

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani Epitome of Islamic Propagation and Tasawuf

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Abstract

Devotion to God constituted the ideal life for Syed Abdul Qadir Jilani. People were constantly advised by him to reform their own thinking and conduct. He says one should always love God in the true sense and the most important kind of worship is to help the poor, the needy and to feed the hungry. As a result all were influenced by his teachings and above all their was moral correctness of people. Syed never in his life attached importance to material power and wealth. His much emphasis was on piety, simplicity, lawful earning and service to mankind.

Keywords: Rectitude, Purification of Soul, Piety, Devotion, Simplicity, Illumination and help to poor

INTRODUCTION

The founder of the Qadriya Sufi order, Sheikh Syed Abdul Qadir¹ Jilani, has been famous for centuries as the most popular Sufi of Islam. His high thinking and simple living proved very much instrumental in the process of social transformation. Primarily and meticulously was interested in the mass welfare of people and by and large remained kind while approaching the people. The social appeal was based on humanism and large number of people were drawn to his fold. This said order has countless followers throughout the Muslim world. His adherents, who knew him as Ghausul Azam, known for his piety, humility, learning and gentleness.

Sincerity and truthfulness:

Sheikh Abdul Qadir² Jilani was born in the month of Ramadan, A.H.470/A.D.1077, in Nif, a village in the district of Gilan, Persia (to the north of current Iran). On his paternal side, his ancestry can be traced back in the direct line to Hazrat Imam Hassan and hence the Prophet Muhammad. Right from his childhood³, remained truthful and honest whatever might happen, Because of his honesty the way robbers were impressed and influenced. They too were convinced about the basic message of Islam.

Spiritual Knowledge beneficial for all:

Ghausul Azam has said that the first and foremost duty of every seeker after truth is to acquire knowledge as far as possible. He should acquire the knowledge of Shariah to the degree of perfection. All are branches of knowledge are offshoot of, Ilm-i-ludunni, (inspired knowledge), which is the origin of every thing. In search of knowledge Sheikh Abdul Qadir left for Baghdad (Iraq) at the age of eighteen⁴ on A.H.488 or A.D.1095. He attended the

classes held by Tibrizi, the well-known Arab Philologist of the age. There he was initiated into the Sufism by Abul Khair Hammad (d.525.AH./1131.A.D). A Sufi lives rather a retired life in voluntary poverty in order to be better able to meditate on the Holy Quran by seeking to draw closer to Allah in prayer. In Sufism, his spiritual instructor was Sheikh Abul Khair Hammad. From him, he received his basic training, and with his help he set out on the spiritual journey. Abu Shuja was also a disciple of Sheikh Hammad. Once he said: "Sheikh Abdul Qadir⁵ was in the company of Sheikh Hammad, so he came and sat in front of him, observing the best of good manners, until he stood up and took his leave. I heard Sheikh Hammad say, as soon as Sheikh Abdul Qadir⁶ had left: 'This non-Arab has a foot that will be raised, when the proper time comes, and placed upon the necks of the Sufis of that time. He will surely be commanded to say, this foot of mine is upon the neck of every Sufi of Allah. Sheikh Abdul Qadir⁷ Jilani is having an eye on Sufi of all times who came to this world and who will come in ahead times till the day of judgment. Allah almighty already bestowed this kind of vision upon Sheikh. His deep insight vision radiates like spokes of wheel. In Sufi spectrum Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani is considered head of all Sufis. Hazrat Junaid Baghdadi, (d.AH297-8./A.D- 910), who died about 167 years before the birth of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, predicted about him on one occasion, when he was performing meditation & during that time he said, his foot will be over all Sufis necks. After finishing meditation, his disciples asked him about his words, he replied, one Sufi would be born in the future, who would be greater than all Sufis. Thus, Sheikh Hammad proved the words of Hazrat Junaid as right. The historians say that, later Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani also repeated the same words on many occasion by himself. After completion of education⁸, Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jilani abandoned the city of Baghdad (Iraq) and spent twenty-five years as a wanderer in the desert regions of Iraq as a recluse. He was over fifty years old by the time he returned to Baghdad in, A.H 521 or A.D 1127, and began to preach in public. His hearers were profoundly affected by the style and content of his lectures, and his reputation grew and spread through all sections of society because of his divinely vision coupled with supernatural modesty and compassionate nature. Besides human beings all sorts of creations including jinath and even angles used to sit in his gathering. Not only Muslims, but also Jews and Christians, of all sects including wazirs and farmers, merchants and traders

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allegedly altered their lives in response to Abdul Qadir's perorations. He moved into the school belonging to his old teacher Al-Mukharrimii, (d./A.H.523/A.D.1129), where he engaged himself in teaching. Soon he became popular in entire region. In the morning he taught hadith and tafseer, and in the afternoon held discourse on mysticism and the virtues of the Quran⁹. The number of students increased so much that the seminary could no more contain them. He, therefore, decided to extend the premises of the seminary. The students and the people willingly came forward with their wholehearted contributions. The campus buildings were ready in .A.H 528-1135.A.D, and thereafter it came to be known as Madarsai-e-Qadriya. Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jilani was a Non-Arab, so he wasn't fluent in Arabic and was having some difficulties because of it. Once The Prophet Muhammad came to him in a dream, before the time of the midday prayer (Zuhr), and he said to him: "O my dear son, why do you not speak out" He replied: "O dear father, I am a Non-Arab man. How can I speak fluently in the classical Arabic language of Baghdad "Holy Prophet said: "Just open your mouth" .He opened his mouth, and the Holy Prophet put his saliva seven times in his mouth. A few moments later, Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib also came & did the same to him six times. And from that time, Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jilani spoke classical Arabic language with fluency, his memory increased and he felt some great positive spiritual changes in him. Once some one asked Sheikh Abdul Qadir¹⁰ Jilani about Mansur Al-Hallaj,(d.A.H.310/A.D.922), he replied, his claim extended too far, so the scissors of the Sacred Law were empowered to clip it. The Sheikh was a great theologian and an earnest, sincere and eloquent preacher. He prayed for all of mankind without distinction of race or creed. His sermons¹¹ which he gave regularly in the School on Friday mornings and Monday evenings, and in the Khanqah on Sunday Mornings, breathed the spirit of charity and philanthropy. Some of his sermons that are entitled 'Futuh al Ghaib' are considered to be among the best pieces of Islamic literature ever written in the light to its matter and style and one of the great educative values to Muslims and non-Muslims alike. A considerable number of Christians and Jews were deeply influenced by his preaching and accepted the Divine faith. He made people understand man God relationship and man Prophet¹² relationship. This is the message of God for all human beings, who have come to this world.

Devotion and dedication:

His fame as a scholar and theologian spread far and wide. Many people including rulers and wazirs figured among his disciples venerated the Sufi for his unaffected simplicity, deep humanity and steadfastness of purpose. I know all Sufis, Walis and Sheikhs who have come to this world and will come. All Walis Sheikh Abdul Qadir¹³ Jilani uttered these words from the pulpit in Baghdad (Iraq) all Auliya, present and non-present, bowed their heads in submission. With the exception of Sahaba and the Imams of Ahle Bait, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani's foot is on the neck of all Auliya. Sheikh was having knowledge beyond knowledge. Both angels and genii executed his command. Sheikh had directly got this knowledge from Prophet Mohammad. He engaged himself for forty years in the service of the Islam from A.H.521-1127.A.D. to 561.A.H.1166.A.D. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani had four wives, each a model of virtue, and devoted to him. He had forty-nine children, twenty-seven sons and twenty-two daughters. Four of his sons, Sheikh Abdul Wahab¹⁴, (d.HA591/1196), Sheikh 'Isa, Sheikh Abdul Razzaq,(d.A.H.604./A.D.1234.) and Sheikh Musa. Among his sons

Abdul Wahab took over the Madrasa and Abdul Razzaq, dedicated himself to running the Ribat.Both the institutions were obliterated during the sack of Baghdad in .A.H.628/A.D.1258.As because of this chaos number of families and followers were disturbed and they began to migrate to other areas. The few members of the family who survived in Baghdad formed the moral centre of the order. The centre became famous for their education and learning, and their descendants spread Islam in other parts of the world. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani¹⁵ passed away with the Zikr of Allah on his lips on 11 Rabi' ul Akhir, (561 A.H or 1166.A.D), at the age of 91. His earthly remains were buried within the premises of, Bab-ul-Azaj.The Madrasa, which later became known after him, by the name of, Bab-ul- Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani. A special Zikr¹⁶ session is held that night it is variously known as Khatm Ghausia, on the day of Urs Shareef of Sheikh Abdul Qadir¹⁷ Jilani .Not only in Baghdad but also at different places of world. In Eastern Africa, a whole night Zikr session is held in congregation ending with Fajr namaz. In some places, Zikr sessions continue for days. These Zikr sessions draw spiritual seekers in thousands who come out spiritually rejuvenated, with their characters modified and refined, ready to sacrifice everything they have for the sake of Allah¹⁸.These gatherings of Zikr in Silsila Qadriya¹⁹ have continued to attract millions of people to Islam through centuries upto present times. Besides this annual Zikr congregation, Zikr sessions are also held on the eleventh of every month, as well as on every thursday night, as the night before Jumu'a is considered auspicious and helpful. The spiritual seekers also performed Zikr everyday individually in a mosque. This then is one of the enduring legacies of Sheikh Abdul Qadir²⁰ Jilani.

Spread of Silsila

The Qadriya order gained its footing in Indian sub continent during fourteenth and fifteenth century The Qadriya Khanqahs are mostly located in Punjab, parts of northern India and extensively in South India. In Kashmir²¹ valley it was introduced in the second half of sixteenth century during the rule of Chaks, 968-994.A.H.or 1563.1586.A.D by Syed Nimatullah²² Shah Qadri Hisari (d.A.H.990/A.D.1582) disciple of Sheikh Mohammad Dervish Qadri, and settled at Chattabal Srinagar, after making large number of followers left the valley. At present almost eighty of people are the followers of said Sufi order. And every one in valley used to say, "Ya Pir Dastgir".

As a real Mentor of people:

Don't transgress the limits set by Allah and do whatever Allah commands. The ultimate stations are abdatiat, Ghausiat and Saddiqiat .In case you do all these things as are prescribed by Islamic Shariah, Allah will make a blissful life your destiny .And if any evil comes in your way Allah will shelter you from its malignancy through your obedience to him. Sheikh Abdul Qadir²³ Jilani has guaranteed to his pupils, until the day of judgment that not a single one of them will die without being in a state of repentance. He has²⁴ also given the assurance that his pupils, and their pupils, pupils will enter the Garden of Paradise. He said²⁵ I am a surety for my pupils. If a defect became apparent in a pupil of mine in any part of world, I would cause it to be concealed. We must make it our habit to direct our endeavors, to the fullest possible extent, toward safeguarding the welfare²⁶ of all and, fortunate is he who has seen me. His main aim was to make people understand the concept of oneness²⁷, and to keep them aware of Quranic philosophy. All Auliyas are one and they are the basic followers of Prophet and they have clearly understood

magnanimity of Prophet, and to let people know about Prophet and his message. Prophet himself announced that all pious persons who will come here up to the day of Judgment are my representatives. They are the true successors of my deep insight spiritual hierarchy known to Allah only, which human beings cannot understand.

Chillah and Zikr a medicine to nafs:

The fresh entrant into Chillah (Khalwat) is to observe fast in day time, because fasting immensely is beneficial and efficacious to control unruly temptations and desires on nafs. For this purpose incessant fasting without break is the most effective remedy, coupled with this keeping night vigil should be the regular practice without fail. One should avoid oversleeping and try to pass wakeful nights as a matter of routine, because without night vigil no Salik, (traveler), can attain his goal, he should always remain engaged in Zikr, with constancy and fortitude. It is important for him to concentrate not on the words but on the meanings, so as to grasp the reality and purpose behind it. A little sleep will help in doing away with exhaustion and fatigue and make in fresh to regain devotion in Zikr. On waking he should perform fresh Wadu (ablution) and offer two Rakah of supererogatory prayer as "Tahayyat-ul-Wadu. The Salik should cultivate the practice of prayers most frequently, as prayer becomes instrumental to spiritual elevation. Indeed Allah loves those who purify themselves and Wadu undoubtedly is a very effective way of purification and before it Istinja (washing of private parts after natural evacuation) is essential pre requisite. The Khalwat Gah (place for seclusion), should be narrow with only one opening door without ventilation so as to shut all avenues of all outside sounds and voices which detract the devotion. The door should be kept closed all the time so as to obstruct the incoming light. Conscious effort should be made to lull all senses into inner state of inaction and the inward attention of the heart be focused on divine remembrance all the time. One should keep the tongue quiet so as to avoid absurd talking and muttering. In case the Salik finds no place from disturbing noises, he should keep his ears stuffed with flakes of cotton and eyes shut at the time he is engaged in remembrance. He should then squat down in sitting posture of prayer and avoid using a pillow because leaning there on is likely to make him sleepy. The time of commencement of Chillah should be when the sun is in the Zone of Zodiac and this coincides with the onset of winter season. The duration of Khalwat should be not more than forty days and will adhere to this schedule strictly as ordered by him. He should come out of Khalwat as and when the period expires with permission of the Murshid.

CONCLUSION

Abdul Qadir Jilani played a major role in spreading Islam and Islamic spiritualism to different parts of world. The Qadriya Sufi Silsila continuously spread from Baghdad to the different parts of the world by the pious followers who were connected with the Sufi chain of Syed Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani.

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