken Sudan

It is as if Al-Sayyid Hasan was the person meant by the ancient poet when he chanted:

God has formed your palms of generosity and you can do none but giving and kindness.

Your giving has covered the whole earth; you and generosity have been made of the same substance.¹

The Sudan, like other countries in the basin of the River Nile, is prone to severe floods and the subsequent disasters causing great loss of human life, livestock, and crops. Like other countries in the Dark Continent as well, the Sudan is a poor country unable to face such devastating disasters on their own; and were it not for donations in aid from other countries, from aid organisations, and from philanthropists, their problems would have been more severe and the disasters would have been more devastating, epidemics would have spread threateningly, and famine would have threatened the whole population with eminent death.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly was keenly aware of the consequences of such circumstances and the devastation caused by such disastrous floods leading to great destruction and displacement of people. Al-Sayyid Hasan – who had lived all his life placing all his wealth without a moment's hesitation at the service of Islam and Muslims everywhere, and who had not an atom of doubt in that that was the profitable trade and that everything was in vain except the good deeds one performs in obedience to the commandments of God – knew perfectly well the implications of the disastrous floods in the Sudan and acted accordingly.

In what follows we have a translation of a document illustrating his response to the situation in the Sudan.

¹ The two verses are by a poet by the name of Al-Aslami, who was eulogising Al-Muhallab Ibn Abu Sofra, who paid off the poet's debts in a time of crisis.

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

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Personal Office

No. 38 – Date: 08 / 01 / 1409 AH

Messrs United Saudi Commercial Bank

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

With reference to our previous order No. 34 dated 23. 12. 1408 AH, about our immediate contribution of two million Sudanese pounds for the benefit of victims of the floods in the state of the Sudan, which, according to your statement, has been paid on that date in US dollars, and the sum of one million Sudanese pounds to be paid monthly starting from the month of Muharram 1409 AH until further notice;

We would like the monthly contribution to be two million Sudanese pounds, rather than one million, or the equivalent of it in US dollars, French francs, or Deutsche marks, or any other currency wished by the recipient, starting from the month of Muharram 1409 AH, until further notice; and notify us of this.

Please accept our regards.

Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 312)

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan with President Al-Azhari, President of the Republic of Sudan in the 1960s CE

(الصورة ص. 313)

His Love to Lebanon

Al-Sayyid Hasan lived all his life looking to Lebanon as an Arab country with a special strategic place in the Arab World. He saw it his duty to extend a helping hand to the Lebanese – Muslims as well as Christians – in spreading education, awareness, and a culture of moderateness and toleration to avoid conflicts among them and in order to move with their country from sectarian conflicts to a state of one nation where everybody works towards progress and prosperity.

Al-Sayyid Hasan saw it his duty, moreover, to enhance the Islamic cultural efforts by spending on mosques, religious affairs, and religious teaching, especially that the resources available for the maintenance of mosques and the allocations for preachers and religious teachers in Lebanon were so low as to be virtually non-existent.

That was why he charged his deputies in Lebanon – including the Member of Parliament Husain Mansour, Chairman of the Executive Board of the Beirut Riyadh Bank; Sheikh Muhammad Al-Arifi; and Kazem Al-Khalil among others – to spend on building and reconstruction works of mosques and payment of salaries of imams, preachers, and *muezzinin* (callers) therein. He also called for the establishment of an Islamic University that would stand on the same footing as the American University of Beirut and the Saint Joseph University, in an attempt to create some balance in the cultural and academic atmosphere in the country.

Al-Sayyid Hasan had bought a number of estates in Lebanon, which he made an endowment for benevolent activities. The ex-Grand Mufti of Lebanon Sheikh Hasan Khalid used to visit Al-Sayyid Hasan frequently and he would always leave carrying with him enough resources to meet the needs of Muslims in Lebanon.

A strong friendship tied Al-Sayyid Hasan with former President of Lebanon Camille Chamoun; however, he terminated this relationship after Chamoun asked for American intervention to quell an uprising against him in Lebanon in the year 1958 CE, which Al-Sayyid Hasan saw as paving the way for American interference in the internal affairs of the country, and he was saddened for this possibility.

Nevertheless, Al-Sayyid Hasan did not sever his relationships with Lebanon, and he persisted in his endeavours to help Muslims and spread education and culture among all sects of Lebanon. He had numerous friends among the statesmen in Lebanon, like Sheikh Abdul-Hamid Karame, Prime Minister Rashid Karame, Prime Minister Sami Solh, and Prime Minister Abd Allah Al-Yafi among others.

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan with the Prime Minister of Lebanon Husain Al-Oweini

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan with the Grand Mufti of Lebanon

(الصورتان ص. 317)

His attitude in the battle against the cultural invasion

The 'intellect' is undoubtedly the most serious power that controls the human faculties. The one best enabled to control the material aspects of life is the one who is most capable of manipulating minds by providing them with the thoughts that serve his interests.

Enemies of Islam have learnt these facts and used them with terrifying success. Astonished by the great striking force of the Muslims who once in the past controlled over half the globe when they were in their day of glory, the enemies used their minds in invading Muslims when they failed to achieve their goals with armies.

The Zionists were pioneers in planning for the cultural invasion of the orient, followed closely by the West, who after the failure of the Crusaders in this respect came to the Orient to finish the job. This alien campaign found a fertile ground in some weak souls among Arabs and Muslims, and this gave rise to movements of westernisation, which called for reforming Muslim societies along the lines of the civilisation of the West.

These movements took the form of Judaisation, Christianisation, Orientalism, and Communism, among others, and were aided by Colonialist movements acting in the Muslim World. Their field of action widened and they developed new strategies and techniques to reach their apex during the fourteenth century AH / twentieth century CE. As a result, a number of Muslims were lured to embrace Christianity, while others were deeply shaken in their beliefs and their cultural identity. This was done through studied and planned friendliness, supplying badly needed medical and food aid provisions, and putting on a show of empathy and tolerance. These practices had a great impact in the cultural life of the Near East and a part of Africa.¹

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly was one of those who were aware of the danger of the work of the missionaries and the cultural invasion. God has opened his eyes to the danger and made it his destiny to struggle against it with the same weapon used by the missionaries: money. He was continually following the news of the works of orientalists and missionaries, and used to obtain information about the secrets of their operations from his erudite friends. He used to enquire how he could be of help to his Muslim brethren in their times of crisis, especially if the crisis involved danger against their faith. That was why he used to spend liberally on projects related to the call to God, and he was frequently heard exclaiming, 'I wish I could spend all my money on projects of the call to God, and keep nothing of it to myself.'

That was why his contributions were expediently sent to callers and preachers working in Africa and other countries of the world. These contributions bore fruit, and Al-Sayyid Hasan often used to receive workers in the field of *da'wa* (the call to God) who told him that hundreds and thousands of people previously misled by missionaries have come back to their right mind and discovered the truth of the missionaries and became close

¹ See *Lubnan fi Al-Tarikh* (Lebanon in History) by Dr Philip Hitti, translated by Dr Anis Freiha; and *Al-Tarjama Al-Mulakhassa an Al-Wujud Al-Masihi fi Al-Khalij* (A Brief Summary of the Christian Presence in the Gulf) prepared by Ahmad Foun and a group of researchers in Leicester, Britain.

adherents of Islam. Such good tidings used to bring extreme joy to the heart and soul of Al-Sayyid Hasan and his face would brighten with joy.

His philosophy concerning Muslim minorities

Al-Sayyid Hasan used to express his belief that it was the duty of the wealthy to extend helping hands to Muslims all over the world. To him the Muslims living in far away places had no less entitlement to help than Muslims living in Muslim countries. In fact, the distant Muslims had more right to be helped as they were weak minorities living in lands where the majority were non-Muslims.

Dar Al-Quran in Kenya

Al-Sayyid Hasan once received a letter from Sheikh Abu Al-A'la Al-Maudoudi in which the Sheikh informed him how the missionary efforts in Kenya have been mounting and how the missionaries have been making use of the poverty, hunger, and drought conditions in the region in their efforts to Christianise the Muslim minority there. The missionary organisations have made their headquarters in Nairobi, and from there they moved in all directions to all African countries, especially that the Kenyan government, essentially of a secular orientation, is sympathetic with the missionary organisations, which received strong support from their Christian governments.

In his letter, Sheikh Al-Maudoudi then asked Al-Sayyid Hasan to help by taking part in establishing a home for the Quran in Kenya that would be both a centre and starting point for the Islamic organisations and a centre for the teaching of the Holy Quran and a home for those caring for it.

Al-Sayyid Hasan was not content by being a mere participator in the project; he insisted, rather, on undertaking the whole project himself, and provided the whole cost of the centre. Furthermore, he persisted in supplying all the needs of the centre continually.

In an interview, Muhammad Akhtar Rau, founder and manager of the Islamic Institution in Kenya, mentioned that the great donation provided by Al-Sayyid Hasan in the late 1960s was the main factor in the establishment of the Institution. He added that Al-Sayyid Hasan's support was the main reason behind the Institution's continued activity by erecting buildings that he made an endowment as a constant income for the Institution to help it in discharging its duties in the service of Islam and Muslims.¹

Al-Sayyid Hasan had made his conviction clear that efforts to provide care for Muslims should never be directed only towards those Muslims living on Muslim soil; rather, they should go beyond that to care for the Muslims living on other lands, especially in non-Muslim countries, where they form minorities. This is because a Muslim living in a non-Muslim land remains prone to persecution and oppression by those in power and to misleading by propagators of corrupt ideologies, striving to bring him away from his

¹ See the interview with Muhammad Akhtar Rau in the Medinan daily *Al-Resala* in its edition 13767 dated 6 Shawwal 1421 AH / 1 January 2001, that is some two years after the passing away of Al-Sayyid Hasan.

faith. Thus, a Muslim living under such conditions is in dire need of material and moral support to make him feel that he is not alone in the face of such savage forces.

Starting from this belief, the contributions of Al-Sayyid Hasan roamed through various continents and countries making no distinction between language and ethnic groupings, as long as the effort was in the service of the Islamic *da'wa* (call) and in support of Muslims in their struggle to survive by meeting some of their requirements. In what follows we have a few examples of these contributions.

His contributions towards the support of Muslims in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a Muslim republic situated on the Bengal Gulf in Asia at the meeting point of the Ganges and the Brahma Buddha rivers. It was previously known as the Sind and it had earlier formed what was known as the eastern part of Pakistan.

On the fifteenth of August 1947, India and Pakistan obtained their independence from England in the aftermaths of severe massacres between Muslims and Hindus. Subsequently, the Indian subcontinent was divided into two states: India and Pakistan, and Lord Mountbatten, the last viceroy in India, departed.

On the twenty-fifth of March 1971, civil war broke out in East Pakistan, and the Pakistani army came from the west to quell the separatist movement there. The Pakistani armed force crushed the separatist movement and hundreds of thousands of Bengalis escaped the fighting and took refuge in India. The separatist leader, Mujibur-Rahman, was sentenced to death on the tenth of August of the same year.

Before the end of the year, however, India announced its recognition of the state of Bangladesh and declared an all-out war on Pakistan with the justification that Bengali refugees have caused complicated economic problems for the Indian government.

In the Security Council, the Soviet Union supported India by vetoing the resolution of the Council calling for a ceasefire; by doing this it was giving the advancing Indian army the chance to continue with their progress.

After a three-week war the Indian forces entered Dacca with the surrender of the Pakistani army there. This defeat led to the partition of the largest Muslim state into two states: a secular one (Bangladesh) in the eastern part and an Islamic one (Pakistan) in the western part.

Bangladesh, which now has a population of about 130 million, had been introduced to Islam early on by Muslim merchants who had close and wide trade links with the region. Towards the end of the first century AH, Hindus, by incitement from their king Dahar, waged war against Muslims in Bengal. A Muslim army, led by Muhammad Ibn Al-Qasem Al-Thaqafi, came to their rescue and defeated Dahar's forces. Thereafter, Islam spread widely in the land, and is still powerful nowadays.

In addition to suffering from continued Indian aggressions, Bangladeshis live in dire poverty between the dual threats of severe floods on one hand and spells of drought on the other.

The philanthropist efforts of Al-Sayyid Hasan reached this long-suffering land; and he used to allocate huge portions of his yearly contributions and grants to the needy there. His contributions to the poor and distressed community in the country never ceased. Add to this his frequent urgent aid to victims of disasters and floods.

His benevolent care also covered the orphans of Bangladesh, and he donated towards establishing an orphans' home there. He wanted it to be a large home with a great capacity to alleviate the suffering and misery of the greatest possible number of needy and orphaned children.

Khalida Zia, the then Prime Minister of Bangladesh, thanked His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan for his noble and generous help in a letter that asserted that he, with his help, had lightened the life and alleviated the suffering of numerous people, especially children.

In what follows we have the translation of some of the correspondences of Al-Sayyid Hasan in this regard.

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No. 153 / H – Date: 19 / 11 / 1411 AH

Messrs United Saudi Commercial Bank

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Kindly pay immediately the sum of 25.455.000 (twenty five million and four hundred fifty five thousand) Bangladeshi taka or the equivalent in US dollars or any other currency as demanded by the recipient according to the current rates in the state of Bangladesh, and notify us of this.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 324)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

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No. 164 / H – Date: 04 / 11 / 1411 AH

His Excellency the Consul General in the Embassy of the Republic of Bangladesh in Jeddah

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Referring to your fax No. B C G / Admin / 91 dated 18. 05. 91, we would like to bring to your attention that the sum of one million and two hundred and fifty five thousand U S dollars, of our contribution by order to the bank on 19. 10. 1411 AH / 04. 05. 1991 CE, will be the first instalment towards building a home for Muslim orphans with a capacity of over one thousand.

God is our goal and He is the One to guide to the Straight Path and grant success.

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 325)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

**Consulate General
People's Republic of Bangladesh
P. O. Box 6215
Jeddah
Saudi Arabia**

No: B C G / Admin 91 Date: 22. 05. 1991 CE

His Excellency Al-Sheikh Hasan Abbas Sharbatly
Jeddah

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

With reference to the fax of Your Excellency No. 163 / H, dated 04. 11. 1411 AH, regarding your generous contribution of one million and two hundred and fifty five thousand U S dollars as a first instalment towards building a home for Muslim orphans with a capacity of more than one thousand ...

I have the honour of informing Your Excellency that our government has opened a special account under the name of the 'Prime Minister – Orphanage Account' with Sonali Bank, the Ramna Branch, Dhaka, in accordance with your wish.

In my name, and on behalf of the Bangladeshi people, I take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to Your Excellency, with our prayers to God the Most Sublime to grant you long life and good health.

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Sayyid Khowaja Shurahbil Hasan

Consul General

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 326)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

A translation of

**The letter of Her Excellency the Prime Minister Khalida Zia
To His Excellency Al-Sheikh Hasan Abbas Sharbatly**

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Prime Minister**

Dacca

Date: 7 August 1991 CE

His Excellency Al-Sheikh Hasan Sharbatly

I take this opportunity to express gratitude to you in my name and on behalf of the government and the people of Bangladesh for your generous contribution towards establishing a home for Muslim orphans.

It gives me great honour to inform Your Excellency that I have opened an account by the name of 'Prime Minister –Orphanage Account' to put this noble plan into effect, and that this account will be used only for the project of establishing the home for the Muslim orphans.

I would like again to express our happiness with your generous contribution and your noble humane sentiments, and we pray to God the Glorified and the Most Sublime to bless you and all noble and generous Muslims, as you, with your generosity, enlighten life for those poor and miserable disadvantaged people, especially children, and provide for them the chance for a secure life.

Sincerely yours,

Khalida Zia

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 327)
(مع الإشارة إلى أنه إذا كان النص الإنكليزي الأصلي متوفراً فيفضل إيراده هنا بدلاً من هذه الترجمة عن النص العربي المترجم بدوره عن أصل إنكليزي)

His support to Muslims in Indonesia

An observer of the life of Al-Sayyid Hasan is likely to have the impression that he was spending his days and nights searching for a place to send his contributions to, provided that it would be in the service of Islam and Muslims.

While he never hesitated in extending a helping hand to the needy and the disadvantaged everywhere, he never forgot to provide for others, who were living in faraway places, the means that would help them cling to their faith and its teachings. Despite the long distance and the long flight hours between Indonesia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Al-Sayyid Hasan used to follow its news closely as if he were one of its citizens in spite of the fact that he never visited it.

It once came to his knowledge that Indonesians had an ardent wish to read and learn the Quran but were prevented by lack of *mushafs* (Quran books) copies in their hands. He at once rose to fill that gap with great happiness, wishing for reward from the Great Lord.

In what follows we have an illustrative example of his efforts in this regard.

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

S. H. A. Abbas Sharbatly
General Merchants
P O Box No. 296
Jeddah –Saudi Arabia
Cable Add.: (SHARBATLY)
C. R. 713
Telephone: 6426433 / 6426596

No. 2855

Date: 22 / 07 / 1402 AH

Messrs Saudi Cairo Bank, Jeddah, Al-Faiha Branch

Regards,

We wish you to hand to His Excellency the Secretary General of the Muslim World League Sheikh Muhammad Al-Harkan the sum of two million and five hundred thousand Saudi Riyals as the first instalment of the cost of five million (*mushaf*) Quran books for the benefit of Indonesian Muslims.

Please accept our sincere regards

Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 329)

His support to Afghanistan

Al-Sayyid Hasan was a good follower of local and international news, and he used to follow the current events and developments in the whole world. The sources of his news were usually his visitors and the specialists that used to come to his office, the daily newspapers that used to be read to him regularly every morning, and the radio set that was his companion on his desk and from which he used to listen to news bulletins and other news programmes. He used to know by heart the times of these programmes and the broadcasting stations that transmitted them. He would never miss the news bulletins, even when he was busy or when he had visitors; and he would keep moving from one broadcasting station to another to catch news bulletins and commentaries. He used to comment on the news and discuss them with his visitors; and from them he would receive the latest developments concerning Arab, Muslim, and world news.

When Russia invaded Afghanistan in the year 1977 CE, after a series of coups d'état that overwhelmed Afghanistan in those days, the man sensed danger; and he was saddened with each progress reported to have been made by the invading forces in the Muslim land. He used to assert that Russia was not only trying to spread its communism in Afghanistan but was aspiring to reach the holiest places on earth, and that the cause of Afghanistan was the cause of all Muslims, because Russia came to Afghanistan only to become closer to the land of the two holiest mosques and to spread its destructive ideology in its neighbouring countries to pave the way for it there.

When the news came carrying scenes of the Russian cruelty and intransigence in Afghanistan forcing elderly people, women, and children to flee their hell to Pakistan, he used to comment, 'If Muslims keep silent today, Communist Russia will annex Afghanistan as it had done with many other Muslim countries before.' Then he would add, 'God will grant the Afghans victory over Communist Russia as He had done before with Britain several times; however, it is our duty to help them and help the refugees in Pakistan.'

Indeed, the contributions of Al-Sayyid Hasan went speedily to Afghanistan; he made a monthly donation of one million riyals to the Afghan mujahidin and contributed the entire contents and the food supplies in his stores in addition to all the shipments that were being carried to him in freight ships, each of which was carrying a hundred and ten thousand tons of sugar.

Al-Sayyid Hasan was not content with just making the contributions; he endeavoured to ensure that these contributions should reach their destinations speedily. There were official papers and governmental documents to be obtained for shipping the food supplies to the refugees in Pakistan. For this purpose, Al-Sayyid Hasan, accompanied by Sheikh Muhammad Al-Harkan, the then Secretary General of the Muslim World League, had an interview with His Majesty King Faisal and obtained from His Majesty a high command to get the supplies out of the Kingdom, and Al-Sayyid Hasan declared that he was ready to bear all the costs of shipping the supplies to their destinations.

Having a deep understanding of international politics, Al-Sayyid Hasan never forgot that the Communist Revolution was essentially Jewish in ideology, planning, financing, and execution; and that its chief figure Marx was a grandson of Rabbi Mordechai Marx, and that Lenin and Trotsky – the main figures in the Russian Communist Revolution – were also Jews. Add to this that the Jews of America were on the top of the list of those who provided financial help to the Communist Revolution.

In this regard, Al-Sayyid Hasan used often to cite the writings of Ahmad Abdul-Ghafour Al-Attar in his book *Al-Shouyu'iyya Walidat Al-Suhiyuniyya* (Communism, the Child of Zionism), where Al-Attar reports from reliable Western sources that the Jews issued a statement at the victory of the Communist Revolution, which addressed Jews saying, 'O Jews, the hour of our complete victory is at hand; and today, we are at the eve of taking the reins of the world in our hands; we have seized power in Russia, the Russians were our masters, and today they have become our slaves.'

One of the first resolutions of the Russian revolutionaries in the first week of the Bolshevik Revolution was the following twofold resolution:

- Enmity to Jews is considered as anti-Semitism and is punishable by law (and they issued laws that would enable them to put this into effect).
- Recognising the right of the Jews in establishing a national home for them in Palestine.

Dr Abd Allah Azzam, one of those who fought against the Russians in Afghanistan, used often to visit Al-Sayyid Hasan and had lengthy discussions with him where he would inform him of the conditions of life and the people's needs there. Al-Sayyid Hasan would closely enquire about details of affairs there in order to form a clear idea about what he can do to support the mujahidin and help the poor population. He had taken it upon himself – as was his habit – to do everything he can to help in that respect. In addition to that, he used to raise the issue with his visitors and give them copies of the book *Ya Muslimi Al-'Alam Ittahu* (Muslims of the World, Unite) to read the documents in it to form an idea about the ultimate goal of Russia in invading Afghanistan, and that it was mainly to help the Jews reach all the Arab countries, and not only Palestine.

The man persisted in bearing the concern of the Afghan cause, and went on with his contributions, and he never had a moment's rest until God granted victory to the Afghans over the Communists – as he had predicted – and the Russians were forced to evacuate the Muslim land with all their power, weapons, and equipment in great disgrace.

When the events in Afghanistan, thereafter, developed along new courses away from the original cause in the service of Islam and Muslims, and when tribes and sects started their infighting seeking power, the man kept his distance from the whole affair: there was no benefit for religion in this kind of situation and there was no external enemy to fight. The whole turmoil was about internal strife, and it was not good judgement to take sides in it. All the parties were in the wrong, and the disadvantaged Muslims there were the real victims.

With his prudence, keen insight, and understanding, Al-Sayyid Hasan never intruded in affairs that were not of his concern. He never was a man of politics, and he never had any political activities, either at home or abroad; and he never needed to partake in such affairs, which were not part of his intellectual and psychological build-up. His main concern was helping the needy and supporting Muslims and Arabs everywhere against external dangers or in face of disasters and calamities.

The Islamic Centre in Canada

Canada is a part of the New World where Muslim immigration started towards the end of the nineteenth century from regions that were previously under the control of the Ottoman State like Lebanon, Syria, Albania, and Bosnia.

The majority of the early Muslim immigrants to Canada were almost totally unaware of the teachings of their religion, were preoccupied with their worldly concerns, and dissolved in the Canadian societal structure to a great extent; that was why they needed to be reminded of their identity and principles.

Waves of Muslim immigration to Canada continued after the First World War. Those immigrants tried to preserve something of their religious identity and practices, more than their predecessors did. However, with the hustle bustle of the cruel materialistic daily life, they lost a great deal of what they had carried along with them of their Islamic principles and teachings.

The immigration movement increased substantially after the Second World War, especially in late years. Thus there was a great increase in the numbers of Arab, Indian, Turkish, and Pakistani Muslims immigrating to Canada.

Canada has been, and still is, greatly encouraging to the immigration of brains to it. That was the reason why a great number of educated Muslims migrated there. There was necessity then for the establishment of an Islamic centre to care for the religious affairs of Muslims in Canada: to provide teaching of religious principles and duties and to remind Muslims of their faith and identity. The centre was established and it was managed by Mr Hasan Jabr; but it seems that the centre was not able to undertake its obligations at some point of time.

Dr Abd Allah Omar Nasif, during his tenure as Secretary General of the Muslim World League, put forward a suggestion to Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly to buy up the Islamic Centre in Canada, support it, and restructure its organisation in an attempt to reinvigorate the Islamic call and give support to the Muslim minority in this non-Muslim country. Al-Sayyid Hasan did not hesitate a moment and hastened to offer ten million riyals for it. He endeavoured with all his might to realise with it his aspirations for Muslims and the Islamic call in Canada, and provided for it all means for success. However, the weakness of the managerial body of the Centre led to its failure in its undertakings and the purposes for which he bought the Centre. The Muslim World

League took possession of the centre again and reformed its management in a way to enable it to execute its aims in the service of Muslims and Islam in a satisfactory manner.

Following is a translation of a document that illustrates the case.

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

S. H. A. Abbas Sharbatly
General Merchants
P O Box No. 296
Jeddah –Saudi Arabia
Cable Add.: (SHARBATLY)
C. R. 713
Telephone: 6885792 / 6885784

No. 7 Date: 01 / 01 / 1404 AH

Messrs Saudi Cairo Bank, Jeddah, Mecca Al-Mukarrama Road Branch

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

We wish you to hand to His Excellency the Secretary General of the Muslim World League Sheikh Muhammad Al-Harkan in Mecca Al-Mukarrama the sum of ten million riyals as an instalment of the costs of buying up the Muslim Nation Research Institute in Canada.

Please accept our sincere regards

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 335)

Building of mosques in France

Al-Sayyid Hasan also had worries concerning the Muslim community in France dissolving in the new society they were living in. That was why he continually supported them and helped in building mosques for them to keep their religious identity and to learn their religion and to find in that secular and materialistic land a place where they can retain their communal links, familiarity, and warmth.

Following is an illustration of this concerning the building of a mosque in France.

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

S. H. A. Abbas Sharbatly
General Merchants
P O Box No. 296
Jeddah –Saudi Arabia
Cable Add.: (SHARBATLY)
C. R. 713
Telephone: 6608896 -6602926

No. 1305 Date: 21 / 02 / 1406 AH

His Excellency Manager of the National Arab Bank City Centre Branch

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

We wish you to hand to His Excellency the Secretary General of the Muslim World League Dr Abd Allah Omar Nasif the sum of five hundred thousand riyals from our account with you No. 64927 / 8 for the building of a mosque for Muslims in France at our expense. This is to replace our previous order at the General Car Syndicate No. 751 dated 30. 11. 1405 AH.

Please accept our sincere regards

Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 337)

He almost bought *The Times*

Thus we see how the contributions of Al-Sayyid Hasan roamed extensively from one country to another. Not even the smallest details missed him; neither did he ignore the needs of the lower crust; and in all this he was seeking God's Pleasure and endeavouring – as much as he could – to achieve the goals that would enhance the cause of Islam all over the globe and would help Muslims wherever they were. He never hesitated or wavered in answering the call of his self-imposed duties as he had dedicated his life, his money, and all that he had to serving this sublime cause. This is why the verse of the famous poet Al-Mutanabbi is as true of him as can be of anyone:

A person of reason suffers with his mind in Paradise whereas a person of ignorance finds bliss in misguidance.

However, he was a man of principle, and he had given his life a great value when he placed it in the service of the most sublime message in life; as if he was acting by the recommendation of the poet:

A person takes the place he sets himself in; so do seek the highest grade among men.

We travel with the contributions of Al-Sayyid Hasan this time to London, the capital of Great Britain that was once a wide reaching empire upon whose possessions the sun did not set. This brings to memory the Islamic state, which was one day a strong empire with the strength of faith and the unity of its subjects. This made Haroun Al-Rashid, the great Abbasid Caliph, address a cloud saying, 'Pour your rain wherever you wish, the benefit of your rain will ultimately come to me.'

It came to the knowledge of Al-Sayyid Hasan that the most prestigious and most widely spread of the British newspapers – numbering around a hundred – was up for sale. *The Times* was one of the most influential newspapers in the whole world; however, its financial problems made its owners offer it, along with all its buildings and its supplements, for sale for seventy million pounds sterling.

After hearing the news, Al-Sayyid Hasan had an ardent desire to buy the paper and transform it to a paper that would be a beacon for right in defending Islam and Muslims. He knew that newspapers were important information media with a serious role in the modern society. He also knew that international Zionism, missionaries, and corrupt ideologies used the media to further their goals in attacking Islam and Muslims. He also knew that *The Times* was one of the major international newspapers and that, if he went ahead with his project to buy it, it would play an important role in serving the cause of the Arabs and the Muslims.

Al-Sayyid Hasan called some of his friends who were experts in the field and sought their advice. He met with Ali and Osman Hafiz and Sheikh Abdul-Quddous Al-Ansari and told them of his desire to buy the paper to make it a mouthpiece for Islamic call in the world.

The experts talked and praised the munificence of Al-Sayyid Hasan; however, they were unanimous in expressing their fear of the paper's management especially that all its managerial board and its editorial body were in their majority Jews; neither the British Government nor the international Zionist movement would allow such a take-over selling the paper to a Muslim Arab.

Al-Sayyid Hasan was deeply saddened by that because he had missed a chance to spend in the way of God, and he felt that the newspaper, were it to become an Islamic asset, would be a strong beacon for right and an edifice of Islam.

The insight of Al-Sayyid Hasan's friends proved right and *The Times* was sold to the Jewish financier Rupert Murdoch, and persisted in its pro-Zionist course and its antagonistic attitudes towards Muslims and Arabs, let alone its enmity towards the Islamic call itself.

Supporting the Islamic Forum in London

Al-Sayyid Hasan did not lose spirit due to his failure in buying the British newspaper and persisted in supporting the Muslim community there by providing financing for their seminars and conferences in serving Islam there. His contributions and allocations played an important role in bringing Islam nearer to the English and in many of them embracing Islam and in the spread of the Islamic call in England.

Following is a translation of a document concerning the monthly allocations for the benefit of the Islamic Forum in London.

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

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General Merchants
P O Box No. (296) JEDDAH 21441
Jeddah –Saudi Arabia
Cable Add.: (SHARBATLY)
C. R. 713
Telephone: 6602926 / 6608896

Personal Office

No. 110 / H – Date: 24 / 08 / 1411 AH

Messrs United Saudi Commercial Bank

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Please pay the sum of one hundred thousand riyals as a monthly allocation to Dr Adel Al-Salim for the benefit of the Islamic Forum in London at the end of each month starting from March 1991 CE, and notify us of this.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you)

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 341)

SECTION SIX

HIS RELATIONSHIPS WITH PUBLIC FIGURES

Chapter One

With Statesmen at Home and Abroad

It has become obvious that a researcher cannot possibly come up with a complete list of the entire philanthropist spending of Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly; and to the same degree, one cannot draw a complete list of his home and international relationships, which were spread all over the world with a great number of leaders on the political, cultural, intellectual, and even popular levels. This was because the man endeavoured all his life to reach out to people and establish solid relationships with them as much as they cared to approach him and establish links with him.

In what follows we have a survey of some of these relationships.

With the House of Saud

We have already referred to the strong relationships that linked Al-Sayyid Hasan to the House of Saud, most prominent of which is that which tied him to the founder of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia King Abdul-Aziz Ibn Saud, with his successors, and with all the Saudi family.

He used always to announce unequivocally that he had a binding pledge to the House of Saud, which he will never break and to which he will remain loyal. The Saudi leaders reciprocated this love and loyalty, and they considered him one of them, and dealt with him in accordance with the injunction of King Abdul-Aziz who had considered him as one of his sons and announced that ‘we are one with him,’ and ‘what hurts him hurts me,’ and Al-Sayyid Hasan reciprocated their love and gave them his full allegiance.

The man never wavered in supporting the causes of his nation and endeavoured to be worthy of the trust that the Royal family had in him, starting with the great founder of the state up to the days of the late King Fahd. Proofs of this are innumerable, and we have cited some of them earlier.

With President Camille Chamoun of Lebanon

We have also already referred to the role Al-Sayyid Hasan played in supporting the cause of Lebanon and to the strong link that tied him to the Lebanese President Camille Chamoun at one stage of his life, and how Al-Sayyid Hasan chose to renounce this link when he saw that it went against his convictions and the tenets of his Arabic ideology and the interest of the Arab nation when Chamoun sought support from foreign powers against his opponents at home.

With President Gamal Abdul-Nasser of Egypt

Egyptians never forgot the contributions of Al-Sayyid Hasan in helping them and his support to their cause in their times of crisis and in their war, and how he participated in

the reconstruction of the city of Port Said after the tripartite aggression in the year 1956 CE.

President Gamal Abdul-Nasser invited Al-Sayyid Hasan repeatedly to the inauguration of the neighbourhood that he had paid for rebuilding in Port Said; however, the circumstances of Al-Sayyid Hasan prevented him from attending the ceremony and he could not attend the inauguration.

It happened that Al-Sayyid Hasan once travelled to Egypt for some business interests there. This took place concurrently with a visit by King Saud to Egypt, and Al-Sayyid Hasan went to the airport to greet the King. President Nasser was in the airport as well; and some of the President's men informed Al-Sayyid Hasan that the President was resentful because he invited him three times and he did not come. Al-Sayyid Hasan said,

If you were inviting me to honour me for my contribution (for the rebuilding of Port Said), I was only performing my duty, and I do not wish to be honoured for performing my duty. As for coming now without prior notice, I want you to know that I regard Egypt as my second home and as a brother nation; the old in it are like a father to me, the middle-aged are like my brothers, and the young are like my children. I see every house in it as my own house; do I need to give prior notice when I come to my home?¹

Some time later during that visit,² President Nasser invited him to his home. He was about half an hour late, and the guard at the gate said, 'You are late,' and Al-Sayyid Hasan answered, 'I am but invited; I am not the host.' During the visit, the two men discussed a number of things, and Al-Sayyid Hasan brought up the issue of the media policy of Egypt in those days. The state-run Egyptian media were promoting the state policy, which differed in some of its orientations with the official policy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and this led to certain transgressions against the Kingdom in the media.

Al-Sayyid Hasan spoke with great frankness and spontaneity with President Nasser and said, 'Your media are daily waging propaganda campaigns of abuse against the Kingdom; and I think that this does a great harm to your image as any abuse to any Arab or Muslim is an abuse to all Arabs and Muslims. If you ever want to insult someone, let the insult come from some mean or lowly person; then, nobody will ever care to answer him.'³

After the visit, some close assistants of the President told Al-Sayyid Hasan that nobody, no matter how much moral courage he had, would have dared to speak with the President the way he did.'⁴

¹ See *Okaz*, *op. cit.*

² That was the first visit of Al-Sayyid Hasan to Egypt – and it took place during the period of the Union between Egypt and Syria – where he stayed some nine months there attending to his businesses and estates.

³ See *Okaz*, *op. cit.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

However, the man was perfectly aware of what he was doing and with whom he was speaking; likewise, President Nasser knew the man very well and highly appreciated his enthusiasm for his nation, his Arab identity, and his religion. That was why the two men had a good relationship.

With King Muhammad V of Morocco

The contributions of Al-Sayyid Hasan had reached Morocco and he was a staunch supporter of the nationalist movement and the Moroccan Independence Party, sponsored by King Muhammad V in facing the French occupation ever since his accession to the throne in 1927 CE. This angered the French occupiers who banished him to Madagascar on 30 August 1953 CE.

Al-Sayyid Hasan persisted in supporting the nationalist movement and the Independence Party during the exile of King Muhammad V. The two men kept following each other's news and actions until they met in Cairo, where a close friendship grew between them. They used to perform dawn prayers together at Al-Imam Husain Mosque everyday, and would go out thereafter and take a walk and discuss matters of common interest. King Muhammad V always found in Al-Sayyid Hasan a good listening ear and a generous hand always ready for good deeds.¹

With Abdul-Karim Al-Khattabi

Abdul-Karim Al-Khattabi (1299-1382 AH / 1882-1963 CE)² was one of the prominent figures of resistance in Morocco against both Spanish and French colonial powers.

He dedicated himself to the support of his nation against foreign occupiers and was able to defeat the Spanish army in the battle of Annoual. There, the Spanish army met with an ignominious defeat and suffered great losses, losing more than twenty five thousand soldiers, at a time when Al- Khattabi had with him about a thousand soldiers only.

After suffering this heavy defeat in a six-day battle (1-6 Dhul-Qi'da 1340 AH / 16-21 June 1921 CE), faced with Abdul-Karim's successes, and seeing in his movement a threat to their colonial possessions in North Africa, the Franco-Spanish forces decided upon joint action. The joint forces, including a French army of 160,000 men under Marshal Philippe Pétain, attacked Al-Khattabi and his men. Confronted with this combined Franco-Spanish force of 250,000 men with overwhelming technological superiority, Abdul-Karim had to surrender. He was exiled and he chose to live in the land of the Two Holy Mosques (Saudi Arabia) where he lived in dignity until he passed away in 1382 AH / 1963 CE.

Al-Sayyid Hasan and Abdul-Karim Al-Khattabi used to exchange visits frequently, and a strong friendship tied the two men. Al-Sayyid Hasan always looked at Al-Khattabi, his

¹ The information is taken from the Sharbatly Archives.

² Al-Khattabi received his education at Al-Qurawiyyin University and was appointed *qadi al-qudat*, or chief Muslim judge, for the district of Melilla.

family, and his soldiers and leaders as his own guests. Abdul-Karim Al-Khattabi used to say that he would never feel a stranger in a place where Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly was.¹

¹ This information is taken from Al-Sharbatly Archives.

Al-Sayyid Hasan displaying some projects to King Saud

With King Muhammad V of Morocco

(الصورتان ص. 353)

Al-Sayyid Hasan with President Gamal Abdul-Nasser

With President Camille Chamoun of Lebanon

(الصورتان ص. 355)

Chapter Two

His Relationships with the Intelligentsia and Support to Education and Culture

The relationships of Al-Sayyid Hasan with men of letters, poets, and the intelligentsia were comparable to his relationships with other scholars and thinkers. Whenever he learnt of a poet or writer visiting the Kingdom, he used to visit him or invite him to his place. The list is long and it includes such brilliant names as Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqqad, Dr Taha Husain, Abdul-Hamid Jawdat Al-Sahhar, and Mustafa Sadeq Al-Rafe'i among others.

From his sittings with scholars and writers, he acquired a good deal of knowledge and education despite his illiteracy. His strong and fast memory enabled him to memorise, retain, and facilely retrieve information from memory whenever he needed.

His support to the Ninth Cultural Conference and contribution to publication of books of culture

His contributions in supporting education and culture started early on and went to great lengths. A good illustrative example is his contribution in supporting the activities of 'The Ninth Cultural Conference' organised by the Cultural Committee of the Arab League in its sixth cycle in Jeddah in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, by invitation from King Saud Ibn Abdul-Aziz and under the chairmanship of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd when he was Minister of Education in January 1955 CE.¹

In the conference, Ahmad Abdul-Ghafour Attar presented a memorandum to the cultural manager Said Fahim in which he mentioned that he had talked to one of the prominent financiers and asked him to support the publication of two cultural books: Al-Azhari's *Tahdhib Al-Lugha* and Al-Jawhari's *Al-Sihah*, and that he responded positively and announced his readiness to finance the project.

When Al-Attar delivered his speech in the conference, he closed it with a letter that he had received.

The letter read as follows.²

¹ See *Al-Sharbatly Al-Muhsin Al-Islami Al-Akbar* (Al-Sharbatly: the Great Islamic Man of Charity).

² *Ibid.*

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Dear Brother Ustaz Ahmad Abdul-Ghafour Attar

Best regards and greetings

I would like to express my appreciation of your noble brotherly gesture in stating your kind confidence in me to the Cultural Committee, as regards my full readiness to contribute in projects of benevolence. I also appreciate your coming to me for financing the publication and distribution of Al-Azhari's *Tahdhib Al-Lugha* and reprinting of Al-Jawhari's *Sihah*, and making copies of all necessary books to be put at the disposal of scholars and students in Mecca.

God willing, I shall come up to your expectation.

God willing, I shall cover all the publication and distribution expenses of Al-Azhari's *Tahdhib Al-Lugha* and Al-Jawhari's *Sihah* in an academically accepted manner, and the production of the required copies. My confidence in your scholarship urges me to ask you to undertake the management of the execution of this huge project, and to start it immediately.

As you have estimated the costs of this project to be four hundred thousand riyals, equivalent to forty thousand guineas, I would like to inform you that I am ready to credit the financing of this scholarly project God willing; and in case the expenses exceeded the mentioned forty thousand guineas, I am ready to foot the bill God willing.

My ultimate hope is that the printing and publication of these books will come in a manner befitting the image of our dear holy land.

As for your request that I allocate a monetary yearly prize starting this year, I am agreeable to this suggestion, wishing to provide encouragement to people of scholarship and education. However, I have a small modification to make concerning the amount of the prize: you asked for the prize to be five hundred Egyptian guineas, and I would like to add another five hundred, to make the prize a thousand yearly, a half of it would be granted to the writer of the best book on an Islamic subject, and the other half to someone who edits one of the ancient cultural books in the following fields: history, literature, poetry, and language, provided that the editing is done in accordance with correct academic standards. The awarding of the prize should not take into consideration the ethnic origin of the candidate. Any candidate is entitled to the prize as long as he is a Muslim and he meets the required stipulations; however, the book has to be in the Arabic language. I reiterate my appreciation of your fruitful efforts in serving scholarship and reviving our culture.

God is with those who are pious and who do good (*Al-Nahl*: 128).

Please accept my best regards.

Al-Attar commented on the letter saying,

This is Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly, who has opened his treasury to benevolence; this is the man who has spent tens of millions in ways of charity. No one, not even Al-Sharbatly himself, can keep count of what he has offered in the way of God. The best we can say to describe him is what the ancient poet Abu Tammam said in describing a generous person:

If he has nothing in his hand except his soul, he would give it away; let someone who asks him fear God.¹

Dr Taha Husain then delivered the following speech in comment.²

The warm welcome we have met with in our holy and noble Arab land from our brethren, and all the efforts put in by the delegations and the states of the Arab League, and all the resolutions and recommendations of this conference are a truly great and wonderful thing. However, another great, beautiful, and amazing thing is being added to all that. This important addition, which has given me great pleasure that I have never felt before in my whole life, is the visit I received from this great, noble, and prominent philanthropist from the Holy Land. Before concluding his visit, he presented a gift to the Cultural Committee in the Arab League, a gift the like of which it had not received ever since the Arab League was established. This is an unprecedented gift that is presented for the first time in the whole history of the Arab League.

I am referring to the contribution of this noble philanthropist towards covering the entire expenses of publishing valuable historical and scholarly ancient books and great dictionaries.

It is a great gesture from a great man, whose endeavours in philanthropy are unstoppable. He could not have done otherwise; no one else could have done what he did, even if he tried. This is because good deeds coming from this good man are like sunrays coming spontaneously from the sun: they are inseparable from their source. Good deeds cannot be separated from this great man; neither can he be separated from them.

Our Cultural Committee has come with hearts filled with the love of scholarship and knowledge; however, it has come with empty hands: it could not discharge its duties with such hands. Whenever a book was mentioned that was planned for publication, whenever a cultural activity was scheduled for performance, and whenever my colleagues used to give free reins to their wishes in flights of imagination, I used to check their ambitious expectations using a hateful word: money. I used to ask my colleagues to give attention to budgetary considerations.

¹See *Al-Sharbatly Al-Muhsin Al-Islami Al-Akbar* (Al-Sharbatly: the Great Islamic Man of Charity).

²*Ibid.*

However, for the first time in our holy Arab lands, and thanks to the energetic surge in cultural activity made possible by this spirit, the Committee will be empowered in spreading cultural activity all over the globe.

For the first time in the history of the Cultural Committee, I ask my colleagues to give free rein to their dreams without the scare of the budgetary considerations. This is because now the Committee has in its possession the required financing for its projects.

I do not look at this act of generosity that I have described as a gesture towards the Cultural Committee and the Arab League alone, neither is it a service to Islam and the Arab spirit alone, nor is it a service to scholarship and education alone; in fact, I am overwhelmed by not a little sense of pride. If this pride be a sin, you are my partners in it.

It is not a little sense of pride that overtakes me when I remember that the Cultural Committee has had chairmen before me, and I have had the honour of holding the chair of the Committee only a short while ago, and I come to the Holy land to experience the greatest bliss ever granted to nations and peoples, and I find myself blessed with this great offer coming from an Arab, a Saudi citizen, living in the homeland of the Arabic language, in Mecca, in the Holy Sanctuary of God.

Whatever I say in singing the praises of this great philanthropist will not stand up to the gratitude I feel deep at heart and will not stand up to be a reward to his benevolence. We are all unable to thank this man strongly enough; and when I say this, I am not exaggerating.

I am really not exaggerating in expressing my gratitude: I am totally unable to thank him enough; I have only my heart; and God be my witness, and I hope you all be my witnesses, that I grant him my heart; it is all I have.

This noble and generous man is His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly; and I hope he will allow me to offer him my most sincere salutation and gratitude for his generous concern. It gives me great pleasure to convey to him the resolution of the Cultural Committee in the Arab league to raise to him our heartfelt gratitude for his generous grant that reaches not only the Arab League and the Cultural Committee but all Arab and Muslim nations all over the globe as well. They will all read the books the publication of which he made possible, and I hope they will also read the other books that he is spending on, like Al-Jawhari's *Sihah* and Al-Azhari's *Tahdhib Al-Lugha*.

To Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly, we offer renewed salutation and continued gratitude.

There were other congratulatory responses – from official circles and from individual scholars and thinkers – that all praised the efforts of Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly towards supporting the activities of the Cultural Conference and publishing important books at his own expense.

A number of the participators in the conference organised by the Cultural Committee of the Arab league in 1955 CE in Jeddah; in the photograph we see the sponsor of the conference the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Ibn Abdul-Aziz when he was Minister of Education and the Chairman of the Committee Dr Taha Husain speaking

(الصورة ص. 364)

King Fahd Ibn Abdul-Aziz - when he was Minister of Education – also sent a letter to thank Al-Sayyid Hasan for his munificence and for his support of education, culture, and the Arabic library. Following is a translation of this letter.

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

**Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Ministry of Education
Office of the Minister**

No.:
Date:

Your Honourable Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly

We send you our kind regards,

I have received the cheque of one hundred thousand riyals that you sent for the publication of the *Tarikh Futouh Al-Buldan* (History of Arab Conquests) book by (the ancient Arab historian) Al-Baladhuri, suggested to you by Dr Taha Husain, which you so generously agreed to publish at your expense.

I appreciate this good gesture and noble sentiment of yours towards Arabic and Islamic culture. I also learnt with great pleasure that you have contributed four hundred thousand riyals towards the publication of Al-Azhari's *Tahdhib Al-Lugha* and Al-Jawhari's *Sihah*, and making copies of manuscripts in the keep of the Cultural Committee of the Arab League for the benefit of researchers and scholars; and your allocation of ten thousand riyals for an annual prize to be awarded in equal shares to the two best books in the Arabic language, etc.

To this great deed in the service of Islam, the Arab spirit, and human culture and knowledge, I present my sincere thanks, and I pray to God to grant our beloved country the likes of you in the fields of culture under the patronage of our great monarch King Saud, may God guard him and grant you success in doing good. God does not waste the good deeds of those who do good.

Wassalmu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah (Peace be with you).

Minister of Education

(ترجمة الرسالة ص. 365)
(مع الملاحظة بعدم وضوح بعض أجزاء النص)

His Majesty then wrote a Foreword for the book, and in what follows we cite a part of it.

It gives me great pleasure to see one of our good compatriots, on whom God has bestowed success in performing good deeds, the noble brother His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly, endeavouring to publish this great dictionary at his own expense, spending tens of thousands guineas towards its editing, printing, and publication, to the extent that this edition – the Sharbatly edition – has come out a gem of elegance in printing and production.

It is my pleasing duty to offer thanks to the dear brother Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly, who is the person standing behind this project and without whose effort many people would have been deprived of this unique edition of the *Sihah*, an edition distinguished for beauty and elegance of printing, in scholarly editing, in organisation, and classification.

The man behind the publication of this edition of the *Sihah* is an honourable philanthropist; and this is not his first – and it will not be the last – contribution in the fields of education, culture, and knowledge. This noble man – *may God reward him in plenty* – has had numerous good precedents in this field. He has published valuable books, some of which were doctoral dissertations from universities in London and Cairo, like *Al-Ma'ajem Al-Arabia* (Arabic Dictionaries) by Dr Abd Allah Darwish from the University of London and *Al-Mu'jam Al-Arabi* (The Arabic Dictionary) by Dr Husain Nassar from the University of Cairo. The books published by this philanthropist are innumerable, and what I have mentioned above is just a sample. In addition, he has built many schools and mosques, and has spent millions in all ways of charity and benevolence.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly is worthy of lasting appreciation from all citizens and scholars in all Arabic-speaking countries. Enough pride and reward unto him is his extreme care in the language of the Quran and the publication of the *Sihah* in this elegant shape; enough pride unto him is his publication at his expense of a new exegesis of the Holy Quran; enough pride unto him is the fact that his name is being repeated in the environs of scholarship, the best of all places.

I offer my deepest gratitude to Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly for his generous spending on cultural and scholarly pursuits and for his fruitful contributions in the fields of benevolence and charity.

I would like my reader also to know that Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly has donated two million riyals to the Ministry of Education a few months ago, in addition to the building of ten grand schools, and in addition to his donation of hundreds of thousands for spreading Arabic and Islamic culture. This noble philanthropist is unique in that he is the only one from among the children of this nation who has done such good deeds.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly is entitled to our thanks and the gratitude of the beloved nation and the gratitude of culture for his great services and deeds; may God reward him in plenty and grant us many like him, and may God grant us success to good deeds.

Al-Riyadh, 14 Rajab 1365 AH
Fahd Ibn Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud
Minister of Education

The book was met with great appreciation and had a great impact among scholarly and intellectual circles and specialists of language studies, who noticed with appreciation the role of Al-Sayyid Hasan in the production of the book.

The prominent writer Mahmoud Abbas Al-Aqqad wrote:

Al-Ustaz Ahmad Abdul-Ghafour Attar put in a great intellectual effort in the production of this linguistic gem (Al-Jawhari's *Sihah*); however, his effort would not have had the desired fruit had it not been for the support provided by a noble altruist, a man who does not hesitate in giving away treasures in serving Islam and the Arabic language: this is the great philanthropist Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Al-Sharbatly. He is a man of great merit in both Islamic and Arabic culture, whenever the need arises for urgent financing and when spenders in contribution become scarce.

Al-Sayyid has given away hundreds of thousands, and he still spends generously whenever the call is raised to spending in the fields of jihad or culture, or the cause of the Arab nation.

We are assured that the lofty spirit of Arabism is in good hands as long as there are people who are concerned about it in this manner, and people who spend in its way like this, and as long as there are people who appreciate this spending as it should.

Cairo
24 Jumada II 1375 AH
6 February 1956 CE¹

His Excellency Sheikh Omar Ibn Hasan Al-Sheikh wrote on the same topic:

Praise be to God Who created man and taught him speech. He made the Arabic language a crown above all other languages and honoured it by making it the language of the Holy Quran. The noble Prophet *Peace be upon him* greatly encouraged the learning of this language when he said, 'Learn Arabic and teach it to others; it is the tongue used by God the Magnificent on the Day of Reckoning.'

¹ The Sharbatly Archives

I have seen the *Sihah* book (*Tajul-Lugha wa Sihah Al-Arabia* (The Crown of Language and the Correctness of Arabic)) by the great scholar Ismail Ibn Hammad Al-Jawhari, and I was amazed and overjoyed by its contents and sections glowing with the lights of Arabic and its solid text and clear explanations which illuminate complex concepts and unveil denotations and connotations of lexical terms. Its reader feels as if he is in a green bright garden from whose fruits and flowers he picks whatever he wishes. In reality, it is the first dictionary with which Arabic linguistic studies made the first step in their history in the way of scholarly lexicography. It is a precise scholarly research done beautifully in accordance with accurate standards and scholarly methodology flowing from the language of the Holy Quran in a wonderful style.

It is a valuable book that every Arab who feels concerned for his noble language should possess. It is nourishment for the soul and a straightener of speech. In this edition, the book is adorned by the scholarly editing of the distinguished scholar Ahmad Abdul-Ghafour Al-Attar, who is a skilful master in the arts of scholarship, literature, and Arabic. He has picked from this wondrous garden the essences of beauty to please his readers.

The publication of this book – for the benefit of all Muslims for generations to come – has been made possible by help from God Who grants success and Who directed the distinguished philanthropist and altruist Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly, who is well known for his contributions and extensive spending in projects of benevolence, in publication of Islamic books and building mosques and schools that have become an attribute of this noble man who grew on the love of scholars and religion, and who has offered many helping hands in the interests of Islam and Muslims and in charity to orphans and the needy.

May God grant many of the likes of this man to this nation; may God rest the soul of the writer and forgive him; may God grant success to what is good to the editor and the publisher; and Peace be upon Prophet Muhammad the last of God's messengers and prophets, the Servant and Messenger of God, and his household and companions.

Al-Riyadh
12 Rajab 1375 AH¹

Ahmad Abdul-Ghafour Al-Attar, the editor of the *Sihah* book discussed his experience in the editing and publication of the book:

When we published *Tahdhib Al-Sihah* (an abridged version of the book) a few years ago, it was met with great welcome and appreciation from kings, presidents, leaders, scholars, men of letters, poets, and the media in the Arab and the Islamic worlds. Many suggested to us to undertake the publishing of the original *Sihah*

¹ The Sharbatly Archives

itself, and – as Dr Zeki Al-Mahasni put it in his review of the *Tahdhib Al-Sihah* in the Egyptian *Kitab* journal – to get it out of its ancient yellow papers and its rare manuscript, to resurrect this great work by Al-Jawhari.

I had accomplished the editing of the original *Sihah*, provided comments on it, and made necessary corrections. I had spent the prime of my life in this work, which was unpaid. When I finished it, I put it aside, as I had done with many others of my writings and researches, in the hope that someday God will send it someone to help in its publication.

As soon as the *Tahdhib Al-Sihah* reached the readers, we received more than one hundred letters from major scholars, thinkers, and language specialists, suggesting that we publish the *Sihah* itself. Some of the writers published lengthy articles in major newspapers about our humble effort, and again suggested the publication of the original. Many Arab and Muslim leaders and orientalist talked to me personally and to the publisher expressing their appreciation and, again, suggesting that we publish the *Sihah*.

I had the pleasure two years ago of meeting His Royal Highness Prince Faisal, who enjoys a high level of education, in one of his hunting trips. When he saw a part of my edited version of the *Sihah*, and saw that it was done with precision and exactitude, he admired and appreciated the work greatly and suggested publishing it and expressed his readiness to finance the project himself.

By a noble gesture, the publisher of *Tahdhib Al-Sihah* Al-Sheikh Muhammad Surour Al-Sabban also promised to publish *Al-Sihah* at his own expense, and he answered Dr Zeki Al-Mahasni and all those who suggested the publication of the book that he was ready to publish the book and undertake all that is required for that project.

A number of prospective publishers expressed their wish to undertake the task of publishing the book. However, Al-Sheikh Al-Sabban had made his preparations and gave me the choice. I persuaded him to make room for someone else this time so as to have as many people as possible partaking in this project and to have more publishers vying for the reward of good deeds. He unwillingly accepted to give up that grand project which he had called for some thirty five years back.

Then I made my choice to approach a noble man, a high-ranking man who never shrinks from benevolence, never hesitates in performing good deeds, and never closes his coffers when spending in the Way of God.

I chose my friend Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly who was active in all fields of good deeds and charity. He was a man worthy of having his name placed alongside the name of the noble scholar Al-Imam Al-Jawhari, who had made giant unprecedented steps in the field of Arabic lexicography. He was a man worthy of being the object of admiration in all scholarly and literary circles and of being the

object of praise whenever the *Sihah* book is mentioned and whenever Arabic dictionaries are discussed, and whenever discussion is renewed of the Quran, the Hadith, the Exegeses, Islamic jurisprudence, the science of history, literature, and biographies.

Al-Sharbatly *may God reward him with good* had undertaken the publication of upwards of fifty books including the Quran, the infallible Book of God, and books in Exegeses, Quran sciences, and the Arabic language, among others.

It is enough pride and glory for a person to have his name mentioned with the names of the great men of Islamic thought and to be counted with them in the gardens of scholarship with scholars who are the inheritors of prophets.

It is enough pride for our publisher the honourable minister to occupy a seat with the numbered giants of thought in the gardens of scholarship; this is a rank that is restricted to those on whom God has bestowed the blessing of honour and fame, and for those who have served Islam, the noble Arabic spirit, and humankind at large.

I would like here to say a word for the record and for history, a brief word of truth coming out of a genuine sentiment.

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Al-Sharbatly is an outstanding spender in ways of charity and philanthropy; his contributions – in millions – have reached all fields of benevolence.

Only a few days ago, he made a great donation of nine hundred thousand riyals towards the defence efforts in Egypt, two million riyals for the city of Port Said, in addition to his donations to Syria, and other contributions.

In the domain of education, culture, and scholarship, he spent millions on building of schools and mosques, on publication of great books, on helping scholars, students, men of letters, and publishers, not to mention his donations in millions to ministries of education. That was a noble and generous effort in this domain; enough pride for him is that he partook in reviving the interest in the Book of God and the Sunna of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Al-Sharbatly is worthy of great and lasting praise for his inimitable feats that put to shame the spending of thousands of men of wealth put together, who might be wealthier than him, but God grants success to whomever He wishes.

Cairo
21 Jumada I 1376 AH

23 December 1956 CE¹

The efforts of Al-Sayyid Hasan in serving the sciences of the Quran and the Arabic language were the object of great praise from the prominent Islamic scholar Al-Sheikh Muhammad Ali Al-Sabouni, who wrote the following.

Praise be to God Lord of the Worlds, and peace be upon the noblest of messengers Muhammad and his companions, the stars of guidance, and all those who follow them in righteousness up to the end of time.

Favours have been coming in succession in the service of our beloved religion from the hands of our brother the Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Al-Sharbatly, who has devoted himself to the service of the Book of God and the blessed Sunna of His Prophet *Peace be upon him*. If a person's worth is measured by his offerings to his nation and his country and by his efforts in the service of his faith, then there is no doubt that His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Al-Sharbatly has the greatest chance and the highest rank in this field. He has in his credit magnificent feats that many men would find difficult to accomplish, be it in the domain of charity and benevolence or in the domain of the publication of religious and Islamic books aiming to provide guidance for a Muslim in matters of faith and religion, and especially in the publication of books that serve the Quran and the Sunna. He has published hundreds of thousands – even millions – of copies in all fields of arts and sciences. From among these, I may mention *Safwat Al-Tafasir* (An Anthology of Exegeses) in three volumes, *Tafsir Ayat Al-Ahkam* (Explanation of the Verses of Rulings) in two volumes, and *Tarbiyat Al-Awalad fi Al-Islam* (The Upbringing of Children in Islam) in two volumes, in addition to other serious and important beneficial books, for which he deserves great respect and appreciation. Here he is today sponsoring the publication of this great book *Al-Sihah* in the Arabic language, edited by the great scholar Brother Ahmad Abdul-Ghafour Al-Attar.

This book, in seven volumes, is a great book in all respects, and one may wonder why Al-Sayyid Hasan Al-Sharbatly would take it upon himself to care for spending on such a great book, at a time when the book is specialised in the sciences of the Arabic language and contains nothing of the religious sciences of exegeses or hadith or other purely religious fields. The answer to this is that the sciences of Arabic are decidedly in the service of the Holy Book of God and the blessed Sunna of His Prophet *Peace be upon him* as long as these honourable subjects could not be comprehended satisfactorily without a good knowledge of Arabic. That was the main reason why Al-Sayyid Hasan Al-Sharbatly took it upon himself to publish the *Sihah*. May God reward him in plenty, and may He grant us many like him who strive in doing good and in attaining God's Pleasure; those are deeds that remain in one's credit in the afterlife, as the Prophet *Peace be upon him* had stated, 'When a child of Adam dies, his work is discontinued except for three

¹ Al-Sharbatly Archives

[things]: a continuous act of charity, knowledge that is of benefit to others, or a righteous child supplicating for him.’¹ We pray that God blesses this man’s life and inspires him to persist in acts of good and benefit to people, and to bless him with sincerity in his works seeking only God’s Pleasure.

God instructs His Messenger to tell his followers to strive in good deeds as their deeds will be displayed to God, His Messenger, and to all believers; and they will come to the One Who knows the Hidden as well as the Manifest, and He will make clear to them all that they had done (*Al-Tauba*: 105).

Um Al-Qura (Mecca)

25. 06. 1402 AH²

¹The hadith is narrated in Muslim, *Sahih*, 5 / 73; Al-Bukhari, *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad*, 238; Abu Dawoud, *Sunan*, 2880; Al-Nasa’i, 2 / 129; and Al-Tirmidhi, 1 / 359.

² The Sharbatly Archives

Al-Sayyid Hasan Al-Sharbatly with a group of intellectuals at his place in Cairo

(الصورة ص. 375)

Between Al-Aqqad and Al-Attar

We have seen how Al-Sayyid Hasan was linked in close friendship with prominent men of letters and culture, and how he used to follow their intellectual activities closely and take part in publishing those of their works that were in agreement with his concepts in serving Islam and raising awareness among Muslims and Arabs.

The following story will serve to illustrate this aspect of his life. One day the two well-known writers Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqqad and Ahmad Abdul-Ghafour Al-Attar were visiting Al-Sayyid Hasan and the three men had a lengthy discussion on communism, its dangers, and the likely implications of the spread of its influence to Arab countries. They were agreed upon the fact that this would certainly lead to drastic structural and cultural changes in concepts, ideologies, and attitudes in Arab communities; these concepts, which are the building blocks of the Arab identity and the Arab community, should remain fixed and should not be tampered with.

Al-Sayyid Hasan said to his visitors,

I have published numerous books for both of you. And for you, Ustaz Abbas, I have published the *'Abqariyyat* series (Outstanding Men of Ingenuity in Islam) in particular, and I have heard His Majesty King Abdul-Aziz praising the series saying, 'May God reward Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqqad for this series.' However, what I have in mind now, is that each one of you write a book on Communism, and I will finance the publication of these books. This is because, as you have mentioned, Communism is starting to take roots and spread in Arab and Muslim countries; even though, thank God, it has not made its entry to our land yet. However, we have to protect ourselves and it is your Islamic and intellectual duty to warn people against its dangers so as to protect them from its deception as many people in the Arab countries have fallen prey to this deception.

What you have said about Communism is relevant and I add that there are three main reasons behind the spread of its influence: poverty, ignorance, and international Jewry that has been active in misleading people.

The two writers responded positively to the request of Al-Sayyid Hasan: Al-Aqqad wrote *Al-Shuyu'iyya wa Al-Insaniyya* (Communism and Humanity), and Al-Attar wrote *Al-Shuyu'iyya wa Al-Islam* (Communism and Islam). Al-Sayyid Hasan fulfilled his promise and financed the publication of the two books.¹

Al-Attar wrote a 'Foreword' for Al-Aqqad's book *Al-Shuyu'iyya wa Al-Insaniyya*. In what follows we have an excerpt from his Foreword.

It is a noteworthy point that Mecca Al-Mukarrama undertakes the publication of Ustaz Al-Aqqad's book to reveal the reality of Communism and Communists to

¹The Sharbatly Archives

all readers. Readers will be able to see how the evidences taken from common sense, science, logic, reality, and factual experience will demolish the false claims of Communism one by one.

Mecca Al-Mukarrama publishes this book for good reasons: some people from both the Arab and Muslim worlds have been tempted by the claims and tenets of Communism and followed the cry of the Devil. Many among these are good hearted Muslims that have been deceived by the embellishments of Communism.

...

Both His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly and I asked him (Al-Aqqad) to undertake this religious duty and seek God's Pleasure with it, and write this book on Communism. He responded and wrote the book with a sincere wish to gain God's Pleasure alone. Mecca Al-Mukarrama, home of the first Mosque for humanity (the Ka'ba), hastened to adopt Al-Aqqad's book, which was published by one of the noble sons of Mecca, seeking only God's Pleasure and the satisfaction of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*. Thus we owe gratitude only to God, and we thank Ustaz Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqqad, and the noble publisher His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly who has many favours in the fields of Arabic cultural studies and the Arabic language, the language of the Quran.

Cairo
20. 06. 1956 CE

You are wrong Abbas!

The close ties and strong friendship and the shared vision that linked Al-Sayyid Hasan and Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqqad did not prevent Al-Sayyid Hasan once from criticising Al-Aqqad bitterly. During one of Al-Aqqad's visits, Al-Sayyid Hasan started his attack by saying, 'You are wrong Abbas!'

Then he continued,

Yes, Abbas, you are wrong when you attack and slander Mu'awiya Ibn Abu Sufian, while he is one of the revered companions of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*, and one of the scribes who wrote down the Revelation. God the Most Sublime praised the Prophet and his companions (*Al-Fath: 29*), did he exclude Mu'awiya Ibn Abu Sufian, when he mentioned the Prophet's companions?

Finding himself facing a severe attack supported with strong evidence, Al-Aqqad retorted, 'But Mu'awiya made changes after the passing away of the Prophet!'

Here Al-Sayyid Hasan asked Al-Aqqad, 'But did this prevent him from being a companion; has the attribute of companionship to the Prophet *Peace be upon him* been taken away from him?'

Al-Aqqad answered, 'But he committed a grave mistake by changing the nature of the caliphate and making it a hereditary monarchy.'

Al-Sayyid Hasan answered, 'But has not the Prophet *Peace be upon him* himself foretold this? He said, 'After me, the rule of the caliphate will last for thirty years, then it will be a hereditary monarchy.'¹

The Prophet *Peace be upon him* foretelling this means that it is something destined since the beginning of time, very much like the sin of Adam *Peace be upon him*. God had told His angels about Adam and that he would be made to descend to earth before Adam was created. This is evidenced by the Quranic verse that informs us that God told the angels before the creation of Adam that He would create man to live on earth. When the angels asked God the Most Sublime why He was creating a new race that would cause destruction and bloodshed in earth while they glorify Him constantly, God answered them that He has knowledge of things that they do not know of (*Al-Baqara: 30*).

They are the companions of the Messenger of God *Peace be upon him*, and their being right or wrong is not of our business. God has created them and made them live in the time of the Prophet *Peace be upon him* and honoured them with his companionship and with seeing him. Abbas, you have to atone for your book on *Mu'awiya Ibn Abu Sufian*. You have done well in the *'Abqariyyat*, but in this book, you have been in the wrong.

¹ The hadith is narrated by Ibn Abu Shaiba in his *Musannaf*, vol. 7, p. 252, in a version similar to the one cited above.

(صورة ص. 381 ليس تحتها تعليق)

SECTION SEVEN
HIS HONOURS AND DISTINCTIONS

The activities and spending of Al-Sayyid Hasan were followed closely by the media in spite of his extreme care to carry out his benevolent deeds discreetly and quietly. His main concern was to get his aid to those deserving it without publicity and without distinction between one ethnic, linguistic, or colour group and another, as long as it was meant to serve Muslims anywhere on earth.¹

Official Distinctions and Honours

On the official level, Al-Sayyid Hasan received numerous distinctions and badges of honour in several countries. From among these we mention the following:

- The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- The King Abdul-Aziz Sash

- Lebanon
- Medallion of Merit of First Order
- The Sash of Cedar of Knight Order

- Egypt
- * The Medallion of the Republic

- Panama
- The Sash of the Republic

¹ See for example his dialogues with the *Saut Al-Orouba* (Voice of the Arabs) magazine, in edition 17 in 1375 AH; the *Okaz* daily in edition 5651 on Thursday 22 Muharram 1402 AH, the Saudi *Al-Rajul* (Man) magazine in edition 16 in August 1393 CE; and the *Istijwab* (Investigation) magazine in edition 4 of its first year on 29 Rabi' I 1415 AH; and his news in *Al-Jazira*, 19. 05. 1388 AH, and 15. 08. 1391 AH, *Al-Bilad* in edition 597 on 29. 04. 1365 AH, edition 616 on 15. 09. 1365, and edition 619 on 14. 10. 1365. References have already been made to his biography in the *'Isamiyyoun* (Self-Made Men) book by Abd Allah Al-Khashrami, 1987 CE, *Al-Sharbatly: Al-Muhsin Al-Sha'bi Al-Awwal* (The Outstanding Man of Charity) by Mustafa Azmi, 1949, *Al-Sharbatly: Al-Muhsin Al-Islami Al-Akbar* (Al-Sharbatly: the Great Islamic Man of Charity) by Muhammad Abdul-Mon'em Al-Khafaji, 1955, in which the two authors dealt with the career of His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan in that period. Worthy of mention also is the group of poems entitled *Imam Al-Muhsinin* (Leader of the Men of Charity) by the Syrian poet Muhammad Mustafa Al-Mahi in eulogising His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan.

Al-Sayyid Hasan in front of the Guard of Honour after receiving the Sash of Cedar of Knight Order in Lebanon

Lebanese President Camille Chamoun girding Al-Sayyid Hasan with the Sash

(صورتان ص. 387)

Al-Sayyid Hasan wearing the Sash with the Lebanese President

(الصورة ص. 389)

SECTION EIGHT
AN ORDEAL OF A DIFFERENT KIND

Observations of daily life occurrences may reveal what may seem strange and unexpected happenings in the life of families and individuals. The topic of this section is one of these happenings.

It might not seem uncommon, but it is certainly unexpected, for a man to come out of a house of scholarship and wisdom, or a house of honour and dignity, then go astray or forget what he had learnt at home. Such a situation – certainly not an uncommon occurrence in men’s lives – might come about due to innate evil tendencies or perversions – and evil is as old as humanity; we need only to remember the first crime committed in human history, where one of Adam’s two sons killed his brother. Or, it might happen due to peer pressure and influence of bad company, who, out of envy, may drag someone out of his family and elevated environment, and create a schism in the family. This usually happens when such a person lends his ear to an envious grudging enemy in the guise of a friend, when his will is paralysed by the influence of a debauchee, or when his heart is possessed by a social climber. Such a man would turn into one of these and his heart would be filled with evil inclinations; he sides with evil against good, supports wrong against right, and seeks the help of enemies against his own people and family.

It might be useful here to draw an analogy between the situation we are dealing with and wider political context. In the political science it is often said that the smaller the power difference between two adversaries is, the bigger is the chance for a third party, irrespective of how weak it might be, to display its might. Such a situation does not necessarily require that the new power is greater than the power difference between the two adversaries; on the contrary, it might be extremely slight both in terms of quality and quantity.¹

Whether this might is abused or not, the influence of the third party will always be strong if the two fighting parties are static; the whole affair will seem like a cold war managed by a third force manipulating the two parties with rules and axioms that it sets, and works towards perpetuating it for the longest possible time by rekindling the struggle whenever it seemed to weaken, as this pushes its interests forward with the two parties.²

Islam, worship, and work

In Islam there is a delicate equilibrium between the requirements of earthly life and the requirements of heaven and afterlife, no one side is made to prevail over the other. In evidence, we may cite the following hadith about the Prophet *Peace be upon him*. He once saw a man bent on worship in the mosque day and night. When he asked about who provides for him, he was informed that it was his brother, and he commented, ‘His brother is a

¹ See Lawrence Martin. *Neutralism and Nonalignment*. Trans. by Khairi Hammad. Egypt: Al-Dar Al-Qawmiyya Lil-Nashr, 1964 (first edition).

² *Ibid.*

better worshipper than him.’ This is because work is an integral part of worship in Islam; which is a message for religion and for life.

This verdict came from the Prophet *Peace be upon him* regarding a worshipper who spent his days and nights in worship to God; he was not a hypocrite or a cheater, he was not disobedient, he was not a thief or a counterfeiter. In spite of all this, the Prophet *Peace be upon him* raised the status of his brother over his rank in worship because his brother used to perform his work in times of work and perform his worship in its time.

It should be mentioned here that some relatives and acquaintances of Al-Sayyid Hasan used to blame him often over his donations that exceeded all reasonable limits.¹ He used to answer them saying,

I am conducting business with my Lord Who says in His Book that the case of those who spend their money in the Way of God is like to a seed that bears seven ears of corn, in each ear there are a hundred seeds; God doubles the reward for whomsoever He wishes; God is All-Bountiful, All-Knowing (*Al-Baqara*: 261).

In trading with God, a riyal will earn seven hundred riyals or more, and at the same time, my fortune will not be reduced as the Prophet *Peace be upon him* says, ‘A person’s money will not decrease by paying alms.’² Furthermore, what I am doing is a religious duty as God stipulates that in the money of the wealthy there is right due to the needy and the deprived (*Al-Dharyat*: 19).

I grew up poor and having nothing, and God gave me wealth by His favour. I held a business transaction with God the Most Sublime, Who states in His Book that He has bought from the believers their souls and their possessions in return for Paradise (*Al-Tauba*: 111) and Who guides believers to the trade that saves from severe punishment: to have belief in God and in His Messenger and to struggle in the way of God with their wealth and their souls: that is the best course to take in life for those who know. Thus God will forgive their misdeeds and admit them to gardens with rivers flowing underneath them and admit them to good homes in the gardens of Eden: that is surely the great success (*Al-Saff*: 10-12).

It is my wish that I die without a single riyal of my fortune in my pocket; but what can I do as whenever I give away, God doubles my wealth and blesses my money with increase; I do hope that He will double my reward.

A similar situation from history

The case of Al-Sayyid Hasan is very much like that of the ancient poet Al-Muqanna’ Al-Kindi, who was extremely generous and never used to reject a beggar. However, Al-Muqanna’ spent all his fortune in acts of charity until he had to borrow from others.

¹ The Sharbatly Archives

² The hadith is narrated by Al-Tabarani in *Al-Mu’jam Al-Saghir*, vol. 1, p. 145, and in *Al-Mu’jam Al-Awsat*, vol. 5, p. 316.

Some of his people reproached him and blamed him for falling in poverty and debt, and he said,

My people blame me for falling in debt; they should know that my debts are in things that will bring them praise and glory.

With my debts I fill in what they have left empty with their failings and what rights they wasted with their inaction.

Surely, my affairs and the affairs of my brothers and my cousins are in two widely different courses.

If they consume my flesh, I will spare and save theirs, and if they demolish my glory, I will build theirs.

If they waste me in my absence, I will guard them in their absence; and if they wished me to go astray, I will always pray for their guidance.

I never bear them any grudge; it is not of the nature of the chief to bear grudge.

They will have the bulk of my money whenever fortune comes my way; and when I suffer lack of money, I will never ask them for help.

However, my people are peerless; never has an eye set sight on the like of them in old or young,

In their merits, and in their reason, and in their munificence, and in their glory; my people are the spring of time when life becomes tough.¹

The relatives and close friends in the inner circle of Al-Sayyid Hasan used to reiterate from time to time that his spending had gone beyond all reasonable limits. They reminded him that his children were still young and needed care, and quoted the statement of the Prophet *Peace be upon him* that it is better for one to leave his children rich, provided for, and independent than to leave them lacking and begging for livelihood from others. They stressed that it was reasonable to take this fact into consideration, that this does not go against having full confidence in God, and that it would not hinder his benevolent spending. On the contrary, it is likely to give him added security so that he would be able to proceed with his march with stronger resolve.

In response to these entreaties, Al-Sayyid Hasan, upon his establishment of the Bank of Al-Riyadh saw it convenient to register a portion of his shares in the bank in the name of his then minor children. However, he made the stipulation that he would be able to manage the shares for his benefit with the purpose of taking necessary decisions expediently whenever the need arises to enable him to facilitate the development of the bank.

Days and years passed, and his children grew up; and he had other children from his second and third wives. When his children attained majority, he received from them power of attorney to manage the shares and estates that he had registered under their names. Subsequently, they wrote an acknowledgement for their father asserting that each

¹ The verses are cited in *Al-Mustatraf fi Kulli Fannin Mustadhraf* (Anthology of Sayings in Elegant Arts), in the chapter on 'Generosity.' The verses are also in the poet's *Diwan* (Complete Poetic Works), and also in the *Amali* (Dictated Notes) by Abu Ali Al-Qali, albeit with certain differences in some verses. Some of the verses are also cited in *Diwan Al-Hamasa* (Pride Poetry) by Al-Marzouqi.

one of their shares, and the rights attached to the shares of each one of them in the Bank of Al-Riyadh, and any subsidiary right thereof in any form and for any reason, is in the private ownership of Al-Sayyid Hasan, and that the name of each one of them is only a formality.

What follows is a translation of this acknowledgement.

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

To His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly *may God guard him*

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace and God's Mercy and Blessings be with you)

We, your family, wives and children, hereby sign for Your Excellency an acknowledgement by each one of us that each share and each right registered under the name of each one of us in the Bank of Al-Riyadh Limited, and each right built on it in any form or for any reason is in the private ownership of Your Excellency and that the name of each one of us is a mere formality, and that the power of attorney signed by each one of us individually to Your Excellency validated by the Notary in Jeddah under No...dated ..., No ... dated ..., and No ... dated ... is still valid and effective, and nothing can invalidate it as it is attached to your rights. May God keep Your Excellency in full enjoyment of health, security, faith, and success continually by the favour and blessings of God. *Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh* (Peace and God's Mercy and Blessings be with you).

Signatures follow.

(الإقرار ص. 397)
(مع ملاحظة عدم الوضوح في بعض أجزاء النص)

Then it happened that Al-Sayyid Hasan had some health problems and he decided to travel to England for treatment. The documents of the shares registered under his name and formally under the names of his family members for his benefit, were in the keep of the Saudi Cairo Bank where a private case was kept for preserving the documents of Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly, including his Bank of Al-Riyadh shares and the shares formally registered under the names of his children as a trust. This was confirmed by the receipt document issued by the Bank

What follows is a translation of this receipt.

Saudi Cairo Bank
A Saudi Joint Stock Co.
Fully Paid Up Capital S. R. 150,000,000
C. R. No. 21374
MECCA ROAD BRANCH - JEDDAH

Jeddah on 20. 09. 1403 AH
12. 06. 1983 CE

Procès-Verbal
Of the Receipt of the Bank of Al-Riyadh
Shares of the Children and Wives
Of His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

On the date cited above, and in the presence of Al-Sayyid Ibrahim Sharbatly, we received the shares detailed below as a trust for His Excellency, related to his wives and children:

Name of share holder	Number of shares
Al-Sayyid Abdul-Rahman Hasan Sharbatly	1941 (one thousand nine hundred and forty one)
Al-Sayyid Adnan Hasan Sharbatly	1941 (one thousand nine hundred and forty one)
Al-Sayyid Ibrahim Hasan Sharbatly	1941 (one thousand nine hundred and forty one)
Al-Sayyid Saud Hasan Sharbatly	1941 (one thousand nine hundred and forty one)
Al-Sayyid Fahd Hasan Sharbatly	1941 (one thousand nine hundred and forty one)
Al-Sayyid Faisal Hasan Sharbatly	1941 (one thousand nine hundred and forty one)
Al-Sayyida Soraya Hasan Sharbatly	970 (nine hundred and seventy)
Al-Sayyida Hayat Hasan Sharbatly	970 (nine hundred and seventy)
Al-Sayyida Layla Hasan Sharbatly	970 (nine hundred and seventy)
Al-Sayyida Fatima Hasan Sharbatly	970 (nine hundred and seventy)
Mrs Khadija Mu'mina	500 (five hundred)
Mrs Saleha Shalabiyya (Saleha Muhammad Shalabi)	500 (five hundred)
Total 16521 (only sixteen thousand five hundred and twenty one shares)	

This is a procès-verbal from us for receiving the shares for His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly as a trust with the bank, and they cannot be disposed of except by instruction from His Excellency, knowing that the shares are accompanied by dividend coupons from number one to number thirty.

Saudi Cairo Bank
(الإيصال ص. 399)

For some reason, it was God's will that those shares were to be the cause of a problem by some of the children of Al-Sayyid Hasan. After coming back from his treatment in England, it came to his knowledge that some of his children obtained the original copy of the power of attorney from his office, and some of them withdrew their power of attorney to him.

Then things became clear to His Excellency about what had happened between these children and some officials in the bank, who handed to them the documents of the shares deposited with the bank as a trust for the benefit of Al-Sayyid Hasan. This opened the door widely to the greatest trial that Al-Sayyid Hasan experienced, and the most painful thing in the whole affair was that the problem was with some of his children. This gave the chance to the jealous rivals and gloaters to feel triumphant over the man. The problem grew too wide to solve, and the man felt more bitter about this ordeal than at any other time of the many disappointments he ever experienced in his life. However, with his faith and firmness, he was able to overcome the ordeal. It is as if the ancient poet and scholar Mansour Ibn Ismail was describing this situation when he was complaining of the treatment he was having at the hands of his jealous rivals.

O you who envy me for my blessings, do you know with whom you are being impolite?

You are being impolite with God in His judgement, as you are complaining against His gift to me.

My Lord has disgraced you by granting me more of His grace and closing the doors in your face.¹

Close friends and relatives thought that time would eventually heal the rift, which could not be solved by any other means, and that the wrongdoers would eventually come round and apologise for their misdeeds, and correct their course.

However, the developments of the case and the obstinacy of the wrongdoers disappointed everybody, and the situation remained much the same. There was nothing to do in that case except being patient, and patience is the only course for safety for the faithful.

The importance of patience in Islamic / Arabic culture

In fact, patience is one of the great pillars of the character build-up of a Muslim or Arab. It is one of the most important communal traits praised both in Islamic sources and cultural orientations. A Muslim/Arab is effectively steeped in the spirit of patience ever since early childhood.

God the Most Sublime has commanded His Prophet *Peace be upon him* to resort to patience (*Al-Ahqaf*: 35), and He also commands His faithful servants to resort to patience and

¹ The verses are cited by Al-Ibshihi in *Al-Mustatraf*; the first two verses are also cited in *Mansour Ibn Ismail Al-Faqih: Hayatuhu wa Shi'ruhu* (Mansour Ibn Ismail the Scholar: His Life and His Poetry) by Dr Abdul-Mohsen Farraj Al-Qahtani, Beirut: Dar Al-Qalam: 1981 CE, p. 69, and it includes a different version of the first half of the first verse.

prayer, as God is with those who persevere (*Al-Baqara*: 153). God also gives good tidings to those who persevere in the face of adversity as they will have favours without measurement (*Al-Zumar*: 10).

Al-Imam Ali *God be pleased with him* said,

I tell you five things (two pairs and one single), and you would do well to keep them in mind: One of you should not fear except his sin and should not have hope except in his Lord; let one of you be not ashamed if he was asked about something that he does not know to say 'I do not know;' know that patience is for all affairs like the head for the body; when the head is separated from the body, the body will decline; and when patience is separated from the affairs of life, these affairs will decline; whenever a man is unjustly imprisoned by a despot and he dies in his prison, he will die a martyr; and if he dies under torture, he is also a martyr.

It has also been said in proverbial literature: 'Calamities of life are not fended off but by perseverance, and there is no treatment for the ailments of life except patience.'

In the wake of this incident, Al-Sayyid Hasan lived the rest of his life in great bitterness, but with faith, with a clear mind, and with resignation to and satisfaction with what God has decreed in spite of his pain. It was as if the ancient poet was describing his state when he said,

I have seen that patience is the best helper in calamities for anyone who needs a helper.
I have also seen that contentment is closely connected with riches, and I have made contentment my fortress.
When I find a place unsuitable for me, I leave it and take another place as my home.
When I find something too expensive for me, I renounce it; and thus it becomes cheapest when it is expensive.¹

Because everyone who is graced with blessings is the object of jealousy, Al-Sayyid went by the wisdom of the poet who said,

Be patient with the jealousy of the envious, and your patience will put an end to him.
Jealousy is like fire that consumes itself when it does not find anything to consume.²

Because Al-Sayyid Hasan was not an ordinary man, calamities befalling him were also out of the ordinary, as adversity comes commensurate with a man's worth:

¹ The verses are by the poet Mahmoud Al-Warraaq. See *Al-Mustatraf*, vol. 2, p. 61.

² The two verses are by Abd Allah Ibn Al-Mu'tazz, and they are in his *Diwan* (Complete Poetical Works).

A man's calamity comes commensurate with his worth, and his patience is an object of praise.

He who has little patience in facing adversity, he will have a little share of hope.¹

Another poet also says,

When you are afflicted, have confidence in God and be content with Him as he is the One Who removes affliction.

Despair sometimes cuts off its practitioner; do not despair, as the Disposer of things is God.

When God has destined something, surrender to His Will; we find no way out in what God has destined.²

For all these reasons, Al-Sayyid Hasan clung to faith and patience and sought reward from God for his patience in the face of calamity, in full contentment with fate. He used often to recite some verses that he had memorised on the subject of patience:

I shall persist in being patient until patience itself fails in catching up with me;
And I shall persist in being patient until God decides the outcome of my affliction.

And I shall persist in being patient until Patience knows that
I have been patient on things that are bitterer than Patience itself.

And Patience will be envious of my patience

And people will wonder how I behave in affliction.³

It is reported that Al-Imam Ali *God be pleased with him*, at the hour of death, advised his children with the following.

My children, I advise you to fear God in private and in public, to say the word of truth in times of contentment as well as in times of anger, to be temperate in times of affluence as well as in times of lack, to do justice with friend and foe alike, to discharge your duty in times of alacrity as well as in times of indolence, and to be content with God's decree in times of adversity as well as in times of prosperity.

My children, he who observes his own shortcomings will be too busy to think of the failings of others; he who is content with what God has apportioned him will not be saddened by what he misses; he who draws the sword of injustice will be killed by it; he who digs a trap for his brother will fall himself in it; he who defames his brother will have the shortcomings of his family revealed; he who forgets his sin will enlarge the sin of others; he who is filled with admiration of his own opinion will go astray; he who is contented with his own reasoning will

¹ The verses are cited in *Al-Mustatraf*, vol. 2, p. 62, and in *Judhwat Al-Muqtabis*, in the stories of the rulers of Andalusia, by Al-Hamidi, in a different version.

² *Al-Mustatraf*, vol. 2, p. 66

³ The verses have been mentioned to me by some of his children, including Al-Sayyid Abdul-Rahman in a meeting with him in Jeddah.

slip; he who is supercilious with people will be humiliated; he who mingles with scoundrels will be scorned; he who goes into suspicious places will expose himself to accusation; he who sits with scholars will be an object of respect; he who jokes will be open to disdain; he who does something frequently will be known by it; he who talks in abundance will commit mistakes in abundance; he who has abundant mistakes will lose his pudency; he who loses his pudency will lose his piety; he who loses piety will cause the death of his heart; and he whose heart is dead will be admitted to Hell.

My children, well-being is of ten portions; nine of them are in silence except for the mention of God the Most Sublime; and the tenth is in leaving the sittings of scoundrels.

My children, there is no honour higher than Islam (submission to God), no glory is more powerful than piety, no intercessor is more efficacious than repentance, and no garment is more beautiful than well-being.

My children, covetousness is the key to weariness and the mount of drudgery.

It has also been said,

If you want to be safe from God's punishment tomorrow, forsake (fast/abstain from) the world, and let breaking your fast be with death. Let the elder among Muslims be like a father to you, let the middle-aged be like a brother to you, and let their young be like your children; be kind to your father, be merciful to your brother, and have pity on your child; love for Muslims what you love for yourself, hate for them what you hate for yourself, then die whenever you wish.

SECTION NINE

HIS WILL

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly was perfectly aware that life and death are in God's Hand alone; and as life is a gift from God, death can come all of a sudden and with no prior notice. That was why he was always ready for the coming of death, and used to take from life what helped him to get ready for the afterlife. He persevered in acts of worship and devotions and used to spend in the manner of someone who does not fear poverty, in seeking God's Pleasure, and in preparation for the eternal life after death.

After a certain stage of his youth, he used to have his will ready in preparation for meeting God at any time. He did not want to meet his Creator while having any undefined dues in his keeping. In this, he was being obedient to the relevant teachings of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*.

He was perfectly aware of the importance of having a will ready for all contingencies. This would help in defining and preserving rights and dues – both his own and others' – as well as rights related to his inheritors, or how much of his inheritance is to be allocated to charity after his departure, in accordance with Islamic teachings. Moreover, he used to change his will from time to time following the changes in his fortune, his commitments, and/or his dues.

One of his wills, that written some twenty five years before his departure (dated 11 Rabi' I, 1395 AH), consisted of twenty pages. In it, he assigned the executors to supervise the execution of his will. He also advised his children to fear God, to increase their devotions and good deeds, and to continue the charity works that he was performing. He provided a detailed list of these works, and asked them to add new items to the list as they deem suitable according to needs arising from time to time.

Close and trustworthy advisors saw that the execution of his will, related to the third of his would-be inheritance, which he had endowed to charity,¹ is impossible to execute as it necessitates giant institutions to supervise it, and this would place a tremendous burden on the executors and on the endowment itself. Furthermore, they saw that these institutions, in case they were to be founded, would not be able to execute all the items mentioned in his will.

However, due to the enormous changes that took place in his wealth and due to the changes in his convictions regarding that will, he disregarded it later. His last will and testament was written some one and a half years before his passing away. This will was dated 01. 01. 1419 AH, and was confirmed by the Ministry of Justice in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under No. 50/51/1/3/12. What follows is a translation of this will.²

¹ According to the Prophet's teaching, a testator can will up to a third of his inheritance to be distributed as he wishes – excluding the actual inheritors. The remaining two thirds is to be divided in accordance with Quranic stipulations.

² See a photocopy of the document in Document No. 51 in the Appendices.

I, Abdul-Rahman Ibn KhalafAllah Al-Zaidi, currently Notary to Jeddah Second, testify that **Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly**, of Identity Card No. 12231, issued on 17. 01. 1378 AH, registered in Jeddah, presented himself before me, with his full mental faculties, as legally acknowledged. His identity was testified to by His Eminence Sheikh Abd Allah Ibn Abdul-Rahman Al-Bassam and His Eminence Sheikh Ibrahim Abd Allah Hasan Zahed; and, with his legal powers, with his full mental capability, and without any coercion, he declared the following:

In obedience to the commandment of the Prophet *Peace be upon him* in his fully approved hadith: ‘It is the duty of every Muslim, who has something to will, not to spend two nights without his will written with him,’¹ I declare the following:

This is the will and testament of Hasan Abbas Sharbatly that he testifies that there is no deity but God, Who has no partners and that our Master Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger, and that Jesus is His Servant and Messenger and His word that He sent to Mary and a spirit from Him, and that Paradise is true and that Hell is true, and that God brings to life the inhabitants of graves.

I recommend to those in my household whom I leave behind to fear God, to set right what is among them, and to be obedient to God and His Messenger and be among the faithful.

I advise them with the advice of Abraham and Jacob to their children: that God has chosen religion for them and that they should not die except as Muslims (*Al-Baqara*: 132).

When my time comes to meet my Lord the Most Sublime, I want you to prepare me for burial and bury me in Medina Al-Munawwara, as the Prophet *Peace be upon him* is reported to have said, ‘Faith resorts to Medina as a snake resorts to its hole,’² and said, ‘He of you who would meet his death in Medina, let him die there. As for him who dies in it I will testify and I will be his intercessor on the Day of Judgement,’³ and said, ‘There is no spot on earth that I would like my grave to be in more beloved to me than Medina Al-Munawwara.’⁴

I want you not to delay my funeral awaiting the attendance of my children or for any other reason, as the Prophet *Peace be upon him* commanded Ali *God be pleased with him* saying, ‘O Ali, there are three things that you should not delay: prayer when its time comes, the funeral when it is due, and the marriage of a widow when she finds a suitable match for her.’⁵

¹ The hadith is approved by all hadith narrators, and it is cited in the *Sahih* of Al-Bukhari, in the section of ‘Wills,’ under No. 2533.

² The hadith is narrated in the *Sahih* of Al-Bukhari, in the section of ‘Faith resorts to Medina,’ under No. 1743.

³ The hadith is narrated in the *Sunan* of Al-Tirmidhi, in the section of ‘Merits of Medina,’ under No. 3852.

⁴ This hadith is not narrated in Books of Hadith in this text.

⁵ The hadith is narrated in the *Sunan* of Al-Tirmidhi, in the section of ‘Merits of Doing Things when their Time Comes,’ vol. 1, p. 287.

After my burial is done with, let the first thing my children and family do is to pay my debts, as the Prophet *Peace be upon him* is reported to have said, ‘The soul (salvation) of a believer (after death) is dependent on the payment of his debt.’¹ I do hope to be able to repay my debts while living; however, if I could not, I hope they will be paid on my behalf as stated in my legal statement, and any other debts that may be legally incurred on me.

After repaying all my debts, I wish that a third of all my fortune – including all my possessions of lands, estates, shares, liquid money, all my dues with others, and all I own in this life – to be set aside for charity, in deference to the teaching of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*: ‘God has given you the right to give away a third of your money at death to increase your credit of good deeds.’² And I wish to put all this money in acts of benevolence seeking God’s Pleasure, especially in the spreading of knowledge, the teaching of the Quran, the building of mosques, and the other items mentioned in the hadith of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*: ‘A believer, after he dies, will have his register of good deeds credited with works such as knowledge he had spread, a virtuous child he had left behind, a Quran book he had bequeathed, a mosque he had built, a house he had built for wayfarers, a stream he had made to flow, or a constant act of charity he had started in his state of health, and will follow him after his death.’³

I have appointed as executor to my will my son Abdul-Rahman, to be supported by whom he chooses of scholars and jurisprudents who fear God and who are active in Islamic interests, and who would give him guidance in spending the money which I have appointed him for as executor in acts of benevolence.

As executor, he will be followed by my sons in the following order: Ibrahim, Yasser, Muhammad Wajih, Ahmad, and Majed; then my daughters Soraya, Fatima, and Shalimar, followed then by the most conscientious from among their children, etc.

This is my last will and testament, and it nullifies all previous wills, and it is the will to be executed.

19. 01. 1419 AH

Signed by the Notary

¹ The hadith is narrated in the *Sunan* of Al-Tirmidhi, vol. 4, pp. 250-1, No. 999.

² The hadith is narrated in the *Musnad* of Ahmad, 5 / 262.

³ The hadith is narrated in the *Sunan* of Ibn Maja, in the section of ‘Merits of Someone who Teaches good to People,’ under No. 238.

SECTION TEN
HIS LAST DAYS AND DEPARTURE

Life went by, and Al-Sayyid Hasan experienced all its crises, without being changed; the vicissitudes of life could not change a thing in him. He spent all his life up to the very end in work and worship; he constantly tried to bring up his spending in charity and acts of good to ever higher levels. Besides, he never waned in devotions and good deeds in seeking the pleasure of God.

We trust that he lived the last days of his life in relative peace and quiet with nothing to disturb his inner peace except that bitterness which he experienced up to his last moment of life when he departed to his Maker.

It was reported that he kept working up to Tuesday evening on 18. 06. 1420 AH.¹ He started his day as usual, had his breakfast, had the newspapers read to him, inspected work-related issues, checked his employees' missions, and gave his instructions pertaining to the issues discussed, and spent the rest of his day in peace as usual. He performed his daily religious obligations, had his meals, and received his visitors and agents. This continued up to the evening.

After supper, he retired to have some rest, but he felt some tiredness accompanied by nausea, and he was carried to hospital shortly after eleven pm. There, his case was diagnosed, and he was treated with suitable medications. He responded to the treatment and started to show some progress. Doctors then decided to move him from the Special Care Unit to an ordinary room in the hospital on Wednesday 10. 06. 1420 AH. He regained his health as observed by doctors who decided that he could be discharged on the next day.

Dr Abd Allah Basfar was one of his visitors on Thursday, and he found that he had recovered considerably. The two men reviewed together some short chapters of the Quran and some supplications, and Al-Sayyid used to repeat after him. Then Dr Basfar told him that he was travelling to Medina, and he wept at the mention of the beloved city, where the Prophet *Peace be upon him* lies, and which he longed to visit to greet the Prophet. He asked Dr Basfar to pray for him at the grave of the Prophet and carry his greetings to the Prophet *Peace be upon him*. Dr Basfar promised that and he calmed down.

Al-Sayyid Hasan had never complained of heart problems at any time of his life; however, it was God's will that the man should have a heart attack on that day. The doctors tried their best to save his life but death was closer to him than their efforts, and he succumbed to the fated ending at the time set by the doctors for his discharge from hospital in the afternoon of Thursday 20. 06. 1420 AH / 30. 09. 1999 CE.

He *God rest his soul* had willed to be buried in Medina Al-Munawwara to be close to the grave of the Prophet *Peace be upon him*, and to gain the merit of burial there as mentioned by the

¹ His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan used to have his office in his house. This practice started with him in his building on Qabel Street in the Old Municipality Quarter; then he did the same in his home on Kilo Four, Mecca Road, which was the main street in Jeddah then; and also when he lastly moved, in 1403 AH, into his home on Prince Muhammad Ibn Abdul-Aziz Street (previously Al-Tahliya Street), in the Hamra neighbourhood, which had become a centre for commercial activity.

Prophet *Peace be upon him*. However, he had a change of mind shortly before he passed away and asked to be buried in Mecca, God's most favoured land, and where reward is hoped to be doubled.

He *God rest his soul* was buried at dawn on Friday 21. 06. 1420 AH / 01.10. 1999 CE in Mecca; his funeral was attended by numerous friends and admirers. A page of his book has been turned, but his book is still open as a living example for all those who wish to have more.¹

¹ See the family tree of children and grandchildren of His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan in Documents 52 and 53 in the Appendices.

A Translation of the Death Certificate of His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Ministry of Justice
Legal Documents Issued by the Sharia Courts

Delivery No. 231 / 2
Date: 02.07. 1420

Document No. 200 / 438 / 2
Date: 26. 06. 1420 AH

Praise be to God Alone; I, the undersigned, Sami Ibn Abdul-Aziz Al-Sheikh, currently Judge at the Jeddah Court, following the instruction from the Chief Judge at Jeddah Court No 4439 / 2 / 2 dated 24. 06. 1420 AH, it has been confirmed with me, by the testimony of Abbas Ibn Ali Ibn Abbas Sharbatly and Ali Ibn Abbas Ali Sharbatly, with their valid identity cards, according to legally acknowledged procedures, the death of Sheikh Hasan Abbas Sharbatly on Thursday 20. 06. 1420 AH, and that his legal inheritance is exclusively limited to his legal inheritors: his wife by a valid marriage contract Saleha Bint Muhammad Shalabi and his children from her Abdul-Rahman, Ibrahim, Soraya, and Fatima, and his second wife by a valid marriage contract Karima Bint Mahmoud Makkawi and his children from her Yasser, Muhammad Wajih, Ahmad, Majed, and Shalimar, and his children from his wife Khadija Hamed Mu'mina, divorced during his lifetime, Adnan, Saud, Mansour, Hayat, Layla, and Nadia. He has no other legal inheritors besides those mentioned above; peace and salutation are raised to our Master Muhammad, his family, and companions. Dated: 26. 06. 1420 AH.

Judge at the Chief Jeddah Court
Signed,
Sami Ibn Abdul-Aziz Al-Sheikh

(الوثيقة ص. 415)

Front of the residence of Al-Sayyid Hasan on Al-Tahliya Street.
The photo above shows the plate identifying the office of Dr Abd Allah Omar Nasif as
Trustee of the Inheritance of His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan.

(الصورتان ص. 417)

(صورة ص. 419 ليس تحتها تعليق)

SECTION ELEVEN

ELEGIES ON HIM

Whenever generosity, and munificence are mentioned, His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan *God rest his soul* remains present with people on every occasion.

The press has found in his life a rich material for study and investigation to return to from time to time, where it has recalled his feats in banner headlines even after he passed away.¹

Numerous writers and speakers have eulogised him in lengthy articles and speeches – that go beyond the scope of this book –² listing his munificence, generosity, wit, and spending that went beyond all limits and reached many places on the globe, not distinguishing between recipients on the basis of race or colour, and that endeavoured in the service of Islam and Muslims.

They eulogised his philosophy in life, his devotions, his love of benevolence, his sessions with scholars, his support to scholarship, and the fields of his charity spending in building schools, mosques, homes, and orphanages, among other things. They were all unanimous on his deserving of all respect and appreciation and that the community has every right to be proud of him.

His Mark and Appreciation Testimonials

After all that has been said ...

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan has departed leaving in the hearts and souls of people an indelible imprint that has persisted up to the present day despite all the turmoil of life surrounding all.

People still recall his mark as if he is still living among them with his wit, generosity, munificence, hastening to charity, and his efforts to pave the way for countless people who have tripped in life; he whose life was not free from hindrances.

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan has departed in body, but he lives on as a value and as a symbol, with his conduct and works that testify to his sublime character and richness of soul.

¹ See, for example, *Al-Iqtisadiyya*, 01.10. 1999; *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, 02. 10. 1999; *Al-Hayat*, 10. 11. 2000; *Okaz* (Cultural Supplement), 19. 10. 2002; and *Okaz*, 14. 08. 2004 (article by Abd Allah Omar Khayyat).

² See, for example, *Al-Sharbatly: Jam 'iyyat Khairiyya fi Rajul wa min Haqqina 'an Naftakhira bih* (Al-Sharbatly: Charity Organisations in a Man, We have the Right to be Proud of Him) by Dr Abd Allah Basfar, *Okaz*, 09. 10. 1999 CE; *Al-Sharbatly: Al-Rajul Al-Ladhi Sakharra Malahu li Al- 'Ilm wa Ahlih* (Al-Sharbatly: The Man Who Dedicated His Money in the Service of Scholarship and Scholars) by Sheikh Sa'id Abd Allah Al-Da'jani, *Okaz*, 19. 11. 1999 CE; and *Al-Takrim Al-Hadari* (A Civilised Honouring) by Fayez Ibn Saleh Bayyari, *Medina Al-Munawwara* 29. 10. 2003 CE.

In what follows we have some of the words that were said by those who knew the man closely. They aimed to describe his indelible mark in brief statements, each in his way and from the specific angle he saw him.¹

¹ The statements have been organized alphabetically according to the names of speakers (in the original Arabic).

- One of the giants in the world of commerce, with a straight course and a good reputation; his philanthropic feats speak of his awareness of his role and his links with his community. (Ustaz Ibrahim Abd Allah Al-Subai'i, businessman)
- His inborn intelligence and wit are admirable: he remembers events and narrates them with names and dates as if he is reading them in an open book. (Ustaz Ibrahim Muhammad Sa'id Shams, businessman, former general manager of Bank of Al-Riyadh)
- He *God rest his soul* was a lover of benevolence and spent in charity without account. (His Excellency Al-Sheikh Ahmad Salah Jamjoum, businessman, former Minister of Commerce)
- He *God rest his soul* was respected and appreciated by King Faisal. (His Excellency Ahmad Abdul-Wahhab, former Master of Royal Ceremonies)
- He was a man of white (generous) hands and noble manners: a helper of the poor and the needy, and a comforter of orphans and the disadvantaged. (His Excellency Dr Ahmad Muhammad Ali, president of the Islamic Development Bank)
- He is a self-made businessman, known for his ambition, brilliance, and generosity; a man of great wit and insight; his humane feats are countless. (Ustaz Ahmad Muhammad Mazhar, lawyer, member of the National Committee for Lawyers, and former Chairman of the Lawyers' Committee in the Chamber of Jeddah)
- He was a distinguished example for the self-made man; he was a school of manners and good conduct. (His Excellency Prof Dr Osama Ibn Abdul-Majid Shabakshi, Ambassador of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques in Germany, former Minister of Health)
- He was a man of religious spirit, character, piety, patience, and humbleness, a lover and practitioner of charity. (Ustaz As'ad Jamil Allaf, former consultant in the Princedom of Mecca Al-Mukarrama)
- He was a father to the fatherless, a brother for those who do not have a brother, and an advisor for those who do not have an advisor. (Engineer Bakr Abdul-Samad Khouja, businessman and former Chairman of the Executive Board of Petromin Oil Company)
- He was a father for the poor and needy, may God have mercy on his soul and admit him with the virtuous. (Sheikh Jamil Muhammad Ali Yusuf Qattan, businessman)
- A self-made man, he graduated from the school of life; life taught him, and he became one of the pioneers of Saudi economy and one of the prominent

- successful businessmen in the Kingdom. (Sheikh Husain Ismail Shukri, legal consultant)
- A social, business, and humane genius. (Sheikh Husain Bakri Qazzaz, businessman)
 - He was a generous free-spending man and an open-handed merchant, who devoted much of his wealth to charity. (Ustaz Husain Ali Shabakshi, businessman and media worker)
 - He was a man of such great wit that we rarely find in self-made great men. (Ustaz Khalid Abdul-Rahim Al-Ma'ina, editor-in-chief, Al-Saudia for Research and Publication)
 - A distinguished businessman, farsighted, of penetrating vision, and with a strong and far-reaching memory. He was, and will always be, a brilliant symbol in the community of Jeddah, and one of the prominent businessmen there. (His Excellency Dr Khalid Ibn Muhammad Abdul-Ghani, businessman and former Secretary to the City of Jeddah)
 - A self-made businessman, who had an unmistakable mark in the history of the economic development of the Kingdom. (Engineer Khalid Al-Nahdi, vice president, Dalla Company)
 - A distinguished Saudi personage, known for charity and benevolence, may God have mercy on his soul. (His Excellency Dr Rashed Ibn Rajeh Al-Sharif, vice president, National Dialogue; former Rector of Um-Al-Qura University; former member of the Consultative Council)
 - While we celebrate fifty years of the establishment of the Bank of Al-Riyadh, we remember with great love and appreciation His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly *God rest his soul*, who, with a few colleagues, established the Bank of Al-Riyadh, which has now become, thank God, one of the strongest and largest Arab banks in the Middle East region. (His Excellency Engineer Rashed Al-Abdul-Aziz Al-Rashed, Chairman of the Executive Board of the Bank of Al-Riyadh)
 - A man of the state, distinguished in trade and performance, loyal in his giving, especially to the people of culture and hadith, loyal to this noble country and its government. (His Excellency Dr Rida Muhammad Sa'id Obaid, Chairman of the Executive Board of *Al-Yamama* daily, former Rector of King Abdul-Aziz University, and former member of the Consultative Council)
 - If a person's deeds define his character, then the contribution of the late Hasan Sharbatly with a third of his fortune to acts of charity is a clear indicator of his

- deep heart-felt intentions in his life and in the afterlife. (Engineer Zuhair Fayez, contractor and businessman)
- He resides at a high level of significance in helping victims of disasters in the Arab World and the Muslim World, let alone his own countrymen. (Sheikh Suleiman Abdul-Rahman Al-Abd Allah Al-Saleh, businessman)
 - More than once he asked me to turn the best plots of land in the best sites to charity projects, and he used to say to me that I would be getting mountain-like boulders off his shoulders by doing this. (Ustaz Samir Abed Sheikh, former secretary to chambers of Islamic banks)
 - He is a distinguished mark in the march of charity. (General Saleh Muhammad Taher Fadel, former chief of police in the Mecca Al-Mukarrama region)
 - A man of good manners, he aspired for a better future, he kept his promises, preserved his trust, loved people, and people loved him. (Dr Abdul-Rahman Taha Bakhsh, MD, Chairman of the Executive Board of Bakhsh Hospital)
 - He was a man of noble character, with general innate generosity, and he used to encourage people to practise it. (Sheikh Abdul-Rahman Abdul-Aziz al-Jumaih, businessman, vice president of the Board of directors, Al-Jumaih Holding Company)
 - Enough pride for him is his kindness to his parents. It was said that he did not marry until after they had passed away for fear he would get too busy with his marriage to care for them. This probably is the secret behind his success in life; and he will surely find in God's grace what is better. (Dr Abdul-Rahman Ibn Muhammad Al-Hammoudi, Deputy Master of Royal Ceremonies)
 - 'Hasan Sharbatly' or 'the great philanthropist;' he left the world a better place with his abundant charity, *God rest his soul*. (Ustaz Abd Allah Bajubair, Saudi writer)
 - He set an example in generosity and spending in the modern age; he started his life by being kind in the treatment of his parents, he loved scholars and knowledge, and God graced him with a good ending, God willing. (Dr Abd Allah Basfar, member of staff at the King Abdul-Aziz University and General Secretary of the World Organisation for the Teaching of the Holy Quran)
 - Sufficient is what is said of him: that he is the great man of charity; I say he is the master of men of charity and the prop and stay of the weak, poor, and needy. (Sheikh Abd Allah Husain Mousa, businessman)
 - He was a self-made man; he formed a wonderful phenomenon in the history of both commercial activity and charity work. (Ustaz Abd Allah Suleiman Al-Husain, Saudi educator)

- I have come to know His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly as a lover of charity, a devoted worshipper of God, a constant listener to the Quran; may God have great mercy on his soul. (His Excellency Dr Abd Allah Ibn Abdul-Mohsen Al-Turki, Secretary General of the Muslim World League, and former Minister of Islamic Call)
- He obtained a great number of titles, both official and communal; but the most endeared title is that of ‘the outstanding man of charity,’ bestowed on him by officials and by the community at large for the charity he had offered. (Ustaz Abd Allah Omar Khayyat, Saudi writer)
- He is one of the prominent men of Hejaz with numerous favours and with a remarkable impact in the social and economic life; he has left behind praiseworthy feats. (Sheikh Abd Allah Ibn Muhammad Al-Bulaihed, special consultant to His Highness the Prince of the Riyadh region and his deputy)
- He was a compassionate father, a righteous educator, a good example, and a successful businessman; he made piety the light of his life, and God bestowed honour on him, his good deeds and charity are extended and are still going on. (His Excellency Engineer Abd Allah Muhammad Nour Rahimi, Chief of Civil Aviation)
- A self-made man, further ennobled by charity; his experience placed him on a high humane level. (Prof Dr Abdul-Mohsen Farraj Al-Qahtani, Professor of literature and criticism at King Abdul-Aziz University, president of the Literary and Cultural Club in Jeddah)
- I knew him closely ... he was a generous man who never rejected someone who came to him for help; he hastened to offer all possible help to whomever he heard was in need of help; his doors were open to all up to the last day in his life. (His Excellency Sheikh Omar Abd Rabbu, Saudi writer)
- He is one of the best men whose deeds our beloved country misses greatly. (His Excellency Dr Fuad Ibn Abdul-Salam Al-Farisi, Minister of Pilgrimage Services, former Minister of Information)
- His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan was one of the great lovers of charity and good, I pray for his well-being in the Hereafter. (Al-Sheikh Muhammad Salem Ibn Mahfouz, businessman)
- Who would offer a third of all his money to his community and countrymen?! Verily, he is the great man of charity! (Ustaz Muhammad Sa'id Tayyib, man of letters, journalist, and legal consultant)

- May God have mercy on the soul of Al-Sayyid Hasan; he was a man easy to approach and who loved people; he was a lover of good; he led a noble life full of benevolence. (His Excellency Dr Muhammad Abdo Yamani, former Minister of Information)
- A limitless love of good and charity, he never forgot, and he never abandoned someone in a time of crisis. (Dr Muhammad ‘Irfan, MD, owner of Dr ‘Irfan and Baqdo Hospital)
- Limitless spending, a sweet reputation over the span of a century. (Prof Dr Muhammad Omar Nasif, Professor of geology and mineralogy at the King Abdul-Aziz University and former Dean of the Faculty of Earth Sciences)
- His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Al-Sharbatly, the outstanding man of charity, he is loyalty and sincerity embodied in a man, may God have mercy on his soul. (Sheikh Mahmoud Sawwaf, businessman)
- He is a man on whom God bestowed the love of charity and supporting the needy. (His Excellency Dr Nasser Al-Salloum, Secretary General of the Committee for Developing Pilgrimage Sites and former Minister of Transport)
- The distinguished students in my school were rewarded with the gift of luxuriously printed *mushafs* (Quran books) including an exegesis of the Holy Quran, printed at the expense of the ‘Great Man of Charity’. (Ustaz Nazih Abd Allah Mousa, legal consultant)
- He was generous, kind-hearted, and with a constant genuine smile on his face. I used always to see him at the afternoon (‘*asr*’) prayer in the mosque. He was a loving friend tied with great love and friendship to his friends Muhammad Rida, Muhammad Saleh Abu Zinada, Sheikh Abdul-Qader Muhtaseb, Sheikh Bakhshab, Hasan Abu Al-‘Izz and others. (Sheikh Nazih Muhammad Saleh Mahmoud, businessman)
- Haughtiness never knew a way to his soul; he used to come to me personally to follow up his papers at the municipality. (Engineer Wahib Ahmad Kably, president of Northern Jeddah Municipality and former engineer of the secretariat of the city of Jeddah)
- A great self-made man, I am lucky to have been born at the same time he was living. (Sheikh Wahib Sa’id Ibn Zuqar, businessman, former Chairman of the Executive Board of the Saudi Cairo Bank)

EPILOGUE

This book is coming to an end, but its two covers will remain open for anyone who wishes to get more, to criticise, or even to modify and change.

It is hoped that this book has repaid the man some of his loans to humanity and given him a little of what he deserves: his many great deeds are still standing as a witness to his benevolence and spending. The above pages are nothing but a humble attempt to glean and learn something from the experiences of an extraordinary man's life and to reflect on his practices, devotions, and benevolence.

The need still stands to learn more and more from this rich and endless mine of knowledge; however, everything must have an end, and this is the place we have to stop our current enquiry into the life of this great man. Seeking more is outside the scope of this volume and would be a suitable topic for further in-depth studies in all the fields of achievement the man excelled in.

When you first meet the man you would be amazed by his extraordinary capabilities and personal charm. This amazement would turn into increasing admiration as you get to know more about him, his life stages, and his achievements.

His munificence is distinguished, his experiences are manifold, his intelligence and wit are amazing, his philosophy in life is unique, and his memory is strong and far reaching. His shrewdness and sagacity, his convictions and beliefs, his education and knowledge, his awareness, his reason, his merciful and kind heart, his wisdom, his worship, his contentment, and his occasional resentments – and the list would go on and on – are all legitimate topics for discussion and analysis.

Our nation has the right to be proud of this unique sample of mankind. Such men are really deserving of all respect and lasting admiration. They will always remain bright spots in the collective memory of this nation, a nation which is in dire need of more men after the pattern of **His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly**, a unique phenomenon and example: charity in the form of a human being, or a man dressed in the robes of benevolence. Such men would enrich the history book of our nation with new bright lines of glory with their white hands and firm wills.

May God have mercy on Al-Sharbatly and admit him into His spacious gardens of Paradise; May God instil in his children the spirit to fill the gap caused by his departure and continue his march.

APPENDIX
DOCUMENTS

Name and family name: Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Date and place of birth: Jeddah - 1333

Father's name: Abbas Sharbatly

Nationality: Saudi

Profession: merchant

Marital status: married

Document One:

Photocopy of the Identity Card of His Excellency Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ص. 441)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

No.: 26 / 2 / 2 / 1565

Date: 14 Shawwal 1376

From Abdul-Aziz Ibn Abdul-Rahman Al-Faisal Al-Saud to the Honourable son Faisal, may God guard him,

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Allah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Considering the public services offered by Hasan Al-Sharbatly, we have commanded to grant him the title of Honorary Minister of the State,

Wassalam

Document Two:

The letter of His Majesty King Abdul-Aziz to His Royal Highness Prince Faisal on granting His Excellency Hasan Abbas Sharbatly the title of Honorary Minister of State

(ص. 442)

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
Department of Social Affairs
General Administration of Civil Institutions and Organisations

Registration Certificate

In accordance with the list of regulations of institutions and organisations decreed by the Council of Ministers No. 107 dated 25. 06. 1410 AH, and the implementation rules issued in the Ministerial decision No. 760 dated 30. 01. 1412 AH, His Excellency the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs issues Decision No. 22067 / sh dated 14. 06. 1422 AH, for the registration of **Hasan Abbas Sharbatly Charity Foundation**, situated in Jeddah in the Mecca Al-Mukarrama region; its service area: the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Thereupon, it is registered in the registry of Charity Organisations under No. 15 dated 14. 06. 1422 AH.

Deputy for the Ministry for Social Affairs

Awad Ibn Baniyya Al-Radadi

Al-Riyadh on 15. 06. 1422
No. 15

Document Three

(ص. 443)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

**Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Princedom of the Eastern Region**

No: 1366

Date: 16. 05. 1372

Dear Son Saud Ibn Jalawi,

As for Al-Sharbatly, you are aware of the deeds he is doing for us; nothing you grant to him is to be seen too much; he is offering himself and his money for our sake without seeking reward; what hurts him hurts me ... I want you, for my sake, to attend to what he demands, to what is useful to him, and to make him satisfied and happy.

Abdul-Aziz

On 16. 05. 1372

Document Four

Recommendation from His Majesty King Abdul-Aziz to His Royal Highness Prince Saud Ibn Jalawi, Prince of Mecca Al-Mukarrama region regarding His Excellency Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ص. 441)

In the Name of God the Merciful and Compassionate

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

From Abdul-Aziz Ibn Abdul-Rahman Al-Faisal Al-Saud to the Honourable Abd Allah Al-Suleiman, *may God guard him,*

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Allah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

As for Al-Sayyid Hasan Al-Sharbatly, you are aware of our affection to him and his position with us; we have previously recommended him to you, we would like you to do whatever is good for him; consider that we are one with him. Recommend him to whomever it is necessary to serve him, and take care of this at all times.

Wassalam

Document Five

Recommendation from His Majesty King Abdul-Aziz to His Finance Minister His Excellency Sheikh Abd Allah Al-Suleiman regarding His Excellency Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ص. 445)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

From Abdul-Aziz Ibn Abdul-Rahman Al-Faisal Al-Saud to the Honourable son Faisal,
may God guard him,

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Allah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Regarding His Excellency Hasan Abbas Sharbatly, we would like you, God willing, to take care to honour him and show him respect; I do not think you need to be reminded of observing his needs at all times.

Wassalam

Document Six

Recommendation from His Majesty King Abdul-Aziz to his son His Royal Highness
Prince Faisal regarding His Excellency Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ص. 446)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

From Abdul-Aziz Ibn Abdul-Rahman Al-Faisal Al-Saud to the Honourable son Mash'al,
may God guard him,

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Allah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Regarding His Excellency Hasan Abbas Sharbatly, we would like you, God willing, to take care to honour him and show him respect; I do not think you need to be reminded of observing his needs at all times.

Wassalam

Document Seven

Recommendation from His Majesty King Abdul-Aziz to his son His Royal Highness
Prince Mash'al regarding His Excellency Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

(ص. 447)

**His Excellency Hasan Abbas Sharbatly holds a celebration honouring
His Majesty the King**

His Majesty the King honoured with his presence yesterday after sunset the grand supper held by the Minister of State His Excellency Hasan Abbas Sharbatly in Jeddah. The venue of the celebration was prepared on the seashore with triumphal archs and lights and waving flags everywhere. The list of the invitees included a great number of statesmen, officials, and members of the public. Upon arrival, His Majesty the King was warmly received by the host and the chief guests, and there was an amazing colourful display of fireworks. Arabic coffee was served round, and the His Majesty honoured the grand banquet by his presence, surrounded by the chief guests. Meanwhile, Ustaz Muhammad Husain Zaidan and Ustaz Mustafa Al-Sabahi delivered a speech and recited a poem on behalf of the host; then Ustaz Muhammad Khalil delivered a translation in English of the speech. Following that, there was a number of school ditties sung by students from the Orphans' home in Mecca Al-Mukarrama. His Majesty then left the celebration with great ceremony and respect as he was received.

Document Eight

A clip from *Al-Bilad* newspaper dated 22. 03. 75

(ص. 448)

[The article is a review of a book entitled '*Onwan Al-Najaba fi Ma'rifat Man Mata bi Al-Medina Al-Munawwara mina Al-Sahaba* (A Historical Account of Who of the Prophet's Companions died and were buried in Medina). The book is written by Mustafa Muhammad Al-Alawi, and published by His Excellency Hasan Abbas Sharbatly. The review mentions that Al-Sayyid Hasan had published a great number of books before that book, and that he asked for his name not to be mentioned as publisher. The writer gives a few examples, chief among which is the Exegesis of the Holy Quran by Ibn Abbas. He also mentions a book by an Indian thinker which was being printed in India with two versions: Arabic and English. Each one of the two versions was to be in thirty thousand copies, with a cost amounting to thousands of guineas, and the book was to be distributed free of charge. The writer also mentions that the reviewed book was also being distributed free of charge and that thousands of copies of it had been already given away.]

Document Nine

A clip from *Al-Bilad* newspaper dated 06. 03. 74

(ص. 449)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Office of the Prime Minister

No.: 9588

Date: 08. 06. 1383

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly, *may God guard him,*

Greetings,

We have seen your letter No. 2643 dated 26. 05. 1383, in which you express your willingness and readiness to offer all the contents of your stores of provisions in the Western Region, Al-Riyadh, and the Eastern Region, and all the provisions expected to come at basic costs with no profits in order to counter the crisis precipitated by greedy merchants who raised their prices in view of the latest incidents in Cuba. We value highly your noble sentiments and munificence, and we pray to God to keep the world free of disasters. When the need arises for your stored merchandise, relevant officials will contact you; may God guard you against harm.

Document Ten

A letter from the Office of the Prime Minister

(ص. 450)

(مع الإشارة إلى عدم وضوح بعض أجزاء النص)

Jeddah, His Excellency Hasan Abbas Sharbatly
Radio Station, Jeddah

We have learnt of your benevolent and altruistic act in offering your merchandise for sale at basic prices without increase, after greedy merchants have exploited crisis circumstances and raised their prices. We appreciate your noble sentiments towards the nation and the community, and we thank you for your high spirit; we would like to assure you that we shall give every possible support to all your benevolent measures.

Document Eleven

Cable showing support to His Excellency Hasan Abbas Sharbatly for his decision to sell the contents of his stores at basic prices without profit

(ص. 451)

[This is a newspaper clip, citing the cable in the previous page as published in the newspaper]

**Cable from His Majesty the King to His Excellency
Hasan Abbas Sharbatly on his noble sentiments towards the community**

Radio Mecca broadcast the following:

In these critical circumstances and current political disturbances surrounding the whole Arab World, His Majesty the King takes special care to watch over the affairs of the state in minute details and offers congratulations and encouragement to doers of good.

In line with this policy, His Majesty the King sent the following cable to Al-Sayyid Hasan Al-Sharbatly thanking him for his noble sentiments towards the citizens and for the facilities he is offering to the community, and for the deep understanding he displayed of the duties of each merchant in these critical circumstances in empathising with the consumers from the public. Following is the text of the cable. [The text is cited in the previous page.]

Document Eleven (continued)

(ص. 452)

Bombshell

This is not a bombshell of warfare, not a nuclear bomb, not a bomb thrown by a soldier in the warfront or a commando; it was rather more like a humanitarian quake in the community life, motivated by strength of faith and heart-felt love of benevolence ... It was fifty thousand riyals, an unprecedented sum donated in the inauguration of donations for the hospital.

Document 12

Newspaper clip from *Al-Bilad* newspaper dated 22. 04. 1365 AH

(ص. 453)

Four Million Riyals
Donated by
His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Two million for armaments for the Army
And Two Million for Education

Al-Sheikh Abd Allah Sharbatly donates half a million
For the armaments of the army

Radio Mecca Al-Mukarrama broadcast on Friday 18. 03. 75 evening the following:

His Excellency Minister of State Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly sent a letter to His Majesty the King announcing his contribution of two million riyals as a contribution towards the armament of the army and two million riyals as a contribution in spreading education in the country. Al-Sheikh Abd Allah Sharbatly donated half a million riyals towards the armament of the army as well.

Document Thirteen

A newspaper clip form *Al-Bilad* newspaper, edition 1990, on 30 Shawwal 1375 AH /
06 November 1955 CE

(ص. 454)

His Highness Prince Fahd Minister of Education
Thanks Al-Sayyid Al-Sharbatly
For donating towards the building of eight modern schools

The prominent philanthropist Al-Sayyid Hasan Al-Sharbatly has made a donation towards building eight modern schools to be opened in different parts of the Kingdom. He put his donation at the disposal of the Ministry of Education to be spent in the areas where such schools are needed.

His Royal Highness the Minister of Education has sent the following letter of gratitude to His Excellency Al-Sayyid Al-Sharbatly:

Your Honourable Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly

We send you our kind regards,

The good benevolent deeds that you are performing to this nation and your noble sentiments that are obvious on every occasion towards education ... make me address this letter to you to express gratitude concerning your good actions and your noble feeling towards knowledge and scholarship. When you were with me a few days ago, you announced that you are donating towards the building of eight modern schools to be erected in different parts of the country. I assure you that this announcement has filled me with great joy and happiness.

For this action in serving the process of education, I extend thanks to you and I pray to God to grant to our beloved country the likes of you to participate in the revival of this noble land in encouraging scholarship under the sponsorship of His Majesty the King and in his guidance and encouragement.

In conclusion, I pray that God will grant us all success in good actions, and God does not waste the reward for someone who performs good deeds.

Wassalmu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah (Peace be with you).

Document Fourteen
A newspaper clip from *Al-Bilad* newspaper dated 24. 09. 74 AH

(ص. 455)

Bank of Al-Riyadh
A Saudi Limited Company

An Invitation for Subscription in the Shares of the Company
To start on 18 Ramadan 1376 and close on 18 Shawwal 1376

Headquarters: the city of Al-Riyadh; and the company has the right to establish branches and agencies all over the world.

Goals of the Company

1. Preserving the wealth of the nation
2. Performing all banking operations
3. Encouraging import and export operations
4. Industrialisation of the nation and participating in construction works
5. Encouraging agriculture and agricultural projects
6. Establishing national companies of communal interest
7. Participating in grand projects in the Arab World
8. Encouraging trade with the Arab and Muslim Worlds
9. Providing economic and banking education for the Saudi youths

Duration of the company: Full fifty renewable years

Company capital: Fifty million Arab Saudi riyals

Founders: Hasan Sharbatly – Muhammad Ibn Laden – Abdul-Rahman Al-Sabban – Savings Company – Abd Allah Al-Darwish – Salah Al-Din Abdul-Jawad – Rashad Al-Dabbagh

Document Fifteen

Invitation for subscription in the shares of the Bank of Al-Riyadh

(ص. 456)

A statement from Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly

Bank of Al-Riyadh is stronger than steel

[In this statement Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly responds to accusations and rumours spread against the Bank of Al-Riyadh of mismanagement and weakness]

Document Sixteen

A statement from Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly published in *Al-Bilad* newspaper

(ص. 457)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

S. H. A. Abbas Sharbatly
General Merchants
P O Box No. 296
Jeddah –Saudi Arabia
Personal Office
Cable Add.: (SHARBATLY)
C. R. 713
Telephone: 6885792 / 6885784

No. 609

Date: 01 / 12 / 1402 AH

His Excellency Manager of Saudi Cairo Bank, Mecca Al-Mukarrama Road Branch

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly hand to the Ministry of Commerce, their representative, or anyone charged by them to receive the money by signature of His Excellency Minister of Commerce or anyone of the deputies of the Ministry, the sum of up to one million riyals daily, starting from the date of this letter and until further notice, for the prices of supplies to be bought and distributed at our expense on all pilgrims. Kindly be informed by this and act accordingly.

Wassalam

Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Seventeen

(ص. 458)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 113 / h

Messrs Badr Bakeries

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

With reference to our letter No. 50 / h dated 01.09.1412 AH concerning supplying *Jam'iyat Al-Birr* (the Charity Organisation) in Jeddah with all their needs of bread – a million loaves monthly – we would like the amount to be a million loaves daily, more or less, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412 AH, and debit the required sum from our account.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Eighteen

(ص. 459)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 114 / h

Messrs Badr Bakeries

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

With reference to our letter No. 48 / h dated 01.09.1412 AH concerning supplying *Jam'iyat Al-Birr* (the Charity Organisation) in Mecca Al-Mukarrama with all their needs of bread – a million loaves monthly – we would like the amount to be a million loaves daily, more or less, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412 AH, and debit the required sum from our account.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Nineteen

(ص. 460)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 115 / h

Messrs Badr Bakeries

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

With reference to our letter No. 49 / h dated 01.09.1412 AH concerning supplying *Jam'iyat Jeddah Lil Khidmat Al-Ijtima'iyya* (the Jeddah Social Services Organisation) with all their needs of bread – a million loaves monthly – we would like the amount to be a million loaves daily, more or less, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412 AH, and debit the required sum from our account.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Twenty

(ص. 461)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 116 / h

Messrs Badr Bakeries

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

With reference to our letter No. 49 / h dated 01.09.1412 AH concerning supplying *Al-Jam'iyya Al-Khairiyya* (the Benevolent Organisation in Mecca Al-Mukarrama) with all their needs of bread – a million loaves monthly – we would like the amount to be a million loaves daily, more or less, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412 AH, and debit the required sum from our account.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Twenty-One
(ص. 462)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 117 / h

Messrs Badr Bakeries

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

With reference to our letter No. 51 / h dated 01.09.1412 AH concerning supplying *Jam'iyat Al-Mabarra al-Khairiyya* (the Benevolent Charity Organisation) in Mecca Al-Mukarrama with all their needs of bread – a million loaves monthly – we would like the amount to be a million loaves daily, more or less, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412 AH, and debit the required sum from our account.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Twenty-Two

(ص. 463)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 118 / h

Messrs Badr Bakeries

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

With reference to our letter No. 53 / h dated 01.09.1412 AH concerning supplying the Organisation for the Teaching of the Holy Quran in Mecca Al-Mukarrama with all their needs of bread – a million loaves monthly – we would like the amount to be a million loaves daily, more or less, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412 AH, and debit the required sum from our account.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Twenty-Three

(ص. 464)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

**Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office**

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 119 / h

Messrs Badr Bakeries

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

With reference to our letter No. 52 / h dated 01.09.1412 AH concerning supplying the Organisation for the Teaching of the Holy Quran in Jeddah with all their needs of bread – a million loaves monthly – we would like the amount to be a million loaves daily, more or less, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412 AH, and debit the required sum from our account.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Twenty-Four

(ص. 465)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 128 / h

Messrs Badr Bakeries

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs the Ministry of Commerce Branch in Mecca Al-Mukarrama with all their needs of bread (of all kinds), a million loaves daily, more or less, whatever it takes at their request starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412, and debit the amount from our account.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Twenty-Five

(ص. 466)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 133 / h

Messrs Badr Bakeries

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs the Muslim World League in Mecca Al-Mukarrama with all their needs of bread (of all kinds), a million loaves daily, more or less, whatever it takes at their request starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412, and debit the amount from our account.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Twenty-Six

(ص. 467)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 134 / h

Messrs Arabian Car Company, Mecca Al-Mukarrama

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs the Muslim World League in Mecca Al-Mukarrama with all their needs of dates daily, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Twenty-Seven

(ص. 468)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 135 / h

Messrs Arabian Car Company, Mecca Al-Mukarrama

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs *Jam'iyat Al-Birr* (the Charity Organisation) in Mecca Al-Mukarrama with all their needs of dates daily, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Twenty-Eight

(ص. 469)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 135 / h

Messrs Arabian Car Company, Mecca Al-Mukarrama

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs *Al-Jam'iyya Al-Khairiyya* (the Benevolent Charity Organisation) in Mecca Al-Mukarrama with all their needs of dates daily, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Twenty-Nine

(ص. 470)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

**Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office**

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 137 / h

Messrs Arabian Car Company, Mecca Al-Mukarrama

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs *Jam'iyat Al-Mabarra Al-Khairiyya* (the Benevolent Charity Association) in Mecca Al-Mukarrama with all their needs of dates daily, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Thirty

(ص. 471)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 138 / h

Messrs Arabian Car Company, Mecca Al-Mukarrama

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs *Jam'iyat Al-Birr* (the Charity Organisation) in Jeddah with all their needs of dates daily, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Thirty-One

(ص. 472)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

**Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office**

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 139 / h

Messrs Arabian Car Company, Mecca Al-Mukarrama

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs *Jam'iyyat Al-Khidmat Al-Ijtima'iyya* (the Jeddah Social Services Organisation) with all their needs of dates daily, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Thirty-Two

(ص. 473)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

**Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office**

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 140 / h

Messrs Arabian Car Company, Mecca Al-Mukarrama

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs the Organisation for the Teaching of the Holy Quran in Jeddah with all their needs of dates daily, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Thirty-Three

(ص. 474)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

**Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office**

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 141 / h

Messrs Arabian Car Company, Mecca Al-Mukarrama

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs the Organisation for the Teaching of the Holy Quran in Mecca Al-Mukarrama with all their needs of dates daily, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Thirty-Four

(ص. 475)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 142 / h

Messrs Modern Dairy

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs the Muslim World League in Mecca Al-Mukarrama with all their needs of juice, milk, and yogurt daily, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Thirty-Five

(ص. 476)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

**Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office**

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 143 / h

Messrs Modern Dairy

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs *Jam'iyat Al-Birr* (the Charity Organisation) in Mecca Al-Mukarrama with all their needs of juice, milk, and yogurt daily, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Thirty-Six

(ص. 477)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 144 / h

Messrs Modern Dairy

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs *Jam'iyat Al-Mabarra Al-Khairiyya* (the Benevolent Charity Organisation) in Mecca Al-Mukarrama with all their needs of juice, milk, and yogurt daily, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Thirty-Seven

(ص. 478)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 145 / h

Messrs Modern Dairy

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs the Organisation for the Teaching of the Holy Quran in Mecca Al-Mukarrama with all their needs of juice, milk, and yogurt daily, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Thirty-Eight

(ص. 479)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 146 / h

Messrs Modern Dairy

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs *Al-Jam'iyya Al-Khairiyya* (the Benevolent Organisation) in Mecca Al-Mukarrama with all their needs of juice, milk, and yogurt daily, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Thirty-Nine

(ص. 480)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 147 / h

Messrs Modern Dairy

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs *Jam'iyat Al-Birr* (the Charity Organisation) in Jeddah with all their needs of juice, milk, and yogurt daily, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Forty

(ص. 481)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 142 / h

Messrs Modern Dairy

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs *Jam'iyyat Jeddah Lil Khidmat Al-Ijtima'iyya* (the Jeddah Social Services Organisation) with all their needs of juice, milk, and yogurt daily, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Forty-One

(ص. 482)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

**Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office**

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 149 / h

Messrs Modern Dairy

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs the Benevolent Organisation for the Teaching of the Holy Quran in Jeddah with all their needs of juice, milk, and yogurt daily, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Forty-Two

(ص. 483)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 150 / h

Messrs Muslim World League

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly find attached the original copy of our letter No. 133 / h dated 28. 11. 1412 AH, regarding supplying you with all your needs for the pilgrims of all kinds of bread, our letter No. 142 / h dated 28. 11. 1412 AH, regarding supplying you with all your daily needs for the pilgrims of juice, milk, and yogurt, and our letter No. 134 / h regarding supplying you with all your daily needs of dates for the pilgrims. We are also ready to supply you with all your demands regarding supplies of any kind for the benefit of the pilgrims.

Since the one who guides to good is like the one who does it, we pray to God that our deeds and yours are accepted and that they are done in sincerity seeking God's Pleasure alone and that they will be credited to our register of good deeds on the Day of Judgement, and may God make you and us from among those who provide for the guests of His Noble House.

May God make permanent our successes in doing good.

God is our Goal; He is the One to inspire and support all on the Straight Path.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Forty-Three

(ص. 484)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 152 / h

Messrs Modern Dairy

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs the General Car Syndicate in Mecca Al-Mukarrama with all their daily needs of juice, milk, and yogurt for the benefit of pilgrims, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Forty-Four

(ص. 485)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 153 / h

Messrs Arabian Car Company, Mecca Al-Mukarrama

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs the General Car Syndicate in Mecca Al-Mukarrama with all their daily needs of dates for the benefit of pilgrims, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Forty-Five

(ص. 486)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 154 / h

Messrs Badr Bakeries

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs the General Car Syndicate in Mecca al-Mukarrama with all their needs of bread (of all kinds) – a million loaves daily – more or less, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412 AH, and debit the required sum from our account.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Forty-Six

(ص. 487)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 156 / h

Messrs Badr Bakeries

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs the Agency of the Ministry of Pilgrimage in Mecca Al-Mukarrama with all their needs of bread (of all kinds) – a million loaves daily – more or less, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412 AH, and debit the required sum from our account.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Forty-Seven

(ص. 488)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 157 / h

Messrs Modern Dairy

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly supply Messrs the Agency of the Ministry of Pilgrimage in Mecca Al-Mukarrama with all their daily needs of juice, milk, and yogurt for the benefit of pilgrims, whatever it takes, at their request, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Forty-Eight

(ص. 489)

In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly
Personal Office

Date: 28. 11. 1412 AH / 30.05. 1992 CE
No. 159 / h

Messrs the Agency of the Ministry of Pilgrimage in Mecca Al-Mukarrama

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

Kindly find attached the original copy of our letter No. 156 / h dated 28. 11. 1412 AH, regarding supplying you with all your needs for the pilgrims of all kinds of bread, our letter No. 157 / h dated 28. 11. 1412 AH, regarding supplying you with all your daily needs for the pilgrims of juice, milk, and yogurt, and our letter No. 158 / h regarding supplying you with all your daily needs of dates for the pilgrims. We are also ready to supply you with all your demands regarding supplies of any kind for the benefit of the pilgrims.

Since the one who guides to good is like the one who does it, we pray to God that our deeds and yours are accepted and that they are done in sincerity seeking God's Pleasure alone and that they will be credited to our register of good deeds on the Day of Judgement, and may God make you and us from among those who provide good to the guests of His Noble House.

May God make permanent our successes in doing good.

God is our Goal; He is the One to inspire and support all on the Straight Path.

Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Document Forty-Nine

(ص. 490)

Muslim World League

Office of the Secretary-General

No.: 1 / kh / m 1 t / 55

Date: 05. 01. 1413

His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Sharbatly

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Llah wa Barakatuh (Peace be with you),

I refer with appreciation to your letter No. 150 / h dated 28. 11. 1412, containing your written instructions to:

1. Messrs Arabian Car Company in Mecca Al-Mukarrama in your letter No. 134 / h dated 28. 11. 1412 AH,
2. Messrs Badr Bakeries in your letter No. 133 / h dated 28. 11. 1412, and
3. Messrs Modern Dairy in your letter No. 143 / h dated 28. 11. 1412,

to supply the League with all its needs of juice, milk, and yogurt, dates, and bread for the benefit of the pilgrims, and your remark that you are ready to supply the League with all its needs of other supplies of all kinds, starting from the first of Dhul-Hijja 1412 AH.

It gives me pleasure to inform Your Excellency that your abovementioned letters reached the League on the seventh of Dhul-Hijja 1412 AH, and that there were immediate contacts and coordination with the officials in the Arabian Car Company Mr Abdul-Hamid Lashin and Mr Saleh Osairi, who have displayed praiseworthy cooperation. The League vehicle transported the required quantities, and this lasted until 16. 12. 1412 AH, for milk, dates, juice, and yogurt, and until 26. 12. 1412 AH for bread and other kinds of pastries.

I take this occasion to offer Your Excellency our heart-felt gratitude and thanks for this noble generosity, and pray to God Almighty to let your offerings be in your balance of good deeds on the Day of Judgement; He is the One to hear our supplication and answer it.

In conclusion, kindly accept my sincere regards and appreciation, and may God guard you.

Secretary-General
Dr Abd Allah Ibn Omar Nasif

Document Fifty

(ص. 491)

Document Fifty-One

A photocopy of the Will of His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Sharbatly (for a translation of the will see the section on **His Will** above)

(ص. 492-493)

**Descendants of His Excellency Al-Sayyid Hasan Abbas Ali Sharbatly
(d. 1420 AH / 1999 CE)**

Document Fifty-Two

(ص. 494-495)

أنا لا أستطيع طباعة هاتين الصفحتين بالتنسيق الوارد فيهما. أحيل الإخوة الخبراء في الطباعة والإخراج إلى (الأسماء باللغة الإنكليزية في الصفحات 64 و65 و66)

Al-Imam Ali Ibn Abu Taleb *God be pleased with him* Al-Sayyida Fatima *God be pleased with her*
Al-Imam Husain *God be pleased with him* Al-Sayyida Om Kalsoum Zaid Al-Ablaj
Al-Hasan Al-Mona Al-Mohsen (died young) Al-Imam Al-Hasan
Al-Sayyida Zeinab Al-Sayyida Ruqayya Ali Zain Al-‘Abidin
Abu Ja’far Muhammad Al-Baqer Abu Mousa Ja’far Al-Sadeq Mousa Al-Kadhem
Ali Al-Rida Muhammad Al-Jawad Ali Al-Hadi Ja’far Al-Zaki
Hasan Al-‘Askari Muhammad Al-Mahdi Ali Al-Taqi ‘Issa

Document Fifty-Three

(ص. 496-497)

(أنا لا أستطيع طباعة هاتين الصفحتين بالتنسيق الوارد فيهما. أقدم كتابة الأسماء باللغة الإنكليزية)

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1. With Sharbatly family members

- Al-Sayyid Abdul-Rahman Hasan Abbas Sharbatly
- Ibrahim Hasan Abbas Sharbatly
- Al-Sayyid Hasan Abdul-Rahman Hasan Sharbatly
- Al-Sayyid Abbas Ali Abbas Sharbatly
- Al-Sayyid Ali Abbas Ali Sharbatly

2. With others

- His Excellency Prof Dr Abd Allah Omar Nasif
- His Excellency Prof Dr Muhammad Omar Nasif
- His Excellency Dr Abd Allah Basfar
- His Excellency Dr Yahya Kawshak
- Sheikh Abdul-Rahman Khayyat
- Ustaz Muhammad Hasan
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