

# Al Maghribi Mosque:

## place of worship, tourism and pilgrimage

>Tartous - Zeina El-Cheikh

Lattakia is the principal port in Syria. The few remains of the old city include columns and a Roman arch, a beautiful Ottoman hotel called "Khan Dokhan", currently housing the Lattakia museum and some old mosques. The most famous is Al-Maghribi Mosque. In addition to its religious importance, this mosque is an architectural gem that deserves to be visited by everyone who comes to Lattakia.

### Life of Sheik Al Maghribi

Imam Sheik Mohamed Ben Abdallah Ben Ahmed Al Nasereddine Al Maghribi was born in Morocco in 1764AD /1177H. He left on a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1802AD/1216H, then Medina. Afterwards, he went to Jerusalem, where he remained for a month. Then, he left for Damascus in order to gain more knowledge of religious sciences. He remained there until 1805/1220H. The next stop was Hama, Idleb and finally Lattakia, a small city, which had survived natural disasters and wars. He resided there until his death in 1827/1242 H.

### Description of the mosque

The mosque is located at the south of a hill overlooking Lattakia and the sea. The entry to its esplanade is located on the western side through a stone staircase connecting it to a square known as "Maghribi Square". One goes down from the door of the Eastern esplanade by a staircase of the cemetery also called "the cemetery of Maghribi". In the middle of the esplanade, an open area, one finds a rectangular pond. In the northern side of the esplanade is a covered corridor, with rooms opening on it, a warehouse, toilets and bathrooms. The prayer room is on the southern side.

The history of the mosque has been

recorded on four plaques showing the stages of its 10-year construction under the direction of Ahmed Al Halabi, one of the followers of Al Maghrabi, who was buried beside his spiritual master. The mausoleum was built in 1242H, then the minaret and other structures were added. The building was finally finished in 1251H.

The mausoleum has a square form. One enters by a door to the northern side. It is covered with a dome built according to the Ottoman model, with a window on each of the eight portions of this dome, for lighting and ventilation. On the four walls of the mausoleum there are eight windows. The prayer room also has a square form with a dome. In the middle there is a platform

made out of decorated wood which would have been used as a prayer room for women and a place for sermons.

### Importance of the mosque

This mosque is characterized by a mixture of simple Ottoman architecture and the richness of its Moroccan style architecture. This can be seen on the mausoleum's doors and floors. Al Maghribi mosque is preserved in its original form, except for the minaret which was rebuilt after it was destroyed by a lightning strike in 1909. This mosque continues to be a place of pilgrimage for those seeking the blessings of Sheik Al Maghribi, a traditional practise which is well anchored in local culture. ■



Tombs of Sheikh Al- Maghribi & Ahmad Al-Halabi

مرقدا الشيخ المغربي وتلميذه الحلبي



View of the mosque

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