

The Patron Saint of Algiers:

Sidi Abdul-Rahman Athaalibi

> Algiers- Mohamed Bokreta

The Patron Saint of Algiers Sidi Abdul-Rahman Athaalibi, the wise, erudite and exegesis scholar, belongs to the Ahl Al Bait honourable lineage going up to Jaafar Ibn Abi Taleb.

Sidi Abdul-Rahman was born in 1384 AD/785 AH in the town of Wad Isser about 86 km south east of Algiers and was brought up in a very spiritual environment with high Islamic values and ethics shaping the brilliant future of this great man. After reaching the age of 15, Sidi Abdul-Rahman, in the company of his father Sidi Mohamed Ben Makhlof, went to Morocco to study where he met a great Muslim scholar Sidi Mohamed Ibn Marzoug Al Adjissi .

In 1392, always in the company of his father, Sidi Abdul-Rahman took the opposite road to Bijaya (200 km east of Algiers) for the same sublime purpose of knowledge seeking. After a brief sojourn, his father passed away. This unexpected event obliged him to return to Algiers for a short while. He came back to Bijaya for a period of only one year followed by another stay of seven years to finish his studies. He also travelled to Tunis in 1406, Cairo in 1414 and went on to Bursa in Turkey, where he was well received. A Zawiyya was erected in his honour which remains an endowment for this saint.

From Turkey, Sidi Abdul-Rahman went to perform Hajj to Mecca. After accomplishing this Islamic pillar, he returned to his native Algeria after a 20 year absence spent in knowledge seeking. He went to teach in Masjid Al Kabir (the Great Mosque). He died on Friday the 23rd of Ramadan 875 AH – the 15th of March 1479 after dedicating 95 years of service to Islam and Muslims.

He was buried near the quarter of "Bab El



The writer beside the tomb **الكاتب بجانب الضريح**

Oued" in the heart of Algiers next to his Sheikh Sidi Abi Djamaa Al Maknassi. He left a legacy of more than 100 books – the most important "The Jawahir Al Hissane fi Tafsir Al Koran" (the fine pearls in the exegesis of the Koran).

The sincere combination of spiritual yearning and practice and the recognition of the inseparability of Shariah (Law) and Tariqah (Sufism) embodied the depth and the breadth of genuine Islam within the vision of this great man.

In downtown Algiers Sidi Abdul-Rahman's most sacred architectural masterpiece is still proudly witnessing its spiritual legacy and reverberating the perennial divine message which has always enlightened humanity. ■



The flag covering the shrine **علم يغطي الضريح**