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MASTER'S THESIS

TRACING BĀ ʿALAWĪ SUFISM IN SINGAPORE MADRASAH EDUCATION: HISTORICAL INFLUENCE, CURRICULAR INTEGRATION AND CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

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ISTANBUL, 2025

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A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in Islamic Studies

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ACADEMIC HONESTY ATTESTATION

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ÖZ

SİNGAPUR MEDRESE EĞİTİMİNDE BÂʿALAVÎ TASAVVUFUNUN İZİNİ SÜRMEK: TARİHSEL ETKİSİ, MÜFREDATTAKİ YERİ VE GÜNCEL GEÇERLİLİĞİ

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Temmuz 2025, 153 Sayfa

Bu çalışma, Singapur'daki medrese eğitim BâʿAlavî tasavvufunun tarihsel, pedagojik ve dini etkilerini incelemektedir. Araştırma, BâʿAlavî tarikatının bölgedeki dini eğitim üzerindeki etkilerini ve bu etkinin medreselerin müfredatı ve pedagojik yaklaşımlarında nasıl somutlaştığını ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, sömürge öncesi dönemden günümüze kadar BâʿAlavî tasavvufunun Singapur'daki gelişimini analiz ederek, bölgedeki İslam eğitiminin bu özel tasavvufi gelenekten nasıl etkilendiğini göstermektedir.

Nitel bir araştırma yöntemi benimsenerek, arşiv belgeleri, medrese müfredatları, BâʿAlavî tasavvufu ile bağlantılı dini metinler ve ilgili topluluk liderleriyle yapılan derinlemesine mülakatlardan elde edilen veriler analiz edilmiştir. Çalışma, BâʿAlavî tasavvufunun manevi uygulamalarının ve değerlerinin Singapur'daki medrese eğitimine katkılarını değerlendirmektedir.

Bu araştırma, Singapur'daki medreselerin kültürel ve dini çeşitlilik içinde BâʿAlavî tasavvufunun temel ilkelerini nasıl koruduğunu ve bu ilkelerin dini ve toplumsal bağlamdaki önemini vurgulamaktadır. Sonuç olarak, BâʿAlavî tasavvufunun eğitim sistemine entegre edilmesinin, Singapur'daki Malay İslam topluluğu için manevi ve sosyal bir bağlayıcı rol oynadığı görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeleri: Bâʿ Alavî Pedagojisi, Değerler Eğitimi, İslam'ın Bütüncül Anlayışı, Karakter Oluşumu, Manevi Gelişim

ABSTRACT

TRACING BĀ ʿALAWĪ SUFISM IN SINGAPORE MADRASAH EDUCATION: HISTORICAL INFLUENCE, CURRICULAR INTEGRATION, AND CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

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This thesis explores the influence and integration of Bā ʿAlawī Sufi teachings within the framework of Islamic educational institutions in Singapore. The study delves into the historical emergence of the Bā ʿAlawī *ṭarīqa* in Singapore, focusing on its dissemination through madrasahs and its impact on religious pedagogy, community identity, and spiritual practices.

Drawing on a multidisciplinary approach that incorporates historical analysis, ethnographic fieldwork, and curriculum studies, this research investigates how Bā ʿAlawī Sufism shapes students' moral and spiritual development within madrasah settings. It examines the presence of Bā ʿAlawī teachings in curricular and extracurricular activities, highlighting their contribution to fostering a holistic understanding of Islam that balances jurisprudence with spirituality.

The thesis also addresses broader implications, including how Bā ʿAlawī Sufism navigates contemporary challenges in a rapidly modernising society while maintaining relevance among younger generations. By situating the Bā ʿAlawī *ṭarīqa* within Singapore's unique sociopolitical and multireligious context, this study contributes to the understanding of Islamic education as a dynamic space where tradition and modernity intersect.

Ultimately, this work aims to provide a nuanced perspective on how Bā ʿAlawī Sufism continues to sustain its legacy in shaping the intellectual and spiritual dimensions of the Malay Muslim community in Singapore while serving as a bridge between Southeast Asian and global Islamic Sufi traditions.

Keywords: Bā ʿAlawī Pedagogy, Character Formation, Holistic Understanding of Islam, Spiritual Development, Values Education

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my ever-supportive parents. To my Umi, who has always cheered me on in my endeavours to seek beyond the horizon, and who sacrificed her entire life selflessly raising her five children. To my Abah, the steady backbone of my educational journey, who nurtured me to be of benefit to humanity.

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To my late maternal uncle, who passed away during my second semester in Istanbul, I hope you would be proud of your niece. May your soul be enveloped in His mercy.
To my close friends, with whom I grew up at Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah and later struggled alongside in Egypt while pursuing our degrees at Al-Azhar University, thank you for accepting me as I am.

To the Palestinian people, your unwavering determination and devotion to the land of your ancestors and to al-Aqsa *al-muqaddasa* will forever inspire us to strive for the betterment of this ummah. In these moments of helplessness, while the ongoing siege and genocide in Gaza unfold, marking both the beginning and end of this thesis, I pray that we may all find strength and solace in the martyrdom of the many *shuhadā'*, just as the early Muslims did through the *shuhadā'* of Badr and Uhud. I apologise for my helplessness.

Lastly, to my teachers and the noble *sāda* Bā ʿAlawī who have guided my spiritual journey and whom I continue to look up to, may this humble effort be a means to be in your company on the Day of Resurrection.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMLA	Administration of Muslim Law Act
CDP	Curriculum Development Project
CMIO	Chinese, Malay, Indian and Others
D.K	Distinguished Knight
IB	International Baccalaureate
ICON	Certificate in Islam in Context
J.M.S	Joint Madrasah System
J.P	Justice of Peace
MoE	The Ministry of Education
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTFA	Muslim Trust Fund Association
MUIS	Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura
NIE	National Institute of Education
PAP	People's Action Party
PCICS	Postgraduate Certificate in Islam in Contemporary Societies
PSLE	Primary School Leaving Examination
S.A.T	Syed Abdulrahman Taha Alsagoff
S.F.A	Singapore Food Agency
S.M.A.W	Syed Mohamed b. Ahmed Alsagoff Wakaf
STP	Singapore Teaching Practice

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The Islamic educational landscape in Singapore has long been a cornerstone of the nation's Malay-Muslim identity, blending religious traditions with modern pedagogical practices. Central to this landscape is the enduring influence of Bā ʿAlawī *sāda*[1] (sing. *sayyid*) Sufism, is a spiritual tradition rooted in the Prophetic lineage, which originated in Hadhramaut, Yemen. This *ṭarīqa* (Sufi-affiliated order) has played a pivotal role in shaping the religious and spiritual outlook of Southeast Asian Muslim communities, including Singapore, where it has found expression through prominent madrasahs.

It is well established in the Sufi tradition that each *ṭarīqa* possesses distinct characteristics that define its spiritual approach, doctrinal emphasis, and ritual practices.[2] The Bā ʿAlawī Sufi order, which was a branch of the Abū Madyan-Shādhiliyya *silsila* (lineage) with a special distinction of its lineage as descendants of the Prophet[3], emphasises inner purification, ethical conduct, and the pursuit of divine

[1] *Sayyid* is an honorific title given to those who are from the lineage of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ known to be used within the Hadhrami Arabs and differs from some other Arabs. The Arabs in North Africa refer to them as *Sharīf*. The Banū ʿAlawī *sāda* are often recognised by the patronymic Bā ʿAlawī, where the prefix 'Bā' short for Bānu (descendants of) is used in Hadhrami colloquial to denote descendants of a shared lineage.

[2] For more information on the characteristics of Sufi orders, see:Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, 1-30.

[3] Anne K. Bang, *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea: Family Networks in East Africa. 1860-1925* (Routledge Curzon Taylor & Francis Group, 2003), 15–16. In summary, Anne Bang concluded that although there are significant overlaps in ethical and doctrinal orientation between the ʿAlāwiyya and the Abū Madyan, Shādhiliyya tradition, the ʿAlāwī *ṭarīqa* cannot be accurately characterised as a mere derivative of the latter. The principal point of divergence lies in the ʿAlāwī assertion of a distinctive baraka rooted in Sharīfian lineage, descent from the Prophet Muḥammad, which, in certain interpretations, may appear to overshadow the pure mystical dimensions of the tradition. Rather than being subsumed under the broader Shādhilī current, the ʿAlāwiyya is more appropriately understood as a distinct vehicle for the transmission of mystical knowledge, shaped by both inherited spiritual authority and selective integration of Madyani influences.

knowledge, aligning with core Islamic principles while fostering a holistic approach to spiritual and intellectual growth. Its influence in Singapore is deeply embedded in the curriculum and ethos of key Islamic institutions, particularly Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah and Madrasah Alsagoff Al-Arabiah. Established in the early 20th century, these madrasahs have been instrumental in preserving and transmitting Bā ʿAlawī teachings to successive generations, bridging traditional Islamic scholarship with contemporary challenges.

Despite its significance, scholarly attention to the role of Bā ʿAlawī Sufism in Singaporean madrasahs remains limited. Existing studies on Islamic education in Singapore often focus on sociopolitical contexts, modernisation efforts, or broader educational reforms, with insufficient attention to the spiritual and pedagogical dimensions shaped by specific Sufi traditions. This research seeks to address this academic lacuna by tracing the historical, curricular, and contemporary relevance of Bā ʿAlawī Sufism within the framework of these madrasahs.

This thesis delves into the curriculum and educational materials utilised in Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah and Madrasah Alsagoff Al-Arabiah since its inception period, uncovering their connections to Bā ʿAlawī Sufi practices. By tracing the integration of Bā ʿAlawī teachings, values, and spiritual methodologies within these institutions, the study aims to illuminate how Sufi principles are woven into the pedagogical frameworks and content delivery. The alignment of books, authors, and methodologies with the tenets of the Bā ʿAlawī *ṭarīqa* underscores a deliberate effort to preserve and impart its spiritual and intellectual principles. Through a reverse investigation into the underlying purposes and ideologies, this research seeks to uncover the rationale behind the design of the curriculum and daily routines, shedding light on how these elements are carefully structured to embody and perpetuate the values and teachings of the Bā ʿAlawī Sufi lineage.

Through an in-depth analysis of curricular content, supplementary materials, and teaching approaches, this research highlights how Bā ʿAlawī Sufism continues to shape students' moral, intellectual, and spiritual development. Doing so contributes

to a deeper understanding of the enduring influence of Sufi traditions on Islamic education in Singapore and their relevance in a contemporary, multicultural context.

1.1.1. Notes on Transliteration of Arab Names or Known Local Arab Nouns

Since the reference sources for the paper vary by research field and language medium, some original Arabic terms found in local reference materials will be retained as they are. These are Arab names that have been localised, such as Junied (Junayd), Omar (ʿUmar), and Alsagoff (al-Saqqāf). Similarly, certain Arabic nouns are used in the local context without formal transliteration, for example, *asatizah* (asātidha) or *Islamiah* (Islāmiyyah). Names from Arabic sources are rendered according to the standard transliteration method.

1.1.2. Identity of Malay-Muslim as a Minority in Singapore

The Malay-Muslim identity operates at the confluence of ethnoreligious essentialism, statecraft and historical contingency, where Islam is not merely a theological affiliation but a structural, legal, and performative criterion of "Malayness". The dynamic interplay of historical colonial constructs, contemporary political instrumentalisation, and theological contestations underscores the ontological fluidity yet institutional rigidity of Malay-Muslim identity in Southeast Asia.[4]

The notion of Singaporean national identity necessitates that each citizen possesses two interrelated social identities: a politically defined identity as a Singaporean and a culturally defined identity tied to their ethnic heritage. There are only four officially recognised ethnic groups Chinese, Malay, Indian and Others (CMIO). [5] This CMIO census was inherited by the colonial state-crafting of modern Singapore. It eventually became the foundation of Singaporean multiracialism and conveniently the base of state policies and nation-building programmes.

[4] Wan Hussin Zoohri, *The Singapore Malays: The Dilemma of Development* (Singapore Malay Teachers' Union, 1990), 7.
[5] Sharon Siddique, 'The Phenomenology of Ethnicity: A Singapore Case-Study', *ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute*, Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia, vol. 5, no. 1 (1990): 37.

The term “Malay” in Singapore, like other officially recognised ethnic categories, is a broad classification that encompasses significant internal diversity. This label is primarily assigned based on perceived racial characteristics, including physical appearance, language, and adherence to Islam, with the official assumption that each ethnic category is relatively homogeneous. A census of the Singapore “Malay” reveals at least forty distinct cultural and ethnic subgroups within the Malay community. These include indigenous Malays of Singapore, migrants from various regions of Malaysia, and proto-Malay groups such as the Orang Seletar and Orang Kallang, as well as Indonesian-origin groups like the Minangkabau, Batak, Javanese, Sundanese, Bugis, and Boyanese, along with former inhabitants of the Riau Islands. Additionally, Brunei Malays and even some groups not traditionally classified as Malay, such as the Iban, are included in this category. The classification also extends to individuals of Arab or Indian Muslim descent who, through intermarriage or cultural assimilation, fit within the state-sanctioned definition of Malay identity. Similarly, the assumption that all Malays are Muslims is an official construct, as some individuals identify only nominally as Muslims or are categorised as such purely for statistical or cultural reasons rather than religious conviction. [6]

The historical forces of colonialism, demographic transformations, and socio-economic marginalisation have profoundly shaped the Malay-Muslim identity in Singapore. While Muslims in Singapore today are not actively persecuted, their position as a minority has been a direct consequence of British colonial policies that reshaped the nation’s ethnic and economic landscape. Initially, the dominant group in pre-colonial Singapore, upon the arrival of the developer of modern Singapore, Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles (d. 1826) in 1819, Malays comprised approximately 50% of the population, alongside smaller numbers of Chinese (31%), Bugis (18%), and Indians (7%). However, with the rapid influx of Chinese migrants, their demographic dominance diminished, and by 1830, the Chinese had become the largest ethnic group at 53%, growing to 65% by 1867. This shift in numbers had far-reaching

[6] John Clammer, ‘Malay Society in Singapore: A Preliminary Analysis’, *Brill*, Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science, vol. 9, no. 1/2 (1981): 20.

implications for the Malay-Muslim community, reducing their influence in governance, economy, and education.[7]

The political status of Malay-Muslims suffered a significant decline during British rule. When the British established Singapore as a colonial trading post in 1819, they capitalised on a succession dispute within the Johor-Riau-Lingga Sultanate to secure their position. By recognising Sultan Hussein as the ruler and signing treaties of cession, the British gained control over Singapore, effectively relegating Malay-Muslim rulers to symbolic roles with limited political authority.[8] This was further compounded by the gradual sidelining of Malay elites. The relocation of the Temenggong's court from the city centre weakened his influence, while colonial officials ignored Malay-Muslim leaders in administrative decision-making. This political disempowerment extended to the broader Malay community, which found itself increasingly sidelined as the British administration prioritised the economic interests of the Chinese community. [9]

Economically, the Malays faced systematic exclusion from lucrative industries. While Chinese migrants, largely driven by economic hardship in China, arrived in Singapore and took advantage of business opportunities, Malay-Muslims remained concentrated in traditional occupations such as fishing and agriculture. British policies favoured Chinese merchants and labourers, whom they regarded as industrious and essential for economic development, while Malays were perceived as reluctant wage labourers.[10] By the early 20th century, Chinese enterprises dominated trade, industry, and banking, while Malay participation in commerce remained minimal. This economic disparity has persisted, with Malays continuing to

[7] Haikal and Yahaya, "Muslims in Singapore: The Colonial Legacy and the Making of a Minority," 84.
[8] C.M. Turnbull, *A History of Singapore 1819-1975* (Oxford University Press, 1985), 17,23.
[9] A.M. Ibrahim, 'The Legal Status of the Muslims in Singapore', *Malayan Law Journal Limited*, 1965, 1–2.
[10] Haikal and Yahaya, *Muslims in Singapore: The Colonial Legacy and the Making of a Minority*, 85.

experience lower income levels and fewer entrepreneurial opportunities compared to other ethnic groups.[11]

Education was another major factor in the socioeconomic stagnation of the Malay-Muslim community. British colonial policies provided Malays with only vernacular education, reinforcing their traditional agrarian roles rather than equipping them with skills for upward mobility.[12] Up until the early 1950s, Malays had limited opportunities to learn English due to British colonial policies. Malays were primarily educated in institutions designed to preserve their cultural identity rather than prepare them for economic advancement. Even in the post-independence era, attempts to modernise Malay education were met with resistance due to fears of cultural erosion amongst the Malays themselves.[13] This hesitation, combined with historical disadvantages, cemented the economic and educational gaps that continue to affect the Malay-Muslim community today. By 1966, only 3% of the 147,000 Malays aged 10 and over managed to complete their secondary education, in comparison to that of 8% of the Chinese. [14] The long-term effects of colonial rule and demographic shifts continue to shape the Malay-Muslim identity in contemporary Singapore. Once the majority, Malays now as of 2024, make up approximately 15.1% of the population, while Chinese constitute around 75.6%, Indian 7.6% and other ethnicities 1.7%.[15]

This demographic restructuring, coupled with historical policies of exclusion, has contributed to the relatively marginalised position of Malay-Muslims in Singaporean society. Although the modern Singaporean state has implemented policies to promote social mobility and economic inclusion and recognised the rights of Malays as the indigenous people of Singapore[16], the historical legacy of colonialism remains a

[11] J. Ee, *Chinese Migration to Singapore, 1896-1941*, Journal of Southeast Asian History, II (1961): 33.
[12] Zoohri, *The Singapore Malays: The Dilemma of Development*, 7.
[13] Zoohri, *The Singapore Malays: The Dilemma of Development*, 8.
[14] Pang Eng Fong, 'The Economic Status of Malay Muslims in Singapore', *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 3, no. 2 (1981): 150, https://doi.org/10.1080/02666958108715844.
[15] singstat.gov.sg, *Singapore Citizen by Age Group and Sex, at the End of June 2024*, n.d., https://tablebuilder.singstat.gov.sg/table/TS/M810671.
[16] 'Constitution of the Republic of Singapore - Singapore Statutes Online (152) Minorities and Special Position of Malays', accessed 5 February 2025,

defining factor in the socio-political realities of the Malay-Muslim community. Their struggle for representation, economic progress, and cultural preservation continues to be a key aspect of their identity in a rapidly evolving, multicultural nation.

At the legislation level, Shāfiʿī *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) became the region's practical orientation since Islam first spread in the Nusantara (Malay Archipelago). It was recorded in the travels of Ibn Battuta in the year 1345. During his visit to the sultanate of Pasai, he identified that the king, Sultan Malik al-Zāhir, which was the name that Merah Silu had adopted upon his conversion, to be a religiously devoted Muslim. He noted that the king and his subjects adhered to the Shāfiʿī school.[17] He also encountered two scholars, Amir Sayyid of Shīrāz and Tāj al-Dīn of Iṣfahān, from the Shāfiʿī school hailing from Persia.[18] The implementation of Shāfiʿī *fiqh* went through phases, from the times of the Sultans' reign to the colonised time and now the post-colonial era, where countries are now having independent laws, albeit influenced by the colonisers' legal framework. During the time of the Sultanate, it was generally observed that the implementation of laws according to the Shāfi'ī school was at times compromised with Malay customs. With the invasion of the British and Dutch occupation, the Islamic laws were further infringed by not only Malay customs but also the Charter of Justice, hence limiting the practice of Islamic laws only in matters regarding Muslim marriages, labelled as the Islamic Family Law Ordinance.[19]

After Independence, many Southeast Asian countries sought an Islamic Administration body responsible for the affairs of the Muslim community. These bodies are semi-government and are also responsible for the Fatwa committee of the country. In Singapore, after it became an independent republic on the 9th of August 1965, Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS), or the Islamic Religious Council of

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https://sso.agc.gov.sg:5443/Act/CONS1963?ProvIds=pr152-&ViewType=Within&Phrase=who+are+malay&WiAl=1.

[17] Hamilton A.R. Gibb, tran., *Ibn Battuta Travels in Asia and Africa 1325-1354*, 3rd (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, n.d.), 877.

[18] Gibb, *Ibn Battuta Travels in Asia and Africa 1325-1354*, 876.

[19] Mahmood Zuhdi Haji Abd Majid, 'Mazhab Syafi'i Di Malaysia: Sejarah, Realiti Dan Prospek Masa Depan', *Jurnal Fiqh* 4 (December 2007): 17–18, https://doi.org/10.22452/fiqh.vol4no1.1.

Singapore, was established in 1968 two years after the Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA) came into effect in 1966.[20]

As we examine the timeline, we will later see that the madrasahs were established during the colonial period, before independence, and the enactment of AMLA and MUIS. This gave madrasah a certain degree of autonomy in its managerial decisions and the running of its curriculum until the early 21st century, when the commodification of graduate qualifications became a pivotal determinant of economic viability within Singapore's knowledge and skill-intensive economy, making major changes necessary. [21]

1.1.3. Overview of Madrasah Education in Singapore

Aside from spreading *daʿwah* and commerce, a well-established custom of the Hadhrami diaspora community was establishing their own schools. Whether through their Arab association in the region where they reside in or individually by their religious leaders. They would then send their youth who had this religious foundational knowledge to their homeland or other Islamic countries for further education. This very route of inquiring religious knowledge is still taken by graduates of the surviving madrasahs in Singapore and elsewhere in the Malay archipelago. An example of this is the schools operated by the *Jamiat Kheir*, an Arab association that was founded in 1901 in Batavia, currently Jakarta.[22]

The term madrasah originates from Arabic and means school. In Singapore, it specifically refers to an Islamic religious institution. There are full-time and part-time madrasahs. Full-time madrasahs are schools that run as an alternative education to the public schools but serve as the main education provider for their students. In the

[20] 'Muis | Roles & Functions', accessed 10 February 2025, https://www.muis.gov.sg/About-MUIS/Roles-Functions.
[21] Mukhlis Abu Bakar, "Islamic Religious Schools in Singapore: Recent Trends and Issues," paper presented at The 4th ASEAN Inter-University Seminar on Social Development, Pattani, Thailand, Department of Malay Studies National University of Singapore, June 16, 1999, 13–14,
[22] De Jonge, *In Search of Identity: The Hadhrami Arabs in the Netherlands East Indies and Indonesia (1900-1950)*,23- 24.

21st century, madrasahs offer a pedagogical integration of Islamic Religious Education and Secular Education within their curriculum.[23] In modern-day Singapore, the term madrasah commonly refers to an Islamic educational institution that caters to children and adolescents. These institutions may operate either on a full-time or part-time basis. Part-time madrasahs, typically affiliated with mosques, supplement the religious education of students concurrently enrolled in mainstream schools. In contrast, full-time madrasahs provide a more comprehensive curriculum, usually covering primary to secondary levels, with some extending to pre-university education.[24]

The full-time madrasahs are intended in this research as the term madrasah is also used by The Ministry of Education (MoE) as a distinction from the public schools run by the government. During their inception, their curriculum, syllabus, funding and management were autonomous and operated exclusively by their founder and board members. Now, each madrasah operates under a Management Committee registered under the Education Act. The MoE renews the committee members' registration every two years, consulting the MUIS before finalising appointments.[25]

Presently, there are six full-time madrasahs in Singapore registered with the Ministry of Education: Madrasah Alsagoff Al-Arabiah, Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah, Madrasah Al-Maʿarif Al-Islamiah, Madrasah Wak Tanjong Al-Islamiah, Madrasah Irsyad Zuhri Al-Islamiah and Madrasah Al-Arabiah Al-Islamiah. Madrasahs were initially built on *waqf* (endowed) lands. Currently, only two of the six full-time madrasahs, Madrasah Alsagoff and Madrasah Al-Maʿarif, remain on *waqf* land, while the rest have been acquired by the government.[26]

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[23] https://www.muis.gov.sg/madrasah/About/Key-Facts-About-Our-Full-Time-Madrasahs, accessed February 10, 2025.
[24] Kerstin Steiner, 'Madrasah in Singapore: Tradition and Modernity in Religious Education', *IIUM Press*, Intellectual Discourse, no. 19 (2011): 42.
[25] https://www.muis.gov.sg/madrasah/About/Key-Facts-About-Our-Full-Time-Madrasahs, accessed February 10, 2025.
[26] https://www.muis.gov.sg/madrasah/About/Key-Facts-About-Our-Full-Time-Madrasahs, accessed February 10, 2025.

Madrasah Alsagoff Al-Arabiah, was established in 1912 by Syed Mohamed b. Ahmed Alsagoff[27], and Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah, founded in 1927 by Syed Abdul Rahman Aljunied are two of Singapore's most prominent Islamic institutions.[28] These madrasahs have long been associated with the Hadhrami Arab community, which played a crucial role in the dissemination of Bāʿ Alawī teachings in the region.

Madrasah Aljunied is renowned for its rigorous curriculum, which integrates traditional Islamic sciences with secular subjects, producing graduates who excel in both religious and academic spheres. Its Islamic curriculum, particularly at the pre-university level, is formally aligned with the syllabus of Al-Azhar's secondary institutions, as stipulated in a continually reviewed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This alignment enables graduates to gain direct admission into the Faculty of Islamic Studies at Al-Azhar University. In addition, the institution has established MoUs with other prominent regional Islamic universities, including the Islamic University of Malaysia and the Islamic Science University of Malaysia. Even in cases where formal agreements are absent, such as with universities in Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, and Türkiye, graduates have consistently secured admission into Islamic faculties based on the recognised rigour of their training and their demonstrated academic excellence in the entry test or as a student there.

It has served as a bastion of Islamic scholarship, attracting students and scholars from across Southeast Asia during its early establishment. Similarly, Madrasah Alsagoff, dated as the oldest madrasah in Singapore[29] has prioritised the moral and spiritual development of its students, emphasising the values of humility, service, and piety central to Bāʿ Alawī Sufism.

[27] https://www.alsagoff.edu.sg/about_us#about_us, accessed March 23, 2025. .
[28] Nurhaizatul Jamila Jamil and Nadirah Norrudin, 'Madrasah Education in Singapore', A Singapore Government Agency Website, Nlb.Gov.Sg, accessed 6 February 2025, https://www.nlb.gov.sg/main/article-detail?cmsuuid=eb5c99a9-d585-4b84-9e29-e5cf8ea926ce.
[29] Jamil and Norrudin, 'Madrasah Education in Singapore'. A Singapore Government Agency Website, Nlb.Gov.Sg, accessed February 6, 2025, https://www.nlb.gov.sg/main/article-detail?cmsuuid=eb5c99a9-d585-4b84-9e29-e5cf8ea926ce.

Both madrasahs have incorporated Bā ʿAlawī teachings into their curricular and extracurricular activities, fostering an environment where jurisprudence, theology, and spirituality coexist harmoniously. These institutions not only serve as centres of education but also as cultural and spiritual hubs, reflecting the rich heritage of the Bā ʿAlawī *ṭarīqa* in Singapore's Islamic community.

1.1.4. Research Limitations

This case study is centred on two Islamic schools in Singapore that were established under the direct auspices of Hadhrami scholars. While the case study primarily concerns two madrasahs, it will include references to the other four madrasahs where applicable. It is also crucial to introduce the direction of the research, which comes from someone who has undergone the entirety of the education system in Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah, with the exception of not starting primary one in a madrasah due to the limited quota intake of primary one students in the year 2000. The author furthered her tertiary studies in Islamic Jurisprudence at Al-Azhar University and became an educator in one of the full-time madrasahs for three years before undertaking this graduate study. Being a madrasah alumna and staying close to the *asātidha* (religious teachers) fraternity (spelled as *asatizah* is a term used in Singapore to identify the Islamic teachers, henceforth the term will be used in its contextualised form and manner) in the Islamic Religious Education sector gives invaluable insight into this area of study. It is intended to bridge the research gap between external and internal observational analyses derived from active participant observation. Notwithstanding, impartial observation and objective selection of information will be ensured throughout the research and analysis of this study.

Studies pertaining to the Bā ʿAlawī *ṭarīqa* will only cover the perimeter of their formation period, its primary principles and how it became widely accepted in the Southeast Asian Region. This covers their diasporic venture and settlement in Singapore, the lineage tree and the contributions that they have made to the nation-building of the country's state in the realm of Islamic education and religiosity.

1.1.5. Significance of Research

A key significance of this research lies in its positioning within the lived realities of the madrasah education system in Singapore. While numerous academic works have explored madrasah education, such as those by Charlene Tan, Kerstin Steiner, and other education scholars, many are conducted by external observers who have not themselves been part of the system. These studies often emerge from researchers affiliated with secular humanities or education faculties in local or overseas universities, many of whom do not possess training in Islamic studies or a deep understanding of the intellectual and spiritual foundations of madrasah education. Although such works may aim to be objective and methodologically sound, they frequently lack the subtle yet critical nuances that come from within the tradition.

Moreover, this study draws directly from Arabic primary sources, such as the biographies of key Bāʿalawī figures, including those of the Aljunied family in Singapore and their blood and spiritual lineage to al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam, the progenitor of the *ṭarīqa*. These foundational texts, written in the source language of Islamic scholarship, offer a rich and authentic lens through which to understand the historical transmission and local adaptation of Bāʿalawī Sufism in Singapore. By incorporating these rarely accessed materials and doing so through a researcher proficient in Arabic and situated within both the madrasah system and traditional Islamic learning, the study contributes a level of epistemic confidence and representational depth that has been largely absent from existing literature. This further reinforces the urgency and legitimacy of insider-led scholarship in the field of Islamic education in Singapore.

This study, therefore, offers a corrective and timely contribution. It brings forth an insider's perspective from someone who has not only studied within the madrasah environment but is also actively involved in Islamic scholarship with a strong grounding in its traditional epistemology. This dual position allows for a richer, more authentic interpretation of how Islamic educational values, particularly those rooted in Bāʿalawī Sufism, are embodied and transmitted within Singaporean madrasahs. Beyond addressing a gap in the literature, the study also aims to empower the

madrasah community by asserting its internal logic, spiritual depth, and resilience in the face of modern educational and societal shifts. In doing so, it contributes meaningfully to both local and global discussions on the future of Islamic education and the relevance of Sufi traditions in contemporary pedagogy.

1.2. Research Questions

This study seeks to address several key questions about the relationship between Bā ʿAlawī Sufism and Islamic education in Singapore. The first question focuses on the historical roots of Bā ʿAlawī Sufism and its influence on the Islamic education landscape in the region. Understanding the historical context provides a foundation for exploring how Bā ʿAlawī teachings have shaped religious pedagogy and community identity.

The second question investigates how Bā ʿAlawī teachings are integrated into the curriculum and extracurricular activities of Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah and Madrasah Alsagoff Al-Arabiah. It examines whether specific Bā ʿAlawī texts, practices, or philosophies are explicitly incorporated into these institutions' educational frameworks, thereby shaping students' spiritual and intellectual journeys. The third question assesses the contemporary relevance of Bā ʿAlawī Sufism in addressing the needs of students in a rapidly modernising society. This includes exploring how these teachings help students navigate the challenges of modernity while retaining a strong spiritual grounding. Additionally, it examines the ways in which Bā ʿAlawī Sufism contributes to the moral and ethical education of students in a diverse, multicultural context like Singapore.

Finally, the study seeks to understand how these madrasahs balance the preservation of traditional Islamic knowledge with the demands of modern education. This involves investigating the ways in which they integrate classical Bā ʿAlawī teachings with modern pedagogical approaches, ensuring that students receive a comprehensive education that prepares them for contemporary challenges.

1.3. Literature Review

The study of Bā ʿAlawī Sufism within the context of Islamic education in Singapore remains an underexplored domain. Existing scholarship on Southeast Asian Islam, Sufism, and madrasah education provides a foundational understanding of the region's historical, social, and spiritual dimensions of Islamic practices. This sub-chapter reviews key literature on the development of Bā ʿAlawī Sufism, the role of madrasahs in Islamic education, and the intersection of traditional Sufi teachings with modern pedagogical frameworks. By situating this study within broader academic discussions, the literature review identifies gaps that this research seeks to address.

1.3.1. Historical Foundations of Bā ʿAlawī Sufism in Southeast Asia, Specifically Singapore

Bā ʿAlawī Sufism, originating from the Hadhramaut region in Yemen, has had a profound influence on Islamic practices and education in Southeast Asia. Its emphasis on spiritual refinement, ethical conduct, and communal harmony has shaped Muslim communities across the region. It is known that the historical accounts of the developmental years of the Bā ʿAlawī *ṭarīqa* are indeed recorded in the primary sources on the *sāda* historical records, travel narratives, and traditional hagiographical (*manāqib*) and biographical (*tarājim*), amongst them, two of the most seminal and exhaustive scholarly contributions that become the reference for contemporary scholars in this field are evidently *Ghurar al-bahāʾ al-ḍawī wa-durar al-jamāl al-badīʿ al-bahī* by Muḥammad b. ʿAlī Khirid (d. 960/1553) and *Al-mashraʿ al-rawy fī manāqib al-sāda al-kirām āl Abī ʿAlawī* by Muḥammad b. Abū Bakr al-Shillī (d. 1132/1720).[30] Contemporary works by modern Arab historians who write on the foundational history of the *ṭarīqa* have been undertaken. Significant academic explorations into Hadhrami historiography have been conducted by scholars such as

[30] Omar Edaibat, 'The Bā ʿAlawī Sāda of the Hadhramaut Valley: An Intellectual and Social History from Tenth-Century Origins till the Late-Sixteenth Century' (PhD Thesis, McGill University, n.d.), 19. For a more extensive literature review on the primary sources of the *sāda* refer to Edaibat's PhD thesis chapter 4 as he exhaustively discussed the early historiography works by Arab authors in Arabic.

R. B. Serjeant, whose pioneering research in the mid-twentieth century laid the foundation for contemporary studies on Hadhramaut. Serjeant's influential work, particularly his concise yet insightful monograph *The Saiyids of Ḥaḍramawt*, originally presented as a lecture at the School of Oriental and African Studies in 1956, remains a key reference in the study of Hadhrami scholarly and genealogical traditions.[31]

Anne K. Bang's *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea* and Engseng Ho's *The Graves of Tarim* constitute seminal contributions to the study of the ʿAlawī diaspora, offering a rigorous examination of their transoceanic mobility, intellectual exchanges, and sociopolitical influence across the Indian Ocean world. These works critically engage with the migratory trajectories of the *sāda*, situating their early historical development within the broader context of Hadhramaut's religious and scholarly traditions. Scholars like Azyumardi Azra have documented the transmission of Sufi traditions from Yemen to the Malay Archipelago, facilitated by Hadhrami traders and religious scholars.[32] The adaptability of Bā ʿAlawī Sufism to diverse cultural contexts underscores its long-standing relevance in the region.

The Bā ʿAlawī *ṭarīqa* has been integral to the religious life of Southeast Asian Muslim communities, particularly in fostering a balance between jurisprudence and spirituality. Syed Farid Alatas (2011) and Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid (2016) highlight the pivotal role of Hadhrami migrants in disseminating Sufi traditions across the Malay Archipelago, emphasising the spiritual authority and social networks of Hadhrami *ʿulamāʾ* in shaping Islamic thought in the region. However, studies specific to Bā ʿAlawī Sufism in Singapore, particularly its role in institutional education, remain sparse. This research aims to build on these foundational studies by examining how Bā ʿAlawī teachings have been institutionalised in Singaporean madrasahs.

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[31] Serjeant, *The Saiyids of Ḥaḍramawt An Inaugural Lecture Delivered on 5 June 1956* (School of Oriental and African Studies University of London, 1957).

[32] Azyurmadi Azra, *The Origin of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesia and Middle Eastern 'Ulamā in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2004).

1.3.2. Islamic Education in Singapore

Islamic education in Singapore has been the subject of numerous studies, exploring the evolution of madrasah as centres of learning. Notable contributions include which examines the integration of traditional Islamic teachings with modern educational structures. These works provide a comparative framework for analysing the curriculum and pedagogy of Islamic institutions in Singapore.

In Singapore, Islamic education has evolved significantly over the decades, balancing traditional religious instruction with the demands of a modern, secular society. Madrasahs, as primary institutions for Islamic learning, have played a pivotal role in this process. Works by scholars such as Noor Aisha Abdul Rahman and Lai Ah Eng, *Secularism and Spirituality: Revisiting the Singapore State's Management of Religion* (2006) highlight madrasahs' historical and contemporary challenges, including curriculum reform, state policies, and community expectations. It offers critical insights into how Singaporean madrasahs navigate these challenges while maintaining their Islamic pedagogical identity. These studies provide a critical backdrop for understanding the specific contributions of Bā ʿAlawi Sufism to madrasah education in Singapore, which operates within a unique socio-political framework, where institutions must balance the preservation of traditional Islamic teachings with the state's educational regulations.

One of the most recent and relevant works on madrasah education in Singapore is Kerstin Steiner's *Madrasah in Singapore: Tradition and Modernity in Religious Education* (2011) which offers valuable insight into the transitional period preceding the implementation of JMS. Her work highlights the socio-political and educational considerations of madrasah education that led to the inception of the JMS, providing an important perspective on the motivations and structural shifts that shaped its formation.

1.3.3. Bā ʿAlawī Sufism as a Pedagogical Device in Madrasah Education

The integration of Sufi teachings into formal education has been examined in the broader context of Islamic education, yet specific studies on Bā ʿAlawī Sufism's role are limited. Bā ʿAlawī teachings, characterised by their emphasis on ethical conduct, spiritual refinement, and community service, align closely with Islamic education's moral and spiritual objectives.

In *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*, the Bā ʿAlawī prolific writer and historian of our time from the scholarly lineage of the *sāda*, al-Ḥabīb[33] Zain b. Ibrāhīm b. Sumayt highlights the developmental stages of the Bā ʿAlawī *ṭarīqa* as a formalised Sufi order, including the emergence of its written manuals in each stage.[34] He further expounded on the principles and the wayfaring towards God (*sulūk*) of the Bā ʿAlawī path in the five spiritual states (*ḥālāt*, sing. ḥāla) that the *ṭarīqa* was built upon. This is as per the words of al-Ḥabīb Ahmad b. Zain al-Habshī (d. 1145/1732), "The path of the Ba ʿAlawī *sāda* is based on knowledge, good deed, piety, fear of God and sincerity to Him the Almighty."[35]

This work, amongst other manuals, coupled with the guidance from the words of the current global leadership of the *ṭarīqa*, al-Ḥabīb ʿUmar b. Hāfiz will be the universal to the specifics, which are the activities that the madrasah curriculum has adopted as its pedagogical devices. This will be the core of the research and will be elaborated more in Chapter 3.

Recent works, such as *Hadramis in Singapore* [36], touches on the cultural and religious contributions of Hadhrami Arabs but do not delve deeply into their influence on madrasah curricula. This study seeks to fill this gap by focusing on how Bā ʿAlawī principles are incorporated into the pedagogical practices and

[33] Al-Ḥabīb is used as an honorary title for the elderly *ʿālim* (scholar) of the *ṭarīqa*
[34] Zayn b. Ibrāhīm Bin Sumayṭ, *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī* (Dār al-ʿIlm wal-Daʿwa, 2005), 22–25.
[35] Bin Sumayṭ, *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*, 39.
[36] Ameen Ali Talib, "Hadramis in Singapore," *Routledge Taylor & Francis Group*, Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, vol. 17, no. 1 (1997).

extracurricular activities of Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah and Madrasah Alsagoff Al-Arabiah.

The alignment of Bā ʿAlawī teachings with modern pedagogical approaches is evident in their emphasis on critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and the cultivation of a well-rounded personality. Charlene Tan's work on madrasah education in Singapore underscores the efforts of these institutions to integrate traditional Islamic knowledge with contemporary educational methodologies. Tan highlights how madrasahs adopt interactive teaching methods, technology, and student-centred learning approaches to make Islamic education more engaging and relevant in a modern context. The principles of Bā ʿAlawī Sufism, with their emphasis on introspection, ethical conduct, and communal responsibility, complement these modern pedagogical strategies, thereby fostering a holistic educational experience for students.

1.3.4. Methodological Insights from Sufi Studies

The study of Sufism has evolved to include ethnographic and qualitative approaches, as seen in works like *Sufism and the 'Modern' in Islam* (2007) edited by Martin van Bruinessen and Julia Day Howell. These methods allow for a deeper exploration of lived experiences and spiritual practices within Sufi communities.

This research builds on such methodological frameworks, integrating historical analysis with participant observation to provide a holistic understanding of Bā ʿAlawī Sufism's impact on madrasah education. By adopting this interdisciplinary approach, the study contributes to both the field of Sufi studies and the broader discourse on Islamic education.

1.3.5. Gaps in the Literature

Despite extensive scholarship on Sufism and Islamic education in Southeast Asia, limited attention has been paid to the specific contributions of Bā ʿAlawī Sufism within Singaporean madrasahs. Existing studies often focus on theological or historical aspects, neglecting the pedagogical implications of integrating Sufi

teachings into formal education. Furthermore, the unique socio-political context of Singapore presents a rich yet underexplored field for examining how traditional Sufi practices adapt to modern educational frameworks.

- Conclusion

The literature reviewed highlights the significant role of Sufism in shaping Islamic education and underscores the need for focused studies on Bā ʿAlawī teachings within Singaporean madrasahs. By addressing these lacunas, this research aims to contribute to understanding how Bā ʿAlawī Sufism continues to influence students' moral, intellectual, and spiritual development while navigating the challenges of a modern, pluralistic society.

1.4. Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative methodology to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of Bā ʿAlawī Sufism's role in shaping Islamic education in Singapore. The study combines historical analysis, ethnographic fieldwork, and curriculum studies to achieve its objectives.

Archival research forms the foundation of the study, involving the examination of historical documents, founding charters, and records related to the establishment and development of Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah and Madrasah Alsagoff Al-Arabiah. These sources help trace the historical emergence and institutionalisation of Bā ʿAlawī Sufi practices in these madrasahs.

Semi-structured interviews and news articles with madrasah administrators, educators, alumni, and community leaders provide firsthand insights into the influence of Bā ʿAlawī Sufism. These interviews aim to uncover the lived experiences and perspectives of those directly involved in these institutions, shedding light on how Bā ʿAlawī teachings are perceived and practised.

Curriculum analysis involves reviewing textbooks, syllabi, and extracurricular program materials to identify the presence and application of Bā ʿAlawī teachings. This analysis seeks to determine the extent to which Bā ʿAlawī principles are explicitly or implicitly incorporated into these madrasahs' educational content and activities. This curriculum is examined across two distinct timeframes, before and following the implementation of the Joint Madrasah System (JMS hereafter) curriculum.

Participant observation by the author is another critical component, involving direct engagement with classroom activities, religious ceremonies, and community events. This method allows for an immersive understanding of how Bā ʿAlawī Sufi practices are experienced and enacted within the madrasah environment.

The theoretical framework adopted for this study draws from the transformational leadership model developed by Kenneth Leithwood and Doris Jantzi, particularly as outlined in their work *The Effects of Transformational Leadership on Organizational Conditions and Student Engagement with School.* This framework provides a useful lens to trace the often intangible, layered influence of Bā ʿAlawī Sufi practices within the educational environment. To further assess the effectiveness of these embedded practices, the study also incorporates evaluative matrices inspired by the work of Philip Hallinger and Ronald H. Heck in *Exploring the Principal's Contribution to School Effectiveness: 1980–1995* (Swets & Zeitlinger, *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*). Together, these models form the structural backbone of the argument, allowing the research to map the diffusion of Sufi values through various levels of the madrasah's organisational and pedagogical hierarchy. This parallels the traditional Sufi model of layered spiritual instruction and community formation, thus making the framework especially suitable for exploring the multidimensional impact of Bā ʿAlawī Sufism on school culture, leadership, and student development.

Through this combination of methods, the research provides a detailed exploration of the ways in which Bā ʿAlawī Sufism has shaped and continues to influence Islamic

education in Singapore, particularly in the contexts of Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah and Madrasah Alsagoff Al-Arabiah.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL EMERGENCE OF BĀ ʿALAWĪ SUFISM IN SINGAPORE

2.1. Origins of the Bā ʿAlawī *sāda* and their Migration to Singapore

The Bā ʿAlawī *sāda*, traces their ancestry to the Prophet Muhammad through his grandson Sayidinā al-Ḥusayn through their primogenitor Imām Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā (d. 345/956), who made the famous migration from his ancestral city of Basra in Iraq in *circa* 317/929 to the southern Arabian Peninsula of the Hadhramaut valley.[37] Over centuries, they established themselves as a prominent group within Islamic scholarship and Sufism largely unified by the *ṭarīqa* ʿAlawiyya, which served as their primary social connection.[38]

Their migration patterns, particularly during the colonial period, led them to various parts of Southeast Asia, including Singapore, as one of the docks of the trading routes.[39] This impetus began to surface in the eighteenth century and was influenced by religious and economic motivations as they sought to disseminate Islamic teachings and engage in mercantile activities.[40] In Singapore, the Bā ʿAlawī community became integral to the socio-religious fabric, contributing significantly to the spread of Sufism and the establishment of Islamic institutions. Their presence not only enriched the cultural landscape but also reinforced transnational networks connecting Southeast Asia to the broader Muslim world. [41] Their influence is evident

[37] Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿAlawī Khirid, *Ghurar al-bahāʾ al-ḍawī wa-durar al-jamāl al-badīʿ al-bahī* (n.d.), 96–97.
[38] Bang, *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea: Family Networks in East Africa. 1860-1925*, 13.
[39] Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean* (University of California Press, 2006), xxii.
[40] Bang, *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea: Family Networks in East Africa. 1860-1925*, 75.
[41] Talib, "Hadramis in Singapore."

in the establishment of mosques, madrasahs, and endowments[42] that continue to play a pivotal role in Singaporean Muslims' cultural, social, economic and religious life.

Understanding the origins and migration of the Bāʿ Alawī *sāda* to Singapore will inevitably elucidate the historical development of Islamic communities in Singapore. Their diaspora reflects broader patterns of religious and cultural exchange that have shaped the region's history. By examining their contributions, we gain a deeper appreciation for the diverse influences that have enriched Singapore's Islamic heritage.

2.1.1. Origins of the Bāʿ Alawī *sāda* of Hadhramaut

Preceding the emigration of Imām Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā was mounting considerations that have become a contention point amongst the Hadhrami modern historians. One of the authoritative historians ʿAlawī b. Ṭāhir al-Ḥaddād mentioned the account of another sayyid historian ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥasan Balfaqīh (d. 1980) in his incomplete monograph *Ṣubḥ al-dayājir fī tārīkh al-Muhājir* suggest that his migration to Hadhramaut was a calculated and intentional move. Rather than solely seeking refuge from the persecution resulting from theological turmoil in Iraq, he may have been motivated by the prospect of establishing a Sunni environment in Hadhramaut. This is coherent with the reasoning behind his departure from Iraq known as *dār sunnah* (abode of the Sunni teachings) during his time, to *dār bid'ah* (abode of heresies). Notably, Hadhramaut was home to various heterodox groups, including the Ibāḍīs, indicating that doctrinal uniformity was not the sole criterion in his settlement choice.[43] Al-Haddad claimed that this account is also acceptable as it did not contradict the canonised narrative that he was escaping the political turbulence[44] from the Zanj Revolt (255–70/869–83), a prolonged and violent uprising against the ʿAbbāsids in Basra and southern Iraq during the reign of al-Muʿtamad b. al-Mutawakkil. This rebellion resulted in significant loss of life, severely undermined

[42] Talib, "Hadramis in Singapore," 91.
[43] ʿAlawī b. Ṭāhir al-Ḥaddād, *Jāniy al-shamārīkh: jawāb asʾila fī al-tārīkh*, 1st edn, ed. Muhammad Yaslam 'Abd al-Nūr (Tarīm li al-Dirāsāt wa al-Nasyr, 2012), 64.
[44] al-Ḥaddād,*Jāniy al-shamārīkh: jawāb asʾila fī al-tārīkh*, 66.

the authority of the central government, and left Basra's economy and living conditions in a state of devastation. These hardships were soon exacerbated by the protracted and catastrophic incursions of the Qarmaṭīs (Arabic pl. Qarāmiṭa), an Ismāʿīlī faction named after the influential missionary and convert Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ. Emerging from an internal schism within the Ismāʿīlī movement, the Qarmaṭīs formally established themselves as a distinct dissident group in 286/899, following a major dispute over the continuity of the Imāmate.[45]

His departure was marked by the formation of an extensive caravan, comprising both immediate and extended family members. Among those accompanying him were his wife, Zaynab bt. ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥasan al-ʿUrayḍī, as well as his son ʿAbd Allāh and his daughter-in-law, Umm al-Banīn bt. Muḥammad b. ʿĪsa. The caravan also included his paternal cousins, the sayyids Muḥammad b. Sulaymān and Aḥmad al-Qudaymī, alongside a retinue of approximately seventy individuals. This diverse entourage consisted of loyal companions, kin, and their attendants (*mawālī*), including the Imām's three personal servants, Jaʿfar, Shuwayh, and Mukhtār.[46] Following careful deliberation with his family and relatives before resolving to undertake migration toward the Hejaz, it was also recorded in most ʿAlawi biographies that he had sought divine guidance through *istikhārah* prayers and was divinely inspired to settle in Hadhramaut as it was not made feasible for him to settle in the Holy cities.[47]

Imām ʿUbayd Allāh known by the diminutive amongst the people of Hadhramaut, was born by the name ʿAbd Allāh (d. 383/993) was Muhajir's son who migrated with him to Hadhramaut. He was blessed with three sons, Baṣrī and ʿAlawī were born from his wife and his paternal cousin, Umm al-Banīn bt. Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā, the third Jadīd from his second wife, whom he married after the demise of Umm al-

[45] Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Shillī, *Al-mashraʿ al-rawy fī manāqib al-sāda al-kirām āl Abī ʿAlawī*, 2nd ed., vols. 1 & 2 (1982); Muḥammad Ḍiyāʾ Shihāb and ʿAbd Allāh Bin Nūḥ, *Al-Imām al-Muhājir Aḥmad b. ʿIsā*, 1st ed. (Dār al-Shurūq, 1980), 241–42. Shihāb and Nūḥ, *Al-Imām al-Muhājir Aḥmad b. ʿIsā*, 113–15.
[46] b. ʿAlī b. ʿAlawī Khirid, *Ghurar al-bahāʾ al-ḍawī wa-durar al-jamāl al-badīʿ al-bahī*, 98–99.
[47] al-Shillī, *Al-mashraʿ al-rawy fī manāqib al-sāda al-kirām āl Abī ʿAlawī*, 1 & 2:246.

Banīn. [48] It is from his son Imām ʿAlawi that the descendants of Banu ʿAlawi thrive.[49]

By the mid-fourth/tenth century, Sufism had developed a tangible history, prompting Būyid-era scholars in Baghdad to preserve and analyse the legacy of early masters like Junayd. This effort aligned with broader intellectual trends, leading to the emergence of specialised literature that defined a 'normative' Sufi tradition and distinguished it from other more obscure mystical currents.[50] It was implied in the work of Khirid and al-Shillī that Imām ʿAbdullah b. Aḥmad was well-acquainted with Sufism, highlighting his encounter with the esteemed Sufi master Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 386/996) in Mecca[51] during his Hajj pilgrimage in 377/987. During this time, he had the opportunity to benefit from him and to study *Qūt al-qulūb*, al-Makkī's well-known spiritual treatise.[52] According to Edaibat[53], the published edition of *Al-ghurar* contains a textual inaccuracy, dating the encounter with Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī to 305 AH.[54]

One of the earliest literatures of its genre to set the perimeters of normative Sufism. Recognising that spiritual knowledge arose from both inner and outer devotion, he outlined a holistic approach to piety, encompassing religious rituals alongside social and practical aspects of life, including work, marriage, travel, and leadership. Despite his emphasis on esoteric knowledge, al-Makkī remained a committed traditionalist, exclusively anchoring epistemology in the Qurʾān and Prophetic precedent, prioritising weak *ḥadīth* (Prophetic tradition) over rational speculation when aligned with these sources.[55]

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[48] b. ʿAlī b. ʿAlawī Khirid, *Ghurar al-bahāʾ al-ḍawī wa-durar al-jamāl al-badīʿ al-bahī*, 101–2.
[49] al-Shillī, *Al-mashraʿ al-rawy fī manāqib al-sāda al-kirām āl Abī ʿAlawī*, 1 & 2:229.
[50] Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period*, The New Edinburgh Islamic Surveys (Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 83–84,
[51] al-Shillī, *Al-mashraʿ al-rawy fī manāqib al-sāda al-kirām āl Abī ʿAlawī*, 1 & 2:75.
[52] Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUmar al-Shāṭirī, *Adwār al-tārīkh al-Ḥaḍramī*, 3rd edn, 2 vols (Dār al-Muhājir, 1994), 163.
[53] Edaibat, "The Bā ʿAlawī Sāda of the Hadhramaut Valley: An Intellectual and Social History from Tenth-Century Origins till the Late-Sixteenth Century," 53.
[54] b. ʿAlī b. ʿAlawī Khirid, *Ghurar al-bahāʾ al-ḍawī wa-durar al-jamāl al-badīʿ al-bahī*, 470.
[55] Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period*, 87–89.

Imām ʿAlawī b. ʿAbdullah passed away in Sumal circa 412/1021, leaving his only progeny Imām Muḥammad,[56] who was born in Bayt Jubayr, one of the suburban valleys of Tarīm, which later became the main residency for the *sāda*, who passed on at the age of fifty-six and had also one son, Imām ʿAlawī b. Muḥammad was named after his father. Both Imām Muḥammad and his son had married their relative from Banū Jadīd. Imām ʿAlawi b. Muḥammad had two sons and a daughter, ʿAlī, Sālim, and Fāṭima. He passed away in 512/1118.[57]

Imām ʿAli, his brother Sālīm, and their cousins were the pioneers of the *sāda* who moved to the city centre of Tarīm, which was the distinguished scholarly nexus of their time. The migration enabled their noble Prophetic lineage, economic prosperity, and influence to be more pronounced, which further solidified their status as an intellectual elite and their prestige. This signifies a pivotal turning point for the Hadhramis whence the ʿAlawīs' began their gradual transition from relative seclusion to prominence.[58]

Imām ʿAli b. ʿAlawī was known by the sobriquet 'Khāliʿ' (the Sower) Qasam from the piece of land that he bought for twenty-thousand dinars, which was named 'Qasam' after his ancestral plantation in Basra.[59] Imām ʿAlī b. ʿAlawī passed away around (527-29/1135) and was the first *sayyid* to be laid to rest in Tarīm's infamous *sāda* cemetery of Zanbal. He was survived by his three sons: ʿAbdullah, Ḥusayn, and Muḥammad[60], of which only his third son continued the noble progeny. Imām Muḥammad b. 'Ali (d. 551 or 556/1161) was also known as Ṣāḥib Mirbāṭ as he would frequent Mirbāṭ, the harbour city to the east of the valley and would later settle in towards the end of his life. The Imām was also recognized for constructing the al-Aḥmad Mosque, named in honour of the descendants of Imām al-Muhājir. In

[56] b. ʿAlī b. ʿAlawī Khirid, *Ghurar al-bahāʾ al-ḍawī wa-durar al-jamāl al-badīʿ al-bahī*, 473.
[57] b. ʿAlī b. ʿAlawī Khirid, *Ghurar al-bahāʾ al-ḍawī wa-durar al-jamāl al-badīʿ al-bahī*, 475–78.
[58] al-Ḥāmid, *Tārīkh Ḥaḍramawt*, vol. 2, 461-462.
[59] b. ʿAlī b. ʿAlawī Khirid, *Ghurar al-bahāʾ al-ḍawī wa-durar al-jamāl al-badīʿ al-bahī*, 479.
[60] b. ʿAlī b. ʿAlawī Khirid, *Ghurar al-bahāʾ al-ḍawī wa-durar al-jamāl al-badīʿ al-bahī*, 480.

the early fourteenth century,[61] the mosque was renamed Masjid Bā ʿAlawī and soon emerged as the primary hub for the ʿAlawīs' scholarly pursuits in Tarīm till this day. Out of his four sons: ʿAlī, ʿAbd Allāh, ʿAlawī, and Aḥmad.[62] The lineage of the Banū ʿAlawīs continued exclusively through the progeny of ʿAlī b. Muḥammad and his brother ʿAlawī. It is from ʿAlī b. Muḥammad that Imām Muḥammad 'al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam' (d. 653/1255), the founder of the Bā ʿAlawī *ṭarīqa*, while ʿAlawī, his brother, came to be known as ''ʿAmm al-Faqīh'.

The preservation of the family lineage or family tree truly receives immense importance in the Arab tribal tradition to this day. It is hence expected to be much more emphasised within the Prophetic noble lineage. Through this closely scrutinised and preserved *silsila,* the teachings of the forefathers passed on to the Bā ʿAlawī progenies.

2.1.2. The Birth of the Bā ʿAlawī *Ṭarīqa*

Anne Bang mentioned that Habīb Ahmad b. Abī Bakr Sumayṭ[63] (d. 1344/1925), Habīb ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mashhūr[64] (d. 1441/2020) and J.S Trimingham[65] concluded that the Bā ʿAlawī *ṭarīqa* was founded on dual chains *(isnad*)[66]. One that was transmitted through the genealogical lineage and the other through a Sufi investiture of the mantle (*khirqa*), North African Sufi Abū Madyan b. Shuʿayb (d. 594/1191) of Tlemcen.[67] Having established the genealogical *isnād* in the preceding subchapters, it is important to consider now the spiritual transmission that complements it. At the heart of this convergence stands Imām al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam, who serves as the pivotal nexus, bridging the esteemed Sharīfian descent of the Bā ʿAlawī lineage with the Sufi *silsila* of the gnostics (*ʿārifīn,* sing. *ʿārif*).

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[61] al-Shillī, *Al-mashraʿ al-rawy fī manāqib al-sāda al-kirām āl Abī ʿAlawī,* 1 & 2:263.
[62] b. ʿAlī b. ʿAlawī Khirid, *Ghurar al-bahāʾ al-ḍawī wa-durar al-jamāl al-badīʿ al-bahī,* 482.
[63] Aḥmad b. Sumayṭ, *Tuḥfat al-labīb (sharḥ lamīyat al-Ḥabīb)* (n.d.), 35–36, 66–67.
[64] ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Mashhūr, *Shams al-ẓahīra* (ʿAlam al-Maʿrifa, 1984), 77–78.
[65] Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam,* 16.
[66] Bang, *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea: Family Networks in East Africa. 1860-1925,* 13–14.
[67] Edaibat, 'The Bā ʿAlawī Sāda of the Hadhramaut Valley: An Intellectual and Social History from Tenth-Century Origins till the Late-Sixteenth Century', 97.

The transmission of the Sufi *silsila* within the Bāʿ Alawī tradition is notably linked to an episode involving Shaykh Abū Madyan b. Shuʿayb (d. 594/1191), the eminent Sufi master of Tlemcen. According to recorded accounts, upon becoming aware of the scholarly excellence and spiritual stature of Imām al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam and Shaykh Saʿīd al-ʿAmūdī (d. 671/1273) of Qaydūn, Abū Madyan saw in them worthy recipients of his spiritual trust. He therefore dispatched his Hadhrami disciple, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Muqʿad, as an emissary to confer upon them the Sufi *khirqa* and the formal appointment (*taḥkīm*). Following al-Muqʿad's demise in Makkah, al-Muqʿad's disciple ʿAbdullah al-Ṣāliḥ al-Maghribī completed the mission, eventually settling in Duʿan and passing his leadership to al-ʿAmūdī through a symbolic division of relics, the one receiving his prayer beads (*subḥa*) to be their new *khalīfa* (leader). Ultimately affirming al-Faqīh's spiritual supremacy in his receiving the *subḥa* and the staff of al-Maghribī.[68]

The induction of al-Faqīh into Abū Madyan's Sufi lineage has brought the developing discourse of the institutionalisation of the rather general practice of taṣawwuf to Hadhramaut. The practice of their forefathers became an organised discipline incorporating key concepts of the formalised Sufism such as *ṭarīqa, taḥkīm, khirqa,* license (*ijāza*), and litany (*dhikr*).[69]

[68] Sumayṭ, *Tuḥfat al-labīb (sharḥ lamīyat al-Ḥabīb)*, 36,66.
[69] Ho, *The Graves of Tarim Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean*, 41.

Muḥammad ﷺ

Fāṭima &ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib | **ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib**

ʿALAWĪ ISNĀD	**SUFI ISNĀD OF ABŪ MADYAN**
Imām Ḥusayn	Abū Saʿīd al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī
ʿAlī Zayn a-ʿĀbidīn	Abū Muḥammad Saʿīd al-ʿAjmī
Muḥammad al-Bāqir	Abū Sulaymān Dāwūd b. Nāsīr
Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq	Abū Maḥfūẓ Maʿrūf b. Fayrūz al-Karkhī
ʿAlī al-ʿUrayḍī	Abū al-Ḥasan al-Sarī al-Saqaṭī
Muḥammad	Abū al-Qāsim al-Junayd (d. 297/910)
ʿĪsā al-Naqīb	Abū Bakr al-Shiblī
Aḥmad al-Muhajir (d. 345/956)	Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī
ʿUbayd Allāh	Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh al-Juwīnī
ʿAlawī	ʿAbd Malik Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī
Muḥammad	Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111)
ʿAlawī	Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Muʿāfirī
ʿAlī Khāliʿ Qasam	ʿAlī b. Ḥarāzham
Muḥammad Ṣāḥib Mirbāṭ	Abū Yaʿazzā
	Shuʿayb Abū Madyan (d. 594/1191)
ʿAlī	ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Muqʿad
	ʿAbd Allāh al-Ṣāliḥ al-Maghribī

Al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam Muḥammad b. ʿAlī (d. 653/1255)

Figure 2.1. The Dual Sufi Isnad of the Bā ʿAlawī *Ṭarīqa*

References: Anne Bang, *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea: Family Networks in East Africa. 1860-1925*, pp 14, from Aḥmad b. Sumayt, *Tuḥfat al-labīb*, based on Muḥammad al-Shillī, *Al-mashraʿ al-rawy fī manāqib al-sāda al-kirām āl Abī ʿAlawī*.

2.1.3. Early Bāʿ Alawī *sāda* Migration in Singapore

The Arabs' presence can be traced in maritime Southeast Asia since the tenth century. By the fifteenth century, they became a dominant force in the coastal region of the Indo-Malay archipelago. Most of them came from Hadhramaut to trade and expand their wealth, as it was nearly impossible to do so in their infertile land with the volatile political state.[70] Being aware of this, as the colonial power Sir Stamford Raffles had hoped the Arabs would set their trading goods in the port of their newly added settlement, Singapore. Stamford understood that their investment was essential for the blueprint of Singapore to not only become a reality but also to prosper.[71] He thus expected a swift influx of Arab immigrants into Singapore and envisioned the city inclusive of the establishment of an Arab district. In his 1822 instructions to the Singapore Housing Committee, he emphasised that the Arab population necessitated careful deliberation, with the vicinity of the Sultan's residence identified as the most suitable location for their settlement.[72] This was of no novel consideration as this strategic placement occurred whenever the Arab, especially of the noble *sayyid* descent, settled in a Sultanate region. Although initially not politically driven, the benefits were of having the *sayyid* near the Sultans in their court, extrinsically, for their knowledge on the religious matter for most cases and intrinsically for the blessing (*baraka*) that they brought as the carrier of Prophetic noble blood.

The first Hadhrami trader to come to Singapore in 1820/21[73] was Syed Mohamed b. Hārūn Aljunied from Palembang in Sumatra. Upon hearing the news of a new free port settlement by the British, he set sail to Singapore with his family and nephew, who was also his business partner, Syed Omar b. ʿAli Aljunied (d. 1269/1852). As opposed to the restrictions that the Dutch imposed on the trading post in Palembang, this incentive proved successful in alluring the Arab traders to Singapore.[74] The Aljunied family arrived in 1163-64/1750 in the Netherlands East Indies and

[70] De Jonge, *In Search of Identity: The Hadhrami Arabs in the Netherlands East Indies and Indonesia (1900-1950)*, 16.
[71] Harold Frank Pearson, *People of Early Singapore* (University of London Press, 1955), 92.
[72] Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Singapore 1819-1867*, 85.
[73] Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore*, 62.
[74] Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore*, 62.

established a Hadhrami community in Palembang.[75] Syed Omar managed his uncle's wealth after the latter's demise on 22 February 1824/1239-40, as his cousin Syed ʿAli (d. 1274-75/1858) was only a boy when his father passed. [76]

In 1240/1824, another early Hadhrami figure, Syed Abdul Rahman Alsagoff, came to Singapore with his son, who also set up the famous Alsagoff & Company in 1848.[77] According to M. Jayapal, the Alsagoff were spice traders.[78] He was engaged in the trade of Java spices and those from the surrounding islands. As a merchant of the Shipowner class, he spent many years trading using his own vessels.[79] Syed Ahmed, his son, wedded Raja Siti, the daughter of Bugis Sultana Hajjah Fatimah, a wealthy Malaccan who inherited from her husband Karaeng/Daeng Chanda Pulih, a Bugis prince from the Sultanate of Gowa in the Celebes.[80] An interview by Sharifah Zahra Aljunied with a direct descendant of the Alsagoff family of this branch, Sharifah Aishah Alsagoff, revealed that the husband of Hajjah Fatimah was a King who went by the name Raja Daeng Tapulira.[81] Scholar William Roff referred to the Bugis as 'the Phoenicians of Malaysia' due to the extensive reach of their ships throughout the archipelago.[82] The royalty owned a fleet of sturdy Bugis vessels and prahus with a trading post in Singapore. [83] Sultana Hajjah Fatimah, having been widowed at a young age, assumed leadership of her late husband's business and subsequently

[75] J.A.E Morley, 'The Arabs and the Eastern Trade', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 22, no. 1 (1949): 155.
[76] Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore*, 156.
[77] Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia: A.H. 1240 (A.D. 1824)-A.H. 1382 (A.D. 1962): With Biographical and Contemporary Sketches of Some Members of the Alsagoff Family* (The Author, 1963), 9.
[78] Talib, "Hadramis in Singapore," 90.
[79] Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia: A.H. 1240 (A.D. 1824)-A.H. 1382 (A.D. 1962): With Biographical and Contemporary Sketches of Some Members of the Alsagoff Family*, 9.
[80] Stephanie Po Yin Chung, 'Creating "Family" Networks across Time and Space: The Alsagoffs in Singapore, 1824-2009', *Cambridge University Press* 52, no. 2 (2018): 463.
[81] 'Memories of Engku Aman Geylang Serai & PPIS', accessed 6 March 2025, https://www.nlb.gov.sg/main/article-detail?cmsuuid=A-61788101-499d-4a61-8fb8-5be8d9602817.
The late Sharifah Aishah Alsagoff, founder of the Persatuan Pemudi Islam Singapura (PPIS) association (the interviewee passed away in October 2010). PPIS is also known as the Young Women Muslim Association. Her father was Syed Abdul Rahman bin Taha Alsagoff or Engku Aman in his Bugis tittle was the trustee of Madrasah Alsagoff Al-Arabiah.
[82] William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (Oxford University Press, 1994), 36.
[83] Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia: A.H. 1240 (A.D. 1824)-A.H. 1382 (A.D. 1962): With Biographical and Contemporary Sketches of Some Members of the Alsagoff Family*, 11.

achieved considerable prosperity.[84] This matrimonial alliance further augmented Alsagoff & Co.'s wealth and social influence in the trading business.[85]

Sultana Hajjah Fatimah left a lasting landmark of piety in Singapore. It was during the late 1830s that her residency was attacked twice by jealous rivals. The first one was a robbery incident, and the second was an arson intended to end her life.[86] She was not home, fortunately, and was safe. As a gesture of gratitude to divine providence, she instructed the building of a mosque that was once the site of her residency and named it after her.[87] Her tomb can be found in a private enclosure behind the mosque with her daughter, Raja Siti. An alternative account posits that Raja Siti passed away in Mecca and was interred there, with the smaller grave adjacent to Hajjah Fatimah's believed to belong to the child of one of her servants.[88] Her son-in-law was buried in another chamber at the mosque's rear. Adjacent to the chamber, a small plot of land became a burial spot for the Alsagoff families. Ownership of the mosque was transferred to the Alsagoff family, which runs under the Muslim Trust Fund Association (MTFA), founded by her grandson, Syed Mohamed b. Ahmed Alsagoff, together with MUIS.[89] The mosque continues to be used for the Mawlid procession and the commemorative gathering (*haul*) of Hajjah Fatimah, the Alsagoff family, particularly in honour of Syed Ahmed Alsagoff, also known as Nong Chik.

Most of the historical accounts examined above were documented in mainstream historical sources authored by historians who observed events as external commentators. Western scholarship often constructs knowledge about the East through a lens of cultural superiority. Orientalism became intertwined with

[84] Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia: A.H. 1240 (A.D. 1824)-A.H. 1382 (A.D. 1962): With Biographical and Contemporary Sketches of Some Members of the Alsagoff Family*, 463.
[85] Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia: A.H. 1240 (A.D. 1824)-A.H. 1382 (A.D. 1962): With Biographical and Contemporary Sketches of Some Members of the Alsagoff Family*, 11.
[86] Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore*, 564.
[87] Dhoraisingam S. Samuel, *Singapore's Heritage: Through Places of Historical Interest.* (Singapore, 2010), 119.
[88] Samuel, *Singapore's Heritage: Through Places of Historical Interest.*, 119.
[89] National Library Board Singapore, 'Hajjah Fatimah Mosque', accessed 6 March 2025, https://www.nlb.gov.sg/main/article-detail?cmsuuid=7c4cb6c4-1f2f-4475-8c26-a2aa49c84717.

colonialism as Western powers, after years of infiltration and study of indigenous societies, shifted their focus from material conquest to epistemic dominance. They recognised that subjugation was most effectively achieved not solely through economic or political means but by instilling in the native populations a sense of cultural inferiority. By undermining indigenous identities, reducing them to mere components of a broader strategy of division and control, colonial powers facilitated their broader agenda of hegemony and governance.[90]

To demonstrate the colonial powers' prior groundwork and strategic narrative construction before engaging with a region, Anthony Milner, in his chapter *Singapore's Role in Constituting the 'Malay' Narrative* (from the edited volume *Studying Singapore's Past: C.M. Turnbull and the History of Modern Singapore*), summarised the historical development of racial categorisation in the colonial imagination. Citing Christopher Bayly, he noted that "*the concept of 'race' began to play an increasingly prominent role in European efforts to categorise the human population*".[91]

This shift was evident in Napoleon's reorganisation of Europe, which prioritised race and ethnicity over dynasty and tradition, and in the growing scholarly focus across Europe and Britain on classifying the various peoples of the world, including those in Asia. In England, figures such as Sir Joseph Banks supported early orientalist scholars like William Marsden, a pioneer in Malay studies. Following his 1805 posting to Penang, Thomas Stamford Raffles engaged with Marsden and formed a scholarly alliance with John Leyden, who had previously collaborated with Sir Walter Scott. Another important contributor was John Crawfurd, who joined Raffles in Java during the British occupation and later published his three-volume *History of the Indian Archipelago* (1820) before becoming Resident of Singapore in 1823.

[90] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1978).
[91] Nicholas Tarling, ed., *Studying Singapore's Past: C.M. Turnbull and the History of Modern Singapore* (NUS Press Singapore, 2012), 133.

Upon his arrival in Penang, Raffles directed his attention toward the ethnographic study of the region's diverse communities, contributing significantly to the European intellectual project of racial classification. His own writings helped shape the early concept of the "Malay race," most clearly seen in his assertion that "I cannot but consider the *Malayu* nation as one people, speaking one language, though spread over so wide a space, and preserving their character and customs." Raffles went further to describe their "character" as "indolent," "polite," and "alive to insult," while Crawfurd attempted to trace their origin and delineate internal social stratifications. Both perspectives reflected the broader racial thinking of the time, in line with anthropologists such as Friedrich Schiller, Johann Gotfried von Herder, and Walter Scott, who viewed race as tied to biology and bloodline. [92]

2.1.4. Aljunied Family Branch of the Bāʿ Alawī *sāda* in Singapore

This section returns to the *manāqib*-style account authored by ʿAbd al-Qādir b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿUmar Aljunied, a relative of the Singaporean Aljunied family residing in Hadhramaut. In Ramaḍān 1414/February 1994, Pustaka Nasional, a Hadhrami-owned Malay publishing company, published a book titled *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, commissioned by two Singaporean Aljunied brothers, ʿAbdullah and Junied b. Hārūn b. Ḥasan Aljunied. Written in Arabic, the book contains biographies of prominent members of the Aljunied family, letters of counsel and praise, known in the Yemeni Arab tradition as *maktūbāt* (sing. *maktūb*), as well as photographs of biographical figures, images of related landmarks, and laudatory poems.

The author initially set out to write about his esteemed great-grandfather, al-Sayyid Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Hārūn Aljunied, a scholar figure of considerable repute. Prior to his endeavour, several prominent scholars had made attempts to document al-Sayyid Aḥmad's life and contributions. His student, al-Ḥabīb ʿAydrūs b. ʿUmar al-Ḥabshī, provided a brief account of him in *ʿAqd al-yawāqīt al-jawhariyya*. Additionally, his

[92] Nicholas Tarling, ed., *Studying Singapore's Past: C.M. Turnbull and the History of Modern Singapore* (NUS Press Singapore, 2012), 133–34.

son, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, known as Saqqāf, intended to compose a dedicated biography, compiling materials on his father's lineage, Sufi stations, and teachers. However, he passed away in Singapore in 1302/1884 before he could complete the work. Subsequently, al-Ḥabīb ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad al-Mashhūr also included a brief mention of him in his work *al-Shajara al-ʿAlawiyya*. After extensive contemplation and seeking guidance from his esteemed teacher, al-Ḥabīb Aḥmad al-Mashḥūr b. Ṭaha al-Ḥaddād, he resolved to undertake the arduous task despite the limited resources available. Drawing upon all possible means, he meticulously gathered information from existing manuscripts and oral accounts from family members, especially the elders, and scholars, to complete this work successfully.[93]

Along the way, he found it opportune to also document the biography of al-Sayyid Aḥmad's brother, al-Sayyid Omar b. ʿAlī b. Hārūn Aljunied. While he was aware of al-Sayyid Omar's prominence during his time, he noted the absence of Hadhrami historians who had written about him, as al-Sayyid Omar had resided in Singapore. Consequently, he had to rely primarily on oral transmissions and recollections from his elders, much like in the case of al-Sayyid Aḥmad. To ensure a more comprehensive account, he sought assistance from his relatives in Singapore, particularly the immediate family members of al-Sayyid Omar, and successfully gathered a substantial amount of biographical material.[94] His work not only chronicled al-Sayyid Omar's life before he migrated to Singapore, an aspect largely absent in mainstream historical narratives, but also provided a holistic portrayal of his character beyond his role as a trader, capturing the depth of his persona and contributions.

Given our primary objective of establishing the connection between the Aljunied family in Singapore and the Bā ʿAlawī lineage in Hadhramaut, the following discussion will focus exclusively on the key figures within the Aljunied family's ancestral lineage. As a starting point, we have successfully traced the lineage of the

[93] ʿAbd al-Qādir b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. Umar Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 1st edn (Pustaka Nasional Pte Ltd, 1994), 11–13.
[94] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 13.

Aljunied family in Singapore back to Imām al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam Muḥammad, as documented in this work.

The author commenced the biography of al-Sayyid Aḥmad by presenting his complete genealogy, tracing his lineage back to al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam. "He is Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Hārūn b. ʿAlī b. Aljunied b. ʿAlī b. Abū Bakr Aljunied b. ʿUmar b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ṣāliḥ b. Hārūn b. Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad Jamāl al-Lail b. Ḥasan al-Muʿallim b. Muḥammad Asad al-Allāh b. Ḥasan al-Turābī b. ʿAlī b. al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam Muḥammad."[95]

Al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam Muḥammad b. ʿAlī (d. 653/1255)

ʿAlī (d. 696/1297)

Ḥasan al-Turābī

Muḥammad Asad al-Allāh (d. 778/1376)

Ḥasan al-Muʿallim

Muḥammad Jamāl al-Lail (d. 845/1441)

ʿAlī (d. 853/1449)

Ḥasan

Hārūn (d. 905/1499)

ʿAbd Allāh al-Ṣāliḥ (d. 944/1537)

ʿUmar

Abū Bakr Aljunied (d. 1053/1643)

ʿAlī (d. 1070/1659)

Aljunied (d. 1705/1117)

ʿAlī

Hārūn (d. 1209/1794)

Figure 2.2. The Aljunied Family Lineage from Al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam

References: *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya* by ʿAbd al-Qādir b. ʿAbd al -Rahmān b. ʿUmar Aljunied, pp.16-23

[95] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 16–22.

The Aljunied family name originates from their forefather, Abū Bakar. His father, al-Sayyid ʿUmar, conferred upon him the epithet al-Junayd, rendered as Aljunied in the local context, as a means of invoking the legacy of the eminent Sufi master, Imām al-*ṭarīqa* al-Imām Junayd al-Baghdādī. Similarly, he bestowed upon his other son, ʿAlī, the epithet al-Sarī, in reference to al-Imām al-Sarī al-Saqaṭī. This practice reflects al-Sayyid ʿUmar's deep affiliation with the esteemed figures of the Sufi tradition. Over time, these epithets became hereditary, eventually evolving into family names for their respective descendants.[96]

The next significant figure in the Aljunied family lineage, essential for a comprehensive understanding of its expansion in Southeast Asia, is al-Sayyid Hārūn b. ʿAlī (d. 1209/1794). The biographical account describes him as a righteous man with a clear and composed mind, preferring seclusion and frequently retreating to Mount al-Nuʿayr. A memoriser (*hafiz*) of the Qurʾān, he devoted most of his time to the Shaykh ʿAidīd Mosque. Al-Sayyid Hārūn had three sons: the first ʿAlī, the second ʿAlawī the third Muḥammad. The first son was the father of the author's main biographical subject, al-Sayyid Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Hārūn Aljunied. The second, al-Sayyid ʿAlawī left one son, ʿAbd Allāh. The third al-Sayyid Muḥammad, was the very first person from the Hadhrami diaspora to arrive in Singapore. It was recorded in this book that his passing year was 1234/1819.[97] This contradicts the mainstream account, as represented by Charles Burton Buckley, who recorded that he first arrived in Singapore in 1820. It was recorded that he had travelled from Hadhramaut, firstly to Indonesia, and then finally resided in Singapore. After settling in Singapore, he then invited his nephew, Syed Omar, to venture into the trading possibilities in the newly established British colony. Unfortunately, when the latter arrived in Singapore, his paternal uncle had passed away.[98]

The entire lineage of the Aljunied family presently residing in Hadhramaut and Singapore is genealogically traced to their progenitor, al-Sayyid Hārūn. This lineage

[96] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 21.
[97] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 16.
[98] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 17.

is subdivided into two distinct branches: the branch of ʿAlī b. Hārūn and the branch of Muḥammad b. Hārūn. Al-Sayyid ʿAlawī's progeny ended with his son ʿAbd Allāh, who passed away in Aceh, Sumatra, Indonesia.[99]

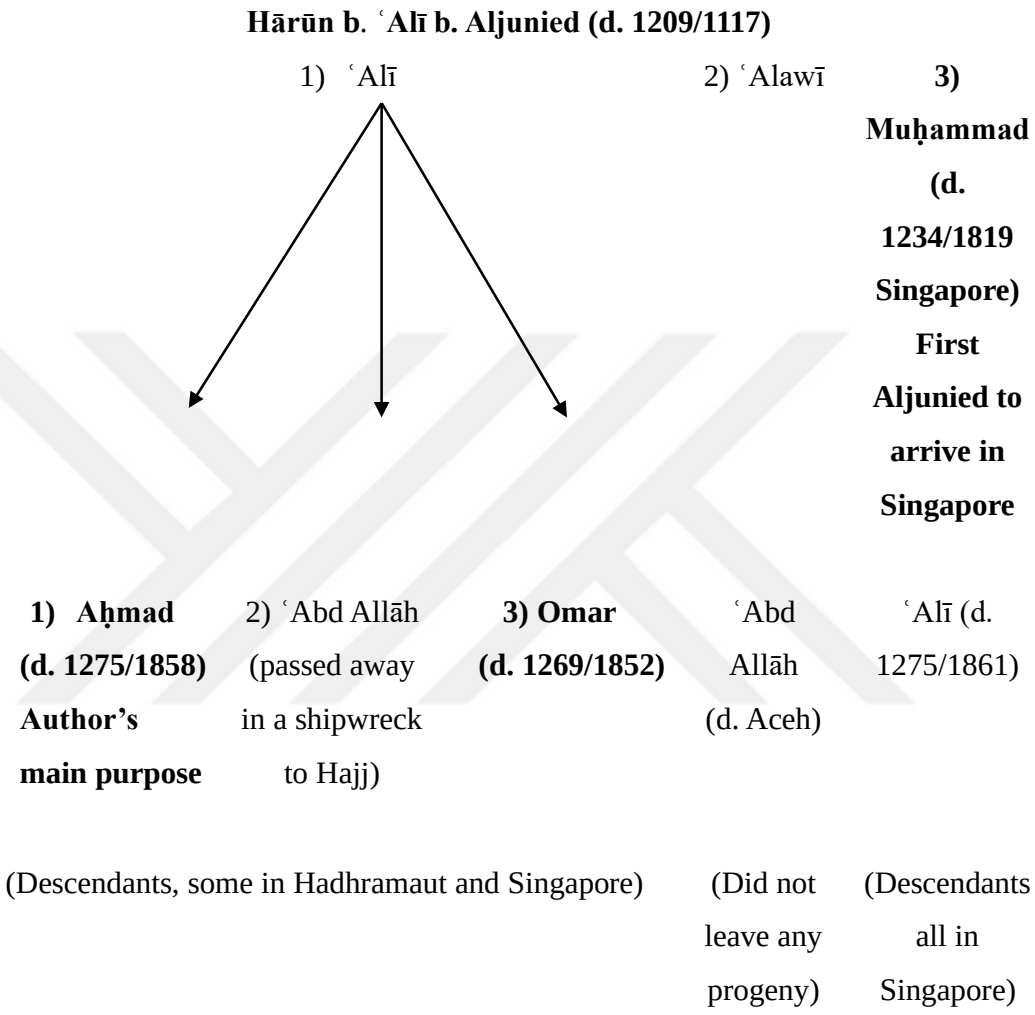


Figure 2.3. Al-Sayyid Hārūn's Children and the Branching Progeny of his Living Descendants

References: *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya* by ʿAbd al-Qādir b. ʿAbd al -Rahmān b. ʿUmar Aljunied, pp. 16-17

[99] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 17.

- A Biography of Syed Omar Aljunied

His exact date of birth remains unknown; however, it is estimated to have been in the early 13th *hijrī* century. He had been raised in the guidance and guardianship of his father like most Bāʿ Alawī *sāda*. He received the foundational principles of religious sciences during a period when the intellectual climate in Hadhramaut was thriving, notwithstanding the recurrent disturbances and incursions by armed tribal factions that intermittently unsettled the region. Amongst the foremost of his teachers from whom he received knowledge were his maternal uncle, the eminent scholar al-Sayyid ʿAbd Allāh b. Abū Bakr ʿAidīd, al-Imām ʿAbd al -Rahmān b. ʿAbd Allāh Bā Farj, al-Imām ʿAbd al -Rahmān b. Hāmid al-Munfir, the two sons of the famous scholar Aḥmad b. Ḥasan al-Haddād: Omar and ʿAlawī and other luminaries of his time. He pursued knowledge under the tutelage of many esteemed scholars across Hadhramaut until his scholarly pursuits became intertwined with his travels. After the passing of his father, he entrusted his entire affairs to his elder brother, al-Sayyid Aḥmad b. ʿAlī and regarded him as a father after his own.[100]

In the biographical text he is described as a person with profound knowledge, exemplary character, and humility. He was also endowed with a strong memory, far-sightedness, profound intellect and sound judgement. His demeanour was characterised by both gentleness and resolve, integrity, and a relentless ambition for excellence and noble virtues. Had he fully dedicated himself entirely to the pursuit of knowledge, it was believed that he would have reached the rank of the great scholars and distinguished philosophers.[101]

The author seemed to conclude that there were conflicting documentations on the year he arrived, indicating that some historical textbooks and government records state that it was in 1821 or 1828. He gathered from the birth years of al-Sayyid

[100] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 164–65.
[101] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 165.

Omar's children, ʿAbdullah in 1827 and ʿAlī in 1830, that all of them were born in Singapore; he had journeyed to Singapore at the end of 1824 and arrived in 1825.[102] He had five sons, chronologically from the eldest to the youngest, ʿAlawī, ʿAlī, Junied, ʿAbd Allāh and Abū Bakr, from whom ʿAlawī passed on in Tarim, Junied in Singaporeʿ and the rest in the sacred city of Mecca.[103]

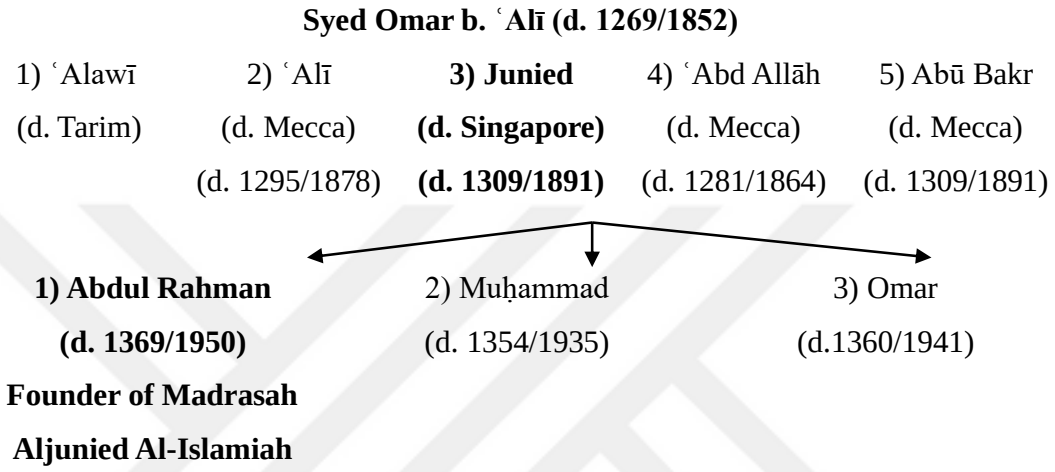


Figure 2.4. Syed Omar's Children and Grandchildren
References: *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya* by ʿAbd al-Qādir b. ʿAbd al -Rahmān b. ʿUmar Aljunied, pp 164, 259, and 261

In 1250/1834, his eldest brother wrote to him, bequeathing his return to Hadhramaut following the passing of their brother ʿAbd Allāh, who perished in a shipwreck while en route to Mecca for the sacred pilgrimage (*ḥajj*). Thus, he had no choice but to comply with his elder brother's request. He gathered all his sons, along with his cousin, al-Sayyid ʿAlī b. Muḥammad, resolute in his decision to return permanently. Arriving a year later, it brought unmatched happiness to al-Sayyid Aḥmad. Unbeknownst to him, that happiness was short-lived as in the year 1253/1837, both brothers, with their cousin, were put to arbitrary sentence of imprisonment by ʿAbd Allāh ʿIwaḍ, the unjust ruler of the central region of Tarim. After their release, Syed Omar vowed not to return to his homeland and left for Singapore with his sons and

[102] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 166.
[103] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 181.

cousin. He pleaded with his eldest brother to come along with them but was turned down.[104]

He kept his home open to guests and visitors from all communities because, in his time, he was the only one in Singapore whom people, both Arabs and non-Arabs, would seek. He personally attended to his guests, going to great lengths to honour them and fulfil their needs, with a humility that elevated his status and sincerity that furthered his reputation.[105] He was also looked upon and sought after for guidance and counsel.[106] As a result, the authorities granted him exceptional consideration; for instance, the post office responsible for his letters would deliver them two hours before the general delivery, the police would not apprehend anyone who entered his residence's premises under his protection until they had left the house, and a road has been named after him to this day.[107] Raffles referred to him as 'Pangeran Sherif Omar'. The term 'Pangeran' is a title conferred upon royal families, signifying a princely status in the social strata for the individual who bears this title.[108]

His demise was met with much loss from the people of Hadhramaut, the Hadhrami diaspora, and the people of Singapore. His funeral rites were performed by al-Shaykh Sālim b. Saʿad b. Sumair, author of the well-known Shāfiʿi *fiqh* manual *Safīnat al-naja*, along with his brother, al-Shaykh ʿAbd Allāh b. Saʿad b. Sumair al-Hadhrami. He passed away in the month of Muharram in the year 1269/1852 in Singapore. A big dome (*qubba*) was erected on his tomb.[109] News of his passing did not reach Hadhramaut until the end of Rabīʿ al-Awwal of the same year. An extraordinary occurrence took place before the arrival of this news. It was revealed to the scholar, al-Sayyid Ḥāmid b. ʿUmar Bā Farj, during one of his visits to Zanbal, where he witnessed the souls of the Bā ʿAlawī predecessors residing there and saw Syed Omar among them.[110]

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[104] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 174–75.
[105] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 175.
[106] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 176.
[107] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 178.
[108] Pearson, *People of Early Singapore*, 92.
[109] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 180.
[110] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 180–81.

- A Brief Biography on Syed Junied

Born in Singapore in 1258/1842, he was raised under the guidance of his father alongside his brothers. From an early age, he exhibited a deep passion for knowledge, righteousness, and devotion, embodying the Prophetic character and exemplary etiquette.[111]

Following his father's passing, he assumed the role of Syed Omar as the community leader. He extended hospitality to newcomers, provided assistance to those in distress, and attended to the needs of the less fortunate. Renowned for his generosity, he eventually emerged as a prominent leader in Singapore. As a result, both the elite and the general public sought his counsel, and his home became a sanctuary for those facing hardship.[112]

The Singaporean local government entrusted him with significant administrative responsibilities and officially recognised him as the de facto leader of the Arab diaspora. His authorisation was a prerequisite for any Arab individual's entry into Singapore, and he bore full accountability for their presence. Additionally, he played a pivotal role in logistical coordination, ensuring seamless integration by providing lodging and other necessary resources, often extending hospitality within his own distinguished residence.[113]

During a particular period, the Singapore government issued a directive stipulating that no individual would be permitted to disembark at the harbour without a valid passport. This policy was implemented during the initial introduction of passports as a means of personal identification. The regulation posed a significant challenge for Hadhrami traders and immigrants, as they originated from a society that, by contemporary standards, lacked formalised administrative documentation. Facing this critical situation, he devised a clever solution by distributing illustrations of the

[111] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 217.
[112] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 217.
[113] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 217.

Holy Kaaba to Arab passengers without passports, instructing them to present these as identification. When questioned, immigration officials deferred to Syed Junied b. Omar, who affirmed their validity, allowing the travellers to disembark.[114]

On the 19th of Rabiʿ al-awwal 1309/1891, Syed Junied passed away. He was interred alongside his father, Syed Omar, under the *qubba*. He left behind three children: Abdul Rahman, Muḥammad, and Omar.

- Biography of Syed Abdul Rahman b. Junied b. Omar Aljunied

Born in Singapore in 1291/1874, he was nurtured under his father's guardianship in an environment characterised by moral rectitude and devout observance, receiving meticulous guidance and dedicated tutelage. During the first decade of his life, in 1305/1887 at the age of 13, he arrived in Hadhramaut, which at the time was flourishing with distinguished scholars, spiritual luminaries, and men of exceptional virtue, individuals whose very presence invoked remembrance of God. He settled in the city of Seiyun under the supervision and mentorship of the esteemed scholar al-Sayyid Ṭaha b. ʿAbd al-Qādir b. ʿUmar al-Saqqāf. He pursued Islamic studies there, learning from its scholars and frequently travelling to Tarim and beyond to seek knowledge and blessings from renowned ʿAlawite luminaries.[115]

Some of the scholars that he took his knowledge from were al-Imām ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥsin b. ʿAlawī al-Saqqāf and his brother al-Imām ʿUbayd Allāh, al-Ḥabīb ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Habshī, al-Ḥabīb ʿAydarūs b. ʿUmar al-Habshī, al-Imām Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm Balfaqīh, al-Imām ʿUmar b. Ḥasan al-Haddād, al-Ḥabīb Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Kāff, al-Ḥabīb ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. Muḥammad al-Mashhur, al-Shaykh Ḥasan b. ʿIwaḍ Mukhaddim and al-Ḥabīb Aḥmad b. Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭās.[116]

[114] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 218.
[115] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 261.
[116] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 261–62.

According to the biography as well, he was deeply passionate about seeking knowledge from every scholar, saint, and righteous figure he encountered, both within Hadhramaut and beyond. He attended the gatherings and lessons of the most distinguished scholars of his time in Hadhramaut, benefiting from their guidance, blessings, and spiritual presence. Many of them granted him formal authorisation (*ijāza*), spiritual initiation (*ilbās*), transmission (*talqīn*), handshake (*muṣāfaḥa*), and interlocking of fingers (*mushābaka*), among other established traditions within his scholarly and spiritual lineage.[117]

These forms of ritualised transmission are rooted in classical Sufi practice. As Aḥmad Zarrūq al-Fāsī notes in his *Qawāʿid al-taṣawwuf*, such acts—including the donning of the spiritual robe (*khirqah*), the handing over of the prayer beads (*subḥa*), the taking of the spiritual covenant (*ʿahd*), and physical gestures like *muṣāfaḥa* and *mushābaka*, constitute part of the transmission of narrated knowledge (*ʿilm al-riwāya*), unless they are explicitly intended to signify a spiritual state (*ḥāl*), in which case they serve that purpose. Ibn Abī Jamrah, in his commentary on allegiance (*bāb al-bayʿa*), also mentions the *ʿahd* as one of its forms, linking it to early prophetic practices. The bestowal of the *khirqah*, in particular, is derived from narrations where the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have conferred it upon several companions, as well as through his *bayʿa* (allegiance) with Salama ibn al-Akwaʿ and others, after faith had firmly taken root in their hearts.[118]

During this time, he honed his scholarship in Seiyun under the guidance of al-Sayyid Ṭaha. He remained in his quest for knowledge and spirituality for a significant

[117] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 262.
[118] Ahmad Zarruq al-Fasi, *Qawā'id al-Taṣawwuf* (n.d.), 102. "Rule 158: The donning of the *khirqah* (spiritual robe), the handing over of the prayer beads (*subḥa*), the taking of the spiritual covenant (*ʿahd*), the handshake (*muṣāfaḥa*), and the interlocking of fingers (*mushābaka*) are considered part of the transmission of narrated knowledge (*ʿilm al-riwāya*), unless they are intended to signify a spiritual state (*ḥāl*), in which case they serve that purpose.
Ibn Abī Jamrah mentioned the taking of the covenant (*ʿahd*) under the chapter on allegiance (*bāb al-bayʿa*), categorising it as one of its forms. The practice of bestowing the *khirqah* is derived from narrations in which the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have conferred it upon several of his companions, as well as from the account of his pledge of allegiance (*bayʿa*) with Salama ibn al-Akwa' and his pledge with other companions after faith had been firmly established in their hearts."

duration before returning to Singapore, only to return to Hadhramaut in 1319/1901 for a brief period to ease his yearning for his teachers and *shuyukh*.[119]

After his sojourn, he hung up his boots and entered the professional arena, beginning his involvement in the communal affairs. Engaging in both trade and agriculture, he portrayed exceptional skill and proficiency, earning a reputation for integrity and piety while attaining considerable material success. Throughout this period, he remained steadfast in his devotion, consistently attending congregational prayers, engaging in *adhkār* (remembrance of God) and *awrād* (spiritual litanies), and pursuing the study of religious knowledge. He was also dedicated to assisting those in need, extending support to the impoverished, and offering hospitality to visitors and newcomers.[120] Due to his unwavering integrity and trustworthiness, he became the custodian of people's deposits and entrusted possessions. As a result, he was appointed as the legal administrator of a significant portion of the Aljunied family's estates in Singapore.[121]

In the year 1346/1927 it was recorded that he had travelled once more to Hadhramaut. The purpose of his journey this time was to study the legacy of past scholars, explore historical landmarks and places of worship, and engage with esteemed scholars and pious individuals across various regions of the Middle East. His travels encompassed the entirety of Hadhramaut, from the coastal areas to Duʿan and the tomb of Prophet Hud[122], before continuing to the Hijaz, where he visited the

[119] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 262.
[120] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 262.
[121] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 262.
[122] Edaibat, 'The Bā ʿAlawī Sāda of the Hadhramaut Valley: An Intellectual and Social History from Tenth-Century Origins till the Late-Sixteenth Century', 164. Edaibat mentioned in his footnote numbered 143 the origin of the practice of visiting the tomb of Prophet Hud pbuh including references from other primary resources citing him: "It is believed that the first ʿAlawī to formalize the visit to the Prophet Hūd as a devotional practice was al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam, after whom the major ʿAlawī saints typically followed suit making a habit of prolonged and isolated spiritual retreats at his tomb site. It was not until the sixteenth century, however, that the tomb became formally the site of a major annual ʿAlawī pilgrimage (*ziyāra*) in the month of Shaʿbān, which was initially led for the first time by the illustrious Shaykh Abū Bakr b. Sālim (d. 992/1583). al-Badawi, A Blessed Valley, 148–149. The three-day festival of the Prophet Hūd remains the largest and most popular religious festival in Hadhramaut today. The trek up the hill to the ancient Prophet's tomb begins, as has been the custom for centuries, with opening supererogatory prayers over a large rock known as ʿUmar's Rock, where Imām al-Miḥḍār was known to have prayed. For more on this annual pilgrimage (ziyāra), see

Two Holy Sanctuaries. He then proceeded to Egypt, Jerusalem, Lebanon, and the Levant before returning to Singapore.[123]

Throughout his journey, he meticulously documented his visits to significant religious and historical sites, including mosques, shrines, and places of spiritual retreats *(zawāyā sin. zāwiya*) and (*khalawāt sin. khalwa)*. He also recorded his encounters with scholars and religious figures, as well as notable visions, dreams, and events that occurred during his travels. His detailed account extended even to logistical aspects, such as the accommodations he stayed in and the modes of transport he used. His grandson Ḥārūn b. Ḥasan preserved it in a documentary book titled *Hadyi al-khalaf ilā maʾāthir al-salaf.*[124]

In 1368/1948-49, he embarked on a journey to the sacred cities of Mecca and Medina with several family members, intending to settle in Medina al-Munawwarah. After completing his seventh pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) that year, he proceeded to Medina, firmly establishing his residence in pursuit of the path of God's most devout servants and righteous predecessors.[125]

The record regarding his last days described him dedicating most of his time to worship, meticulously observed both obligatory and supererogatory prayers at the Prophet's Mosque and frequently visited the *Rawḍah*, the blessed area between the Prophet's pulpit and house, described in narrations as a part of paradise. This devotion continued uninterrupted until his final moments.[126]

He passed away at 4:15 a.m. on Friday, 7 Jumādā al-Awwal 1369/23 February 1950. His funeral rites, including the ritual bathing and initial funeral prayer, were conducted at the residence of al-Sayyid ʿAbbās b. ʿAlawī al-Saqqāf. His *janāza* was then taken in a solemn procession to Al-Masjid al-Nabawy, where it remained

Boxberger, On the Edge of Empire, 156–159; R. B. Serjeant, Hūd and other pre-Islamic prophets of Ḥaḍramawt, in Le Muséon, lxvii (1954), 121-179; Buxton, Imams of the Valley, 37-38."

[123] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 266.

[124] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 267.

[125] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 391.

[126] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 391.

throughout the Friday sermon and prayer. Following the congregational prayer, a vast assembly gathered to perform the funeral prayer before he was escorted to al-Baqiʿ Cemetery and laid to rest near the Prophet's family, close to Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm, the son of the Prophet. His legacy was further immortalised in *Minḥa al-ilāh fī al-ittiṣāl bi baʿḍ awliyāʾ* by al-Ḥabīb Salīm b. Ḥafīẓ b. al-Shaykh Abū Bakr b. Salīm, where he was recognised as one of al-Ḥabīb's esteemed teachers. He was survived by five children: Abū Bakr, Hārūn, ʿAbd Allāh, Aḥmad, and ʿAlī, all of whom resided and passed away in Singapore, except for Hārūn, who predeceased his father. Among them, only ʿAlī did not continue the lineage. [127]

[127] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 394–95.

2.1.5. Alsagoff Family Branch of the Bā ʿAlawī *sāda* in Singapore

Al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam Muḥammad b. ʿAlī (d. 653/1255)

ʿAlawī al-Ghayūr (d. 669/1270)

ʿAlī (709/1309)

Muḥammad Mawlā al-Dawīla (d. 765/1354)

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Saqqāf (d. 819/1416)

ʿAlī

Muḥammad

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Muʿalim

ʿUmar al-Ṣofy

Ṭaha

ʿUmar

Ṭaha

ʿUmar

Muḥammad

ʿAbdullah

ʿAlawī

Abdul Rahman Alsagoff

Ahmed Alsagoff

Mohamed Alsagoff

Figure 2.5. Prominent Alsagoff Figures in Singapore and their *Silsila* to Al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam
Reference: *Shajara al-nasab* (*Genealogy Tree)* from the descendant of the founder of Madrasah Alsagoff, Syed Mohamed Alsagoff

2.2. Contributions of the Bā ʿAlawī *sāda* in Singapore

The Bā ʿAlawī *sāda* played a pivotal role in shaping the religious, social, and economic landscape of Singapore. As descendants of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, they brought with them a deep-rooted tradition of Islamic scholarship, spiritual guidance, and community leadership based on their ancestral tradition that has been passed down to them. Their contributions extended beyond religious affairs, as they

were instrumental in establishing mosques, endowments, and educational institutions that nurtured Islamic learning. Additionally, they actively engaged in commerce and philanthropy, fostering economic growth while ensuring the welfare of the less fortunate. Through their influence, the Bā ʿAlawī scholars and merchants became key figures in the integration of Islamic traditions within the multicultural fabric of Singaporean society.

2.2.1. Contributions to the Religiosity of the Community

The Aljunied and Alsagoff families, amongst other Ḥadhrami families here, were the backbones of the development of modern Singapore. As was envisioned by Raffles, the Ḥadhrami traders amassed extensive real estate holdings. The Alsagoff family's most renowned property, Perseverance Estate, cultivated lemon grass, giving rise to the name Geylang Serai, now a hub for Singapore's Malay-Muslim community. Jalan Alsagoff was named after them in 1932. In the mid-1900s, Syed Omar Alsagoff built Omran Villa, featuring a pond with three man-made islands representing Malacca, Singapore, and Penang, each with a 20,000-square-foot guest house. Beyond landownership and trade, the Alsagoffs played key civic roles, with family members serving as Municipal Commissioners (1872–1933) and on Singapore's first Advisory Council in 1945.[128]

The Alsagoff family acquired their wealth through trading, which secured them high government positions owing to their extensive networks within society. Syed Mohamed, also known as Nong Chik, took on the role of Honorary Consul General for Türkiye due to his considerable trade networks that spanned from Johore, the Rhio Archipelago, the Moluccas, and Celebes to Arabia, the Hijaz, the Near and Middle East, Egypt, and Türkiye. In recognition of his services, he was inducted into the Ottoman order by the last Ottoman caliph, Sultan Abdul Hamid II. The S.M.A (Syed Mohamed b. Ahmad) Alsagoff Wakaf Funds were also founded and funded by him alongside the MTFA. Not only was he the founder of Madrasah Alsagoff Al-Arabiah, but he was also its primary benefactor. Twenty-one per cent of the annual

[128] Talib, 'Hadramis in Singapore', 90.

income generated by S.M.A Alsagoff would be allocated to the MTFA, while eight per cent of the investment was designated for the maintenance of the madrasah, and an additional three per cent was allocated for the upkeep and regular ceremonies at the Hajjah Fatimah mosque, established by his grandmother.

The nephew of Syed Mohamed b. Ahmed Alsagoff, Syed Omar b. Mohamed Alsagoff was born in Mecca in 1850. He served as the Justice of Peace (J.P) of Singapore alongside his position as the High Order of Sheriff Hussein, King of Mecca, and the Distinguished Knight (D.K), J.P of the Ottoman Order succeeding after his uncle Syed Mohamed. He was also the sole owner and founder of the firm of S.O (Syed Omar) Alsagoff, Landowners, General Merchants, Real Estate Agents and Pilgrim Agents with offices located in Singapore and Jeddah.[129]

The son-in-law of Syed Mohamed b. Ahmed Alsagoff, Syed Abdul Rahman b. Taha Alsagoff was born on 17th October 1880 in Singapore and received his education both locally and in Cairo, Egypt. Following in the footsteps of his predecessors, he established his own firm, S.A.T (Syed Abdul Rahman Taha) Alsagoff, Landowners & Estate Developers, Singapore, in 1915. Throughout his lifetime, he held various appointments. From July 1906 to December 1954, a period of nearly 48 years, he served as the trustee of the S.M.A Alsagoff Wakaf Fund. He was also the Trustee of the Alsagoff Arab School from 1912 to 1954. Additionally, from 1921 to 1942, he was the Honorary Secretary of the MTFA. He was elected as President of the MTFA in 1911, 1912, and 1943.[130]

The Aljunied family, similarly, has also played a pivotal role in shaping the socio-economic landscape and welfare initiatives in Singapore, as evidenced by the biographies of its prominent figures. As such, this section will only focus on the contributions of Syed Abdul Rahman b. Junied b. Omar Aljunied, the founder of Madrasah Aljunied which highlights his impact on religious education and

[129] Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia: A.H. 1240 (A.D. 1824)-A.H. 1382 (A.D. 1962): With Biographical and Contemporary Sketches of Some Members of the Alsagoff Family*, 15.
[130] Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia: A.H. 1240 (A.D. 1824)-A.H. 1382 (A.D. 1962): With Biographical and Contemporary Sketches of Some Members of the Alsagoff Family*, 20.

community development. By doing so, it seeks to underscore the enduring influence of his religious legacy, which remains integral to the identity and mission of Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah.

Syed Abdul Rahman was highly trusted by the public and thus entrusted with their deposits (*wadāiʿ sing. wadīʿah*) and valuables (*amānāt sing. amāna)*. As a result, he was appointed as the legal custodian of most of the Aljunied family's estates in Singapore, a responsibility he fulfilled with great diligence. Additionally, he assumed stewardship over all the endowed properties (*awqāf sing. waqf*) of his family in Singapore, particularly those established by his wealthy grandfather, Syed Omar b. ʿAli Aljunied, as well as the endowments of his grandfather's sons and daughters. He managed these assets effectively, expanded them, and administered them with prudence, ensuring their appropriate allocation. This reflects his sound judgment, strategic foresight, and exceptional managerial abilities.[131]

2.2.2. Founding Fathers of Two Madrasahs in Singapore

Recognising the absence of an Islamic educational institution in Singapore and entrusted with his family's endowed funds, Syed Abdul Rahman b. Junied b. Omar Aljunied deemed it imperative to establish a prominent Islamic school. His vision was to create an institution dedicated to Islamic and Arabic sciences, with a particular focus on Shāfiʿī jurisprudence, to foster Islamic scholarship and cultural education in the Malay region.[132]

With steadfast commitment, he oversaw the school's development, securing government authorisation and recruiting distinguished scholars, including *al-ʿAllāma* Syed Abu Bakr b. Taha al-Saqqāf, a renowned educator and former principal of *al-Nahḍha School* in Seiyun, Hadhramaut, was appointed as the institution's first principal. In 1346/1927, Aljunied Islamic School was officially established, quickly gaining recognition for its academic and religious excellence, significantly

[131] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 262–63.
[132] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 263.

contributing to the dissemination of Islamic knowledge, the promotion of Islamic culture, and the intellectual development of the younger generation in the region.[133] Throughout his lifetime, he remained devoted to the school's growth, regarding its success as part of his broader commitment to religious and national service, all while maintaining humility and eschewing personal recognition. Syed Abu Bakr b. Ṭaha al-Saqqāf served as principal until his retirement in 1375/1956, after which he returned to Seiyun, where he passed away shortly thereafter.[134]

During World War Two in the year 1362/1943, the Japanese occupation sought to reform the school's system by altering its curriculum, replacing certain subjects, and reducing religious studies. In his capacity as the school's supervisor, he strongly opposed these changes, presenting a firm argument based on the school's officially registered endowment document at the Supreme Court of Singapore. In response, he faced intense threats and pressure for his refusal to comply with their demands. However, he remained unwavering in his stance, determined that the school should continue to operate in accordance with its endowment charter. Eventually, they conceded to his position and left the school as it was.[135]

The Aljunied and Alsagoff families have both left lasting legacies in Singapore, particularly in the realms of religion and education. Their respective contributions to madrasah education showcase their distinct approaches to faith, scholarship, and philanthropy. The Aljunied family, while involved in business, was deeply inclined toward spirituality and scholarship. This is evident in their establishment of Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah, which was founded by Syed Abdul Rahman b. Junied b. Omar Aljunied. The family's emphasis on religious knowledge, coupled with their philanthropic spirit, led them to develop an institution that prioritises Islamic scholarship, religious leadership, and spiritual development. Their commitment to learning and the dissemination of knowledge aligns with their lineage of scholars and spiritual luminaries. Even as they engaged in commerce, their

[133] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 263.
[134] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 263,265.
[135] Aljunied, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*, 266.

primary focus remained the cultivation of a scholarly and spiritually enriched community, which continues to shape the vision and mission of the madrasah today. The institution has remained a centre for Islamic learning, producing numerous scholars, imāms, and community leaders who uphold the tradition of Islamic jurisprudence and spirituality.

On the other hand, the Alsagoff family was primarily known for their business acumen and civic engagement. While they were not solely focused on religious scholarship, their contributions to education and community welfare were significant. Their legacy is best represented by Madrasah Alsagoff Al-Arabiah, which was founded by Syed Mohamed b. Ahmed Alsagoff, remains one of the oldest madrasahs in Singapore. Unlike the Aljunieds, whose focus was on scholarly pursuits, the Alsagoffs integrated charitable endowments and community service into their vision of Islamic education. The madrasah emphasises Arabic language studies and practical contributions to society, reflecting the family's dedication to economic empowerment, civic responsibility, and education. The Alsagoffs' wealth from trade was channelled into educational and social welfare initiatives, ensuring that the community benefited from their success.

In summary, while both families contributed significantly to Islamic education, their approaches differed in emphasis. The Aljunieds prioritised spirituality and religious scholarship, shaping their madrasah into a hub for producing scholars and religious leaders. The Alsagoffs, meanwhile, focused on economic prosperity and philanthropy, using their wealth to fund institutions that support Arabic literacy and practical education. These distinct influences are still reflected in the mission and vision of Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah and Madrasah Alsagoff Al-Arabiah, ensuring that their legacies continue to shape the religious and social fabric of Singapore’s Muslim community.

CHAPTER III

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND BĀ ʿALAWĪ PRINCIPLES IN MADRASAH CURRICULUM

3.1. General Defining Features of Bā ʿAlawī Sufism

The consolidation of the Bā ʿAlawī *ṭarīqa* was significantly shaped by the spiritual and social influence of al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam (d. 653/1255), who earned the sobriquet (*laqab*) of *al- Ustādh al-Aẓam* (the Grand Master). Unlike some of his Sufi contemporaries, such as Aḥmad b. ʿAlwān (d. 655/1266) and Abū al-Ghayth b. Jamīl (d. 651/1253),[136] al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam did not leave behind an institutional Sufi brotherhood.[137]

A crucial moment in the history of the Bā ʿAlawī tradition was al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam's initiation into the Sufi lineage (*silsila*) of Abū Madyan of North Africa. This connection significantly elevated the status of the Banū ʿAlawī as a prominent scholarly and spiritual family in Hadhramaut. According to the 17th-18th century ʿAlawī Sufi Imām ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAlawī al-Ḥaddād (d. 1132/1720), al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam was believed to have inherited the role of the spiritual pole (*quṭb*) in succession from ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166) through Abū Madyan.[138] This inheritance legitimised his spiritual authority and allowed him to reshape the identity of his family within the broader Hadhrami context.[139]

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[136] Muhammad Ali Aziz, *Religion and Mysticism in Early Islam: Theology and Sufism in Yemen The Legacy of Aḥmad Ibn ʻAlwān* (I.B Tauris & Co Ltd, 2011), 49.
[137] Aziz, *Religion and Mysticism in Early Islam: Theology and Sufism in Yemen The Legacy of Aḥmad Ibn ʻAlwān*, 183.
[138] Aziz, *Religion and Mysticism in Early Islam: Theology and Sufism in Yemen The Legacy of Aḥmad Ibn ʻAlwān*, 198.
[139] Edaibat, "The Bā ʿAlawī Sāda of the Hadhramaut Valley: An Intellectual and Social History from Tenth-Century Origins till the Late-Sixteenth Century," 109.

Amidst a turbulent political climate, particularly following Masʿūd b. Yamānī (d. 648/1250) conquest of Tarim and the persecution of the *sāda*, al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam strategically positioned the Bā ʿAlawī scholars as a pacifist and scholarly family. His most famous symbolic act, the breaking of his sword, marked his complete renunciation of political involvement and commitment to spiritual reform. This decision was aimed at securing the peaceful future of the *sāda*, reducing tribal conflict, and fostering a non-violent scholarly tradition.[140] However, this act was met with opposition from his own teacher, ʿAlī b. Aḥmad Bā Marwān (d. 624/1227), who lamented his shift from a potential juristic leader to a Sufi ascetic.[141] Al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam's legacy continued through his five sons, all of whom became renowned scholars. His wife, Zaynab bt. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ṣāḥib Mirbāṭ, played an instrumental role in supporting his mission and caring for the poor, earning her the title 'Umm al-Fuqarā'.[142]

Historical sources, as a consensus from the historians of the Bā ʿAlawī history according to al-Ḥabīb Zayn b. Ibrāhīm b. Sumayt, offers limited details regarding the earliest generations of the Bā ʿAlawī lineage. However, the period commencing with the progeny of al-Sayyid Imām Muḥammad b. ʿAlī, specifically, ʿAlī, the father of al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam, and ʿAlawī, renowned as the uncle of al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam, along with subsequent generations, is considerably richer in historical documentation.[143] He further listed the generations of the Bā ʿAlawī *sāda* and the main figures who played a pivotal role in consolidating the ways of the *ṭarīqa*.

Succeeding al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam, the *ṭarīqa* was perpetuated by his descendants, who remained unwavering in adherence to his methodology and spiritual orientation. However, due to the esoteric nature of their praxis, characterised by an emphasis on experiential gnosis (*taḥqīq*), mystical perceptions (*adhwāq*), and the safeguarding of esoteric knowledge (*asrār*), they inclined towards obscurity and discretion, refraining from engaging in scholarly authorship. This tendency persisted among the early

[140] al-Shāṭirī, *Adwār al-tārīkh al-Ḥaḍramī*, 304–6.
[141] Aḥmad b. Zayn al-Ḥabshī, *Sharḥ al-ʿayniyya* (Dār al-ʿUlūm al-Islāmiyya, 2007), 167.
[142] b. ʿAlī b. ʿAlawī Khirid, *Ghurar al-bahāʾ al-ḍawī wa-durar al-jamāl al-badīʿ al-bahī*, 501.
[143] Bin Sumayṭ, *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*, 21.

generations of the tradition until the era of al-ʿAydarūs (d. 864/1460) and his brother Shaykh ʿAlī (d. 892/1487). During their time, the *ṭarīqa* experienced a significant expansion, necessitating the formal codification of its ethical and spiritual principles. Consequently, a corpus of literature emerged that elucidated its doctrinal framework and praxis, including seminal works such as *Al-kibrit al-aḥmar*, *Al-juzʾ al-laṭīf*, *Al-maʿārij*, and *Al-barqa*, among others. These texts not only systematised the teachings of the *ṭarīqa* but also served as sources of spiritual edification and guidance for aspirants on the path.[144]

Prominent figures within this *ṭarīqa* emerged as distinguished scholars, surpassing their contemporaries in intellectual and spiritual attainment, with some attaining the rank of *ijtihād* in jurisprudence. Among the luminaries of this *ṭarīqa* were towering figures who distinguished themselves through their spiritual and scholarly contributions. These include al-Shaykh *al-Quṭb* ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Saqqāf (d. 819/1416-17), known as *al-Muqaddam al-Thānī*; Imām al-Ghawth ʿUmar al-Miḥḍār (d. 833/1429-30); *al-Quṭb* al-ʿAydarūs ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī Bakr (d. 865/1460-61) and his son, Abū Bakr al-ʿAdanī (d. 914/1508-09), the renowned saint of Aden; al-Shaykh Abū Bakr b. Sālim (d. 992/1584-85), famously referred to as *Fakhr al-Wujūd*; and al-Shaykh Imām ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-ʿAṭṭās (d. 1072/1661-62), among other eminent figures. The *ṭarīqa* continued to flourish through successive generations until it reached its great reviver and preeminent disseminator, the esteemed Imām, al-Shaykh al-Islām, *al-Quṭb* of *daʿwah* and spiritual guidance, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAlawī al-Ḥaddād (d. 1132/1719-20).[145]

Imām al-Ḥaddād had a profound and lasting impact on the Muslim ummah, as his *awrād* (spiritual litanies), teachings, counsels, and poetry continue to be transmitted across generations. His influence extends across Africa, in countries such as Kenya and Tanzania, as well as throughout Asia, including Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. Moreover, his legacy has reached Europe and, of course, the Arab world, owing to his unwavering dedication to spreading knowledge and guiding people

[144] Bin Sumayṭ, *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*, 22.
[145] Bin Sumayṭ, *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*, 23.

through both his spoken words and prolific writings. His compositions are said to encapsulate the essence of the works of earlier scholars, including *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* by al-Ghazālī, making them a cornerstone of spiritual and ethical refinement.[146]

After Imām al-Ḥaddād, the responsibility of carrying forward his mission and methodology was undertaken by distinguished scholars from among his most eminent disciples. These include the erudite Imām and scholar Ḥabīb Aḥmad b. Zayn al-Ḥabshī (d. 1144/1731-32), the esteemed Imām ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAbd Allāh Balfaqīh (d. 1162/1748-49), renowned by the title *ʿAllāmah al-Dunyā* (The Scholar of the World), and the brilliant Imām Muḥammad b. Sumayṭ (d. 1172/1758-59). Additionally, the sons of Imām al-Ḥaddād themselves stood as living exemplars of their father's teachings, embodying the profound spiritual and intellectual cultivation imparted through his guidance.

Following Imām al-Ḥaddād and his distinguished disciples, a subsequent generation emerged that played a prominent role in the propagation of the *daʿwah*. Foremost among them was the great saint and spiritual luminary, al-Ḥabīb ʿUmar b. Saqqāf al-Saqqāf, honoured with the title *al-Shaykh al-Aqṭāb* (Master of the Spiritual Poles). Among his foremost disciples were eminent figures such as al-Ḥabīb Aḥmad b. ʿUmar b. Sumayṭ (d. 1257/1841-42) and al-Ḥabīb ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥusayn b. Ṭāhir (d. 1272/1855-56), the author of *Al-majmūʿ al-Ṭāhirī*, along with his brother al-Ḥabīb Ṭāhir b. Ḥusayn b. Ṭāhir (d. 1241/1825-26), al-Ḥabīb al-Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ al-Baḥr al-Jifri (d. 1273/1856-57), and al-Ḥabīb ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar b. Yaḥyā (d. 1265/1848-49). The most distinguished student of this generation was the eminent *ḥadīth* scholar and erudite authority, al-Ḥabīb ʿAydarūs b. ʿUmar al-Ḥabshī (d. 1314/1896-97), renowned for his seminal work *ʿAqd al-yawāqīt al-jawhariyya*. In this text, he meticulously compiled the transmission chains (*asānīd*) of the Bā ʿAlawī *sāda*, thereby rendering an invaluable service to his community by preserving and systematising their scholarly and spiritual heritage. [147]

[146] Bin Sumayṭ, *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*, 23.
[147] Bin Sumayṭ, *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*, 24.

Among the most prominent figures of the Bā ʿAlawī tradition following this generation are three towering imāms. First is the Grand Muftī of Hadhramaut, Imām ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad al-Mashhūr (d. 1320/1902-03), renowned for his influential work *Bughyat al-mustarshidīn* and other legal treatises. Second is the rare polymath of the later period, the distinguished scholar al-Ḥabīb Aḥmad b. Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭās (d. 1334/1915-16), whose scholarly reputation extended far beyond Hadhramaut to centres of learning such as Egypt, the Levant, and the Hijaz. The third is the noble inheritor of the Prophetic path and bearer of the banner of Muḥammadan love, al-Ḥabīb ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Ḥabshī (d. 1333/1914-15), whose vast literary and Sufi legacy continues to inspire spiritual seekers across the Islamic world.[148]

Then, succeeding that generation, emerged eminent figures such as al-Shaykh al-Islām the esteemed ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar al-Shāṭirī (d. 1361/1942-43), founder of *Ribāt Tarim* and the architect of the scientific renaissance of his era; the mystically inclined ʿAlawī b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Shihāb al-Dīn (d. 1386/1966-67), and the renowned scholar Sālim b. Ḥafīz (d. 1378/1958-59). In addition, the eminent itinerant preacher ʿUmar b. Aḥmad b. Sumayṭ (d. 1397/1976-77), who received his instruction from the luminaries of both this and the preceding generation, ensured that his own disciples would later ascend to the ranks of our era's foremost imāms and preachers. Among these were the esteemed ʿAbd al-Qādir b. Aḥmad al-Saqqāf; ʿAḥmad Mashhūr b. Ṭāhā al-Ḥaddād; al-Barakah Abī ʿAṭās al-Ḥabshī; the prominent preacher Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Haddār, the renowned scholar Muḥammad b. Sālim b. Ḥafīz, and the distinguished musnad preacher Ibrāhīm b. ʿUmar b. ʿAqīl b. Yaḥyā, among others.[149]

3.1.1. Analysis of Key Bā ʿAlawi Sufi Principles: Spiritual and Ethical Aspect

Muhammad Ali Aziz in his book *Religion and Mysticism in Early Islam: Theology and Sufism in Yemen The Legacy of Aḥmad Ibn ʻAlwān* in chapter 9 Sufism in *Yemen*

[148] Bin Sumayṭ, *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*, 25.
[149] Bin Sumayṭ, *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*, 24.

after the age of Ibn ʿAlwān extracted the defining features of the *ʿAlawiyya Order*.[150] He referred to the transcription of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn al-Ḥabshī completed in 1289/1872 which was his father's influential treatise *Al-ʿuqūd al-luʾluʾiyya fī bayān ṭarīqat al-sāda al-ʿAlawiyya*. This work draws extensively on the authoritative perspectives of the eminent Sufi scholar ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAlawī al-Ḥaddād (d. 1044/1634), who anchors the spiritual genealogy of the Bā ʿAlawī path within the Husaynid imāmic lineage, beginning with al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī and continuing through ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, Muḥammad al-Bāqir, and Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq. Al-Ḥaddād conceptualises the *ṭarīqa* as the *Ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*, a divinely guided path rooted in the Qurʾān, the Prophetic Sunnah, including the Prophet's sayings (*aqwāl*), actions (*afʿāl*), and tacit approvals (*taqrīr*), as well as the praxis of the Prophet's family (*ahl al-bayt*) and his righteous companions. The doctrinal architecture of this spiritual path was laid by Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī in *Qūt al-qulūb*, further elaborated by ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072) in his *Risāla* and subsequently synthesised and refined by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī in his magnum opus *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*.[151]

According to al-Ḥaddād, citing ʿAbd Allāh Bā Saudān's *Fayḍ al-asrār wa iqtibās al-anwār*, the Bā ʿAlawī *ṭarīqa* is epistemologically and spiritually distinguished among Sufi orders by its unique characteristics (*khuṣūṣiyyāt*), elevated moral ethos, and direct *silsila* of spiritual transmission from the Prophet ﷺ. Bā Saudān underscores a consensus (*ijmāʿ*) regarding the superior spiritual distinction (*faḍl*) of the Āl Bā ʿAlawī lineage within the broader context of the Prophet's family.[152] Similarly, al-Ḥabīb ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAbd Allāh Balfaqīh notes that, while the *ṭarīqa* aligns with the foundational principles of the Qurʾān and Sunna, it follows them in a specific way (*ʿalā wajh makhṣūṣ*), distinct from general interpretations. He emphasises that this special form of adherence is based on a body of knowledge accessible to a particular group, namely, the *sāda* of the Bā ʿAlawī.[153]

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[150] Aziz, *Religion and Mysticism in Early Islam: Theology and Sufism in Yemen The Legacy of Aḥmad Ibn ʿAlwān*, 196.
[151] Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn al-Ḥabshī, *Al-ʿuqūd al-luʾluʾiyya fī bayān ṭarīqat al-sāda al-ʿAlawiyya* (al-Matba'ah al-Sharafiyyah, 1328), 5.
[152] al-Ḥabshī, *Al-ʿuqūd al-luʾluʾiyya fī bayān ṭarīqat al-sāda al-ʿAlawiyya*, 10.
[153] Munīr b. Salīm b. Sa'ad Bā Zuhair, *Al-ṭarīqa al-ʿalawiyya al-ḥaḍramiyya al-nashʾa wa-al-imtidād* (Maktabah Tarim al-Haditha, 2014), 32.

In terms of structure, he further elaborates that the *ṭarīqa* incorporates both *ẓāhir* (outward) and *bāṭin* (inward) aspects: the outward practices include engagement with religious sciences and rituals, while the inward aspect focuses on attaining spiritual states (*maqāmāt*) and stages (*aḥwāl*). The preservation of certain spiritual practices (*ṣawn al-asrār*) is a defining feature of the order. The outward practices align with the general Sufi tradition as outlined by al-Ghazālī in *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, while the inward practices reflect concepts of spiritual realisation, such as *taḥqīq al-ḥaqāʾiq* and *tajrīd al-tawḥīd*, similar to those in the Shādhilī tradition. Common features of the *ṭarīqa* include the initiatory covenant (*akhdh al-ʿahd*), spiritual instruction (*talqīn*), the wearing of the Sufi robe (*lubs al-khirqa*), participation in spiritual retreats (*dukhūl al-khalwa*), and communal practices (*ṣuḥba* and *mukhālaṭa*). These elements align with practices found in other Sufi orders.[154]

3.1.2. Prioritising Shariʿah Based Knowledge: Educational Aspect

Drawing upon Muḥammad b. Abū Bakr Bā Dhīb's findings in his exhaustive and meticulous survey of the historical evolution of the Shāfiʿī school in Hadhramaut, it can be safely argued that it is not the end of the third/twelfth century,[155] that we have any recorded mentions of Shāfiʿī teachings reaching Hadhramaut, which may be largely attributed to the efforts of the two notable jurists Zayd al-Yāfiʿī (d. 515/1121)[156] and Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Qalʿī (d. 577/1181),[157] the latter of whom had a more lasting legacy on the legal scholarship of Hadhramaut, especially in Tarīm.[158] Bā Dhīb's analysis also reveals that Basra was not a significant centre of Shāfiʿī learning in the early fourth/tenth century, rendering Imām al-Muhājir's Shāfiʿī affiliation in the sources as highly unlikely.[159] Its doctrinal consolidation and

[154] al-Ḥabshī, *Al-ʿuqūd al-luʾluʾiyya fī bayān ṭarīqat al-sāda al-ʿAlawiyya*, 12.
[155] Muḥammad b. Abū Bakr Bā Dhīb, *Juhūd Fuqahāʾ Ḥaḍramaut Fi Khidmat Al-Madhhab al-Shāfiʿī*, 1st ed., 2 (Dar al-Fath li al-Dirasat wa al-Nasyr, 2009), 249.
[156] Bā Dhīb, *Juhūd fuqahāʾ Ḥaḍramaut fī khidmat al-madhhab al-Shāfiʿī*, 214–16.
[157] Bā Dhīb, *Juhūd fuqahāʾ Ḥaḍramaut fī khidmat al-madhhab al-Shāfiʿī*, 230–38.
[158] Bā Dhīb, *Juhūd fuqahāʾ Ḥaḍramaut fī khidmat al-madhhab al-Shāfiʿī*, 238–42. Bā Dhīb dedicated a sub-chapter titled "The Influence of al-Faqīh al-Qal'ī on the Jurists of Hadhramaut," mentioning his exchange of a response poem with Sālim Bā Faḍl, the teacher of al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam.
[159] Bā Dhīb, *Juhūd fuqahāʾ Ḥaḍramaut fī khidmat al-madhhab al-Shāfiʿī*, 260–61. In reiterating the handful of Shafi'ī scholars in Basra in the early stage of the spread of the Shafi'ī school, Bā Dhīb

broader diffusion only reached maturation in the fifth/eleventh century, initiated by al-Faqīh al-Qāsim al-Qurash (d. 437/1046) and further systematised by his distinguished disciples. This trajectory culminated during a period of institutional stabilisation, exemplified by the scholarly milieu of Banū Abī ʿAqāmah (d. 525/1131), Ibn ʿAbduwayyah (d. 558/1163), Yaḥyā b. Abī al-Khayr al-ʿImrānī (d. 558/1163), and al-Qalʿī.[160]

He presented two main opinions: one that he adhered to the Shāfiʿī school of jurisprudence and subscribed to the Asharī creed in theology,[161] which was the opinion of al-Imām ʿAlawī b. Ṭāhir al-Ḥaddad (d. 1382 AH) and Bā Dhīb's teacher al-Sayyid Muḥammad al-Shāṭirī (d. 1422 AH) and the other was Imāmī meant here that he follows the religion of his predecessors who were all Imām in their juristic and doctrine and not the Shiite term which was opined by ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. ʿUbayd Allāh al-Saqqāf. He eventually reached a middle ground conclusion that he was not affiliated with the Shāfiʿī school; rather, he followed the doctrinal and jurisprudential tradition of his forefathers from among the Imāms of Ahl al-Bayt in both legal rulings (*furūʿ*) and theological principles (*uṣūl*).[162]Ibn Samra in *Ṭabaqāt fuqahāʾ al-Yaman*[163] that the conversion of Abu Ṭayyib al-ʿUmrānī to the Ashʿarī creed, adopting a theological stance at variance from his father's Ḥanbalī orthodoxy, marked the beginning of the Ashʿarī theology gaining traction in southern Yemen through the efforts of Abū al-Ṭayyib al-ʿImrānī and a cadre of Zabīd-based *fuqahā*.[164]

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highlighted the infinitesimal chance of Imām Muhajir to supposedly be initiated into the school under the tutelage of Abu Yaḥya al-Sajī (d. 307 AH)

[160] Bā Dhīb, *Juhūd fuqahāʾ Ḥaḍramaut fī khidmat al-madhhab al-Shāfiʿī*, 250.

[161] Bā Dhīb, *Juhūd fuqahāʾ Ḥaḍramaut fī khidmat al-madhhab al-Shāfiʿī*, 260–62. Imām al-Ashʿarī's departure from Muʿtazilism occurred late in life, around 300 AH, with his death in 330 AH, placing him as a contemporary of al-Sayyid al-Muhājir. His transition to Sunni orthodoxy, under the tutelage of the Basran Shāfiʿī authority Abū Yaḥyā al-Sājī (d. 307 AH), marks the inception of Ashʿarī theology. Given the embryonic state of his thought and the ongoing polemics with the Muʿtazilites of Basra, it is historically improbable that his doctrines had yet diffused to the distant intellectual margins of Ḥaḍramawt during al-Muhājir's lifetime.

[162] Bā Dhīb, *Juhūd fuqahāʾ Ḥaḍramaut fī khidmat al-madhhab al-Shāfiʿī*, 275.

[163] ʿUmar b. ʿAlī Ibn Samraʾ, *Ṭabaqāt fuqahāʾ al-Yaman*, ed. Fuʾād Sayyid (Dār al-Qalam, 1957), 181,188.

[164] Bā Dhīb, *Juhūd fuqahāʾ Ḥaḍramaut fī khidmat al-madhhab al-Shāfiʿī*, 262.

During his formative years, al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam was immersed in the teachings of the illustrious Sālim Bā Faḍl (d. 581/1185), whose untimely demise occurred while he was still in early childhood. His subsequent legal training was entrusted to the distinguished Shāfiʿī jurist ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Bā ʿUbayd (d. 613/1216) and the esteemed qāḍī Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Bā ʿĪsā (d. 626/1229). In the domain of *uṣūl al-fiqh* (principle of Islamic jurisprudence) and the rational sciences, he became a protégé of ʿAlī b. Aḥmad Bā Marwān and the noted Hadhrami scholar and poet Muḥammad b. Abī al-Ḥubb (d. 611/1215). Moreover, his scholarly pursuits in *ḥadīth* Sayyid of the Banū Jadīds, renowned for his meticulous authentication of familial lineages. In matters of Sufism, his spiritual formation was under the guidance of his uncle, ʿAlawī b. Muḥammad (d. 613/1216), the eminent al-Sayyid Imām Sālim b. Baṣrī (d. 604/1208) of the Banū Bāṣrī, and the preeminent Sufi shaykh of Tarīm, Alī b. Muḥammad al-Khāṭīb (d. 641/1243), widely recognised by the appellation 'Mawlā al-Waʿl.'[165]

3.2. Incorporation of Bā ʿAlawī Sufi Paradigm in Madrasah

The deliberate appointment of a highly experienced headmaster, or *mudīr*, by the founders of Madrasah Aljunied and Madrasah Alsagoff underscores the critical significance they placed on ensuring the enduring success of their institutions beyond their own lifetimes, with a vision for future leadership continuity. Kenneth Leithwood and Doris Jantzi have emphasised the profound impact of transformational leadership on organisational dynamics and student engagement within schools. Power is conferred upon individuals within an organisation by its members when they demonstrate the capacity to galvanise commitment toward shared aspirations while simultaneously cultivating a collective and individual pursuit of the competencies required to realise those aims.[166] The framework of

[165] Abū Bakr al-ʿAdanī b. ʿAlī al-Mashhūr, *Silsilat aʿlām Ḥaḍramawt al-kāmila* (n.d.), 14–15, accessed April 7, 2025; Edaibat, "The Bā ʿAlawī Sāda of the Hadhramaut Valley: An Intellectual and Social History from Tenth-Century Origins till the Late-Sixteenth Century," 94–95.

[166] Kenneth Leithwood and Doris Jantzi, 'The Effects of Transformational Leadership on Organizational Conditions and Student Engagement with School', *MCB University Press*, Journal of Education Administration, vol. 38, no. 2 (2000): 113.

transformational leadership will serve as the analytical structure for examining and assessing the presence and extent of Bā ʿAlawī influence in these two madrasahs.

- *Transformational Leadership*

The transformational leadership model, developed through their research in schools, including factor analytic studies, characterises transformational leadership across six key dimensions: establishing a clear school vision and goals, fostering intellectual stimulation, offering individualised support, embodying professional practices and values, setting high performance expectations, and creating structures that encourage participation in school decision-making. The dimensions assessed in the study encompass staffing, instructional support, monitoring school activities, and engagement with the broader community. [167]

Syed Abdul Rahman had managed to fulfil these six key dimensions, drawing on his immense experience as both an eager student of knowledge and at a managerial level as a man of commerce. Syed Abu Bakr b. Taha Alsagoff, the first headmaster of Madrasah Aljunied, commenced his foundational Islamic education in his native town of Seiyun, as mentioned earlier. He subsequently advanced his scholarly pursuits in the sacred city of Mecca, where he studied under the tutelage of some of the most distinguished *ʿulamāʾ* of the period. Upon the completion of his formal studies, he migrated to Singapore, intending to disseminate Islamic teachings and engage in *daʿwah* activities. Shortly after his arrival, he entered into a matrimonial alliance with Sherifa Aisyah Alsagoff, a scion of the same illustrious Alsagoff family, renowned for their philanthropic legacy within the Arab diaspora community in Southeast Asia. Syed Abū Bakar played a pivotal role as a member of the founding committee responsible for the establishment of Madrasah Alsagoff, the earliest formal Islamic educational institution in Singapore.[168]

[167] Leithwood and Jantzi, 'The Effects of Transformational Leadership on Organizational Conditions and Student Engagement with School', 114.
[168] 'Al-Habib Abu Bakar Bin Taha Alsagoff (Singapore) » BaAlawi.Com - The Definitive Resource for Islam and the Alawiyyen Ancestry', 25 September 2009,

In 1920, he returned to his homeland to realise his long-held aspiration of establishing a modern Islamic educational institution. He founded *Madrasah Nahdah Ilmiah* and assumed the role of its inaugural Headmaster. He returned to Singapore in 1927, where he would reside for nearly three decades. His arrival coincided with the establishment of Madrasah Aljunied on Victoria Street. Syed Abdul Rahman, recognising his scholarly credentials and leadership, deemed him the most suitable candidate to assume the role of Headmaster. Syed Abu Bakr accepted the appointment on two conditions: that Arabic would be instituted as the primary medium of instruction and that the madrasah's pedagogical framework would be structured along modern educational lines.[169]

His stipulations were met with full approval, and under his leadership, Madrasah Aljunied became a model of rigorous academic discipline and reformist Islamic education. Serving as Headmaster from 1927 to 1955, Syed Abu Bakar significantly elevated the institution's standing, transforming it into one of the foremost centres of Islamic learning in Southeast Asia. Students from across the region were drawn to the madrasah to study under his tutelage. Demonstrating his commitment to accessible education, he designated part of his residence on Java Road as complimentary lodging for students, who also benefited from fully subsidised education at the institution.[170]

As a result of his extensive pedagogical influence, Syed Abu Bakar produced a vast cohort of students, numbering in the hundreds, many of whom rose to prominence as *ʿulamāʾ* and religious leaders in their respective countries. Among his distinguished protégés was Yahya Rajai of the Philippines, who went on to establish over 106

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https://web.archive.org/web/20090925043500/http://baalawi.com/articles/biographies/214-al-habib-abu-bakar-bin-taha-alsagoff-singapore.html.

[169] 'Al-Habib Abu Bakar Bin Taha Alsagoff (Singapore) » BaAlawi.Com - The Definitive Resource for Islam and the Alawiyyen Ancestry', 25 September 2009, https://web.archive.org/web/20090925043500/http://baalawi.com/articles/biographies/214-al-habib-abu-bakar-bin-taha-alsagoff-singapore.html.

[170] 'Al-Habib Abu Bakar Bin Taha Alsagoff (Singapore) » BaAlawi.Com - The Definitive Resource for Islam and the Alawiyyen Ancestry', 25 September 2009.

madrasahs across the Sulu and Palawan archipelagos, significantly contributing to the institutionalisation of Islamic education in the region.[171]

During his tenure as Headmaster of Madrasah Aljunied, Syed Abu Bakar also made substantial contributions to Islamic scholarship through authorship. Notable among his works are *Tauḥīd al-khāliq wa risālat anbiyāʾihi*, which was reprinted ten times, and *Al-durūs al-tadrīkiyyah*, which saw no fewer than fifteen printings. His seminal text *Tauḥīd al-khāliq* remained a staple in the curriculum of Islamic institutions well into the early 1990s, over three decades after his passing, attesting to the enduring relevance and pedagogical value of his intellectual legacy.[172]

As students of Madrasah Aljunied, we frequently encountered accounts, passed down through generations, particularly those predating the 20th century, that strictly adhered to the institutional regulation mandating the exclusive use of Arabic as the medium of communication. This linguistic policy was instituted under the leadership of the inaugural *mudīr* (headmaster), who had firmly stipulated that Arabic serve as the primary language of instruction and interaction within the madrasah environment.

Non-compliance with this rule was met with disciplinary measures, the most notorious of which involved the ingestion of a bitter substance known in Malay as *jadam*, colloquially referred to as *jadam Arab*. This substance, believed to be derived from the sap of *Aloe ferox*, a plant native to arid regions, possibly the Arabian desert, is a dense, black resin traditionally used for its potent purgative properties. The deterrent lay in its laxative effects, which students sought to avoid, thereby reinforcing adherence to the Arabic-only policy through both disciplinary and pedagogical means.

Although the aforementioned punitive measure was eventually discontinued in compliance with the regulatory frameworks and educational standards imposed by

[171] 'Al-Habib Abu Bakar Bin Taha Alsagoff (Singapore) » BaAlawi.Com - The Definitive Resource for Islam and the Alawiyyen Ancestry', 25 September 2009.
[172] 'Al-Habib Abu Bakar Bin Taha Alsagoff (Singapore) » BaAlawi.Com - The Definitive Resource for Islam and the Alawiyyen Ancestry', 25 September 2009.

the Ministry of Education, Madrasah Aljunied has continued to uphold its commitment to cultivating an Arabic-speaking environment through more creative, student-centred pedagogical strategies. One of the key initiatives is the annual Arabic Language Month, which serves as a focused period of celebration and reinforcement of the Arabic language and culture, including competitions recognising the most Arabic-proficient class. Beyond this dedicated month, a variety of language-enhancing activities are conducted throughout the academic year to sustain and deepen students' engagement with Arabic. Some of these activities are daily student-led sermons (*khutbah*) delivered in Arabic during morning assemblies, class presentations, and both intra- and inter-class Arabic debate forums. Together, these year-round efforts aim to preserve the institution's high standards of Arabic fluency and rhetorical competence in line with its founding educational philosophy.

In establishing a clear school vision and goals, Madrasah Aljunied has always conscientiously aligned its identity with the ideals expressed in its motto *al-ʿUlamāʾ waratha al-anbiyaʾ* (the Scholars are the heirs of the Prophets). Even through various developments and progress in its curriculum, it has continuously been evolving without sacrificing its sacred, profound foundational purpose. After almost a century of its existence, the vision still revolves around the rightful upbringing of the next generation of Muslim scholars.

Its latest revised vision is *Tanshʾa al-ʿulamāʾ wa al-qāda al-Islamiyīn al-ʿālamiyīn* (nurturing global Islamic leaders), while its missions are:[173]

i. *Li taṭwīr qāda wa mutaʿallimīn muʾathirīn zhawī al-taqwā* (to develop impactful learners and leaders with taqwa)
ii. *Li tawfīr tajriba taʿlīmiyya shāmila wa mumakkina* (to provide an educational experience that is holistic and empowering)
iii. *Li tashkīl mujtamʿāt al-mustaqbal min khilāl tarsīkh al-maʿrifah wa al-mahārāt* (to shape future communities by instilling purposeful relevant knowledge and skills).

[173] 'Vision, Mission & Values', Madrasah Aljunied, accessed 14 April 2025, https://www.aljunied.edu.sg/vision-mission-values.

It is also no wonder that these visions and missions are also grounded in their core values: *itqān* (excellence), *ihsān* (compassion), *ikhlās* (sincerity).[174]

The continued appointment of *mudīrīn* drawn from individuals nurtured within Madrasah Aljunied's own educational system has played a critical role in preserving the institution's legacy of academic and spiritual excellence. This practice ensures that leadership remains deeply attuned to the school's foundational ethos, consistently upholding its motto, vision, and mission.

Moreover, the fact that several among these leaders hail from *sāda* lineages further reinforces the institution's genealogical and intellectual continuity with its founding vision, enhancing both its religious authority and communal resonance. The following is a record of successive *mudīrīn*, all of whom are distinguished alumni of Madrasah Aljunied:

i. Al-Ḥabīb Syed Abu Bakar Taha al-Saqqāf (1927-1950)
ii. Al-Ḥabīb Syed ʿAbd Allāh b. Sheikh b. Muhammad Balfaqīh (1951-1962)
iii. Ustaz[175] Syed Muhammad ʿAlwi Al-Idrus (Jan 1963-May 1967)
iv. Ustaz Syed Ahmad b. Syed Omar Aljunied (1968-1971)
v. Ustaz Ahmad Sonhadji Mohamad Milatu (1972-1977)
vi. Ustaz Amir b. Mohd Rais (1978-1979)
vii. Ustaz Mohmoud Abdul Majid (1980-1982)
viii. Ustaz Syed Agil b. Othman āl Yahyā (1983-1991)
ix. Ustaz Mokson Mahori (1992-1998)
x. Ustaz Zainal Arifin (1999)
xi. Ustaz Syed Abdillah Ahmad Al-Jufri (2000-2003)
xii. Ustaz Mohamad Hasbi Hassan (2006-2008)
xiii. Ustaz Mohd. Murat b. Md. Aris (2008-2014)[176]
xiv. Ustaz Mahmoud Matlub Sidek (2014-2017)
xv. Mdm Khairiana Zainal Abiden (Jan 2018-Jun 2023) and
xvi. The current principal Mr Herman Cher Ma'in (2024- current).

[174] Madrasah Aljunied, 'Vision, Mission & Values'.
[175] Ustaz is a title we call for religious teachers in the Malay world as such it does not generally mean mister. as it is in the Arabic language.
[176] National Library Board Singapore, 'Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah at Victoria Lane, between 1927 and 1970', accessed 13 April 2025, https://www.nlb.gov.sg/main/image-detail?cmsuuid=b666f0b1-02fb-43ab-9be5-fb1002f8657b.

In recent years, following the implementation of the JMS, there has been a notable shift in the appointment of school leadership. Under this new framework, principals appointed by MUIS to oversee the integration and execution of the JMS curriculum have not necessarily emerged from traditional Islamic scholarly backgrounds.

The institutional renewal of Madrasah Aljunied in recent years has been marked by a strategic succession of leadership that reflects both internal continuity and adaptive reform. This transition began with the appointment of Mdm Khairiana, an educator nurtured within the madrasah's own pedagogical tradition, who later held key roles in academic administration. Her tenure was succeeded by Mr Herman Cher Ma'in, whose extensive experience within the national public school system and prior leadership at Madrasah Al-Arabiah brought valuable insights into curriculum development, school governance, and stakeholder engagement.

In June 2023, the leadership trajectory came full circle with the appointment of Dr Afif Pasuni as Vice Principal, an alumnus of Madrasah Aljunied who embodies the integration of traditional Islamic scholarship and contemporary academic training. With foundational studies at Al-Azhar University, a master's degree from the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at National Technology University (NTU), and a PhD in Politics and International Studies from the University of Warwick, England, Dr Afif brings both intellectual depth and policy literacy to his role. His previous work at MUIS in curriculum development further underscores his commitment to aligning religious education with national pedagogical standards. Together, this evolving leadership ensemble reflects a deliberate effort to balance heritage with innovation, ensuring that Madrasah Aljunied remains responsive to the complex educational and spiritual needs of Singapore's Muslim community.[177] This shift reflects a broader institutional trend toward professionalised educational leadership within the madrasah sector, aligned with national standards while maintaining the core objectives of Islamic education.

[177] 'Naib Pengetua Madrasah Aljunied Dengan Ijazah Kedoktoran, Berita Berita Utama - Beritaharian.Sg', accessed 26 May 2025, https://www.beritaharian.sg/berita-utama/naib-pengetua-madrasah-aljunied-dengan-ijazah-kedoktoran.

3.2.1. Values Rooted in Bāʿ Alawī Sufism in the Daily School Routine

- *School Conditions*

Leithwood and Jantzi emphasise that school conditions serve as essential mediators or 'intervening variables', developed by Philip Hallinger and Ronald H. Heck, for enacting an institution's vision and mission, exerting greater influence on student outcomes than the direct effects of principal leadership.[178] Hallinger and Heck's framework of mediating variables identifies four key conditions: institutional purposes and goals, school structure and social networks, human capital, and organisational culture.[179]

This section examines the translation of institutional purposes and goals into concrete actions through the lens of organisational culture. While organisational structure can be assessed through various metrics, this study adopts a framework that accommodates the intangible dimensions of a Sufi-influenced way of life. Accordingly, I propose to analyse the school's daily routines, curriculum, co-curricular activities, and its structural and organisational configuration. The latter is understood as the nature and quality of relationships formed among individuals and groups within the school, as well as between the school and its external stakeholders, relationships that collectively shape the institutional structure and significantly influence overall organisational effectiveness[180].

- *Litany Reading*

The school day begins with a morning assembly at 7:30 a.m., during which a set of morning supplications is recited. These consist of curated invocations drawn from intuited invocations specifically selected to reflect the students' formative roles and

[178] Philip Hallinger and Ronald H. Heck, 'Exploring Principal's Contribution to Schoool Effectiveness: 1980-1995', *Swets & Zeitlinger*, School Effectiveness and School Improvement, vol. 9, no. 2 (1998): 157–91, https://doi.org/10.1080/0924345980090203.
[179] Leithwood and Jantzi, 'The Effects of Transformational Leadership on Organizational Conditions and Student Engagement with School', 115.
[180] Leithwood and Jantzi, 'The Effects of Transformational Leadership on Organizational Conditions and Student Engagement with School', 116.

responsibilities. The content of these prayers is intentionally aligned with the school's ethos, reinforcing its spiritual and educational values at the outset of each day. We will seek to analyse the Sufi influence within the invocation in a general sense, with particular focus on the litany of the Bāʿ Alawī *ṭarīqa*.

The invocation commences with the *basmalah* (*Bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*), followed by the *ḥamdalah* (*al-ḥamdu lillāh*), an expression of praise and gratitude to God, and concludes the opening with *ṣalawāt* upon the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, thereby establishing a traditional devotional framework rooted in classical Islamic liturgical practice.[181]

i. *Allāhumma urzuqnā yā Rabb faḥma al-nabiyyīn wa ḥifẓa al-mursalīn wa ilhāma al-malāʾikah al-muqarrabīn fī ʿāfiyatin yā Arḥama al-Rāḥimīn.*

Allāh, grant us, O Lord, the understanding of the Prophets, the preservation of the Messengers, and the inspiration of the nearest angels, in well-being, O Most Merciful of the merciful.

The first line of the supplication is widely circulated among students and educators, particularly in contexts emphasising the pursuit of knowledge. However, it is important to note that this specific wording is not found in the canonical hadith collections and is not attributed directly to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Islamic scholars have clarified that while the supplication is not part of the Prophetic tradition, its content aligns with Islamic teachings and is permissible to recite, especially when seeking understanding and knowledge.

ii. *Allāhumma iftaḥ ʿalaynā futūḥ al-ʿārifīn wa faqqihnā fī al-dīn wa ʿallimnā al-taʾwīl wa ihdinā ilā sawāʾ al-sabīl.*

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[181] 'Jami` At-Tirmidhi 3477 - Chapters on Supplication - كتاب الدعوات عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم - Sunnah.Com - Sayings and Teachings of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم)', accessed 18 April 2025, https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi:3477.
`Amr bin Malik Al-Janbi narrated that he heard Fadalah bin `Ubaid saying:
"The Prophet (ﷺ) heard a man supplicating in his *ṣalā* (meant here is the literal *ṣalā* which is supplication, but he did not send *ṣalā* upon the Prophet (ﷺ), so the Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'This one has rushed.' Then he called him and said to him, or to someone other than him: 'When one of you performs *ṣalā*, then let him begin by expressing gratitude to Allāh and praising Him. Then, let him send *ṣalā* upon the Prophet (ﷺ), then let him supplicate after that, whatever he wishes.'
The supplication can be found in the annual students' handbook on the first page.

O Allāh, open for us the openings of those who truly know (ʿārifīn), grant us deep understanding in religion, teach us the interpretation (of sacred knowledge), and guide us to the straight path.

The second line reflects the prayer that the Prophet ﷺ prayed for Sayyidinā ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbas, whilst placing his blessed hands on Sayyidinā ʿAbd Allāh's shoulders. The hadith[182]: Ibn Abbas reported: The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, put his hand on my shoulder and he said, "O Allāh, give him understanding in religion and teach him the interpretation of the Qurʾān."[183].

It resonates with Sufi traditions, particularly the Bā ʿAlawī *ṭarīqa*, which emphasises the pursuit of inner knowledge (*maʿrifa*) and spiritual insight. Phrases like *futūḥ al-ʿārifīn* (openings of the gnostics) and *ʿallimnā al-taʾwīl* (teach us interpretation) reflect a deep yearning for spiritual enlightenment and understanding, characteristic of Sufi litanies. This can be found in *sāda* poetries as an example, a renowned devotional poem by al-Ḥabīb ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥabshī, *Rabbi innī yā dhā al-ṣifāti al-ʿaliyyah*, often recited and sung during *Mawlid* gatherings. It's a beautiful expression of love and praise for Allāh and the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, filled with themes of divine attributes, longing, and spiritual connection.

Wa ihdinā Rabbanā limā qad hadayta
as-sādah al-ʿārifīn ahl al-maziyyah.
Wa-jʿal al-ʿilma muqtadānā bi-ḥukm adh-
dhawq fī fahmi sirri maʿnā al-maʿiyyah.
Wa-ḥfaẓ al-qalba an yalimma bihi ash-shay-
ṭān wa an-nafs wa al-hawā wa ad-daniyyah.

Guide us, O Lord, to the path You bestowed
Upon the gnostic lords, with virtues they glowed.
Make knowledge our guide by the rule of true taste,
In grasping the secret of nearness, embraced.
And guard our hearts from what seeks to ensnare,
The devil, the ego, desire, and despair.[184]

iii. *Allāhumma anfaʿnā wa irfaʿnā wa sharifnā bi al-ʿilm al-nāfiʿ wa anfaʿnā bihi li-anfusinā wa ahlinā wa awṭāninā wa diyārinā wa jamīʿ al-muslimīn yā Ilāha al-ʿālamīn.*

[182] Syuʿaib al-Arnaʾut, ed., *Musnad al-imām Ahmad b. Hanbal*, 1st edn, vol. 5th (Muʾassasa al-Risālah, 1416), no. 2879.
[183] Abu Amina Elias, 'Hadith on Tafsir: The Prophet Prays for Ibn Abbas to Understand', 17 August 2012, https://www.abuaminaelias.com/dailyhadithonline/2012/08/16/ibn-abbas-tafsir-quran/.
[184] Umar b. Salim al-Hafiz, *Al-khulaṣa fī al-awrād wa al-adʿiya al-wārida wa al-maʾthūra*, Third (Maktabah Tarim al-Haditha, 2016), 31.

O Allāh, benefit us and elevate us, and honour us with beneficial knowledge, and allow it to benefit ourselves, our families, our homelands, our communities, and all Muslims, O Lord of the worlds.

The third line underscores the centrality of the pursuit of knowledge, a foundational principle within the Bā ʿAlawī *ṭarīqa*. This emphasis is affirmed by its placement as the opening chapter in *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*. Al-Imām ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥabshī, in his exposition on the significance of seeking knowledge, states:

Wa fī ṭalab al-ʿilm al-sharīf tawajjahū,
bijidd wa tashmīr wa tark li-muʿtād.
Fa-fī al-ʿilm nūr li-l-fuʾād wa bahjah,
wa murāduhu li-l-ʿabd aḥsan murād.
Bihi yuʿraf al-insān ḥaqq ilāhi,
wa yahdī bihi ḍāll wa yurwā bihi al-ṣādī.

In noble quest for knowledge bright, proceed,
With earnest strive, and habits left to heed.
For in its light, the heart finds radiant gleam,
A joy profound, a seeker's truest dream.
Through knowledge, man his Lord comes to revere,
The lost find guidance, and the thirsty, cheer.[185]

The prayer then transitions from the third line to encompass the broader community, thereby evolving into an invocation for the welfare and well-being of the ummah of the Prophet Muhammad.

iv. *Allāhumma waḥḥid kalimata al-ummah al-Muḥammadiyyah wa aʿli shaʾnahā wa anqidh awṭānahā wa alhimhā al-taḍḥiyah fī sabīl dīnihā wa al-daʿwah ilayh wa al-dhabb ʿanhu bi al-nafs wa al-nafīs.*

O Allāh, unify the word of the Muhammadan ummah, elevate its status, save its lands, and inspire it with the spirit of sacrifice for the sake of its religion, calling to it, and defending it with life and all that is precious.

v. *Wa ʿiṣimhā min nazaghāti al-ilḥād wa fitan al-qawmiyyāt wa shurūr al-madaniyyah al-ʿaṣriyyah.*

And protect it (the ummah) from the insinuations of atheism, the trials of nationalism, and the evils of modern secular civilisation.

vi. *Wa idfaʿhā ilā al-ʿamali bi-al-nāfiʿ minhā al-muwāfiq li-taʿālīmi dīnihā, wa abʿid-hā ʿan al-ḍārri min dhālik.*

[185] Bin Sumayṭ, *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*, 97.

> Guide it to adopt what is beneficial from modernity that aligns with the teachings of its religion, and distance it from what is harmful therein.

In a world that is becoming more modernised and fast-paced, the prescriptive language of the supplication serves as a powerful reminder to stay true to the vision and mission established at the founding of the institution. Implicitly, it is a call to developing a whole identity, which embraces the spiritual, intellectual, and ethical aspects of life based on the traditions of the Bā ʿAlawī *ṭarīqa*. The evolving curriculum that has undergone significant transformation since the institution's early days testifies to this.

Its curriculum has shifted from having its sole focus on traditional Islamic sciences to the inclusion of secular subjects, such as English, Mathematics, Humanities and Science, in response to the growing need for foundational competencies required in the modern workforce. This curriculum reform is not merely organic or just an emergent curriculum; it has, in fact, been on the government's agenda more than three decades to have direct influence on the curriculum of the madrasahs.[186] In the current era, marked by rapid technological advancement, the school has further expanded its academic scope by becoming an Apple-certified institution and adopting the International Baccalaureate (IB) framework.[187]

This paradigm shift reflects a strategic effort to challenge and redefine prevailing public perceptions of madrasah education as outdated or insular. All these developments have occurred while the institution's leadership and educators have remained steadfast in preserving the foundational ethos upon which the institution was originally established. The following lines powerfully encapsulate the spiritual ethos of the Bā ʿAlawī *ṭarīqa*, particularly emphasising the themes of prophetic emulation, divine love, spiritual service, and communal responsibility.

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[186] Steiner, 'Madrasah in Singapore: Tradition and Modernity in Religious Education', 2011, 55–56.
[187] Charlene Tan, 'Future-Readiness and Islamic Education.', *Researchgate*, Journal of Education in Muslim Societies, vol. 6, no. 1 (2024): 109–29; Charlene Tan, 'The Reform Agenda for Madrasah Education in Singapore', *Diaspora Indigenous and Minority Education* 3, no. 2 (2009): 67–80.

vii. *Allāhumma ijʿalnī khādiman amīnan li-al-Islām, wa jundiyyan bāsilan min junūdih, ʿāmilan bi-awāmirih, mutamassikan bi-aḥkāmih, mubtaʿidan ʿan nawāhīh, mudāfiʿan ʿanhu bi-nafsī wa ʿilmī wa ʿamalī wa mālī wa jiddī wa kulli mā amlik, khāliṣan mukhliṣan ṣādiqan fīh, muttabiʿan āthāra al-nabiyy, muqtadiyyan bih, sāʾiran ʿalā sabīlih, muḥibban li-ahlihi al-ṭāhirīn wa aṣḥābihi al-muttaqīn, muqtafiyyan āthārahum, muttabiʿan sunanahum.*

O Allāh, make me a faithful servant of Islam, a courageous soldier among its ranks, one who acts according to its commands, clings to its rulings, refrains from its prohibitions, and defends it with my self, my knowledge, my deeds, my wealth, my earnest effort, and all that I possess, purely, sincerely, and truthfully. Make me one who follows in the footsteps of the Prophet, emulates him, walks upon his path, loves his pure family and pious companions, traces their legacy, and adheres to their traditions.

The seventh line begins with a plea to become a devoted servant of Islam and a valiant soldier within its spiritual ranks. This resonates deeply with the Bā ʿAlawī principle of *khidma* (service) and *jihād al-nafs* (inner striving), emphasising that true spiritual strength lies in disciplined obedience and unwavering commitment to divine commandments. The term "soldier" (*jundī*) metaphorically captures this inner discipline and reflects a strong identification with the name of the institution, linked etymologically to Imām al- *ṭarīqa* al-Junayd al-Baghdādī, the eponymous figure of Junaydī Sufism and a spiritual ancestor of the Bā ʿAlawī path. Following this, the supplication transitions into a prayer for steadfast emulation of the Prophet Muḥammad, love for his purified family (Ahl al-Bayt), and companionship with the righteous. This is a foundational aspect of Bā ʿAlawī identity, which is rooted in direct lineage from the Prophet and a lived commitment to his sunnah. Love for the Ahl al-Bayt is not merely emotional but a devotional and ethical orientation that guides every action of the seeker.

viii. *Allāhumma amlaʾ qalbī bi-ḥubbik wa ḥubb anbiyāʾik wa aṣfiyāʾik wa ḥubb dīnī wa ikhwānī al-muslimīn, nāsiyan nafsī fī dhālik, mubtaʿidan ʿan al-atharah wa al-anāniyyah wa al-kibr wa al-iʿjāb wa kulli khaṣlah daniyyah, yā Rabb al-ʿālamīn.*

O Allāh, fill my heart with love for You, love for Your Prophets and Your elect servants, love for my religion, and love for my fellow Muslim brethren. Let me forget myself in this love, distancing myself from selfishness, egotism, arrogance, vanity, and every lowly trait, O Lord of the Worlds.

The eighth line of the supplication deepens the inner dimension of this love by asking God to fill the heart with love for Himself, His prophets, His elect, the *dīn*, and the Muslim brethren. It culminates in the plea to "forget oneself in this love," a concept aligned with *fanā'* (annihilation of the self) in divine love, a hallmark of Bā ʿAlawī spirituality. This inner transformation, articulated in terms of distancing

oneself from egotism, arrogance, and vanity, mirrors the teachings found in al-Ḥaddād's *Risālat al-muʿāwanah,* where he outlines the necessity of emptying the soul of blameworthy traits and adorning it with virtues.

ix. *Allāhumma aghfir liman anshaʾa hādhihi al-madrasah wa assasahā wa ʿammarahā wa waqafahā wa taṣaddaqa ʿalayhā wa khadamahā wa taʿallama fīhā, wa li-wālidīnā wa muʿallimīnā ajmaʿīn.*

O Allāh, forgive those who established, founded, built, endowed, donated to, served, or studied in this school, as well as our parents and all our teachers.

x. *Allāhumma irḥamhum wa ʿāfihim wa iʿfu ʿanhum wa ḍāʿif ḥasanātihim wa tajāwaz ʿan sayyiʾātihim wa irfaʿ darajātihim wa jāzihim ʿannā khayra al-dunyā wa al-ākhirah, wa iqḍi ḥājātihim wa balligh maqāṣidahum biraḥmatika yā Arḥam al-Rāḥimīn.*

O Allāh, have mercy on them, grant them well-being, pardon them, multiply their good deeds, overlook their shortcomings, raise their ranks, and reward them on our behalf with the best of this world and the Hereafter. Fulfil their needs and grant them their goals through Your mercy, O Most Merciful of the Merciful.

Lines nine and ten expand the spiritual vision to encompass gratitude for those who contributed to the establishment of the school, its founders, builders, benefactors, and educators. In Bā ʿAlawī tradition, this form of collective *duʿā'* for one's spiritual and educational predecessors is not only a sign of *barakah* (divine blessing) but an ethical obligation. This sentiment is reinforced especially in poetry seeking blessings and intercessions from the predecessors, which emphasise honouring one's lineage of knowledge transmission.

Tawassalnā wa kull al-tābiʿīna wa kull,
bikulli ṭawāʾif al-amlāk nadʿū,
bimā fī ghayb Rabbī ajmaʿīna,
wa bil-ʿulamāʾ bi-amr Allāh ṭurran,
wa kull al-awliyāʾ wa al-ṣāliḥīna,
ukhaṣṣu bihi al-imām al-quṭb ḥaqqan,
Wajīh al-Dīn, tāj al-ʿārifīna.

We seek intercession, along with all the followers, each and every one,
calling upon all the ranks of the angelic hosts.
By what lies in the unseen knowledge of my Lord, encompassing us all,
and through the scholars, entirely devoted to God's command,
and through all the saints and the righteous.
Among them, I especially single out the imām, truly the *quṭb* (spiritual axis),
Wajīh al-Dīn, the crown of the gnostics (*ʿārifīn*).[188]

[188] al-Hafiz, *Al-khulaṣa fī al-awrād wa al-adʿiya al-wārida wa al-maʾthūra*, 22–23.

xi. *Wa ṣallallāhu ʿalā Sayyidinā Muḥammad wa ʿalā ālihi wa ṣaḥbihi wa sallam, wa al-ḥamdu lillāhi Rabb al-ʿālamīn.*

And may the blessings and peace of Allāh be upon our master Muhammad, his family, and his companions. And all praise is due to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds.

The final benediction closes with the invocation of peace and blessings upon the Prophet Muḥammad, his family, and companions, a typical closure in Bā ʿAlawī litanies such as *Al-rātib al-Ḥaddād*[189]. This affirms the centrality of prophetic love as both the origin and culmination of the spiritual path. Together, these lines reflect not only theological depth but also the poetic sophistication of the liturgist who composed them, embedding layers of devotional, communal, and educational meanings into a single supplication.

In addition to the principal supplication recited during the morning assembly, students also engage in the recitation of *Wīrd al-laṭīf* by Imām ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAlawī al-Ḥaddād[190] on Thursdays. The school day customarily concludes with a prayer drawn from *Al-khulaṣa fī al-awrād wa al-adʿiya al-wārida wa al-maʾthūra*[191], a litany manual widely circulated among adherents of the Bā ʿAlawī tradition. This compilation, often employed during spiritual gatherings or knowledge circles (*majālis*), reflects the daily devotional practices of the *sālik* (spiritual wayfarer). Curated by al-Ḥabīb ʿUmar b. Ḥafīẓ, it is also available in mobile application form, facilitating greater accessibility and continuity of practice in contemporary contexts. The complete text of the litany is presented below. Students are expected to memorise it in its entirety and recite it during *majālis*, particularly those honoured by the presence of visiting *Ḥabāʾib* from Tarīm. The recitation customarily concludes with the *tasbīḥ al-kafārah*.

Yā Rabbana, iʿtarafnā, bi-annanā iqtirafnā
wa-annanā asrafnā, ʿalā laẓā asharafnā
Fatub ʿalaynā tawbah, taghsil kulla ḥawbah
Wastur lanā al-ʿawrāt, wa-āmin al-rawʿāt
Waghfir li-wālidīnā, rabbī wa-mawlūdīnā
Wa-al-ahli wa-al-ikhwāni, wa-sāʾir al-khillān
Wa-kulla dhī maḥabbah, aw jīrahtin aw ṣuḥbah

[189] al-Hafiz, *Al-khulaṣa fī al-awrād wa al-adʿiya al-wārida wa al-maʾthūra*, 121–29.
[190] al-Hafiz, *Al-khulaṣa fī al-awrād wa al-adʿiya al-wārida wa al-maʾthūra*, 59.
[191] al-Hafiz, *Al-khulaṣa fī al-awrād wa al-adʿiya al-wārida wa al-maʾthūra*, 206–9.

Wa-al-muslimīn ajmaʿ, āmīn yā Rabbī ismaʿ
Faḍlan wa-jūdan manna, lā bi iktisabin minna
Bi'l-Muṣṭafā al-Rasūli, naḥẓā bi-kulli sūli
Ṣallā wa-sallam Rabbī, ʿalayhi ʿadda al-ḥubbi
Wa-ālihī wa-al-ṣaḥb, ʿadāda ṭashsh al-suḥbi
Wa-al-ḥamdu li'l-Ilāh, fī al-badʾi wa-al-tanāhī

O Lord, we confess our sin,
That we have erred again and again,
And in our excess we have strayed,
Toward the blaze we nearly made.
So turn to us with a cleansing grace,
And wash each fault, each darkened trace.
Conceal our flaws, our shame, erase,
Grant safety in each fearful place.
Forgive our parents, Lord Most High,
Our kin and those we hold nearby.
Our families, brothers, friends so dear,
And all companions far and near.
All those who love, who dwell, who share,
Our neighbours too, O heed our prayer!
And every soul who bears Islam
O Lord, accept, O Lord, respond.
Bestow Your bounty from Your throne,
Through purest grace and grace alone.
Through the Chosen Messenger, we gain,
The fulfilment of every hope and aim.
Blessings and peace my Lord bestows,
Upon him, as countless as love that flows.
Upon his noble family and loyal friends,
As much as the rain the heavens send.
And all praise is due to God Most High,
At the beginning and the end of time

3.2.2. The Design of Religious Content in Books

Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭās strongly advocated for the sustained engagement with *kutub al-salaf*, underscoring their epistemic luminosity, divine blessing, and synthesis of ʿilm, ʿamal, ikhlāṣ, and ṣidq. He urged: *"Ijridū al-qirāʾah fī kutub al-salaf,"* (Commit yourselves to reading the books of the pious predecessors) highlighting their integrative transmission of normative knowledge and praxis. He critiqued the marginalisation of early legal and theological corpora as symptomatic of *ḥirmān*, epistemic arrogance, and *ittibāʿ al-hawā*, pursuit of personal whims.[192]

Al-Hābib Zayn listed some important books that has been the circulated book read in the Bā ʿAlawī lineage of scholarship. He brings great emphasis to the compendium

[192] Bin Sumayṭ, *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*, 246.

of Al-Imām Al-Haddād and al-Imām al-Ghazālī.[193] Al-Shaykh al-Quṭb ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Saqqāf, in showing reverence in reading some of the important manuals, is reported to have said:

"Man lam yaqra' al-Muhadhdhab lam ya'rif qawā'id al-madhhab, wa man lam yaqra' Al-tanbīh fa-laysa binābīh, wa man lam yuṭāli' al-Iḥyā' fa-mā fīhi ḥayā', wa man lā lahu wird fa-huwa qird.
Whoever has not studied al-Muhadhdhab has not grasped the foundational principles of the legal school; whoever has not read Al-tanbīh lacks discernment; whoever has not engaged with Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn is bereft of spiritual modesty; and whoever does not maintain a regular litany (wird) is no more than a monkey."[194]

Al-Hābib Zayn further listed a select corpus of recommended books in the different Islamic sciences. In the Qurʾānic exegesis Tafsīr al-Baghawī *Maʿālim al-tanzīl* by Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn ibn Masʿūd al-Baghawī (d. 516/1122) Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān* by Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/ 923) *Tafsīr Ibn Ḥajar* by Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/ 1449).[195]

In the field of hadīth and its sciences, the most recommended texts include: *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Sunan Abī Dāwūd, Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī, Al-muwaṭṭaʾ* of Imām Mālik, *Fatḥ al-bārī* by al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar, and the *Sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* by Imām al-Nawawī.[196]
Imām al-Ḥaddād stated:

"Indeed, we have found in these three books a blessing, illumination, and both the giving and receiving of knowledge, unlike what we found in other works. These three books are: Al-itqān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān by al-Suyūṭī, Sharḥ al-Nawawī ʿalā ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, and Al-yawāqīt wa al-jawāhir fī ʿaqāʾid al-akābir by al-Shaʿrānī.".[197]

[193] Bin Sumayṭ, *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*, 247–148.
[194] Bin Sumayṭ, *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*, 249.
[195] Bin Sumayṭ, *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*, 250–51.
[196] Bin Sumayṭ, *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*, 252–54.
[197] Bin Sumayṭ, *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*, 254.

In the field of Sufism, Imām ʿAydarūs ibn ʿUmar al-Ḥabashī stated that the six foundational texts in Sufi literature are: *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, *Minhāj al-ʿābidīn*, and *Al-arbaʿīn al-aṣl* by al-Ghazālī; *Al-risālah al-Qushayriyyah* by al-Qushayrī; *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif* by al-Suhrawardī; and *Qūt al-qulūb* by Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī.[198] Introductory manuals such as *Bidāyat al-hidāyah*, *Ayyuhā al-walad*, and *Risālat al-muʿāwanah* are commonly studied in *ḥalaqāt* (study circles) tailored for lay audiences and are also incorporated into specialised programmes at institutions like Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah. These texts are often included in post-examination programmes aimed at fostering personal growth and spiritual development among students.

In the discipline of Shāfiʿī jurisprudence, several seminal texts are recognised for their foundational and advanced contributions. *Al-muhadhdhab* by Imām Abū Isḥāq al-Shīrāzī (d. 476/1083) serves as a comprehensive manual encompassing various aspects of Shāfiʿī *fiqh*. *Minhāj al-ṭālibīn* by Imām Yaḥyā b. Sharaf al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277) is a concise yet authoritative text that has become a cornerstone for legal instruction and has been extensively commented upon, notably in *Al-mughnī* by al-Khaṭīb al-Shirbīnī (d. 977/1570), a detailed commentary elucidating the meanings within *Minhāj al-ṭālibīn*. Further commentaries such as *Al-nihāyah* and *Al-tuḥfah* expand upon and clarify the principles outlined in *Minhāj al-ṭālibīn*.[199] Additionally, *Al-mukhtaṣar al-laṭīf* and *Al-iqnāʿ* provide detailed explanations of *Matn Abī Shujāʿ*, a foundational primer in Shāfiʿī jurisprudence, authored by al-Khaṭīb Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Shirbīnī al-Qāhirī al-Shāfiʿī (d. 977/1570). The early generations held a deep reverence for the reading of *Al-iqnaʿ ʿala matn Abi Shuja'* by Al-Khaṭīb, and the esteemed al- Habīb Ḥasan b. Saleh Al-Bahr devoted himself exclusively to its study, immersing in its contents without engaging in any other text.[200] These texts collectively form a structured framework for both novice and advanced students in the Shāfiʿī school, offering a progression from foundational principles to intricate legal discussions.

[198] Bin Sumayṭ, *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*, 255.
[199] Bin Sumayṭ, *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*, 261–62.
[200] Bin Sumayṭ, *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*, 263.

Al-Iqnāʿ, a prominent *fiqh* manual, has historically been a cornerstone text in Tarim, Hadhramaut, where it holds significant importance, especially in the study of *fiqh*, which is highly emphasised within the *sāda* Bā ʿAlawī tradition. True to its longstanding motto, Madrasah Aljunied has consistently upheld the use of traditional texts such as *Al-Iqnāʿ*, reflecting the doctrinal approach of the Bā ʿAlawī tradition in the study of *fiqh*. This methodology emphasises a classical *turāth* (traditional) structure, whereby legal instruction is anchored in the systematic study of *matn* (concise foundational texts) and *sharḥ* (detailed commentaries), a hallmark of Islamic scholarship at large. Through this approach, Madrasah Aljunied not only preserves the intellectual rigour and spiritual ethos of the Bā ʿAlawī tradition but also sustains continuity with the broader legacy of classical Islamic pedagogy. The preference for *Al-Iqnāʿ* at Madrasah Aljunied reflects the institution's commitment to preserving the sāda Bā ʿAlawī tradition, particularly its distinctive emphasis on *fiqh* as the central science of the Sharīʿah. This approach also prepares students to engage with the *turāth* literature, equipping them with the necessary skills to access more complex works from the rich intellectual legacy left by earlier scholars. Mastery of *Al-Iqnāʿ* thus serves as a crucial foundation, enabling students to tackle more advanced manuals during their tertiary studies in Islamic sciences, as well as other classical texts.

Meanwhile, the continued use of the contemporary Shāfi'ī text, *Fiqh al-manhajī*, originating from Shām, authored by prominent scholars of Damascus, Shaykh Muṣṭafā al-Khin (b. 1341/1922), Shaykh Muṣṭafā Dīb al-Bughā (b. 1354/1938) and Shaykh ʿAlī al-Sharbājī, reflects a parallel development. Its adoption, particularly in other *madāris* and in part-time Islamic tertiary institutions where translated versions are used as textbooks island-wide, demonstrates its appeal due to its modernised structure and clarity. This illustrates regional differences in *fiqh* pedagogy and practice. Although *Fiqh al-manhajī* is not the main text at Madrasah Aljunied, printed excerpts are distributed by educators to aid in student comprehension. Ultimately, the institution's choice of primary textbook reflects a dual commitment: to maintaining doctrinal fidelity to the Bā ʿAlawī tradition while also recognising the

pedagogical advantages offered by more contemporary approaches such as those found in *Fiqh al-manhajī.*

Among the *ḥadīth* manuals adopted as textbooks was *Al-arbaʿīn al-nawawiyyah,* which students memorised incrementally, approximately ten *ḥadīth* per year, over four years at the secondary level (*al-marḥalah al-thanawiyyah*) level. They subsequently advanced to *Riyāḍ al-ṣāliḥīn* at the *al-thanawiyyah al-ʿāliyyah* stage, with *ʿUlūm al-ḥadīth* introduced as an additional subject, taught by Ustaz Syed Agil during the author's period of study.

In the field of Arabic studies, the third headmaster, Ustaz Syed Muḥammad ʿAlwī al-ʿIdrūs, contributed significantly to the learning of Arabic grammar locally between the madrasah students by structuring the traditional *Nāḥw* manual *Al-Ājurrūmiyyah* into *al-Naḥw al-ʿArabī al-jadīd,* a more modern and practical textbook. This work included exercises (*tamrīnāt*) designed to develop sentence construction skills and the application of *iʿrāb* (grammatical inflexion/case endings) after each topic. The textbook was structured into three levels and taught progressively from primary five (*ibtidāʾī khāmis*) through to Secondary four (*thanawī rābiʿ*). This pragmatic renewal responded to the pedagogical needs of a formula-based subject, akin to mathematics, moving beyond rote memorisation towards cultivating a deeper understanding of grammatical logic and application. At the pre-university (*thanawī ʿālī*) level, students advanced to the study of *Naḥw ʿArabī,* a well-regarded manual widely used in the Arab world, which incorporated evidential examples (*shāhid*) from Arabic poetry (*shiʿr*) and discussions of differing grammatical opinions between the Kufan (*Kūfiyyūn*) and Basran (*Baṣriyyūn*) schools.

3.2.3. Extra-Curricular Activities Inspired by Bā ʿAlawī *sulūk*

Unlike practices in other regions often criticised by contemporary Muslims, the ʿAlawī dhikr remains austere, though *ḥaḍra* rituals persist in mosques. At the Saqqāf Mosque, the *Khuddām al-Saqqāf* accompany Sufi *inshād* with pipe and drum. Unlike practices in other regions often criticised by contemporary Muslims for excessive spectacle or syncretism, the ʿAlawī *dhikr* tradition remains marked by spiritual

restraint and contemplative depth. Nevertheless, communal *ḥaḍra* rituals, characterised by rhythmic chanting, swaying, and percussive accompaniment, continue to be held in mosques as embodied forms of devotional expression. At the historic Saqqāf Mosque, for example, the Khuddām al-Saqqāf perform *Sufi inshād* with pipe and drum, combining poetic praise with disciplined musical form. [201] These practices illustrate how rhythmic and poetic modes of remembrance (*dhikr*) have long functioned not only as spiritual exercises but as culturally embedded tools for moral formation, affective discipline, and collective identity.

In educational contexts, particularly within traditional Islamic institutions like Madrasah Aljunied in Singapore, *inshād* has similarly evolved as a pedagogical medium, enhancing students' morale while providing a creative platform for engaging with Arabic poetry and the intricate rhythmic structure of *qāfiyah*. Educators have introduced these songs not only to cultivate linguistic familiarity but also to foster a shared sense of identity among students. Ustaz Ahmad b. Shamsudin, an alumnus of Madrasah Aljunied and now a senior educator, is particularly known for his use of musical pedagogy to energise classroom learning. Under his guidance, students would memorise *taṣrīf* (morphological conjugation) of Arabic verbs set to melodic tunes, reinforcing grammatical structures through auditory recall. His efforts culminated in the compilation of extended *nashīd* into a booklet titled *Al-ṣaḥwah*, which he introduced with the following preface:

> *Hādhā al-kutayyib alladhī bayna aydīkum bāqa min al-adʿiya wa al-ṣalawāt al-muṣṭafawiyya wa al-madāʾiḥ al-nabawiyyah wa al-anāshīd al-madrasiyyah al-muḥammisah, wa hiya mutamaththilah fī iḥdā wasāʾil wa nashāṭāt madrasatinā, Madrasat al-Junayd al-ʿarīqah, fī tahdhīb nufūs abnāʾihā fī ḥubb al-Islām wa lughati wa al-insāniyya kāffah mundhu taʾsīsihā. Wa kānat al-alḥān bi-al-anāshīd al-ḥasana bilā shak wāqiʿah fī al-nufūs al-muhadhdhaba wa ṭarīqa faʿʿālah fī al-majāl al-tarbawī, idh daydanat al-insān amyal ilā al-jamāl wa al-naghamāt al-ṭayyibah. Fa-niʿma al-inshād ḥīn taghdū maṭiyyah lil-irshād, wa niʿma al-anghām ḥīn taghdū muʿabbirah li-al-afhām.*
>
> *This booklet in your hands is a curated collection of duʿāʾs (supplications), ṣalawāt Muṣṭafawiyyah (prayers upon the Chosen Prophet), prophetic eulogies*

[201] Serjeant, *The Saiyids of Ḥaḍramawt An Inaugural Lecture Delivered on 5 June 1956*, 20.

(madāʾiḥ), and spirited school inshād (songs). It represents one of the many pedagogical tools and co-curricular activities of our distinguished institution, Madrasah Aljunied, dedicated since its founding to cultivating in its students a love for Islam, the Arabic language, and universal human values.
Melodic compositions, particularly those expressed through noble anāshīd, have undoubtedly proven to be more effective in refining the soul and serve as a powerful medium within the educational sphere, given that the human disposition naturally inclines toward beauty and harmonious sound. Indeed, how praiseworthy is inshād when it becomes a vehicle for guidance, and how noble are melodies when they become expressive instruments of comprehension.[202]

[202] *Al-ṣaḥwah*, Second, with Ahmad Shamsuddin Bin Ahmad (Madrasah Aljunied al-Islamiah, 2011).

No.	Arabic Title	Transliteration	English Translation	Page
1	ما يُقرأ قبل الدرس	Mā yuqraʾ qabl al-dars	What is Read Before Class	1
2	النية قبل الدرس	Al-niyyah qabl al-dars	The Intention Before Class	6
3	ما يُقرأ بعد الدرس	Mā yuqraʾ baʿd al-dars	What is Read After Class	8
4	ما يُقرأ قبل قراءة الكتاب	Mā yuqraʾ qabl qirāʾat al-kitāb	Before Reading the Book	11
5	الورد اللطيف	Al-wird al-laṭīf	The Gentle Litany	12
6	أسماء الحسنى	Asmāʾ al-ḥusnā	The Beautiful Names (of Allāh)	20
7	الصلاة النورية	Al-ṣalāh al-nūriyyah	The Radiant Prayer	22
8	صلاة الشفاء	Ṣalāt al-shifāʾ	The Healing Prayer	23
9	الصلاة البدرية	Al-ṣalāh al-badriyyah	The Full Moon Prayer	24
10	أسماء رسل الله	Asmāʾ rusul Allāh	Names of the Messengers of Allāh	27
11	ذكرى مولد الهادي	Dhikrā mawlid al-Hādī	Remembrance of the Guide's Birth	28
12	مولد المختار	Mawlid al-Mukhtār	The Chosen One's Birth	29
13	بطه المشفع	Bi Ṭāhā al-Muṣhaffaʿ	By Ṭāhā the Intercessor	30
14	خصائص النبي	Khaṣāʾiṣ al-Nabī	The Prophet's Distinctions	31
15	بمولد الهادي	Bimawlid al-Hādī	With the Guide's Birth	33
16	عظم الله حبيبا	ʿAẓẓama Allāhu Ḥabīban	God Has Honoured a Beloved	34
17	مرحباً شرفتمونا	Marḥaban sharraftumūnā	Welcome, You Have Honoured Us	35
18	يا معهداً	Yā maʿhadān	O Institute	36
19	معهدي	Maʿhadī	My Institute	37
20	نشيد مدرسة الجنيد	Nashīd Madrasat al-Juneid	Madrasah Aljunied Anthem	38
21	يا كرام الوافدين	Yā kirām al-wāfidīn	O Noble Visitors	39
22	أهلاً بمن لبى الندا	Ahlan biman labbā al-nidāʾ	Welcome to Those Who Answered the Call	40
23	إلى الأمام	Ilā al-amām	Forward	42
24	نحن شباب الإسلام	Naḥnu shabāb al-Islām	We Are the Youth of Islam	43
25	Kami Pemuda Islam	Kami Pemuda Islam	We Are the Youth of Islam (Malay version)	45
26	تلميذ هيا طلق محيا	Tilmīdh hayyā ṭalqa muḥayyā	Student, Come Brightly	46
27	قم حي سنغافورة	Qum ḥayyi Singāfūrah	Arise, Salute Singapore	47
28	اصبر قليلاً	Iṣbir qalīlan	Be Patient a Little While	48
29	في الصباح الباكر	Fī al-ṣabāḥ al-bākir	In the Early Morning	49
30	غرباء	Ghurabāʾ	Strangers	50
31	فتية الحق	Fityat al-ḥaqq	Youth of the Truth	52
32	معلمنا	Muʿallimnā	Our Teacher	53

Figure 3.1. Table of Contents – Inshād Collection of *Al-ṣaḥwah*
Reference: *Al-ṣaḥwah pp, 61-62.*

The compilation titled *Al-ṣaḥwah*, meaning "The Awakening", was more than a booklet of songs; it embodied a broader educational and spiritual vision. The term *Al-ṣaḥwah*, derived from Arabic, signifies a state of revival or renewed consciousness, often used in Islamic discourse to denote periods of religious and moral resurgence. In the context of Madrasah Aljunied, this title reflected the educators' aspiration to cultivate an awakening within students, not only of their linguistic and artistic capabilities, but of their spiritual identity and communal responsibility. Through curated selections of *duʿāʾ*, *ṣalawāt*, prophetic praise, and school *inshād*, the booklet served as both a pedagogical tool and a spiritual companion, reinforcing the integration of religious values into daily student life. It is within this framework of purposeful revival that the school's renowned *inshād* group would later emerge, carrying forward the ethos of *Al-ṣaḥwah* from page to performance, and from classroom to community.

Building upon this tradition of musically enhanced pedagogy, Madrasah Aljunied extended its commitment to *inshād* beyond the classroom through the formation of a dedicated student vocal ensemble. This group, initially named *Shoutul Jundil Muslim* and later known simply as *Junied*, was composed of students and managed by educators who believed in the transformative power of sacred song. Their *nashīd* performances became a hallmark of school life, sung at the close of recess, during class breaks to recalibrate focus, and on celebratory occasions such as National Day, Teachers' Day, or when welcoming distinguished international scholars. These musical moments were not peripheral entertainment but deeply woven into the fabric of the school's spiritual and cultural ethos.

In 1996, Mr. Mazlan b. Abdullah, the father of a student named Syarafuddeen, initiated a project to professionally record a compilation of the group's *nashīd*. His son, who led as the primary child vocalist, would later achieve national recognition as a *qārī* (Qurʾān reciter), representing Singapore in international *tilāwah* (Qurʾān recital) competitions, and ultimately serving as the executive imām of the historic Sultan Mosque. In a 2024 interview, Ustaz Syarafuddeen recalled the immense public reception to the cassette release, with over 50,000 units sold. These sales not

only amplified the school's reach but also provided financial support for the new building that was completed from 1996-2000.[203]

The group's influence soon extended beyond the school's gates. Former member Ustaz Taufiq Ismail remembered performing on Malay-language national television during fundraising programmes such as *Tabung Amal Aidilfitri*. These broadcasts brought the *inshād* tradition into countless Malay-Muslim homes, where their recordings became cherished background soundtracks for everyday life, echoing with *ṣalawāt* and *dhikr* in living rooms and cars alike. The project even received professional support from Razzi M, a renowned figure from the iconic band Black Dog Bone, who offered studio access and musical guidance, lending a high level of production quality to the recordings.[204]

From 1994 to 2003, the *inshād* group left a lasting legacy, inspiring other institutions such as Madrasah Al-Irsyad to form their own ensemble in 2007, *Irsyadee*, for funding purposes.[205] Following the final cohort associated with the *Junied* recording, individual vocalists such as Shamil Masruhen, initially known for his role as *raʾīs al-istifāf* (leader of the morning assembly and inshād) in school, emerged with solo recordings produced under the auspices of the school.[206] In parallel, student-formed *kompang* (Malay drum) ensembles began to take shape, often performing rhythmic percussive accompaniments to *inshād* during institutional events such as Teacher's Day. These student-led initiatives not only enriched the school's ceremonial culture but also extended beyond the academic setting; many participants have since continued to perform at community events, including weddings and *mawlid* gatherings, contributing to the sustained presence of devotional musical traditions in the broader socio-religious landscape. This example illustrates how co-curricular programming within madrasah education can contribute significantly to students'

[203] National Library Board Singapore, 'Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah at Victoria Lane, between 1927 and 1970', accessed 16 April 2025, https://www.nlb.gov.sg/main/image-detail?cmsuuid=b666f0b1-02fb-43ab-9be5-fb1002f8657b.
[204] *Kisah Ringkas Shoutul Jundil Muslim | Korang Mesti Pernah Dengar Suara Ustaz Ni Fenomena Luar Biasa, Pelajar Madrasah Aljunied Dengan Rakaman Album Nasyid Pertama Yang Dimainkan Di Radio... | By Syukran.Com | Facebook*. Transcript of the interview video.
[205] 'Irsyadee', Irsyadee, 18 February 2014, https://irsyadee.wordpress.com/.
[206] *SYAMIL | MUZIKIIR HATI*, n.d., accessed 6 May 2025, http://www.syamilmasruhen.com/.

interpersonal and spiritual development, while simultaneously enriching the wider community's devotional culture in a secular, multicultural society. One of the group's longest-serving managers, Ustazah Radhiah, who passed away on 9th June 2024, reminded the students that their mission was not to perform for applause, but to move hearts toward invoking blessings upon the Prophet. Their voices, carried through cassette tapes and televised performances, continue to resonate as a quiet yet powerful form of *daʿwah*, rooted in the Sufi-inspired ethos of remembrance.

In addition to its pedagogical innovations, such as the use of *inshād* to engage students with Arabic poetry and morphology, Madrasah Aljunied has long cultivated a rich tradition of co-curricular religious practices aimed at nurturing both spiritual discipline and communal identity. Daily and weekly rhythms of devotion are embedded within the school culture: students are encouraged to perform *ṣalāt al-ḍuḥā* during recess, while congregational *ẓuhr* prayers form part of the institutional routine. Older students in the *thanawī* and *thanawī ʿāliyy* levels also participate in periodic *qiyām al-layl* (night vigils), held alternately for male and female cohorts. On Fridays, the gendered division of spiritual activities reflects broader pedagogical intentions: male students proceed to *ṣalāt al-jumʿah* at historically significant mosques such as the Sultan Mosque, built in 1824 under Sultan Hussein Shah[207] and emblematic of Singapore's only Malay sultanate[208], or the Malabar Mosque, inaugurated in 1963 and managed by descendants of the Malabar Muslim community from Kerala, India[209]. Meanwhile, female students remain on campus for collective *tilāwah* (Qurʾān recital), reinforcing Qurʾānic fluency and sisterhood bonding. Female students also participate in community engagement through biannual *Tabung Jumʿah* donation drives, during which they are stationed at various mosques, under

[207] 'Sultan Mosque (Masjid) Singapore | Kampong Gelam Landmark', accessed 6 May 2025, https://www.visitsingapore.com/neighbourhood/featured-neighbourhood/kampong-gelam/sultan-mosque/.
[208] Elmizulkarnain, '"The Last Sultan of Singapore." — by Dr Elmi Zulkarnain Osman', *Medium*, 13 February 2024, https://medium.com/@elmizulkarnain/the-last-sultan-of-singapore-by-dr-elmi-zulkarnain-osman-cc9868b3c1d8.
[209] 'Malabar Mosque', accessed 6 May 2025, https://www.nlb.gov.sg/main/article-detail?cmsuuid=41c1404c-eea3-4faa-8f02-29867622e094.

licenses issued by MUIS, to collect charitable contributions from Friday congregants[210].

These practices are further enriched by the madrasah's large-scale annual events, most notably its *Mawlid al-Nabī* celebration, which invites the participation of students' families, alumni, staff, and members of the wider Muslim public. This event often coincides with the institution's *biryani amal*, a charitable fundraising initiative involving the communal preparation and distribution of meals. In earlier decades, Madrasah Aljunied also hosted *ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā* sacrificial rites (*qurbān*) within its school grounds, providing both a sacred experience and an opportunity for community fundraising. However, with the introduction of more stringent animal welfare and halal compliance regulations by the Singapore Food Agency (SFA), which now certifies only six out of seventy-two mosques to conduct *qurbān*, such rituals have been relocated. Today, most halal meat is sourced from certified abattoirs in Australia, where the bulk of Singapore's poultry is also imported.[211] Despite regulatory changes, the madrasah continues to play a vital role in sustaining spiritual consciousness and fostering community cohesion within Singapore's secular and pluralistic society.

In conclusion, the integration of Bā ʿAlawī Sufism into the fabric of madrasah education reveals a holistic framework that transcends doctrinal instruction to shape character, spiritual orientation, and communal responsibility. By prioritising *sharīʿah*-based knowledge while simultaneously nurturing spiritual refinement and ethical conduct, the Bā ʿAlawī paradigm offers a comprehensive model of Islamic education. This framework extends beyond the classroom through extra-curricular activities and a distinct pedagogical ethos rooted in *sulūk* (spiritual discipline), fostering environments where students not only learn but are transformed. The incorporation of transformational leadership principles further demonstrates how

[210] 'Muis Launches Public Education and Fund-Raising Portal to Support Madrasahs', *The Straits Times* (Singapore), 4 December 2020, https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/muis-launches-public-education-and-fundraising-portal-to-support-madrasahs.
[211] 'Modified Korban Ritual to Be Organised by Mosques This Year | Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura', accessed 6 May 2025, https://www.muis.gov.sg/resources/media-releases/08-jun-20-modified-korban-ritual-to-be-organised-by-mosques-this-year.

institutional culture is shaped by values of compassion, excellence, and participatory engagement. Together, these educational and spiritual strategies exemplify how Bā ʿAlawī Sufism continues to influence and revitalise religious instruction in a modern educational context, ensuring its relevance and resilience in nurturing future generations.

3.3. Contemporary Relevance and Challenges

In examining the contemporary moment, the study has shown that the Bā ʿAlawī tradition faces both renewed opportunities and complex challenges. Continued engagement with Bā ʿAlawī scholars from Hadhramaut ensures the transmission of authoritative knowledge chains (*sanad*), preserving the epistemological integrity of the *ṭarīqa*. At the same time, institutional developments, such as the Joint Madrasah System, have introduced new structural realities that both align with and occasionally challenge traditional modes of instruction and identity formation.

The role of the *ṭarīqa* among younger generations is undergoing a quiet transformation. While the ethical teachings of Bā ʿAlawī Sufism remain central, there is an urgent need to rearticulate the *ṭarīqa* as a dynamic path of character cultivation (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) and moral formation (*taʾdīb*), particularly for adolescents entering pivotal stages of self-awareness and responsibility. The practice of *muraqabah*, a spiritual discipline of self-vigilance and God-consciousness, offers a powerful framework for guiding youth through the turbulence of puberty and emerging adulthood. By integrating such inner practices into educational routines, the *ṭarīqa* can continue to serve as a source of clarity, anchoring, and ethical orientation amid the competing influences of secular modernity and plural social settings.

3.3.1. Bridging Traditions: Continued Relations with the Bā ʿAlawī *sāda* Scholars from Hadhramaut

Since its formative years, Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah has welcomed a distinguished array of international scholars. Among the notable visitors was former

Egyptian President Anwar Sadāt, who visited the institution in 1955 during a transit stop en route to the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung. Decades later, in 2006, al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Sayyid Tantawi, then Grand Imām of Al-Azhar, delivered the inaugural MUIS Lecture during his visit to Singapore,[212] further affirming the enduring relationship between Madrasah Aljunied and the scholarly tradition of Al-Azhar University.

This connection continued to flourish through the appointment of Azhar-trained scholars to the Madrasah's faculty. Following the era of pioneering Ḥaḍramī scholars such as Shaykh Abdullah Balfaqīh, the institution continued to host a number of esteemed educators for extended periods. These included Indonesian scholars such as Ustaz Bahar and Ustaz Sandisi, as well as Ustaz Jum'ah from Egypt.

A particularly prominent figure in this lineage was Shaykh Abdel Maqsud Elsayed Elsayed, an erudite Egyptian scholar from Al-Azhar University, who joined Madrasah Aljunied in 1989 and remained there until his passing in 2011. Shaykh Abdel Maqsud was celebrated for his encyclopaedic command of the Islamic sciences. He delivered lessons entirely from memory, without reliance on textbooks, and was renowned for his poetic eloquence in Arabic prose, often composed spontaneously. When asked about this rare gift, he humbly claimed not to know its source, reflecting his deep humility.[213]

Beyond teaching, Shaykh Abdel Maqsud leveraged his strong ties with Al-Azhar to advocate for the institutional recognition of other local madrasahs, including Madrasah Wak Tanjong and Madrasah Al-Maʿarif Al-Islamiah. Previously, students from these schools were required to transfer to Madrasah Aljunied or study abroad in order to qualify for Al-Azhar admission. His efforts enabled students to complete their pre-university education locally while still maintaining access to Al-Azhar's undergraduate programs. In 2010, he extended similar assistance to Sekolah Ugama

[212] 'Transcript of the Inaugural Muis Lecture', Issuu, 26 April 2019, https://issuu.com/muisacademy/docs/dvp_2006_content.
[213] Webmaster, *Abdel Maqsud Elsayed Elsayed | Singapore's Past Ulama*, 29 March 2013, https://ibnyahya.com/2011/abdel-maqsud-elsayed-elsayed/.

Radin Mas in seeking recognition in the fields of *tahfīẓ* (memorisation) and qirāʾāt (the canonical modes of Qurʾānic recitation), securing a preliminary agreement that unfortunately remained unrealised due to a lack of follow-up before his passing. Shaykh Abdel Maqsud passed away in Singapore on 19 February 2011, following a cerebral haemorrhage after returning from a brief visit to Egypt. His remains were returned to his homeland and interred in his family's burial plot. May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him. [214]

The institution's prestige and enduring ties with Al-Azhar were notably affirmed during the visit of the Grand Imām of Al-Azhar and Chairman of the Muslim Council of Elders, His Eminence Dr. Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, to Madrasah Aljunied on 4th May 2018. Invited by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Dr. Al-Tayyeb's visit was part of a broader Singapore engagement from 3rd to 5th May, which included meetings with President Halimah Yacob, Prime Minister Lee, and Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean. These high-level engagements reaffirmed the longstanding collaboration between Al-Azhar University and Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS) in advancing religious education for Singapore's Muslim community.[215]

At Madrasah Aljunied, Dr. Al-Tayyeb met with the school's leadership, reviewed its curriculum, and engaged in meaningful dialogue with faculty and students, many of whom are Al-Azhar alumni. He praised the Madrasah as a "blessed seedling" eagerly awaited by Al-Azhar to flourish and grow. Emphasising the Azharite methodology, he encouraged students and alumni to uphold principles of pluralism, intellectual openness, and social harmony. Stressing Islam's enduring message of peace, he urged the community to embody these values in daily life and maintain constructive societal engagement. [216]

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[214] Webmaster, *Abdel Maqsud Elsayed Elsayed | Singapore's Past Ulama*.

[215] 'MFA Press Statement: Visit to Singapore by His Eminence Dr Ahmed Al Tayyeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, 3 to 5 May 2018', accessed 27 May 2025, http://www.mfa.gov.sg/Newsroom/Press-Statements-Transcripts-and-Photos/2018/05/20180505-GrandImamVisit.

[216] 'الإمام الأكبر يزور مدرسة الجنيد الإسلامية ويلتقى خريجى الأزهر فى سنغافورة', accessed 27 May 2025, https://sis.gov.eg/Story/166108?lang=ar.

In addition to delivering the MUIS Lecture titled *The Unifying Force of Religion*, Dr. Al-Tayyeb engaged in interfaith dialogues with religious and community leaders, highlighting religion's vital role in fostering unity and social cohesion. He also pledged ongoing support for Madrasah Aljunied and other Islamic schools in Singapore by offering scholarships, thus reinforcing the robust educational bridge between Singapore and Al-Azhar University.[217]

While the continuity of the Azharite intellectual tradition at Madrasah Aljunied is maintained through the institutional presence of Azhar-affiliated scholars and periodic visits by distinguished academics, the spiritual lifeblood of the institution remains deeply intertwined with the enduring legacy of the Bā ʿAlawī *ṭarīqa*. This legacy is animated not only through curriculum and pedagogy, but also through the living presence of transregional spiritual leadership, particularly the Southeast Asian *daʿwah* activities of leading Ḥabāʾib scholars from Hadhramaut.

A prominent figure in this spiritual revival is al-Ḥabīb ʿUmar b. Ḥafīẓ, a Yemeni scholar whose *daʿwah* efforts across Southeast Asia have revitalised Bā ʿAlawī pedagogy and practice. His visits to Singapore in 2008, 2012, 2016[218], and 2019[219] including his engagements with Madrasah Aljunied[220], represent more than ceremonial stops; they are part of a deliberate transregional spiritual linkage, reaffirming the genealogical and ethical connections between Southeast Asia and Hadhramaut. In these visits, Ḥabīb ʿUmar not only delivered public sermons but also engaged in closed-door sessions with local scholars, providing ethical and spiritual

[217] 'الإمام الأكبر يزور مدرسة الجنيد الإسلامية ويلتقى خريجى الأزهر فى سنغافورة'.

[218] *Al-Wasatiyyah Fil Islam (Moderation in Islam) by Sayyidil Habib Umar Bin Hafiz*, directed by Muwasolah SG, 2016, 01:15:04, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bFuR6lxxnIQ.

[219] *Rehlah Al Habib Umar Bin Hafidz Ke Singapura 2019*, directed by Muwasolah SG, 2019, 08:06, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HxBM-PiEr-g.

[220] 'Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah - MAA FB Page - Jum'uah Mubarakah! Today's Hadith Is about Our Relationships with the Elders, the Children and Our Muslim Scholars. Let's Be a Part of the Ummah of Rasulullah ﷺ by Always Respecting Our Elders, Being Merciful to the Children and Giving Our Scholars Their Due Rights. Surely, Adab Is Very Important for Every Muslim Because It Represents the Fundamentals of Success in Dunia and Akhirah. This Picture Was Taken in 2018 during the Visit of Habib Umar Bin Hafiz. Pictured Is Our School's Ustaz, Ustaz Ahmad Shamsuddin with Former Mufti Sheikh Syed Isa Semait Who Was a Former Student of Madrasah Aljunied. May Allah Bless Our Teachers and Scholars. | Facebook', accessed 28 May 2025, https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=3960303670657775&set=a.2368833576471467.

counsel aligned with the Bā ʿAlawī tradition. His recent *daʿwah* tour was followed by al-Ḥabīb Kāẓim as-Saqqāf's visit, who likewise paid a special visit to Madrasah Aljunied, affirming its foundational ties to the Bā ʿAlawī scholarly heritage.[221]

These efforts are not limited to male scholarship. In tandem with these formal engagements, gatherings for women, often led by Umm Sālim, the wife of Ḥabīb ʿUmar, and other elder sāda women, convene throughout Singapore and neighbouring countries. These sessions, which blend *tausiyah* (spiritual reminder) and *qasāʾid* (devotional poetry), reflect the gender-inclusive transmission of the Bā ʿAlawī path. More than nostalgic performances, they represent the active continuation of a living tradition, one that is devotional, ethical, and pedagogically grounded in centuries of prophetic inheritance.

The roots of this regional revival can be traced to post-unification Yemen in the early 1990s. After decades of socialist suppression in South Yemen, the unification of the country allowed for a resurgence of religious life, including the rehabilitation of Sufi institutions and shrines. In this climate, Ḥabīb ʿUmar emerged as a leading voice defending the Bā ʿAlawī tradition against the encroachments of Salafism, which had gained significant ideological and financial backing from Saudi Arabia. He was recognised not merely as an orator but as a reviver (*mujaddid*) of the ethical and scholarly legacy of the Bā ʿAlawī way.[222]

In 1993, an Indonesian delegation led by al-Ḥabīb Muhammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-Ḥabshī visited Hadhramaut, seeking to reconnect with the spiritual roots of their ancestors. It was during this visit that the Bā ʿAlawī elders of Hadhramaut appointed Ḥabīb ʿUmar to return to Southeast Asia as a spiritual envoy. His speeches across Indonesia captivated audiences, and upon returning to Yemen he was accompanied by a cohort of forty young Southeast Asian students. This cohort later formed the

[221] 'On Thursday, 8 May... - Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah - MAA FB Page | Facebook', accessed 2 June 2025, https://www.facebook.com/madrasahaljuniedalislamiah/posts/pfbid02P2M6wLoa1huDR7rUkBJvC8nNN4oEhG8wmoxHqNHSJhsKaGfvpQvrXGTZKCfhj4W4l?locale=es_ES.

[222] Alexander Knysh, 'The "Tariqa" on a Landcruiser: The Resurgence of Sufism in Yemen', *Middle East Institute*, Middle East Journal, vol. 55, no. 3 (2001): 406.

nucleus of *Dār al-Mustafa* in Tarīm, established in 1996 as an international seminary grounded in Bā ʿAlawī epistemology and adab.[223] The roots of this revival are anchored in the socio-political transformations of Yemen itself. Habīb ʿUmar descends from the ancient *sāda* family of Shaykh Abū Bakr b. Sālim of the city of ʿInāt. His father, a prominent sayyid scholar, disappeared under suspicious circumstances during the political purges orchestrated by the South Yemeni socialist regime in the early 1970s and is widely believed to have been assassinated by state agents. The young al-Ḥabīb ʿUmar was relocated to Bayḍāʾ, where he was raised among relatives before later migrating to Saudi Arabia to complete his religious education. After the unification of Yemen in 1990, a broader state-sanctioned restoration of Sufi institutions took place in reaction to the ideological dominance of Salafism, particularly that exported by Saudi Arabia. In this post-socialist context, Ḥabīb ʿUmar returned to Hadhramaut and emerged as one of the foremost defenders of Sufi orthodoxy and the Bā ʿAlawī scholarly tradition.[224]

The impact of *Dār al-Mustafa* and its women's wing, *Dār al-Zahraʾ*, founded in 1999 by his wife, was immense. Students from across Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and even Western countries began studying there, many returning to their homelands as *daʿīs*, educators, and imāms. These graduates established local *majālis taʿlīm* (study circles) and spiritual gatherings that not only transmitted the ʿilm they acquired but also revived the *ḥāl*, the internal state of presence and devotion, that characterises the Bā ʿAlawī path.[225]

Thus, the visits of Ḥabīb ʿUmar and other Ḥabāʾib scholars to Singapore are not isolated events but deeply embedded in a broader movement to rekindle the spiritual inheritance of the Bā ʿAlawī *sāda* in Southeast Asia. They serve as bridges reconnecting urban Muslim communities with the sources of spiritual authority

[223] Ismail Fajtrie Alatas, 'The Poetics of Pilgrimage: Assembling Contemporary Indonesian Pilgrimage to Ḥaḍramawt, Yemen', *Cambridge University Press*, Comparative Studies in Society and History, vol. 58, no. 3 (2016): 612.
[224] Knysh, 'The "Tariqa" on a Landcruiser: The Resurgence of Sufism in Yemen', 406.
[225] Alatas, 'The Poetics of Pilgrimage: Assembling Contemporary Indonesian Pilgrimage to Ḥaḍramawt, Yemen', 612.

rooted in Hadhramaut, and reinvigorate institutions such as Madrasah Aljunied, which were founded upon these very principles.

In the current context, where Islamic education in Singapore is increasingly subject to pedagogical reform and epistemic restructuring, the role of these visiting Ḥabāʾib becomes even more crucial. They act not merely as teachers but as stewards of an intellectual and spiritual tradition, complementing the formal Azharite curriculum with the ethical-spiritual force of prophetic inheritance. In this model, Al-Azhar provides *taʿlīm* (instruction), while the Bā ʿAlawī path sustains *tarbiyah* (moral formation), ensuring that knowledge is not only understood but lived.

The Ḥabāʾib have also maintained strong ties with Madrasah Alsagoff, recognising its historic affiliation with the Bā ʿAlawī tradition. Under the stewardship of its former principal, who is now a board chairman, Ustaz Syed Mustafa Alsagoff, a devoted local Bā ʿAlawī scholar deeply committed to traditional Islamic education, the institution offered a holistic, modern and innovative yet spiritually grounded curriculum tailored for young women.[226] In addition to reinforcing the values of the Bā ʿAlawī *tarbiyah*, during his tenure, Ustaz Syed Mustafa organised a study trip for the diploma students of Madrasah Alsagoff to Dār al-Zahrāʾ in Tarīm. These immersive experiences allowed the students to internalise the spiritual disciplines and *adab* (ethical refinement) of the Bā ʿAlawī path, fostering a moral and spiritual grounding that would later shape their personal and communal lives.

The presence of Al-Azhar-affiliated scholars at Madrasah Aljunied serves as a vital mechanism for preserving the integrity of its curriculum and upholding the Azharite

[226] 'Madrasah Alsagoff Al-Arabiah on Instagram: "We Are Heartened to Announce That Ustaz Syed Mustafa Alsagoff Will Be Helming the Madrasah Alsagoff Al-Arabiah Management Committee as Chairman of the Board from 2024 to 2026. Ustaz Syed Mustafa Is No Stranger to the Madrasah and Was Previously the Mudir of Madrasah Alsagoff for 12 Years before Handing over the Reins to Ustazah Asyunifar Abu Back in January 2023. He Was Also Part of the Madrasah's Management Committee Serving as Its General Secretary during the Previous Board Term. We Wish Ustaz Syed Mustafa All the Very Best in Leading the New Board to Greater Heights and in Helping to Steer the Direction of the Madrasah in Producing Students Exemplary of the 'Ummahatul Mukminin'. Here Are Some of His Thoughts and Hopes for Madrasah Alsagoff. Marha! Marha! #madrasahalsagoff #madrasahalsagoffofficial #announcement"', Instagram, 5 January 2024, https://www.instagram.com/madrasahalsagoffofficial/p/C1tG8wCL-tT/.

manhaj wasatiyyah (moderate methodology), ensuring intellectual continuity rooted in scholarly rigor and pluralism. Complementing this, the enduring relationship with the *Bāʿalawī* Ḥabāʾib provides a spiritual axis around which the institution orbits, offering not only guidance but also serving as a living conduit of *barakah* (divine grace). Together, these dual lineages, both intellectual and spiritual, have underpinned the Madrasah's ongoing relevance and blessed continuity in nurturing generations of scholars, teachers, and community leaders.

3.3.2. Evaluating the Joint Madrasah System: Implications on the Bāʿalawī Pedagogical and Educational Framework

Following Singapore's independence in 1965, the number of Islamic madrasahs rose significantly. By 1966, there were between 50 and 60 such institutions, predominantly offering primary-level education to a growing population of Malay-Muslim students. However, the quality of education across these institutions was uneven, prompting widespread calls for reform in the decades that followed.[227]

In the late 1990s, concerns were raised about madrasah students' ability to meet evolving national academic standards. Multiple studies have indicated that the Muslim minority in Singapore trails behind in educational attainment, which in turn places them at a social, economic, and political disadvantage. In discussions about madrasah education, employability frequently emerges as a concern: critics argue that because madrasah graduates often possess a narrower skill set, exhibit lower academic performance, and experience higher dropout rates, they are more likely to struggle with job prospects, including securing well-paid positions.[228]

Despite these drawbacks, many Muslim parents still enrol their children in madrasahs for a stronger religious grounding. In Singapore, where Islam and the

[227] Min Fui Chee, 'The Historical Evolution of Madrasah Education in Singapore', in *The Historical Evolution of Madrasah Education in Singapore*, ed. Noor Aisha Abdul Rahman and Lai Ah Eng (Marshall Cavendish International Ptd Ltd, 2006), 13.
[228] Steiner, 'Madrasah in Singapore: Tradition and Modernity in Religious Education', 2011, 52.

Malay-Muslim identity are politically sensitive,[229] critics argue that madrasah graduates are less employable because the curricula emphasise rote learning and memorisation of the Qurʾān, Arabic grammar, and classical *fiqh* over modern skills such as critical thinking, bilingual fluency, and scientific literacy.[230] Traditional methods, *talaqqī mushāfahah* (literally, learning mouth to mouth), (a continuous chain of teaching and learning leading back to the Prophet), and *ijazah* (accreditation and recognition of achievement having learnt through a chain of scholarship), preserve authenticity but leave little room for transferable skills, emphasising creativity, critical thinking, communication, problem-solving, collaboration, and digital literacy demanded by today's economy.[231]

However, these pedagogical shortcomings stem not only from outdated teaching but also from deep-seated resistance to reform within parts of the madrasah system, as claimed by the external observers, and chronic underfunding, which together hinder curricular modernisation and teacher development.[232] In response to the socio-political and economic imperatives of a modernising state, the Singapore government, under the People's Action Party (PAP), began pushing for a national education framework that emphasised integration, employability, and social cohesion.[233] This necessitated significant changes to madrasah curricula, especially to ensure students would meet national benchmarks such as the PSLE introduced under the Compulsory Education Act 2000.[234]

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[229] Steiner, 'Madrasah in Singapore: Tradition and Modernity in Religious Education', 2011, 53.

[230] Noor Aisha Abdul Rahman, 'The Aims of Madrasah Education in Singapore: Problems and Perceptions', in *Secularism and Spirituality: Seeking Integrated Knowledge and Success in Madrasah Education in Singapore*, ed. Noor Aisha Abdul Rahman and Lai Ah Eng (Marshall Cavendish International Ptd Ltd, 2006), 60.

[231] Azhar Ibrahim, 'An Evaluation of Madrasah Education: Perspectives and Lessons from the Experiences of Some Muslim Societies', in *Secularism and Spirituality: Seeking Integrated Knowledge and Success in Madrasah Education in Singapore*, ed. Noor Aisha Abdul Rahman and Lai Ah Eng (Marshall Cavendish International Ptd Ltd, 2006), 95–96.

[232] Kerstin Steiner, 'Madrasah in Singapore: Tradition and Modernity in Religious Education', *IIUM Press*, Intellectual Discourse, no. 19 (2011): 41–70.

[233] Singapore Press Release, 'Speech by Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew to the Singapore Press Club on Friday, 7 June 1996 at Raffles Place Hotel "Picking up the Gauntlet: Will Singapore Survive Lee Kuan Yew?"', 7 June 1996, https://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/data/pdfdoc/069-1996-06-07_lky.pdf.

[234] Steiner, 'Madrasah in Singapore: Tradition and Modernity in Religious Education', 2011, 59–60. Steiner elaborated on the developments leading to the inclusion of madrasah students in this compulsion.

To align madrasah education with broader national goals, the MUIS spearheaded reforms in administration, curriculum, and teacher quality. A key initiative was the Curriculum Development Project (CDP), launched in 1998. Initially envisioned as an Arabic-medium reform for Primary one to six, it shifted to English after setbacks, with curriculum development outsourced to IQRA International Foundation (USA). While some madrasahs such as Al-Maʿarif and Al-Irsyad adopted the new curriculum in full, others like Aljunied implemented it partially, and institutions like Alsagoff declined its adoption altogether.[235]

The 2000s also saw the institutionalisation of teacher accreditation through the ARS, enhancing the professional standards of Islamic educators.[236] Further reforms culminated in the launch of the JMS in 2009, streamlining educational pathways: Madrasah Irsyad serves as the primary-level feeder school, while Madrasah Aljunied and Al-Arabiah specialise in Islamic studies and general academic pathways, respectively. This model allowed specialisation while maintaining religious depth and academic rigour. More recently, Madrasah Aljunied introduced the IB Diploma Programme in 2019, marking a notable shift towards globally recognised standards while retaining its traditional Aliyah stream for students aspiring to further Islamic education at institutions like Al-Azhar University.[237] Overall, the trajectory of madrasah education in Singapore reflects a dynamic negotiation between tradition and modernity, shaped by policy interventions, community expectations, and the dual imperative of religious authenticity and national integration.

The implementation of the JMS has introduced significant pedagogical and epistemological tensions, particularly in the transmission of Arabic and core Islamic sciences. One of the most pressing concerns is the erosion of Arabic language proficiency at the primary level, where curricular restructuring, especially in

[235] Steiner, 'Madrasah in Singapore: Tradition and Modernity in Religious Education', 2011, 57–58.
[236] Steiner, 'Madrasah in Singapore: Tradition and Modernity in Religious Education', 2011, 60–63.
[237] 'Madrasah_Education_Booklet_2025.Pdf', n.d., accessed 22 May 2025, https://isomer-user-content.by.gov.sg/48/812f47a6-2e57-4df9-99dc-7ef2b2b2dae5/Madrasah_Education_Booklet_2025.pdf.

Madrasah Irsyad, the designated feeder school, has replaced Arabic-medium instruction with Islamic Studies modules delivered primarily in English.[238] This shift has diluted the immersive linguistic environment once essential for developing fluency and accessing classical Islamic texts in their original language.

Despite the formalisation of the JMS as a collaborative strategy for educational reform, its implementation was met with internal resistance, particularly from senior *asatizah* and Heads of Departments within Madrasah Aljunied. Concerns were raised, especially by the Arabic Language and Islamic Studies departments, regarding the long-term pedagogical consequences of the reform, which was perceived to dilute the transmission of traditional Islamic sciences and compromise the institution's established religious ethos. Nevertheless, negotiations with policy authorities did not result in significant concessions. By 2015, the final phase of JMS was enacted: Madrasah Aljunied ceased enrolling primary-level cohorts, Madrasah Irsyad graduated its last secondary batch, and the first intake of JMS secondary students, predominantly from Madrasah Irsyad primary six batch of 2014 who was prepared since 2009 when they were primary one,[239] with some from Madrasah Al-Maʿarif, began their transition.

These changes were implemented despite persistent concerns voiced by senior educators from the Arabic and Islamic Studies leadership at Madrasah Aljunied, who foresaw the pedagogical implications of weakening early Arabic instruction. Concerns were expressed particularly about the erosion of content depth and linguistic rigour. The apprehension was that shifting the feeder system to schools with weaker Arabic foundations, such as Madrasah Irsyad, would impair the continuity of classical Islamic learning. Senior *asatizah* cautioned that students entering secondary education under the JMS would lack not only grammatical and lexical fluency, but also the spiritual discipline traditionally cultivated in the early

[238] Steiner, 'Madrasah in Singapore: Tradition and Modernity in Religious Education', 2011, 62.
[239] preferred not to be disclose, 'The First JMS Secondary One Batch Intake 2015 Student Who Graduated from Madrasah Al-Irsyad 2014 Primary 6 Batch.', 28 May 2025.

years of madrasah education. These concerns, although noted, however, went largely unaddressed in the broader implementation of the JMS model.

This institutional restructuring was accompanied by a curricular overhaul guided by an integrated knowledge framework. Arabic language textbooks were redesigned to include introductory modules on *naḥw* (grammar) and *ṣarf* (morphology), while Islamic jurisprudence materials incorporated elements of *uṣūl al-fiqh* and *qawāʿid fiqhiyyah* (legal maxims), contextualised within Singapore's multicultural setting, for example, composition (*insyāʾ*) texts were localised to reflect the nation's social fabric. These changes reflect broader pedagogical reform efforts aimed at reconciling epistemic tradition with contemporary educational imperatives. However, this integrated model posed challenges for curriculum delivery and depth, particularly in foundational linguistic and conceptual competencies.

In response to these challenges, curriculum redevelopment became a critical priority, particularly for the Arabic component of the JMS framework. At the forefront of this effort were Ustaz Bahar and the late Ustazah Fatimah of Madrasah Aljunied, who were tasked with overseeing the redesign of the Arabic language curriculum across the joint system. Their responsibility extended beyond their own institution, as they played a central role in shaping the Arabic pedagogical framework for the entire JMS structure. Their work involved not only content revision but also the transformation of instructional delivery to meet the demands of a blended learning environment. A substantial portion of the material was digitalised, enabling greater accessibility and flexibility, while still striving to maintain classical rigour and linguistic precision. Their efforts reflect a deep commitment to ensuring the sustainability of Arabic language education within a modernised institutional framework, despite the structural limitations and epistemic compromises inherent in the integrated JMS model.

Drawing from the author's experience as a student during the pre-JMS era (2004-2012), as well as years of tutoring both pre-JMS and JMS-era students at the primary and secondary levels, this decline in Arabic competency is both stark and

measurable. Students from Madrasah Aljunied during the pre-JMS period were introduced to essential linguistic tools, such as *iʿrāb* (grammatical inflexion/case endings) and *tashkīl* (diacritical marks/vowelisation), through a structured curriculum in *naḥw*, fostering functional grammatical literacy. In contrast, post-JMS students, especially those coming from Madrasah Irsyad, encounter *naḥw* in a largely rote manner, often divorced from conceptual foundations. Similar weaknesses are evident in other supporting sciences such as *ṣarf*, *tafsīr*, and *ḥadīth*, placing a heavier remedial burden on secondary level *asatizah*, who are required to bridge gaps that earlier models had already addressed. This regression is particularly concerning in light of cognitive development research, as middle childhood represents a crucial neurological window, particularly in the brain's Wernicke's area, which is highly receptive to complex language input[240].

While Madrasah Irsyad's institutional mission, "For God, For Humanity", and its values of *Imān* (faith), *Iḥsān* (compassion), and *Itqān* (excellence) align with broader Islamic educational aims,[241] its pedagogical orientation toward civic engagement and accessibility has impacted its capacity to deliver specialised Islamic instruction with the linguistic and disciplinary depth characteristic of more traditional institutions like Madrasah Aljunied. The school's 50:50 curriculum model,[242] balancing religious and secular studies often leads to surface-level engagement with Islamic disciplines. Although this model enhances contextual relevance, such as integrating Singapore's multicultural reality into writing assignments, it risks flattening the intellectual distinctions that are central to the Islamic scholarly tradition.

Another major pedagogical shift under the JMS is the introduction of a spiral curriculum model. The adoption of the spiral curriculum is likely driven by a broader push toward integration across disciplines. As Harden and Stamper mentioned,

[240] Yuji Uchiyama et al., 'Functional Segregation of the Inferior Frontal Gyrus for Syntactic Processes: A Functional Magnetic-Resonance Imaging Study', *Neuroscience Research* 61, no. 3 (2008): 309–18, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neures.2008.03.013.
[241] 'Vision, Mission, Values – Madrasah Irsyad Zuhri Al-Islamiah', accessed 29 May 2025, https://irsyad.edu.sg/vision-mission-values/.
[242] *MIZA History – Madrasah Irsyad Zuhri Al-Islamiah,* n.d., accessed 4 June 2025, https://irsyad.edu.sg/miza-history/.

"*There is a growing tendency, however, to break down barriers or boundaries between courses and departments and to look at the overall aims or objectives of the curriculum. It is in this context that the concept of a spiral curriculum has particular relevance*."[243] First conceptualised by Jerome Bruner in 1960, he went to described it as a curriculum involving the repeated exploration of key topics, subjects, or themes over the course of study, with each revisit designed to build upon and expand earlier understanding.[244] Rather than merely repeating content, this approach progressively deepens students' knowledge with each subsequent engagement. This approach, while rooted in contemporary educational theory, yields mixed outcomes in the context of Islamic studies. The model introduces specific themes, such as *ikrām al-jār* (honouring one's neighbour), early on and revisits them in greater analytical depth over subsequent years. Additionally, the spiral model is applied both intra- and inter-disciplinarily. For example, a topic like *tawbah* (repentance) may appear across *tafsīr, ḥadīth,* and *fiqh,* aligning with the epistemological ideal of *tawḥīd al-maʿrifah* (unification of knowledge) and promoting what may be termed an 'intellectual aestheticism'.[245]

However, empirical observations and interviews reveal that in practice, this approach often results in content narrowing. The repeated emphasis on a limited set of themes has restricted students' exposure to a broader range of Islamic content, such as diverse *ḥadīth,* advanced jurisprudential reasoning, or historical contexts. As Dr. Nadeem Memon cautions, the spiral model, when misapplied, can cause "key content

[243] R.M Harden and N. Stamper, 'What Is a Spiral Curriculum?', *Carafex Publishing (Taylor & Francis Group),* Medical Teacher, vol. 21, no. 2 (1999): 141.
[244] Harden and Stamper, 'What Is a Spiral Curriculum?', 141. Jerome Bruner in his words regarding spiral curriculum described: "*I was struck by the fact that successful efforts to teach highly structured bodies of knowledge like mathematics, physical sciences, and even the eld of history often took the form of a metamorphic spiral in which at some simple level a set of ideas or operations were introduced in a rather intuitive way and, once mastered in that spirit, were then revisited and reconstrued in a more formal or operational way, then being connected with other knowledge, the mastery at this stage then being carried one step higher to a new level of formal or operational rigour and to a broader level of abstraction and comprehensiveness. The end state of this process was eventual mastery of the connexity and structure of a large body of knowledge.*" Read more on Spiral Curriculum by Harden, R.M, and N. Stamper. "What Is a Spiral Curriculum?" *Carafex Publishing (Taylor & Francis Group),* Medical Teacher, 21, no. 2 (1999): 141–43.
[245] An educator who delivered the JMS curriculum in Madrasah Aljunied, 'Spiral Curriculum and Thematic Content of JMS Curriculum with Examples', 30 May 2025.

and concepts in Islamic education to be stretched out to the detriment of mastery," undermining both depth and breadth.[246]

This spiral approach contrasts sharply with the traditional mastery-based model, where each subject builds concentrically around a clearly defined core, *ʿaqīdah*, *fiqh*, *ḥadīth*, *naḥw*, and *ṣarf*, developing in both depth and complexity. The decline in content-rich instruction under the JMS model diminishes both the content base and the epistemological clarity students require to engage with the full scope of the Islamic intellectual tradition.[247] Graduates of this system, therefore, risk lacking comprehensive strength in the Islamic sciences, not due to a lack of instruction, but because their learning has been confined to a narrow thematic curriculum. The multiplicity and richness of classical Islamic content are significantly reduced. [248]

This concern extends into the epistemological domain. Traditional Islamic pedagogy organises knowledge into clearly defined disciplines, each governed by internal principles and methodologies. These are encapsulated in the classical framework of the *Mabādiʾ al-ʿAsharah*, the Ten Foundational Principles of any Islamic science:[249]

i. Name of the science
ii. Its definition
iii. Its subject matter
iv. Its fruits (benefits)
v. Its virtue
vi. Its relationship with other sciences
vii. Founders or leading scholars
viii. Its sources
ix. Its legal status
x. Core topics addressed

While this framework may be formally taught only in pre-university levels, traditional pedagogy fosters an implicit awareness of these distinctions from early

[246] Nadeem Memon, 'Rethinking Curriculum Mapping in Islamic Studies', Centre for Islamic Thought & Education (University of South Australia), n.d.
[247] An educator who delivered the JMS curriculum in Madrasah Aljunied, 'Spiral Curriculum and Thematic Content of JMS Curriculum with Examples', 30 May 2025.
[248] Memon, 'Rethinking Curriculum Mapping in Islamic Studies'.
[249] 'Al Mabadi Al Asharah English 2 | PDF | Hadith | Quran', Scribd, accessed 29 May 2025, https://www.scribd.com/document/271693407/Al-Mabadi-Al-Asharah-English-2.

on. By embedding Islamic subjects into an undifferentiated, integrated curriculum, the JMS model risks collapsing these boundaries. Interviews with graduates from the inaugural JMS secondary cohort reveal confusion regarding disciplinary distinctions; many were unable to differentiate between subjects such as *uṣūl al-fiqh* and *qawāʿid fiqhiyyah*, perceiving them as overlapping or indistinct.

To mitigate these issues, some classically trained *asatizah* have proactively allocated dedicated instructional time for *naḥw* and *ṣarf*, supplementing with additional notes and references. However, these efforts are often ad hoc and depend heavily on the initiative of individual teachers, rather than systemic curriculum design. Concurrently, the depth of content in textbooks has also declined, and the traditional emphasis on memorisation, a cornerstone of internalising and preserving sacred knowledge, has been weakened.

The dilution of Arabic instruction, particularly at the primary level under JMS, signals not only a loss in technical language acquisition but a broader epistemic rupture. In the Bāʿalawī tradition, Arabic is not merely a medium of instruction; it is the vessel of revelation, the key to interpretive sciences, and the linguistic matrix in which *adab* (Arabic literature), *fiqh*, *taṣawwuf*, and *ʿaqīdah* converge. In sum, Arabic is not merely a language skill but the epistemic key to engaging with the Islamic tradition. Without a robust foundational grasp of Arabic and its associated disciplines, students are effectively severed from primary sources and interpretive methodologies that underpin the Islamic scholarly heritage.

The weakening of Arabic proficiency among students, exacerbated by fragmented instruction and a spiral curriculum that sacrifices breadth for thematic cohesion, undermines this holistic vision. Graduates of the JMS, as interviews and field observations indicate, often struggle to differentiate between core Islamic disciplines or appreciate the internal logic of sciences such as *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *naḥw*, or *qawāʿid fiqhiyyah*. This is a direct challenge to the Bāʿalawī emphasis on epistemological clarity, which demands students not only to know but internalise the architecture of Islamic knowledge. The curricular and structural shifts under the JMS, though designed for administrative efficiency and educational relevance, risk precipitating

an epistemological rupture, one that may disconnect future generations from the hermeneutical depth, textual tradition, and intellectual integrity of Islamic scholarship.

3.3.3. Bā ʿAlawī *ṭarīqa* for the New Generation: More than Just a Moral Compass

Beyond curricular concerns, one of the emerging challenges within the Joint Madrasah System relates to student discipline and the ethical climate of learning. The widespread integration of digital devices, particularly iPads for classroom use, has led to unintended consequences. Reports from educators and informal observations indicate that students increasingly engage in unregulated digital behaviour, including gaming addictions, consumption of K-pop culture, and, in more troubling cases, exposure to inappropriate content online. While restrictions such as adult content filters have since been implemented, these developments point to a broader erosion of *barakah* (divine grace) traditionally associated with the pursuit of sacred knowledge (*ṭalab al-ʿilm*).[250]

Compounding this issue is the absence of a dedicated subject on *adab* (ethical refinement), which historically functioned as the moral and spiritual scaffolding of Islamic education. Without structured instruction in *adab*, many students lack the foundational understanding of proper conduct toward teachers, peers, and knowledge itself. This ethical void, combined with contemporary distractions, undermines the sanctity and transformative potential of the madrasah as a space of disciplined spiritual and intellectual formation.[251]

In evaluating the JMS through the lens of the Bā ʿAlawī pedagogical heritage, it becomes clear that while the JMS has streamlined madrasah education to meet

[250] Preferred not to be disclose, 'The First JMS Secondary One Batch Intake 2015 Student Who Graduated from Madrasah Al-Irsyad 2014 Primary 6 Batch.', 28 May 2025; An educator who delivered the JMS curriculum in Madrasah Aljunied, 'Current Impact on Student Morality Post JMS Period', 30 May 2025.
[251] An educator who delivered the JMS curriculum in Madrasah Aljunied, 'Current Impact on Student Morality Post JMS Period', 30 May 2025.

national standards of academic performance and integration, this restructuring has not come without significant pedagogical and epistemological costs. The foundational principles of the Bā ʿAlawī framework, namely the deep cultivation of *ʿilm, adab,* and spiritual character, are intimately tied to a model of education that privileges linguistic immersion, disciplined mastery, and hierarchical transmission through chains of authority (*sanad*). These features, central to the tradition's success in Southeast Asia since the colonial period, are increasingly strained by curricular simplification, thematic repetition, and the instrumentalisation of Islamic education within a bureaucratised national system.

Moreover, the Bā ʿAlawī model is rooted in the cultivation of spiritual refinement alongside intellectual mastery. The weakening of early-stage *adab*-based formation, traditionally embedded in classroom interactions, memorisation practices, and teacher-student relational ethics, further distances the JMS model from this tradition. The loss is not merely pedagogical but moral: when students are formed through technocratic routines and standardised assessments, they risk missing the deeper ethical and spiritual anchoring that characterises the Bā ʿAlawī understanding of *ṭalab al-ʿilm*. The shift from a barakah-oriented pedagogy to a performance-oriented system disrupts the intangible yet vital transmission of spiritual ethos from teacher to student.

It is here that the complementary relationship between Al-Azhar's scholastic paradigm and the Bā ʿAlawī pedagogical model becomes essential to recover. Al-Azhar provides the rigorous academic scaffolding, preserving scholarly integrity through structured methodologies in jurisprudence, exegesis, grammar, and creed. It safeguards the *ʿilmī* tradition of Islam as a body of coherent, codified, and transmissible knowledge. The Bā ʿAlawī tradition, by contrast, is the ethical and spiritual vessel into which this knowledge is poured. It ensures that intellectual attainment is not divorced from lived experience, that what is memorised is also actualised, that what is taught is also transformed into states of character. In essence, Al-Azhar secures the content of Islamic tradition, while the Bā ʿAlawī *ṭarīqa* contextualises it through ethical embodiment and spiritual continuity.

To be sure, the JMS has enabled important structural efficiencies. It has raised teacher professionalism, introduced modern instructional technologies, and positioned Islamic education more squarely within Singapore's pluralistic national framework. Institutions such as Madrasah Aljunied have shown resilience and innovation by introducing the IB Diploma Programme while retaining the ʿ*aliyah* stream. However, as the system matures, it must confront the deeper tension between administrative streamlining and epistemological integrity. Without a deliberate effort to restore the intellectual depth and spiritual grammar of the Bā ʿAlawī model, through disciplinary clarity, language mastery, and moral formation, the long-term viability of madrasah education as a tradition-bearing enterprise may be at risk.

In conclusion, the JMS represents a decisive shift in the history of Islamic education in Singapore. It reflects a broader negotiation between state-led modernisation and community-rooted tradition. Yet this negotiation must not obscure what is at stake: the preservation of a scholarly legacy that has historically prioritised spiritual excellence, intellectual rigour, and ethical character. As Singapore's Muslim community continues to adapt to the demands of contemporary life, future reform must seek not only to prepare students for national examinations, but to nurture within them the *sirr*, the inner meaning and *barakah*, of sacred knowledge as upheld by both Al-Azhar and the Bā ʿAlawī sāda. Together, these twin traditions offer a model of Islamic education that is not only academically sound, but spiritually transformative.

The subsequent chapter will delve deeper into the pedagogical theories underpinning the Bā ʿAlawī *ṭarīqa* as embodied by the madrasah, highlighting its compatibility with the educational frameworks endorsed by Singapore's Ministry of Education. Emphasis will be placed on how this spiritually grounded yet intellectually rigorous approach has yielded measurable outcomes, both in the academic development and moral formation of students. To substantiate the efficacy of this model, the chapter will feature notable success stories of alumni who have gone on to become influential religious leaders, both within Singapore and internationally, illustrating

the broader impact of Bāʿ Alawī-inspired education on the religious landscape and its sustained contribution to transnational Islamic scholarship.

CHAPTER IV

ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE ON BĀ ʿALAWĪ SUFISM IN MADRASAH EDUCATION

4.1. Bā ʿAlawī Teachings as a Holistic Pedagogical Approach

Holistic education constitutes a paradigm shift from the dominant epistemological foundations of conventional schooling, which are often rooted in mechanistic and reductionist models of knowledge transmission derived from Cartesian dualism and Newtonian determinism. [252] In contrast to these compartmentalised and outcome-driven approaches, holistic pedagogy endeavours to cultivate the human experience in its totality, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, social, and ecological, by engaging the learner as a dynamic, interconnected being. Rather than prescribing a prescriptive methodology, it functions as a counter-hegemonic discourse that interrogates the ontological and axiological assumptions embedded in mainstream education systems. [253] Pioneering theorists such as John P. Miller and Ron Miller played a formative role in articulating this pedagogical orientation, with John Miller's *The Holistic Curriculum* (1988) offering a seminal framework for educational integration and transformation, and Ron Miller's *Holistic Education Review* advancing its socio-cultural critique and global relevance.[254] Contemporary scholars, such as Yoshiharu Nakagawa, have since expanded the theoretical architecture of holistic education to encompass a plurality of ontological frameworks, including perennial philosophy, indigenous epistemologies, ecological consciousness, systems thinking, life-centric worldviews, and feminist ethics.[255]

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[252] Yoshiharu Nakagawa, *Education for Awakening: An Eastern Approach to Holistic Education* (Foundation for Educational Renewal, 2000), 71.
[253] Edward T. Clark, 'New Directions in Education', in *Holistic Education: A Search for Wholeness*, ed. Ron Miller (Holistic Education Press, 1991), 55.
[254] Lucila Telles Rudge, 'Holistic Education: An Analysis of Its Pedagogical Application' (The Ohio State University, 2008), 6–7.
[255] Nakagawa, *Education for Awakening: An Eastern Approach to Holistic Education*, 73–90.

This multiplicity underscores the holistic approach's commitment to an integrative educational praxis, one that transcends disciplinary silos and prioritises meaning-making, relational knowing, and the co-construction of knowledge within an ethically and ecologically attuned framework. Although particular philosophical currents, such as the perennialist metaphysic and radical feminist ethics, may, in their more doctrinaire articulations, conflict with orthodox Islamic theological constructs, their epistemological convergences and ontological inquiries into existential meaning nonetheless reveal shared trajectories in the pursuit of teleological coherence and ethical intentionality.

4.1.1. Aligning with the Pedagogical Practices by Singapore's Ministry of Education

In the context of Singapore's highly centralised education system, the state functions as the principal architect and regulator of educational provision. The MoE assumes a comprehensive governance role, encompassing formulating, implementing, and continuously evaluating national education policies. This extends to the administration and oversight of both government and government-aided schools, ensuring alignment with state-defined pedagogical standards and developmental objectives.[256] Drawing on the constitutional right articulated in Article 16 of the *Constitution of the Republic of Singapore* (current version as at 18 May 2025), which ensures religious communities the freedom to establish and maintain educational institutions for instructing children in their respective faiths[257]:

Aldous Huxley articulates the *Perennial Philosophy* as a timeless and universal metaphysical system that transcends individual religious traditions. He describes it as "the metaphysic that recognizes a divine Reality substantial to the world of things and lives and minds; the psychology that finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical with, divine Reality; the ethic that places man's final end in the knowledge of the immanent and transcendent Ground of all being," affirming that "the thing is immemorial and universal" (Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy*, 1945, 2.) The core concepts derived from the indigenous worldview embedded in holistic education theories and practices emphasize a deep respect for nature, the earth, the universe, and the Spirit; the sacred interconnectedness of all existence; and the restoration of humanity's harmonious relationship with nature. (Kessler, Rachel. *The Soul of Education: Helping Students Find Connection, Compassion, and Character at School*. 2000)

[256] 'MOE's Mission and Vision', accessed 14 May 2025, http://www.moe.gov.sg/about-us/our-mission-and-vision.

[257] Rights in Respect of Education, 1(a)(b) 16. https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act/CONS1963?ProvIds=P14-#pr16-.

Article 16.1

..there shall be no discrimination against any citizen of Singapore on the grounds only of religion, race, descent or place of birth:

a. *in the administration of any educational institution maintained by a public authority, and, in particular, the admission of pupils or students or the payment of fees; or*
b. *in providing out of the funds of a public authority, financial aid for the maintenance or education of pupils or students in any educational institution (whether or not maintained by a public authority and whether within or outside Singapore)*[258]

Hence, Islamic educational institutions such as mosques, part-time madrasahs and full-time madrasahs have historically functioned with their own independent administrative structures, funding mechanisms, and curricula. While Article 16 of the Constitution of the Republic of Singapore guarantees the right of religious groups to establish and maintain institutions for religious education, the MoE exercises regulatory oversight over all educational institutions, including Islamic religious schools (madrasahs). This dual framework, constitutional protection and governmental regulation, ensures that madrasahs function both as legitimate faith-based institutions and as educational entities embedded within the broader national framework of quality assurance and policy compliance. As such, full-time madrasahs operate under a dual-curriculum model that integrates both secular and Islamic religious subjects, with primary-level students required to meet national Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE)[259] benchmarks. These institutions incorporate both secular and Islamic religious subjects, aligning with national educational standards while simultaneously fulfilling their core objective of producing *ʿulamāʾ* (religious scholars) and *asatizah*. Consequently, madrasah students undergo extended

[258] Rights in Respect of Education, 2 16. https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act/CONS1963?ProvIds=P14-#pr16-.
[259] The Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) is Singapore's standardised test administered at the conclusion of Primary Six. Its results determine a student's placement in secondary schools for their subsequent education. Madrasah students were initially exempt from this requirement; however, following the passage of the Compulsory Education Act (No. 27) in 2000, the PSLE became mandatory for all madrasah pupils.

curriculum hours compared to their counterparts in national schools, in order to accommodate the depth and breadth of this integrated educational mandate.[260]

In Singapore, the early model of Islamic education closely mirrored the traditional *pondok* (literal meaning hut but becomes contextualised as small-scale madrasah) and *surau* (smaller than mosque praying area in small villages) system, offering Qurʾānic instruction, ritual training, and foundational Islamic sciences such as *tafsīr*, *fiqh*, *ḥadīth*, *ʿaqīdah*, and *tārīkh* (Islamic history) in informal settings, mosques, homes, and religious cottages. These classes were conducted on a voluntary basis, with students transitioning flexibly between teachers.[261] Over time, this model evolved in tandem with the introduction of Malay vernacular religious schools and increased colonial involvement, where Islamic instruction was subjected to administrative delineation, e.g., separating Qurʾānic education from Malay literacy instruction and requiring private funding for the former.[262] Despite these constraints, Singapore attracted a significant number of religious scholars, drawn by its political stability and financial prosperity, facilitating a steady expansion of Islamic learning.[263] This culminated in the early 20th century with the establishment of formal madrasahs such as Madrasah As-Sibyan (1905), adhering to the traditionalist Kaum Tua methodology, and Madrasah Aljunied (1927), which, although modern in administration, preserved classical pedagogical foundations.[264]

In the Malay Archipelago, the *Kaum Muda* (Young Group) represented a reformist movement influenced by Middle Eastern thinkers like Muhammad ʿAbduh (d. 1323/1905) and Rashid Rida (d. 1354/1935). Figures such as Syed Sheikh Ahmad Al-Hadi (d. 1352/1934) and Sheikh Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin (d. 1376/1956)

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[260] 'General Information', Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura, accessed 16 May 2025, https://www.muis.gov.sg/education/full-time-madrasahs/general-information/.

[261] Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied and Dayang Istiaisyah Hussin, 'Estranged from the Ideal Past: Historical Evolution of Madrassahs in Singapore', *Routledge Taylor & Francis Group*, Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, vol. 25, no. 2 (2005): 251–52, https://doi.org/10.1080=13602000500350694.

[262] D.D. Chelliah, *A History of The Educational Policy of The Straits Settlements with Recommendations for a New System Based on Vernaculars* (The Government Press, 1947), 64.

[263] Steiner, 'Madrasah in Singapore: Tradition and Modernity in Religious Education', 2011, 44.

[264] Ahmad Fahmi Yusoff, *The Nature and Role of Current Day Madrasahs in Singapore.*, Research Exercise, Department of Malay Studies (National University of Singapore, 1991), 24.

introduced these ideas locally after studying in Makkah and Egypt. Advocating *ijtihād* (independent reasoning) and aligning Islam with rationality and modern science, they sought to eliminate *taqlīd* (blind imitation) and promote intellectual and socio-economic renewal in the Muslim world.[265] This modernist impulse found early institutional expression in Madrasah Al-Iqbal (1907), established by Sheikh Ahmad Al-Hadi, which integrated religious and secular subjects within a structured curriculum resembling national schools.[266] However, this binary distinction, while useful for general historical mapping, oversimplifies the deeper theological and epistemological tensions underlying the reformist-traditionalist divide.

The Singaporean appropriation of *Kaum Muda*, therefore, was not merely a call for pedagogical innovation but stemmed from broader reformist currents, particularly those influenced by Muhammad ʿAbduh, who challenged the legitimacy of *taqlid*[267] and denounced practices such as *tabarruk* (seeking blessings through intercession)[268], although as bordering on *shirk*. Such theological assertions were deeply contentious and perceived as heterodox by many traditionalist scholars. Consequently, resistance to *Kaum Muda* reformism was not a wholesale rejection of modern tools or secular knowledge, but rather a cautious response to the ideological

[265] William R. Roff, 'Kaum Muda—Kaum Tua: Innovation and Reaction Amongst the Malays, 1900-1941', *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, no. Papers on Malaya History (1962): 169–70.
[266] Steiner, 'Madrasah in Singapore: Tradition and Modernity in Religious Education', 2011, 45.
[267] Mark Sedgwick, *Makers of the Muslim World: Muhammad Abduh* (One World Publications, n.d.), 3-4,13.
[268] Muḥammad ʿAbduh, *Al-Islam wa al-radd 'ala muntaqidihi* (al-Maṭba'ah al-Rahmāniyya by Muṣṭofa Muḥammad, 1928), 42–43. In explaining the two categorisations of anthropomorphists, adding the third categorisation that resembles the two: "those who uphold the doctrine of *tawassuṭ* (intermediation) have failed to ascribe to Allāh His due transcendence (*tanzīh*), for they have made analogies between the Divine and temporal sovereigns. They conceive of Allāh's dominion (*mulk*) as resembling the worldly authority (*jabarūt*) of kings who appoint ministers and delegates to manage the affairs of their subjects. Accordingly, when they perceive in an individual certain traits, they deem indicative of nearness to Allāh—or actions interpreted as signs of divine proximity—they elevate such individuals to a status of *ṣafāwah* (elect sainthood), granting them quasi-divine agency in worldly or cosmic affairs.
Such persons are then sought as *shufaʿāʾ* (intercessors), to whom supplications are directed in matters of worldly and spiritual concern. Their followers seek their *shafāʿah* (intercession) on the basis of an assumed special standing (*ḥaẓẓ*) or influence (*jāh*) before Allāh. When questioned about the legitimacy of such acts of devotion, they justify it with the oft-cited claim: "We do not worship them except to bring us nearer to Allāh in rank" (Qur'an 39:3), thereby perpetuating a form of *shirk khafī* (subtle associationism) masked under the guise of reverence and veneration."
Although he began his Sufi practices under the tutelage of his Sufi uncle Shaykh Darwīsh a revivalist and reformist of the Madaniyya *ṭarīqa* a famous branch of the Shadhiliyya order and was later also influenced by the Sufī understanding of his closes teacher Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī.

and doctrinal implications of its proponents. This explains the reluctance of institutions aligned with Al-Azhar's traditional scholarship and Bā ʿAlawī Arab scholars to endorse madrasahs influenced by reformist ideology, such as Madrasah Al-Iqbal. As substantiating evidence for this claim, the appointment of Syed Abu Bakr as the inaugural headmaster of Madrasah Aljunied, previously discussed in Chapter 3, was contingent upon, among other conditions, the restructuring of the madrasah's pedagogical framework in accordance with modern educational principles. Thus, the classification of madrasahs into *Kaum Tua* and *Kaum Muda* camps must be understood as part of a more nuanced intellectual and theological negotiation, rather than a simple dichotomy between tradition and modernity.

These institutions paralleled earlier Islamic educational trajectories found throughout Muslim civilisation, particularly the historical development from *kuttāb* and *maktab* to institutional madrasahs, under the legal framework governing *waqf*, exemplified by the Nizamiyyah schools of the 11th-century Abbasid Caliphate.[269] Like their precursors, Singaporean madrasahs were established as *awqāf* as mentioned previously, endowed to support religious instruction at various levels, from basic Qurʾānic literacy to higher-level studies in religious leadership. This gradual transition or *tadarruj*, from informal devotional learning to structured scholastic systems, echoes broader patterns in Islamic educational history and remains central to understanding the institutional maturation of madrasah education in Singapore.

4.1.2. The Madrasah's Holistic Education Model

The Singapore Curriculum Philosophy aligns closely with holistic education by emphasising the integral development of each learner, centring on values, character formation, and socio-emotional well-being. Grounded in the belief that all children are intrinsically motivated and capable of learning, the curriculum foregrounds learner-centred pedagogies designed to meet diverse developmental needs. Learning is conceptualised as flourishing within nurturing and secure environments while also

[269] George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh University Press, 1981), 27–28.

further enriching through cultivating 21st-century competencies, meaningful engagement with technology, and strategic collaboration with community stakeholders. Assessment is positioned as a formative tool, employed to identify and address individual learning gaps, reinforcing a responsive and inclusive educational ecosystem.[270]



Figure 4.1. The Singapore Teaching Practice
Reference: https://www.moe.gov.sg/education-in-sg/our-teachers

[270] 'Singapore Curriculum Philosophy', accessed 13 May 2025, http://www.moe.gov.sg/education-in-sg/our-teachers/singapore-curriculum-philosophy.

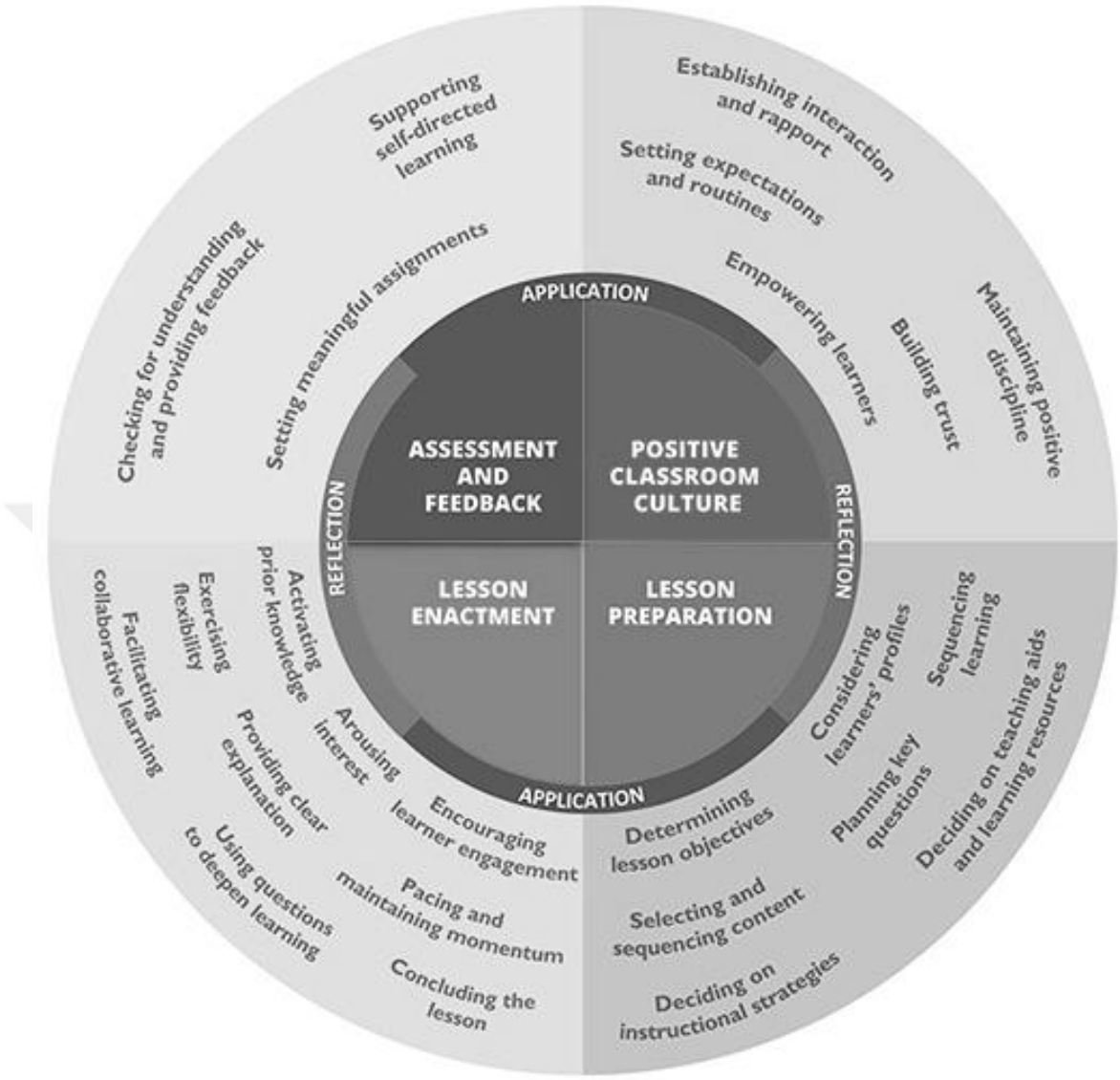


Figure 4.2. The Pedagogical Practices Wheel
Reference: https://www.moe.gov.sg/education-in-sg/our-teachers

The Singapore Teaching Practice (STP) model is effectively visualised through the Pedagogical Practices Wheel, which is anchored in the principles of the Singapore Curriculum Philosophy, which delineates four core quadrants that represent the comprehensive phases of a teacher's professional engagement with student learning. The first quadrant, Positive Classroom Culture, underscores the importance of cultivating a supportive and respectful learning environment. This includes establishing rapport, building trust, setting clear expectations and routines, empowering learners, and maintaining discipline through constructive means. The

second quadrant, Lesson Preparation, emphasises pre-instructional planning that involves understanding learner profiles, setting learning objectives, formulating key questions, selecting and sequencing content, and determining appropriate instructional strategies and teaching aids. The third quadrant, Lesson Enactment, pertains to the enactment of teaching in real time. It involves clearly communicating the lesson purpose, facilitating collaborative learning experiences, actively engaging students, maintaining instructional momentum, and concluding lessons effectively. The fourth quadrant, Assessment and Feedback, focuses on evaluating student progress and guiding further learning through strategies such as checking for understanding, delivering feedback, assigning meaningful tasks, and fostering self-directed learning. These quadrants are enveloped by cross-cutting themes of Reflection and Application, which indicate whether the pedagogical actions involve planning and consideration, or implementation and instructional practice. The integration of these reflective and applied dimensions across all domains reinforces a continuous, iterative cycle of professional growth and pedagogical effectiveness.[271]

Singapore's full-time madrasahs, though privately funded and religiously oriented, operate within a unique framework that harmonises *ad-dīn*-centred education with the pedagogical expectations of the national education system. As detailed in the *Madrasah Education Booklet 2025*, these institutions are designated schools under the Compulsory Education Act 2000, legally exempted from mainstream primary school enrolment yet subject to performance benchmarks such as the PSLE. The madrasahs' dual-curriculum structure, which incorporates both religious sciences (such as fiqh, tafsīr, ḥadīth, and ʿaqīdah) and secular subjects (English, Mathematics, and Science), reflects an intentional alignment with Singapore's broader educational philosophy, which places learners at the centre of instructional design and development.

This alignment is further reinforced by the STP, which defines pedagogical excellence through four interdependent domains: Positive Classroom Culture, Lesson

[271] 'Our Teachers | MOE', accessed 22 May 2025, https://www.moe.gov.sg/education-in-sg/our-teachers.

Preparation, Lesson Enactment, and Assessment and Feedback. These domains map onto a reflective and application-oriented teaching cycle that mirrors the holistic and spiritually grounded approach long cultivated in madrasahs, particularly those influenced by the Bā ʿAlawī tradition. The Bā ʿAlawī educational ethos, as exemplified by Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah, emphasises *tarbiyyah* (nurturing character), *taʿlīm* (instruction), and *ta'dīb* (ethical formation), embedding within its curriculum the prophetic values of *īmān*, *islām*, and *iḥsān*, values that resonate with the STP's emphasis on socio-emotional development, learner engagement, and formative assessment.

In addition to formal curriculum alignment and structured pedagogical planning, madrasahs such as Aljunied cultivate Positive Classroom Culture through spiritually embedded rituals that foster both psychological safety and theological intentionality. Among these is the time-honoured Bā ʿAlawī practice of reciting specific *awrad* (litanies) before and after lessons. Commonly referred to as *duʿāʾ al-ʿilm*, these invocations serve not only as acts of devotion but also as affective pedagogical tools, orienting students' intentions (*niyyah*), anchoring attention, and reinforcing the sanctity of knowledge-seeking as a spiritual act.

Before each lesson, students collectively recite supplications seeking divine light, understanding, and beneficial knowledge, reflecting the Prophet's ﷺ prayer: *"O Allāh, increase me in knowledge."* At the close of each session, a concluding *duʿāʾ* is recited to express gratitude and petition divine acceptance. Within the framework of the Singapore Teaching Practice, this ritual enactment can be situated within the domain of *Positive Classroom Culture*, specifically under the subdomains of building trust, empowering learners, and establishing interaction and rapport. It affirms a shared communal rhythm that deepens students' moral orientation and interpersonal coherence, while also reinforcing a culture of humility, discipline, and reverence for knowledge (*ʿilm*).

From an educational psychology perspective, such rituals contribute to a safe and emotionally anchored learning environment, which the STP recognises as

foundational to effective pedagogy. From an Islamic pedagogical lens, these recitations represent an epistemological framing of learning as both a sacred duty and a transformative process, bridging the heart (*qalb*), intellect (*ʿaql*), and action (*ʿamal*). This convergence of ritualised reflection with pedagogical intentionality illustrates how Bā ʿAlawī-influenced madrasah culture not only preserves spiritual heritage but also complements national educational aims in cultivating resilient, values-driven learners.

Madrasah Aljunied has long served as a premier institution in Southeast Asia for the formation of *asatizah* grounded in both rigorous Islamic sciences and adaptable to modern realities. Its historical affiliation with the Bā ʿAlawī *ṭarīqa*, known for its scholarly orthodoxy, spiritual discipline (*sulūk*), and emphasis on community service, has shaped not only its curriculum but also its pedagogical culture. This influence is evident in the school's adoption of practices that blend traditional *ḥalaqah*-style learning of *talaqqi ʿilm* with the assistance of different modern technologies, from the usage of the early projectors to iPads, becoming one of the two madrasahs that are Apple-Distinguished Schools, the other being Madrasah Alsagoff, which preceded this certification in 2019[272], coupled with contemporary assessment methods, including its implementation of the IB Diploma Programme alongside the classical *ʿāliyah* Al-Azhar track. At Madrasah Alsagoff Al-Arabiah, the then-principal, Syed Mustafa, integrates modern technology with traditional values to nurture articulate, compassionate, and collaborative student leaders. For over a decade, he has leveraged digital tools, providing each student with an iPad, each teacher with a Mac, and outfitting classrooms with Apple TVs, to foster creativity and critical thinking in an Islamic educational setting.[273]

In essence, the madrasah system in Singapore, particularly as seen through the lens of Madrasah Aljunied, demonstrates an evolving synthesis between national

[272] *Madrasah Alsagoff among 5 Schools Here That Score Apple Label | Www.Ourmadrasah.Sg*, n.d., accessed 23 May 2025, https://www.ourmadrasah.sg/madrasah-alsagoff-among-5-schools-score-apple-label/.
[273] 'Education - K-12 - Madrasah Alsagoff Al-Arabiah', Apple (Singapore), accessed 23 May 2025, https://www.apple.com/sg/education/k12/success-stories/madrasah-alsagoff/.

educational mandates and Islamic pedagogical heritage. The integration of the STP's structured evidence-based teaching model with the spiritually informed, learner-centred approach of the Bā ʿAlawī tradition provides a compelling example of how Islamic schools can operate within modern, pluralistic states without compromising their theological integrity or pedagogical effectiveness.

The qualifications of a *madrasah asatizah* in contemporary Singapore extend well beyond traditional Islamic scholarship. While foundational religious training, typically a degree or postgraduate qualification from esteemed institutions such as Al-Azhar University, the Islamic University of Jordan, or the International Islamic University Malaysia, remains essential, *asatizah* are now expected to fulfil a rigorous set of professional development and contextualisation requirements. A key component of this pathway is the Postgraduate Certificate in Islam in Contemporary Societies (PCICS), introduced in 2020 as a mandatory programme for graduates returning from overseas Islamic institutions. The PCICS ensures that returning *asatizah* are equipped to contextualise their religious knowledge within Singapore's plural, secular framework, and is part of a broader strategy to localise Islamic discourse. This initiative builds upon earlier efforts, including the Certificate in Islam in Context (ICON) introduced in 2017.[274] Alongside theological preparation, *asatizah* are also required to be formally registered under the Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS), institutionalised in 2004 and made mandatory in 2017 under Section 87 of the Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA) [275], which serves both as a regulatory framework and a quality assurance mechanism.

To further elevate instructional quality and pedagogical effectiveness, MUIS, in partnership with the National Institute of Education (NIE), has developed a structured framework of teacher training. Full-time educators may pursue the Specialist Diploma in Teaching and Learning, a comprehensive programme

[274] 'Overview The Postgraduate Certificate in Islam in Contemporary Societies (PCICS)', Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura, accessed 23 May 2025, https://www.muis.gov.sg/education/singapore-college-of-islamic-studies/postgraduate-certificate-in-islam-in-contemporary-societies/about/overview/.

[275] 'Asatizah Recognition Scheme', Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura, accessed 23 May 2025, https://www.muis.gov.sg/education/asatizah-development/asatizah-recognition-scheme/.

involving six core modules, practicum experiences under NIE guidance, and observational learning journeys to national schools. Part-time instructors, meanwhile, benefit from the Certificate in Teaching and Learning for Community Educators, tailored specifically for religious instruction in supplementary madrasahs.[276] These efforts are part of a national vision to develop future-ready *asatizah* who are theologically sound, pedagogically skilled, and socially responsive. As then-Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong articulated in the 2019 National Day Rally, Singapore aspires to nurture a new generation of *asatizah* who embody Islam's universal values while engaging the realities of contemporary society with wisdom, confidence, and contextual understanding.[277]

4.2. Successes and Achievements Throughout its Establishment

Since its establishment, the institution has emerged as a pivotal node in the Islamic educational ecosystem of Singapore, cultivating successive cohorts of graduates characterised by epistemic rigour in Islamic sciences and linguistic proficiency in standard Arabic. Its multidimensional contributions extend beyond scholastic achievement to encompass the formation of ethically anchored, socially responsive agents of change within the religious sector. The institution's sustained alignment with the Bāʿ Alawī scholarly heritage, renowned for its synthesis of *fiqh*, *taṣawwuf*, and pedagogical continuity, has consolidated its standing as a locus of moral authority and theological authenticity. Public perception of the institution increasingly reflects this lineage, with the community recognising it not merely as a school, but as a transmitter of a living scholarly tradition. The ensuing subsections will delineate the institution's tangible outcomes: its consistent production of high-calibre Islamic studies and Arabic language graduates, its strategic cultivation of community leadership within the religious sector, and its evolving symbolic capital as a Bāʿ Alawī educational authority within the socio-religious fabric of Singapore.

[276] 'MUIS Partners with NIE to Boost Teaching Quality in Both Full-Time and Part-Time Madrasahs', Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura, accessed 22 May 2025, https://www.muis.gov.sg/resources/media-releases/muis-partners-with-nie-to-boost-teaching-quality-in-both-full-time-and-part-time-madrasahs/.
[277] Majl. Ugama Islam Singapura, 'Overview The Postgraduate Certificate in Islam in Contemporary Societies (PCICS)'.

4.2.1. Islamic-Arabic Graduates as Community Leaders

Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah has produced a distinguished cohort of alumni who have significantly shaped both Singapore's religious and socio-civic landscape and the wider Southeast Asian region. Among its notable graduates are figures such as Syed Isa Mohamed Semait and Ustaz Muhammad Fatris Bakaram both former Muftis of Singapore; the current Mufti of Singapore Ustaz Dr Nazirudin Mohd Nasir; Ustaz Salim Jasman and Haji Abu Bakar Hashim, both former Presidents of the Singapore Syariah Court; Ustaz Pasuni Maulan, a key figure at the Registry of Muslim Marriages; and Ustaz Ahmad Sonhadji, a prominent religious scholar and public intellectual. Beyond national borders, the school's influence extends to the regional Islamic leadership landscape, with approximately 90 percent of the Sarawak Islamic Council's staff and Brunei's former Minister of Religious Affairs, Dato' Mohamed Zain, being among its alumni.[278] In 2015, the madrasah also saw graduates like Ahmad, a student who transitioned from intensive religious education to biomedical science at Singapore Polytechnic and was accepted into the National University of Singapore's prestigious medical school,[279] exemplifying the institution's ability to cultivate intellectual agility and holistic excellence.

An esteemed graduate of Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah, Ustaz Syed Ahmad Semait completed his formal studies up to Level Six. Despite financial hardship following the early death of his father, he forwent advanced classes to support his widowed mother and siblings, taking up work in a textile shop owned by the respected scholar Sheikh ʿUmar b. ʿAbd Allāh Al-Khatib. This relationship would prove pivotal. Sheikh ʿUmar became his *Sheikh al-Fath*, his spiritual initiator and lifelong mentor.

Sheikh ʿUmar, a master of multiple Islamic sciences, *tafsir*, *qirāʾāt*, Islamic history, Arabic language and literature, and especially *fiqh*, was recognised by his peers as a

[278] 'Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah', accessed 23 May 2025, https://www.nlb.gov.sg/main/article-detail?cmsuuid=b95fbc67-7cb4-4223-89b9-f2c7b256f837.
[279] 'NUS Medical School Takes in First Former Madrasah Students', *The Straits Times* (Singapore), 18 May 2015, https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/education/nus-medical-school-takes-in-first-former-madrasah-students.

leading authority in jurisprudence. His analytical brilliance extended even to practical sciences such as inheritance law (*faraʾid*), where he could resolve complex equations mentally, claiming he could compute faster than a bank teller with a calculator. In 1935, at just 27 years old, he was offered the position of Qadhi in Tarim, Yemen, an honour he humbly declined. To avoid the weight of such responsibility and out of deference to senior scholars, he migrated to Singapore, where his legacy would deeply influence the intellectual landscape, including the formation of Ustaz Syed Ahmad.[280]

Ustaz Syed Ahmad continued his religious education through traditional study circles. He studied under the then second principal of Madrasah Aljunied, Sheikh ʿAbd Allāh Balfaqīh, and regularly attended scholarly gatherings on *taṣawwuf, hadith, tafsir*, and *fiqh*, sessions he would later lead in his own right. These formative experiences reflect his commitment to lifelong learning rooted in the Islamic scholarly tradition.

In collaboration with his brother Syed Isa, who was then studying at Al-Azhar University and would later become Mufti of Singapore, he co-founded *Al-maktabah al-tijariyah al-syarqiyah*, an Islamic bookstore that sourced Arabic texts directly from Cairo. This later evolved into *Pustaka Nasional*, a major platform for *daʿwah* and Islamic publishing in the Malay world, which was also the publisher for the previously referenced book for the Aljunied family, *Al-ʿuqūd al-ʿasjadiyya fī nashr manāqib baʿḍ afrād al-usra al-Junaydiyya*.

A prolific author and translator, Ustaz Syed Ahmad produced and translated over 30 major works. His original titles include *Kuliah Subuh, Hadis Qudsi: Analisa dan Komentar, Sepuluh Yang Dijamin Masuk Syurga*, *100 Tokoh Wanita Terbilang*, and *Untaian Kisah Para Wali*. Among his celebrated translations are *Nasihat Agama dan Wasiat Imām* (Imām ʿAbd Allāh Al-Haddad), *Israʾ dan Miʿraj* (Abdul Halim Mahmud), *Dosa-Dosa Besar* (Al-Dḥahabi), *Halal dan Haram dalam Islam* (Yusuf

[280] Webmaster, *Umar Bin Abdullah Al-Khatib | Singapore's Past Ulama*, 12 February 2012, https://ibnyahya.com/1997/syeikh-umar-bin-abdullah-al-khatib/.

Al-Qaradawi), and the translation of *Sahih al-Bukhari* (published posthumously). His work is recognised for its accuracy, clarity, and accessibility for Malay-speaking audiences. Until his passing in 2006, he remained dedicated to Islamic education, notably through his long-running Friday night classes on *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* at Masjid Abdul Razak.[281]

4.2.2. Community Perception of the Institution as Bāʿ Alawī Establishment

Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah has long been a focal point in local Malay-Muslim media, and like many other madrasahs, it is frequently featured in the news, especially when rallying public support for fundraising efforts. This close relationship with the media serves not only to preserve the public presence of the madrasah but also to encourage generous contributions from the Malay-Muslim community whenever there is a need for development or expansion.

The news coverage often highlights key attributes that have sustained the madrasah's relevance over the decades, such as its deep-rooted alignment with the teachings of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah and its strong foundation in the Arabic language. At the same time, it shows an awareness of modern educational demands by incorporating contemporary subjects into its curriculum to ensure students are equipped for future career opportunities. As the news article dated 25 December 1987, titled *Masih gagah berbakti kepada masyarakat* translates to *Still steadfast in serving the community*, an attribution to its 60 years of service, states:[282]

"Rooted firmly in the teachings of Ahlus Sunnah wa al-Jamaah, Madrasah Aljunied delivers all its core subjects in Arabic, while general education subjects such as English and Malay are taught in their respective languages. This balanced curriculum is designed to produce well-rounded individuals grounded in both religious knowledge and academic proficiency."

[281] Webmaster, *Syed Ahmad Bin Muhammad Semait | Singapore's Past Ulama*, 12 February 2012, https://ibnyahya.com/2006/ustaz-syed-ahmad-bin-muhammad-semait/.
[282] 'NewspaperSG - Masih Gagah Berbakti Kepada Masyarakat', accessed 10 February 2025, https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/digitised/article/beritaharian19871225-1.2.19.2.

The madrasah's academic ethos is further supported by its leadership's commitment to excellence. Syed Omar bin Abdul Rahman Aljunied, the founder's son, the *nazir* (successor/official person in charge) of the institution, emphasises the importance of qualified teaching and integrity in lesson delivery:[283]

"Each teacher is entrusted to deliver their lessons with dedication and care, while the leadership continuously seeks qualified asatiẓah, religious teachers, from both local and international backgrounds to elevate the academic standards of the school."

Until the late 1980s, the administrative committee of Madrasah Aljunied was composed almost entirely of members from the Bā ʿAlawi lineage, a tradition that reflects the deep familial and spiritual legacy tied to its leadership. As the article records:[284]

"The madrasah is governed by a nine-member committee appointed by the nazir and approved by the Ministry of Education… The current committee includes Syed Omar as Chairman and Nazir… and other notable figures such as Syed Hassan Abdullah Aljunied and Syed Abdullah Haron Aljunied."

This sustained leadership has helped the madrasah cultivate a track record of producing successful graduates. Its educational impact is evident in the number of alumni who have continued their studies abroad, particularly in prominent Islamic academic centres:[285]

"Today, Madrasah Aljunied is proud to report that 63 of its graduates are currently pursuing further studies abroad, 39 in Egypt, 15 in Kuwait, four in Saudi Arabia, three in Malaysia, and two in Indonesia. This international presence is a testament to the madrasah's enduring quality and the global demand for its alumni."

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283 'NewspaperSG - Masih Gagah Berbakti Kepada Masyarakat'.
284 'NewspaperSG - Masih Gagah Berbakti Kepada Masyarakat'.
285 'NewspaperSG - Masih Gagah Berbakti Kepada Masyarakat', n.d., accessed 10 February 2025, https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/digitised/article/beritaharian19871225-1.2.19.2.

Madrasahs like Aljunied also serve as vital communal spaces, where religious events such as Mawlid al-Nabi are commemorated, reinforcing their role not just as educational institutions but as spiritual and social anchors in the community. The article offers a poignant memory from earlier days:[286]

"Until that time, the school operated without electricity or telephone service… But when some students stayed at the madrasah at night, or during our Mawlid al-Nabi celebrations, we used kerosene lamps," recalled Syed Omar."

The emphasis on critical thinking and rhetorical competence within Singapore's madrasah system is exemplified by the consistent success of institutions such as Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah and Madrasah Alsagoff Al-Arabiah in competitive debating arenas. In 2018, Madrasah Aljunied's debate team secured consecutive championships in the national Malay debate *Bahas 4PM* competition, with one of its members recognised as the best debater, an achievement underscoring the school's pedagogical emphasis on analytical discourse and intellectual agility.[287] Similarly, Madrasah Alsagoff marked a historic milestone in 2023 by winning the international Arabic Debate Championship hosted by Qatar Debate, becoming the first Singaporean team to achieve this honour. Competing in the non-native speaker category, the team ranked within the top 10 globally among over 40 participating countries, and student Sofiyyah Mohd Amirullah was named one of the top three debaters in her category. Despite facing formidable opponents and engaging in nine rounds of high-level debate, including preliminary matches against teams from Kazakhstan, India, Belgium, and South Africa, the Alsagoff team demonstrated exceptional command of Modern Standard Arabic and critical engagement with contemporary issues.[288]

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[286] 'NewspaperSG - Masih Gagah Berbakti Kepada Masyarakat'.

[287] cue, 'Lulusan madrasah manfaatkan kemahiran bahasa Arab tabur bakti, Berita Singapura - Beritaharian.sg', Text, BeritaHarian, 31 May 2024, https://www.beritaharian.sg/singapura/lulusan-madrasah-manfaatkan-kemahiran-bahasa-arab-tabur-bakti.

[288] Nurulkhasanah Agost, 'Madrasah Alsagoff Juara Bahas Bahasa Arab Antarabangsa Di Qatar', BERITA Mediacorp, accessed 24 May 2025, https://berita.mediacorp.sg/singapura/madrasah-alsagoff-juara-bahas-bahasa-arab-antarabangsa-di-qatar-784031.

These accomplishments reflect the broader educational objective of Singapore's madrasahs: to produce articulate, intellectually grounded graduates capable of engaging both religious and secular discourses on national and global platforms. These reflections reveal not only the madrasah's historical modesty and resilience but also its unwavering dedication to nurturing both the spiritual and intellectual well-being of its students and community.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

This study has sought to critically examine the intellectual and pedagogical significance of Bāʿ Alawī Sufism in the context of Singapore's madrasah education system, with particular attention to its historical roots, educational philosophy, and contemporary relevance. Through a combination of historical analysis, a multi-disciplinary approach to textual sources, and ethnographic observation, it has been demonstrated that the Bāʿ Alawī tradition is not merely a relic of the past but remains an active, dynamic force shaping the moral, spiritual, and educational formation of Malay-Muslim madrasah students in Singapore.

By tracing the migratory and institutional contributions of the Bāʿ Alawī *sāda*, particularly the Aljunied and Alsagoff families, this study has highlighted the foundational role of Hadhrami scholars in establishing key madrasah institutions and in embedding a Sufi ethos deeply aligned with both the Shariʿah and contemporary pedagogical norms. The integration of Bāʿ Alawī spiritual principles into curriculum design, daily routines, and extra-curricular programming has resulted in a distinctive educational model, one that seeks to form not only knowledgeable individuals but also spiritually grounded and socially responsible leaders.

Ethnographic data further underscored how this holistic approach to Islamic education resonates with broader national frameworks of education in Singapore. The Bāʿ Alawī model effectively balances traditional Islamic knowledge with state-recognised pedagogical frameworks, thereby ensuring both academic success and community cohesion. Graduates of these madrasahs have gone on to serve as religious scholars, educators, and cultural ambassadors, maintaining the relevance of this tradition across generations.

Contrary to prevailing assumptions or surface-level observations suggesting that madrasahs in Singapore tend to obscure their affiliations with broader Islamic orientations, particularly with regard to Sufi currents such as the Bāʿ Alawī *ṭarīqa* or reformist trends like Salafism, this study demonstrates otherwise. Through a critical outlining of the Aljunied and Alsagoff histories, founding charters, curricular structures, and ritual routines, it becomes evident that the selected madrasahs exhibit a sustained, albeit not labelling it contentiously, alignment with the Bāʿ Alawī spiritual and pedagogical framework. This alignment is neither incidental nor merely symbolic; rather, it reflects a conscious educational framework rooted in the transmission of ethical refinement (*adab*), spiritual refinement (*tazkiyah*), and a cosmopolitan model of Sunni orthodoxy.

It is thus apparent that the selective visibility of such affiliations may be understood as a strategic response to the pressures of religious pluralism, state regulation, and communal representation, where overt identification with specific *ṭuruq* may be viewed as politically or socially sensitive. Nevertheless, this study affirms that the Bāʿ Alawī imprint remains discernible in both form and substance, shaping the moral, intellectual, and spiritual trajectory of madrasah education in subtle but enduring ways.

5.2. Recommendations

This study affirms that the Bāʿ Alawī model of education, rooted in a synthesis of tradition, spirituality, and adaptiveness, offers valuable insights for the broader field of Islamic education in plural societies. In a time when Muslim minorities are negotiating issues of identity, integration, and authenticity, the Bāʿ Alawī approach provides a meaningful framework for cultivating ethical citizenship, spiritual resilience, and communal responsibility.

A clear trajectory forward is to re-evaluate and strengthen curriculum design by preserving the mastery-based model for Islamic sciences, traditionally categorised as *mubtadiʾ* (beginner), *mutaqaddim* (intermediate), and *muntahī* (advanced). This is not merely a matter of honouring tradition but of recognising the pedagogical logic

that has sustained this structure across centuries. Rather than viewing traditional methods as obsolete, we must understand why they continue to be upheld by globally respected institutions. Colleges such as Cambridge Muslim College[289] and Zaytuna College[290] exemplify this approach by preserving the classical curriculum, including speculative theology (*ʿilm al-kalām*), logic (*manṭiq*)[291], and rhetoric (*munaẓara*), while incorporating disciplines like philosophy and other relevant modern subjects, to equip students with the intellectual tools necessary to navigate modern challenges.

These institutions acknowledge that Islamic scholarship must engage with contemporary philosophical, ethical, and societal questions, akin to the impetus driving the PCICS programme. By grounding students in the rich legacy of the *turāth* while situating it within current frameworks, they empower students to produce principled and innovative responses to contemporary issues. This synthesis of tradition and contextual relevance ensures both fidelity to sacred knowledge and sustained intellectual vitality.

In the Southeast Asian context, particularly within the Bā ʿAlawī tradition, *ʿaqīdah* has largely adopted a spiritual and devotional orientation, often to the exclusion of speculative theology. Al-Ḥabīb ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥaddād stated that the *Salaf* (pious predecessors) did not engage with books on theology (*ʿilm al-tawḥīd*) that contained intricate discussions and dialectical-theological (*kalāmī*) issues. He also reportedly declared that reading texts such as *Al-Sanūsiyyah* or *Umm al-barāhīn* is impermissible (*ḥarām*). Among what is narrated from him: "The Salaf did not incline toward delving deeply into theological sciences, nor into refined literary disciplines that may captivate the intellect and lead one beyond the bounds of moderation. The more eloquent a person becomes, the greater his tribulations, though this is not to

[289] *BA (HONS) IN ISLAMIC STUDIES | Cambridge Muslim College*, 29 April 2021, https://www.cambridgemuslimcollege.ac.uk/programmes/isba/.
[290] 'Zaytuna | Bachelor of Arts Program', accessed 7 June 2025, https://zaytuna.edu/bachelors-degree.
[291] Although taught at the Pre-university level, however not thoroughly understood, as it was not coupled with speculative theology, which brings into practicality the usage of learning the auxiliary sciences (*ʿilm al-ālah*).

suggest one should speak in a disjointed or crude manner, but rather to avoid excessive indulgence."[292]

Similarly, Imām ʿAydarūs ibn ʿUmar al-Ḥabshī remarked that "our pious forebears did not favour excessive preoccupation with speculative inquiry in theology." He warned that an overexposure to the dialectical aspects of this discipline could lead to doubt, as well as familiarity with deviant doctrines and aberrant creeds. Therefore, he concluded, it is more prudent to maintain distance from such a study. For most people, it is sufficient to adhere to concise and sound creedal formulations, such as *ʿaqīdah al-Ghazālī* and similar abridged theological texts.[293]

While this fosters sincerity and inner conviction, it can fall short in preparing students to intellectually respond to modern forms of scepticism, relativism, and scientific materialism. Thus, there is a critical need to reintroduce *ʿilm al-kalām* into the curriculum, not to incite theological polemics, but to intellectually fortify faith and make it resilient in a pluralistic age.

The increasing influence of institutions like Cambridge Muslim College[294] and Zaytuna College[295]. Although at a tertiary level, where mastery of Arabic as the prerequisite and logical theology is viewed as essential, this signals a global pedagogical shift already making its way into Islamic scholarship. Rather than diluting the content of Islamic sciences under the banner of reform, we should focus on improving delivery. This has been observed in the JMS curriculum, such as structured textbook layouts, visual aids, and digital tools that facilitate comprehension. However, some intentional measures should also be taken to retain traditional methods, such as reading classical texts to reinforce deeper cognitive engagement.

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[292] Bin Sumayṭ, *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*, 270.
[293] Bin Sumayṭ, *Al-manhaj al-sawī: sharḥ uṣūl ṭarīqat al-sāda āl Bā ʿAlawī*, 271. It is understood amongst the *Bā ʿAlawī* adherents that *ʿaqīdah al-Ghazālī* refers to the second volume of the *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* titled *Kitāb qawāʿid al-ʿaqāʾid* and not the other speculative theology manuals authored by Imām *al-Ghazālī*.
[294] *BA (HONS) IN ISLAMIC STUDIES | Cambridge Muslim College*.
[295] 'Zaytuna | Bachelor of Arts Program'.

It is important to clarify that promoting interdisciplinary thinking and integrating knowledge across subjects is not inherently flawed. Cultivating a holistic understanding of knowledge is commendable. However, there are two important considerations to be made. The first is to understand the integration of knowledge within the longstanding legacy of Islamic scholarship, especially in the domain of Islamic epistemology, specifically *ʿilm taqāsīm al-ʿulūm* (the science of the classification of sciences) in the curricular creation. Some of these references that include the philosophy behind the categorisation and importance of each science would be the book *Jawāhir al-Qurʾān* by *al-Ghazālī* and *Miftāḥ al-saʿāda wa miṣbāḥ al-siyāda* by Taşköprüzade Aḥmad ibn Muṣṭafā (d. 969/1561). Secondly, the consideration of the students' level of comprehension of each science and its purpose. This integration is most effective after students have achieved mastery in each individual discipline. Once firm foundations are laid, a separate module or framework can guide students in synthesising and linking various fields. Without this structured grounding, premature integration risks leading to fragmented understanding rather than coherent intellectual development.

Ultimately, the question is not whether Islamic education should modernise, but how it can do so without sacrificing epistemic depth. The way forward is to reaffirm the importance of mastery-based learning while adopting pedagogical innovations that enhance delivery. This approach enables students to remain anchored in the intellectual richness of the Islamic tradition while being equipped to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex world.

Future research could build upon this study by exploring comparative madrasah models across Western countries, as Singapore is more attuned to the Western Muslim community layout of modernism and multiculturalism than our Southeast Asian counterparts, or by conducting longitudinal studies on alumni trajectories. Moreover, the incorporation of digital pedagogy and restructuring of the traditional curriculum requires evaluation works into their success rate and its adverse impact on the Bāʿ Alawī curriculum may represent fruitful avenues for innovation, ensuring the tradition's continued relevance without compromising its core principles.

In sum, the legacy of the Bāʿ Alawī *sāda* in Singapore is one of quiet continuity and adaptive resilience. Their educational vision, deeply spiritual yet socially conscious, remains a guiding light for generations seeking both rootedness and relevance in a rapidly developing nation such as Singapore.

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Previously the Mudir of Madrasah Alsagoff for 12 Years before Handing over the Reins to Ustazah Asyunifar Abu Back in January 2023. He Was Also Part of the Madrasah's Management Committee Serving as Its General Secretary during the Previous Board Term. We Wish Ustaz Syed Mustafa All the Very Best in Leading the New Board to Greater Heights and in Helping to Steer the Direction of the Madrasah in Producing Students Exemplary of the 'Ummahatul Mukminin'. Here Are Some of His Thoughts and Hopes for Madrasah Alsagoff. Marha! Marha! #madrasahalsagoff #madrasahalsagoffofficial #announcement"'. 5 January 2024. https://www.instagram.com/madrasahalsagoffofficial/p/C1tG8wCL-tT/.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PICTURES OF AL-ṢAHWAH

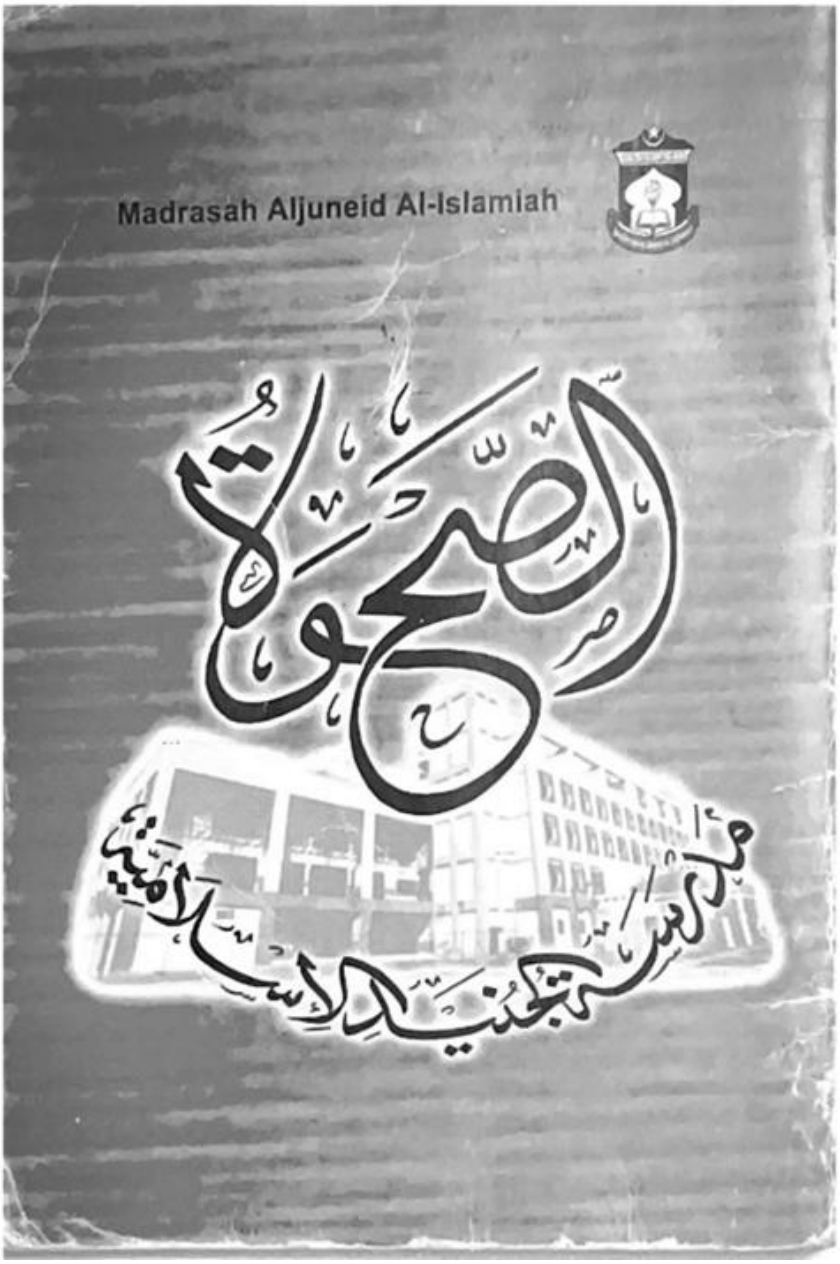


Illustration A.1. Cover Page of *Al-ṣaḥwah*

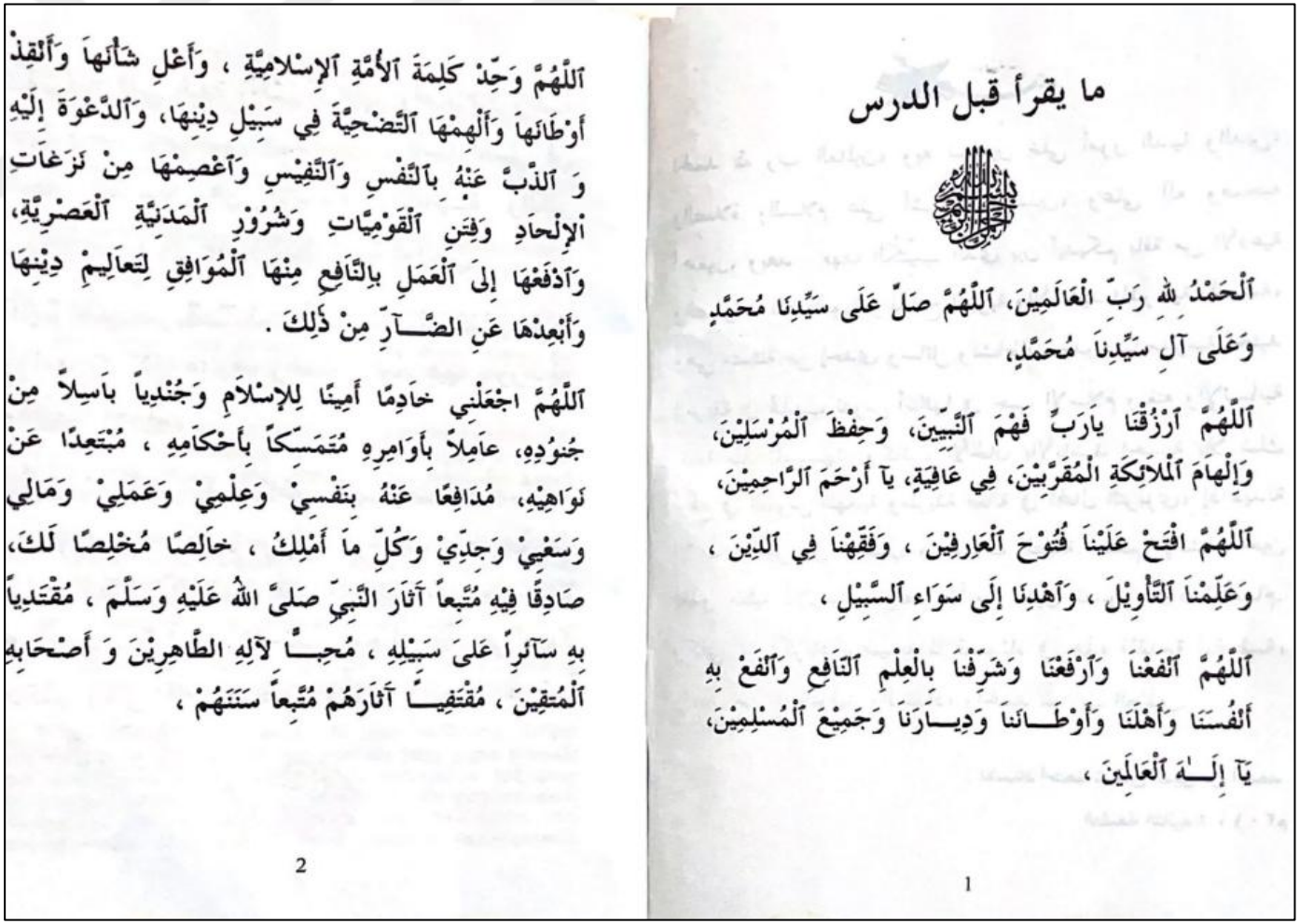


الحمد لله رب العالمين، وبه نستعين على أمور الدنيا والدين، والصلاة والسلام على أشرف المرسلين، وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين، **وبعد:** فهذا الكُتَيِّب الذي بين أيديكم باقة من الأدعية والصلوات المصطفوية والمدائح النبوية والأناشيد المدرسية المحمسة، وهي متمثلة من إحدى وسائل ونشاطات مدرستنا مدرسة الجنيد العريقة في تهذيب نفوس أبنائها في حب الإسلام ولغته والإنسانية كافة منذ تأسيسها. وكانت الألحان بالأناشيد الحسنة بلا شك أوقع في النفوس المهذبة وطريقة فعالة في المجال التربوي، إذ ديدنة الإنسان أميل إلى الجمال والنغمات الطيبة. فنعم الإنشاد حين يغدو مطية للإرشاد، ونعم الأنغام حين تغدو معبرة للأفهام. وكفى بما ذكرناه توضيحا لما قصدناه في هذه المقدمة المقتضبة، راجين من الله التوفيق والسداد، والحمد لله رب العالمين.

الأستاذ أحمد شمس الدين بن أحمد

الطبعة الثانية : ٢٠١١م

Illustration A.2. Preface Page of *Al-ṣaḥwah*



ما يقرأ قبل الدرس

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ، اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ،

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَرْزُقْنَا يَارَبِّ فَهْمَ النَّبِيِّيْنَ، وَحِفْظَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ، وَإِلْهَامَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ الْمُقَرَّبِيْنَ، فِي عَافِيَةٍ، يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِيْنَ،

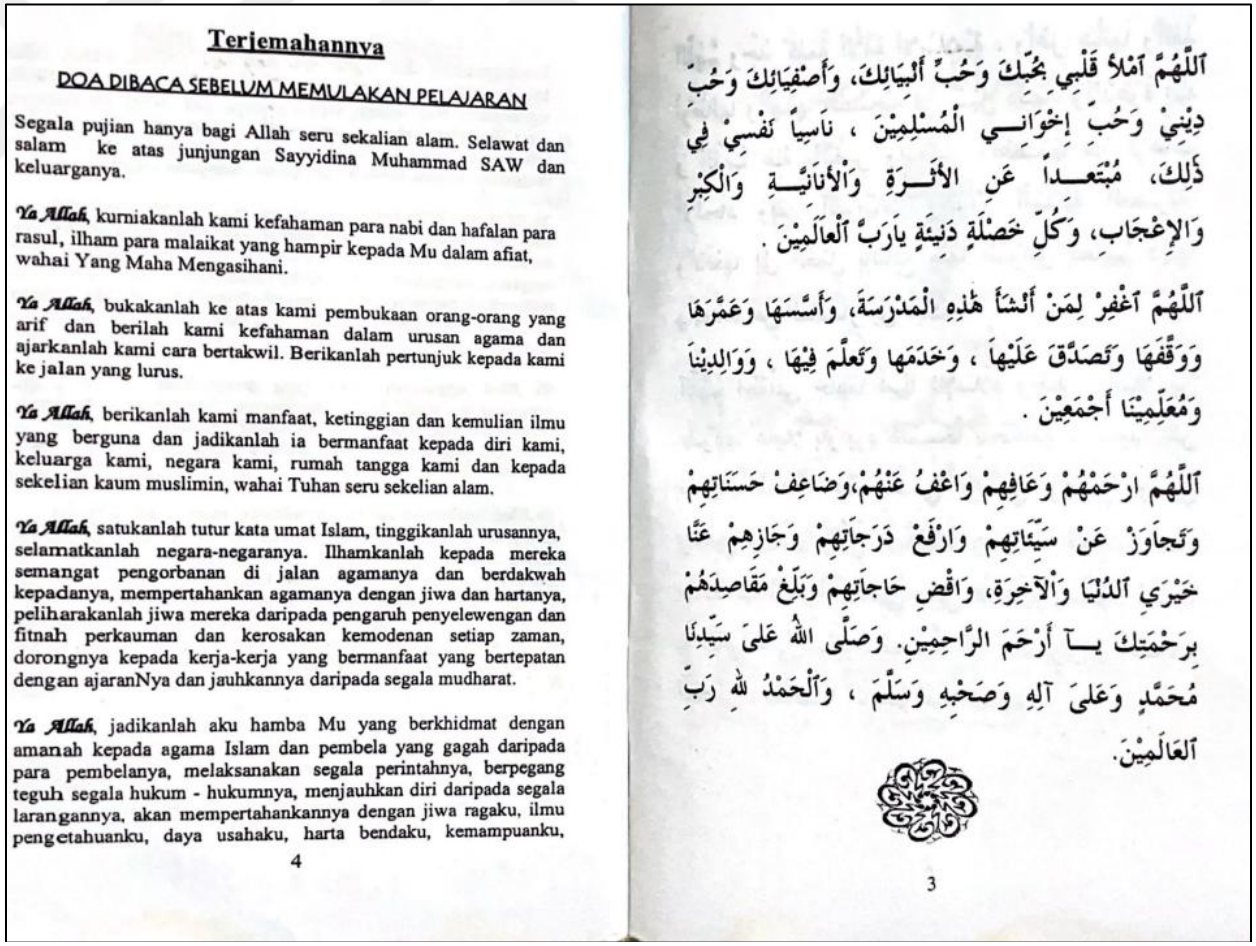
اَللّٰهُمَّ افْتَحْ عَلَيْنَا فُتُوْحَ الْعَارِفِيْنَ ، وَفَقِّهْنَا فِي الدِّيْنِ ، وَعَلِّمْنَا التَّأْوِيْلَ ، وَاهْدِنَا إِلَى سَوَاءِ السَّبِيْلِ ،

اَللّٰهُمَّ انْفَعْنَا وَارْفَعْنَا وَشَرِّفْنَا بِالْعِلْمِ النَّافِعِ وَانْفَعْ بِهِ أَنْفُسَنَا وَأَهْلَنَا وَأَوْطَانَنَا وَدِيَارَنَا وَجَمِيْعَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ، يَا إِلٰهَ الْعَالَمِيْنَ ،

اَللّٰهُمَّ وَحِّدْ كَلِمَةَ الْأُمَّةِ الْإِسْلَامِيَّةِ ، وَأَعْلِ شَأْنَهَا وَأَنْقِذْ أَوْطَانَهَا وَأَلْهِمْهَا التَّضْحِيَّةَ فِي سَبِيْلِ دِيْنِهَا، وَالدَّعْوَةَ إِلَيْهِ وَ الذَّبَّ عَنْهُ بِالنَّفْسِ وَالنَّفِيْسِ وَاعْصِمْهَا مِنْ نَزَغَاتِ الْإِلْحَادِ وَفِتَنِ الْقَوْمِيَّاتِ وَشُرُوْرِ الْمَدَنِيَّةِ الْعَصْرِيَّةِ، وَادْفَعْهَا إِلَى الْعَمَلِ بِالنَّافِعِ مِنْهَا الْمُوَافِقِ لِتَعَالِيْمِ دِيْنِهَا وَأَبْعِدْهَا عَنِ الضَّـــآرِّ مِنْ ذٰلِكَ .

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي خَادِمًا أَمِيْنًا لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَجُنْدِيًا بَاسِلًا مِنْ جُنُوْدِهِ، عَامِلًا بِأَوَامِرِهِ مُتَمَسِّكًا بِأَحْكَامِهِ ، مُبْتَعِدًا عَنْ نَوَاهِيْهِ، مُدَافِعًا عَنْهُ بِنَفْسِيْ وَعِلْمِيْ وَعَمَلِيْ وَمَالِي وَسَعْيِيْ وَجِدِّيْ وَكُلِّ مَا أَمْلِكُ ، خَالِصًا مُخْلِصًا لَكَ، صَادِقًا فِيْهِ مُتَّبِعًا آثَارَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ، مُقْتَدِيًا بِهِ سَآئِرًا عَلَى سَبِيْلِهِ ، مُحِبًّـــا لِآلِهِ الطَّاهِرِيْنَ وَ أَصْحَابِهِ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ، مُقْتَفِيًـــا آثَارَهُمْ مُتَّبِعًا سَنَنَهُمْ ،

Illustration A.3. Litany before Class of *Al-ṣaḥwah pp. 1-2*



Terjemahannya

DOA DIBACA SEBELUM MEMULAKAN PELAJARAN

Segala pujian hanya bagi Allah seru sekalian alam. Selawat dan salam ke atas junjungan Sayyidina Muhammad SAW dan keluarganya.

Ya Allah, kurniakanlah kami kefahaman para nabi dan hafalan para rasul, ilham para malaikat yang hampir kepada Mu dalam afiat, wahai Yang Maha Mengasihani.

Ya Allah, bukakanlah ke atas kami pembukaan orang-orang yang arif dan berilah kami kefahaman dalam urusan agama dan ajarkanlah kami cara bertakwil. Berikanlah pertunjuk kepada kami ke jalan yang lurus.

Ya Allah, berikanlah kami manfaat, ketinggian dan kemulian ilmu yang berguna dan jadikanlah ia bermanfaat kepada diri kami, keluarga kami, negara kami, rumah tangga kami dan kepada sekelian kaum muslimin, wahai Tuhan seru sekelian alam.

Ya Allah, satukanlah tutur kata umat Islam, tinggikanlah urusannya, selamatkanlah negara-negaranya. Ilhamkanlah kepada mereka semangat pengorbanan di jalan agamanya dan berdakwah kepadanya, mempertahankan agamanya dengan jiwa dan hartanya, peliharakanlah jiwa mereka daripada pengaruh penyelewengan dan fitnah perkauman dan kerosakan kemodenan setiap zaman, dorongnya kepada kerja-kerja yang bermanfaat yang bertepatan dengan ajaranNya dan jauhkannya daripada segala mudharat.

Ya Allah, jadikanlah aku hamba Mu yang berkhidmat dengan amanah kepada agama Islam dan pembela yang gagah daripada para pembelanya, melaksanakan segala perintahnya, berpegang teguh segala hukum - hukumnya, menjauhkan diri daripada segala larangannya, akan mempertahankannya dengan jiwa ragaku, ilmu pengetahuanku, daya usahaku, harta bendaku, kemampuanku,

4

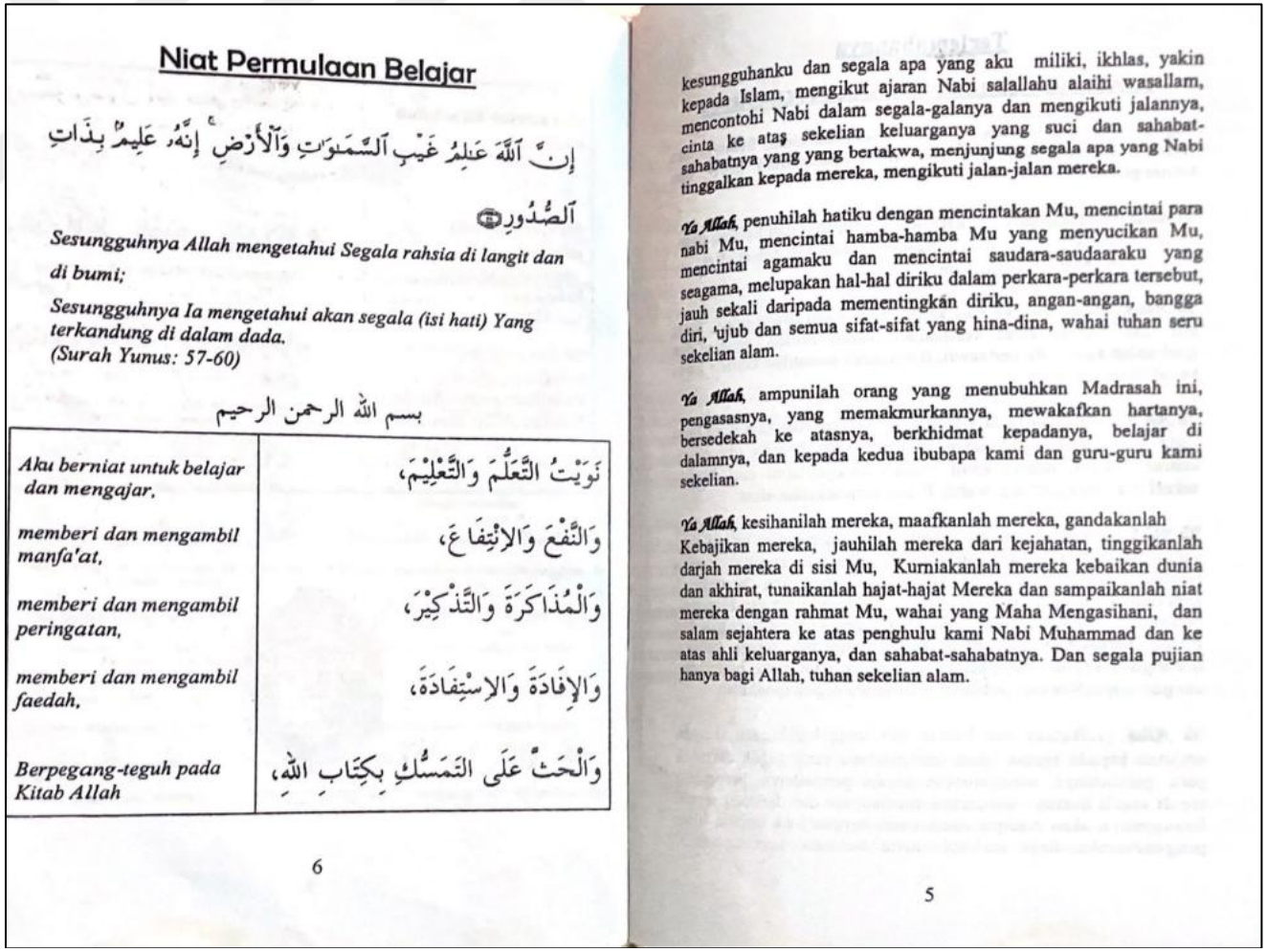
اَللّٰهُمَّ اَمْلأْ قَلْبِي بِحُبِّكَ وَحُبِّ أَنْبِيَائِكَ، وَأَصْفِيَائِكَ وَحُبِّ دِيْنِيْ وَحُبِّ إِخْوَانِـــي الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ، نَاسِياً نَفْسِيْ فِي ذٰلِكَ، مُبْتَعِـــداً عَنِ الأَثَـــرَةِ وَالأَنَانِيَّـــةِ وَالْكِبْرِ وَالإِعْجَابِ، وَكُلِّ خَصْلَةٍ دَنِيئَةٍ يَارَبَّ اَلْعَالَمِيْنَ .

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَغْفِرْ لِمَنْ أَنْشَأَ هٰذِهِ الْمَدْرَسَةَ، وَأَسَّسَهَا وَعَمَّرَهَا وَوَقَّفَهَا وَتَصَدَّقَ عَلَيْهَا ، وَخَدَمَهَا وَتَعلَّمَ فِيْهَا ، وَوَالِدِيْنَا وَمُعَلِّمِيْنَا أَجْمَعِيْنَ .

اَللّٰهُمَّ ارْحَمْهُمْ وَعَافِهِمْ وَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ،وَضَاعِفْ حَسَنَاتِهِمْ وَتَجَاوَزْ عَنْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَارْفَعْ دَرَجَاتِهِمْ وَجَازِهِمْ عَنَّا خَيْرَيِ اَلدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ، وَاقْضِ حَاجَاتِهِمْ وَبَلِّغْ مَقَاصِدَهُمْ بِرَحْمَتِكَ يـــآ أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِيْنِ. وَصَلَّى اللهُ عَلَىَ سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَىَ آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ ، وَاَلْحَمْدُ لله رَبِّ اَلعَالَمِيْنَ.

3

Illustration A.4. Continuation of Litany before Class with the Malay Translation of *Al-ṣaḥwah pp. 3-4*



Niat Permulaan Belajar

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلِيمُ غَيْبِ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ عَلِيمُۢ بِذَاتِ ٱلصُّدُورِ ﴿٣٨﴾

Sesungguhnya Allah mengetahui Segala rahsia di langit dan di bumi;

Sesungguhnya Ia mengetahui akan segala (isi hati) Yang terkandung di dalam dada.
(Surah Yunus: 57-60)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Aku berniat untuk belajar dan mengajar,	نَوَيْتُ التَّعَلُّمَ وَالتَّعْلِيْمَ،
memberi dan mengambil manfa'at,	وَالنَّفْعَ وَالانْتِفَاعَ،
memberi dan mengambil peringatan,	وَالْمُذَاكَرَةَ وَالتَّذْكِيْرَ،
memberi dan mengambil faedah,	وَالإِفَادَةَ وَالاسْتِفَادَةَ،
Berpegang-teguh pada Kitab Allah	وَالْحَثَّ عَلَى التَّمَسُّكِ بِكِتَابِ اللهِ،

6

kesungguhanku dan segala apa yang aku miliki, ikhlas, yakin kepada Islam, mengikut ajaran Nabi salallahu alaihi wasallam, mencontohi Nabi dalam segala-galanya dan mengikuti jalannya, cinta ke atas sekelian keluarganya yang suci dan sahabat-sahabatnya yang yang bertakwa, menjunjung segala apa yang Nabi tinggalkan kepada mereka, mengikuti jalan-jalan mereka.

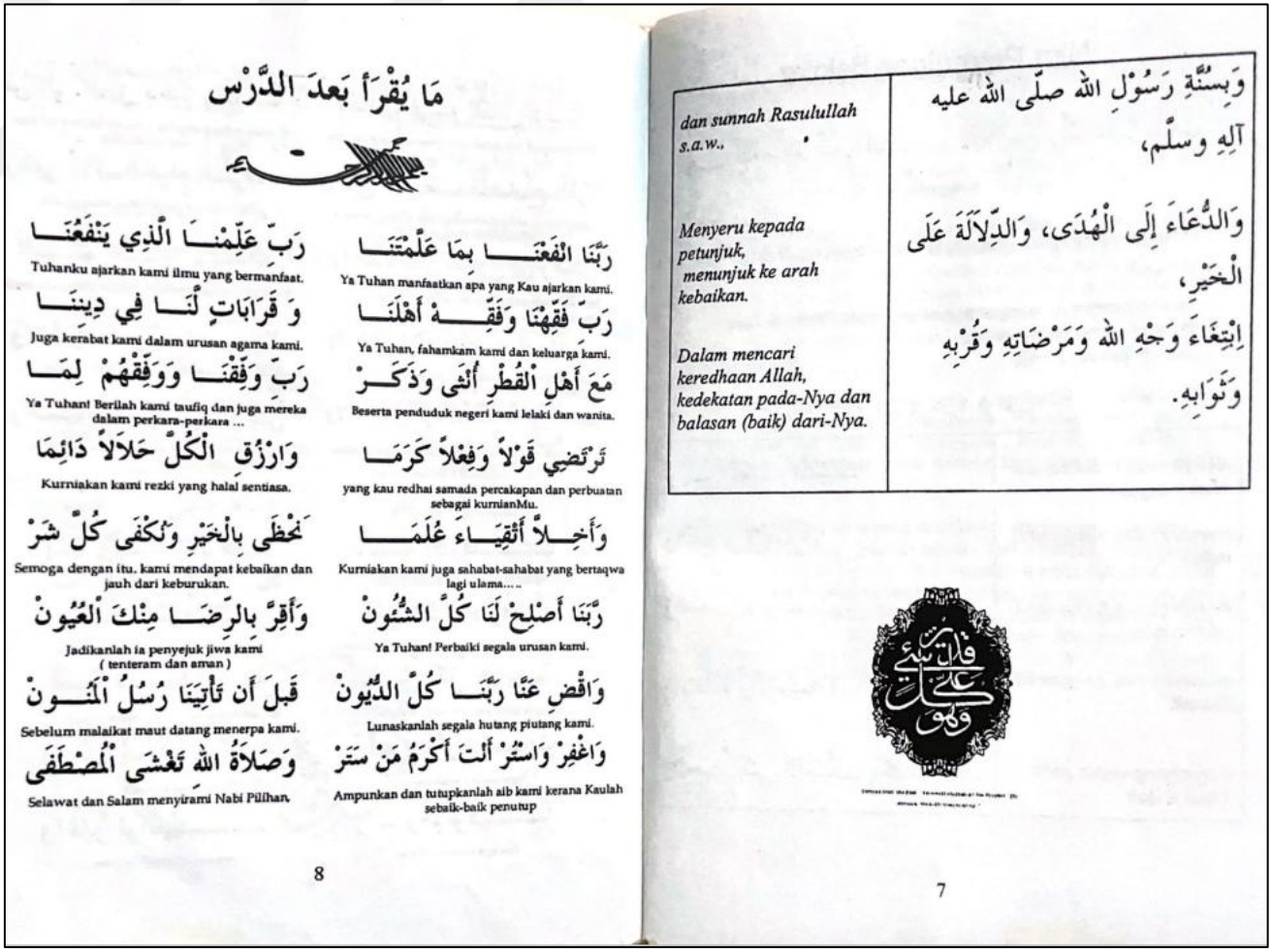
Ya Allah, penuhilah hatiku dengan mencintakan Mu, mencintai para nabi Mu, mencintai hamba-hamba Mu yang menyucikan Mu, mencintai agamaku dan mencintai saudara-saudaraku yang seagama, melupakan hal-hal diriku dalam perkara-perkara tersebut, jauh sekali daripada mementingkan diriku, angan-angan, bangga diri, 'ujub dan semua sifat-sifat yang hina-dina, wahai tuhan seru sekelian alam.

Ya Allah, ampunilah orang yang menubuhkan Madrasah ini, pengasasnya, yang memakmurkannya, mewakafkan hartanya, bersedekah ke atasnya, berkhidmat kepadanya, belajar di dalamnya, dan kepada kedua ibubapa kami dan guru-guru kami sekelian.

Ya Allah, kesihanilah mereka, maafkanlah mereka, gandakanlah Kebajikan mereka, jauhilah mereka dari kejahatan, tinggikanlah darjah mereka di sisi Mu, Kurniakanlah mereka kebaikan dunia dan akhirat, tunaikanlah hajat-hajat Mereka dan sampaikanlah niat mereka dengan rahmat Mu, wahai yang Maha Mengasihani, dan salam sejahtera ke atas penghulu kami Nabi Muhammad dan ke atas ahli keluarganya, dan sahabat-sahabatnya. Dan segala pujian hanya bagi Allah, tuhan sekelian alam.

5

Illustration A.5. Continuation of the Malay Translation of Litany before Class and the Intention before Class of *Al-ṣaḥwah pp. 5-6*



مَا يُقْرَأُ بَعدَ الدَّرْس

رَبَّنَا انْفَعْنَـــا بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنَـــا
Ya Tuhan manfaatkan apa yang Kau ajarkan kami.

رَبِّ عَلِّمْنَـــا الَّذِي يَنْفَعُنَـــا
Tuhanku ajarkan kami ilmu yang bermanfaat.

رَبِّ فَقِّهْنَا وَفَقِّـــهْ أَهْلَنَـــا
Ya Tuhan, fahamkam kami dan keluarga kami.

وَ قَرَابَاتٍ لَّنَـــا فِي دِينِنَـــا
Juga kerabat kami dalam urusan agama kami.

مَعَ أَهْلِ الْقُطْرِ أُنْثَى وَذَكَـــرْ
Beserta penduduk negeri kami lelaki dan wanita.

رَبِّ وَفِّقْنَـــا وَوَفِّقْهُمْ لِمَـــا
Ya Tuhan! Berilah kami taufiq dan juga mereka dalam perkara-perkara ...

تَرْتَضِي قَوْلاً وَفِعْلاً كَرَمَـــا
yang kau redhai samada percakapan dan perbuatan sebagai kurnianMu.

وَارْزُقِ الْكُلَّ حَلَالاً دَائِمَا
Kurniakan kami rezki yang halal sentiasa.

وَأَخِـــلاَّءَ أَتْقِيَـــاءَ عُلَمَـــا
Kurniakan kami juga sahabat-sahabat yang bertaqwa lagi ulama.....

نَحْظَى بِالْخَيْرِ وَنُكْفَى كُلَّ شَرْ
Semoga dengan itu, kami mendapat kebaikan dan jauh dari keburukan.

رَبَّنَا أَصْلِحْ لَنَا كُلَّ الشُّئُونْ
Ya Tuhan! Perbaiki segala urusan kami.

وَأَقِرَّ بِالرِّضَـــا مِنْكَ الْعُيُونْ
Jadikanlah ia penyejuk jiwa kami (tenteram dan aman)

وَاقْضِ عَنَّا رَبَّنَـــا كُلَّ الدُّيُونْ
Lunaskanlah segala hutang piutang kami.

قَبلَ أَن تَأْتِيَنَا رُسُلُ الْمَنُـــونْ
Sebelum malaikat maut datang menerpa kami.

وَاغْفِرْ وَاسْتُرْ أَنْتَ أَكْرَمُ مَنْ سَتَرْ
Ampunkan dan tutupkanlah aib kami kerana Kaulah sebaik-baik penutup

وَصَلاَةُ اللهِ تَغْشَى الْمُصْطَفَى
Selawat dan Salam menyirami Nabi Pilihan.

8

وَبِسُنَّةِ رَسُوْلِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عليه آلِهِ وسلَّم،

dan sunnah Rasulullah s.a.w.,

وَالدُّعَاءَ إِلَى الْهُدَى، وَالدِّلاَلَةَ عَلَى الْخَيْرِ،

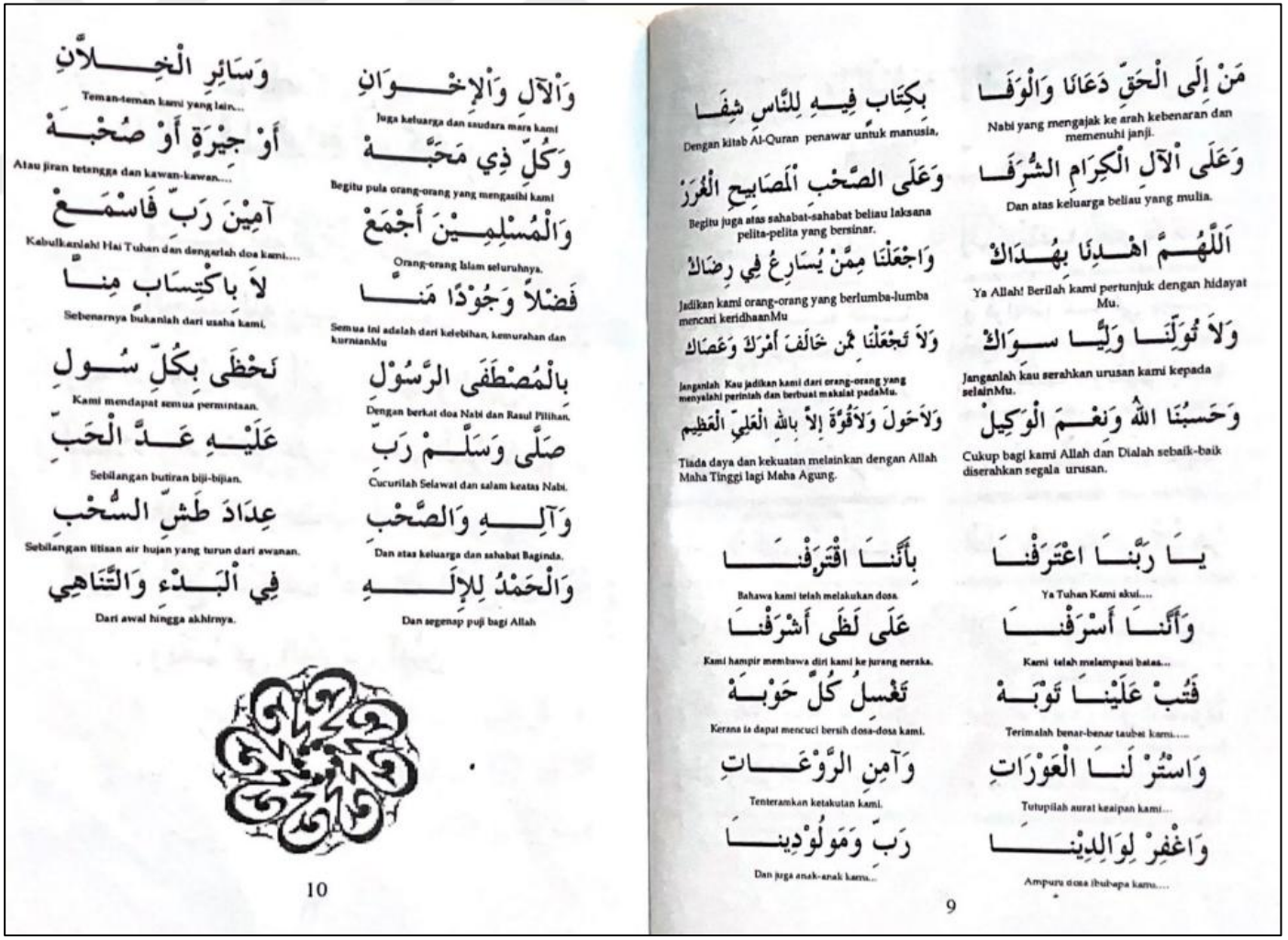
Menyeru kepada petunjuk, menunjuk ke arah kebaikan.

اِبْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللهِ وَمَرْضَاتِهِ وَقُرْبِهِ وَثَوَابِهِ.

Dalam mencari keredhaan Allah, kedekatan pada-Nya dan balasan (baik) dari-Nya.

7

Illustration A.6. Continuation of the Intention before Class and the Litany after Class with its Malay Translation of *Al-ṣaḥwah pp. 7-8*



مَنْ إِلَى الْحَقِّ دَعَانَا وَالْوَفَـا
Nabi yang mengajak ke arah kebenaran dan memenuhi janji.

وَعَلَى الْآلِ الْكِرَامِ الشُّرَفَـا
Dan atas keluarga beliau yang mulia.

اَللّٰهُـمَّ اهْـدِنَا بِهُـدَاكْ
Ya Allah! Berilah kami pertunjuk dengan hidayat Mu.

وَلاَ تُوَلِّنَـا وَلِيًّـا سِـوَاكْ
Janganlah kau serahkan urusan kami kepada selainMu.

وَحَسْبُنَا اللهُ وَنِعْـمَ الْوَكِيلْ
Cukup bagi kami Allah dan Dialah sebaik-baik diserahkan segala urusan.

بِكِتَابٍ فِيـهِ لِلنَّاسِ شِفَـا
Dengan kitab Al-Quran penawar untuk manusia.

وَعَلَى الصَّحْبِ الْمَصَابِيحِ الْغُرَرْ
Begitu juga atas sahabat-sahabat beliau laksana pelita-pelita yang bersinar.

وَاجْعَلْنَا مِمَّنْ يُسَارِعُ فِي رِضَاكْ
Jadikan kami orang-orang yang berlumba-lumba mencari keridhaanMu

وَلاَ تَجْعَلْنَا مِمَّنْ خَالَفَ أَمْرَكَ وَعَصَاكْ
Janganlah Kau jadikan kami dari orang-orang yang menyalahi perintah dan berbuat makalat padaMu.

وَلاَحَولَ وَلاَقُوَّةَ إِلاَّ بِاللهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ
Tiada daya dan kekuatan melainkan dengan Allah Maha Tinggi lagi Maha Agung.

يَـا رَبَّنَـا اغْتَرَفْنَـا
Ya Tuhan Kami akui....

وَأَنَّنَـا أَسْرَفْنَـا
Kami telah melampaui batas...

فَتُبْ عَلَيْنَـا تَوْبَـةْ
Terimalah benar-benar taubat kami.....

وَاسْتُرْ لَنَـا الْعَوْرَاتِ
Tutupilah aurat kealpan kami....

وَاغْفِرْ لِوَالِدِيْنَـا
Ampuni dosa ibubapa kami....

بِأَنَّنَـا اقْتَرَفْنَـا
Bahawa kami telah melakukan dosa.

عَلَى لَظَى أَشْرَفْنَـا
Kami hampir membawa diri kami ke jurang neraka.

تَغْسِلُ كُلَّ حَوْبَـةْ
Kerana ia dapat mencuci bersih dosa-dosa kami.

وَآمِنِ الرَّوْعَـاتِ
Tenteramkan ketakutan kami.

رَبِّ وَمَوْلُوْدِينَـا
Dan juga anak-anak kami...

9

وَالْآلِ وَالْإِخْـوَانِ
Juga keluarga dan saudara mara kami

وَكُلِّ ذِي مَحَبَّـةْ
Begitu pula orang-orang yang mengasihi kami

وَالْمُسْلِمِيْنَ أَجْمَعْ
Orang-orang Islam seluruhnya.

فَضْلاً وَجُوْدًا مَنَّـا
Semua ini adalah dari kelebihan, kemurahan dan kurnianMu

بِالْمُصْطَفَى الرَّسُوْلِ
Dengan berkat doa Nabi dan Rasul Pilihan.

صَلَّى وَسَلَّـمْ رَبِّ
Curahlah Selawat dan salam keatas Nabi.

وَآلِـهِ وَالصَّحْبِ
Dan atas keluarga dan sahabat Baginda.

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلإِلَـهِ
Dan segenap puji bagi Allah

وَسَائِرِ الْخِـلاَّنِ
Teman-teman kami yang lain...

أَوْ جِيْرَةٍ أَوْ صُحْبَـةْ
Atau jiran tetangga dan kawan-kawan....

آمِيْنَ رَبِّ فَاسْمَـعْ
Kabulkanlah! Hai Tuhan dan dengarlah doa kami....

لاَ بِاكْتِسَابٍ مِنَّـا
Sebenarnya bukanlah dari usaha kami,

نَحْظَى بِكُلِّ سُـولِ
Kami mendapat semua permintaan.

عَلَيْـهِ عَـدَّ الْحَبِّ
Sebilangan butiran biji-bijian.

عِدَادَ طَشِّ السُّحْبِ
Sebilangan titisan air hujan yang turun dari awanan.

فِي الْبَـدْءِ وَالتَّنَاهِي
Dari awal hingga akhirnya.

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Illustration A.7. Continuation of the Litany after Class with its Malay Translation of *Al-ṣaḥwah pp. 9-10*

APPENDIX B

FAMILY TREE OF THE DESCENDANTS OF SYED MOHAMED ALSAGOFF

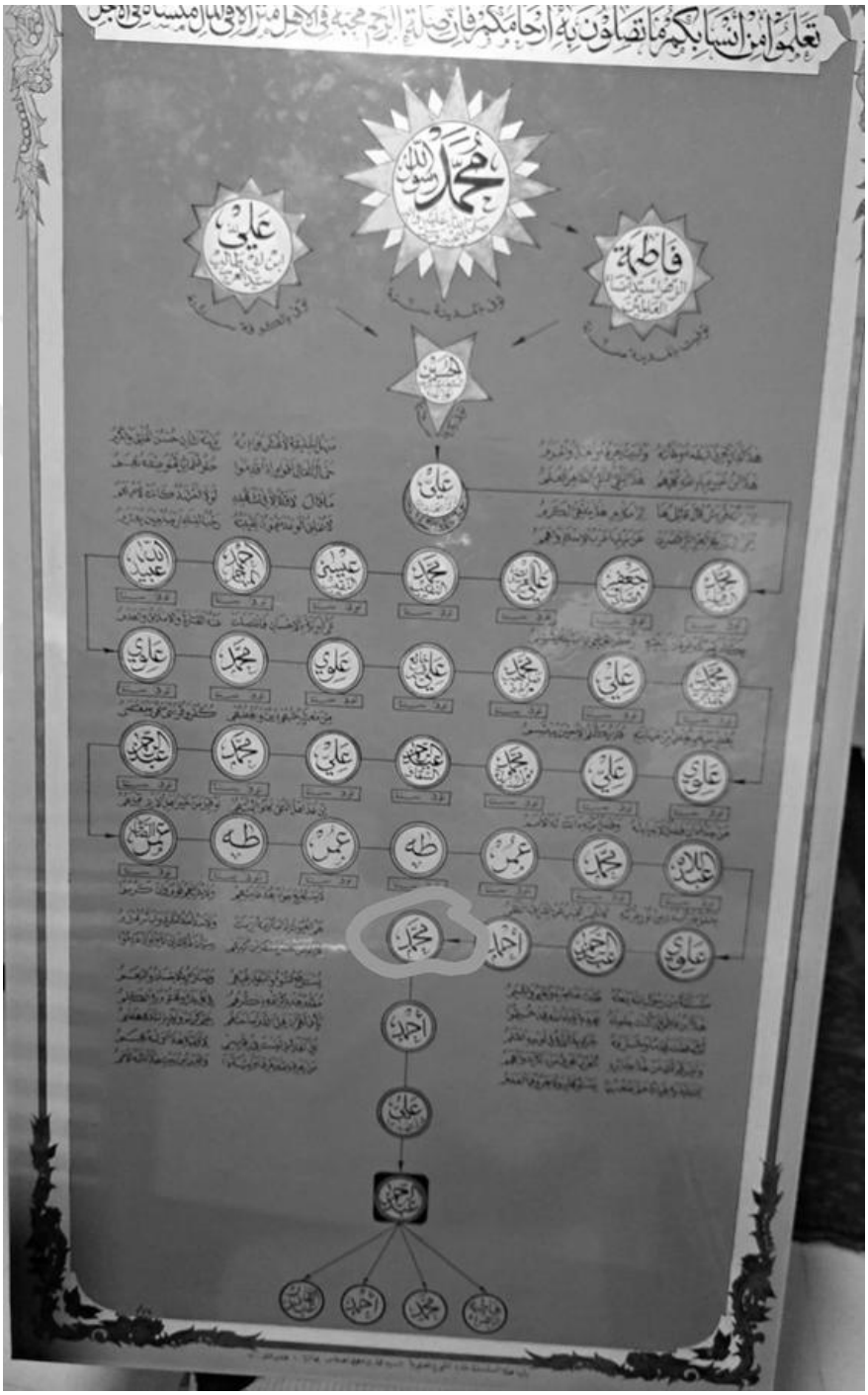


Illustration B.1. Family Tree of the Descendants of Syed Mohamed Alsagoff by One of his Living Descendants

CURRICULUM VITAE

Full Name:

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