

## Shaykh Rajab Ali Khayyat



### The Reverend Shaykh Who Changed My Islamic Life

Your Journey with the Shaykh.....

#### 1. Shaykhs' Life

The pious man of God, Rajab Ali Khayyat known as the Reverend Shaykh was born in 1883. His father was an ordinary worker.

When Rajab Ali was 12, his father passed away and left him alone with no full-blooded brothers and sisters.

There is no more knowledge at hand about the Shaykh's childhood. However, he has quoted his mother himself as saying:

"One night when I was pregnant with you, your father — who was then working in a restaurant brought home some wholesome meatballs. When I proceeded to eat, I found that you began to stir and beat my belly with your feet. I felt I should not eat from this food.

I refrained from eating and asked your father why he had brought wholesome meat that night, whereas the other nights he used to bring the customers leftovers.

He said he had actually brought these meatballs without permission!

#### Lesson Learnt:

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01) Upbringing of Children starts even before and during Conception.

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#### 2. The Shaykh's House - Compare it with Yours and Mine!

His simple brick House that was bequeathed to him from his father was located in an alley. He lived in this small house for the rest of his life. His son says:

“Whenever it rained, the ceiling began to drip...One day, an army general, along with some other governmental officials, came to our house. We had placed some basins and bowls under the rain dripping from the ceiling. Having seen our condition of living, he bought two pieces of land and showed them to my father, and said he had bought one for himself and one for him. My father replied: What we have is sufficient for us!”

Interestingly enough, several years later, the reverend Shaykh let one of his rooms to a taxi driver for twenty dirhams a month. Later on, when the latter's wife gave birth to a daughter, the late Shaykh gave a name to her. When he recited Adhan and Iqama into the baby's ears, he placed a two dirham bank-note in the corner of her swaddling clothes, and said:

"Mr! Now your expenses have increased, from this month forward; instead of twenty tomans pay only eighteen tomans (for rent)!"

A huge lesson to all the Muslim Land-Lords out there!

**Lesson Learnt:**

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02) Live with simplicity.

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**3.The Shaykh's Clothing**

The reverend Shaykh's clothing was very simple and neat. The type of clothing he used to wear was a set of clothes like that of an Alim including a cloak, a skullcap, and a robe. What was interesting about him was that even in his dressing, too; his intention was to attain God's pleasure. The only time he put on to please others, he was reproached for that in his spiritual state.

His account of this event is as follows:

"Nafs (carnal desire) is a strange thing; one night I found I was veiled [in darkness] and was unable to achieve Divine Grace, like I attained before. I probed into the matter, and upon humble requesting, I found out that the previous afternoon, when one of the nobles of the city came to visit me, he said that he liked to perform the evening and the night prayers with me [as prayer leader]. So, in order to please him, I put on my robe while performing prayers...!"

“Thus on this day I could NOT achieve My Lord's Grace as I wore my clothes to please others!”

**Lesson Learnt:**

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03) Wear your clothes to attain only God's Pleasure!

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#### 4. The Shaykh's Food

His reverence never cared for delicious meals...

Most often, he used such simple foods as potatoes and puddings. At the tablecloth, he would kneel down facing the qibla and kind of bending over the food. Sometimes he would also hold up the plate in his hands while eating. He would only eat when hungry...Sometimes he would put some of his food in the plate of a friend that he could reach out [as a sign of respect]. While eating, he would not talk, and the others would also keep silent out of respect for him. If someone invited him to a feast, he would accept or reject it with some deliberation.

Nevertheless, he would most often accept his friends' invitations. He would not mind eating out; however, he was conscious of the effect of food on one's soul, and regarded some spiritual changes as a consequence of eating certain foods.

Once, while he was traveling by train, he felt some spiritual contraction. He made an appeal and after a while he was informed by intuition that the spiritual contraction had been the consequence of drinking of the tea served by the train's restaurant!

#### Lesson Learnt:

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04) Only eat at Halal restaurants and make sure the food you eat is Tahir (clean)

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#### 5. Shaykh's Occupation

Tailoring is one of the praiseworthy professions in Islam. "Luqman the Sage" had chosen this as his occupation. It is quoted from the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) who said:

"The job of the righteous men is tailoring and the job of the pious women is spinning."

The reverend Shaykh had chosen this job as a means of livelihood. Hence he was known as Shaykh Rajab Ali Khayyat [the tailor].

Interestingly, his simple small house, as described before, was his tailoring workshop, too. In this respect one of his children says:

"At first, my father had RENTED a shop in the city, where he pursued his tailoring profession. One day the landlord came to him and asked him to leave the shop. The next day and without any arguing or demanding any due rights, my father packed up his sewing machine and sewing table, brought them home, and gave the shop back to the landlord. Ever since the incident, he worked at home using a room near the entrance as his tailoring workshop!"

**Lesson Learnt:**

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05) Choose your profession which is a Halal means of livelihood even if it means slogging from Home.

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**6. Perseverance and Hard Work**

The reverend Shaykh was extremely serious and persevering in his work. He worked hard to the last days of his life to earn his living through his own endeavors. Although his devotees were wholeheartedly ready to provide for his simple livelihood, he would never accept.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said in a Hadith:

"Whoever earns one's own living; they will be ranked among the Prophets and rewarded as Prophets." And in another hadith, he said: "Divine worship has ten parts, nine of which comprises earning lawful daily sustenance."

One of Shaykh's friends says: "I never forget the day I saw the reverend Shaykh in the market who was pale in the countenance out of fatigue. He was going home carrying some tailoring tools and material that he had bought. I told him: Shaykh have some rest, you are not feeling well."

He replied:

"What should I do with the wife and the children then?"

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) is quoted as saying:

"God likes to see his servant tired out in the way of earning his lawful sustenance."

"Cursed is the one, cursed is the one who does not provide for his family's sustenance."

**Lesson Learnt:**

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06) Do not depend on others for your living

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**7. Equity in Receiving Wages**

The Shaykh received very equitable wages for sewing clothes. He used to get wages for exactly the amount of stitching he had done and just for as much time as he had spent working on the clothes.

By no means would he accept to be paid more than what he had worked for. Thus, if someone would say: "Reverend Shaykh! Let me pay a higher wage. He would reject.

The reverend Shaykh charged his customers on the basis of ijara (contract on hire and lease) according to Islamic law. But since he never tended to receive more than what he had worked for the customers, if after finishing the work; he found that he had done less work than predicted, he would give back the money that he thought was extra to his real wages!

One of the Alim said: "I took some cloths to the Shaykh to make a robe, a cloak, and a quilted cloak. I asked him how much I should pay."

"It needs two days' work, so the wage will be forty dirhams." He said.

"A couple of days later when I went for the clothes, he said: "The wage is only twenty dirhams."

"I inquired: You said forty? He replied:"

"First I thought they needed two days' work, but it just took one day to complete!"

The Shaykh's son said: "Once he settled with a customer to make a robe for 35 Rials. Some days later the customer came for the robe. No sooner had he walked away with the robe than my father ran after him and gave him five back, saying:" "I thought it would take me longer time to make this robe, but it did not!"

**Lessons Learnt:**

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- 01) Upbringing of Children starts even before and during Conception.
- 02) Live with simplicity
- 03) Wear your clothes to attain only God's Pleasure!
- 04) Only eat at Halal restaurants and make sure the food you eat is Tahir (clean)
- 05) Choose your profession which is a Halal means of livelihood even if it means slogging from Home.
- 06) Do not depend on others for your living
- 07) Equity is the best of virtue with lots of rewards

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We are at the end of the journey together with the Shaykh...

**By : Dr. Rashid M.H.**

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