

Book 4. Jamadiul awal - jamadi ul akhir 1426 # July-Aug 2005

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Book -4

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A Journal on Sufi Culture,
Philosophy and Literature
(Islamic Spiritualism)

Hazreth Ghouse - e-pak issne

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Aims and Objectives

1. To propogate the ideals and proctice of Sufism
2. To achieve Cosmic harmony through preachings of Sufi Tradition and Culture.
3. To carry out publications of books on sufies, their lives and preachings.
4. To hold lectures, seminars on Sufi thought.
5. To Unite Sufies and members of Sufi orders all over India and abroad for achieving universal love and brother-hood.

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Fore word

We are presenting to our readers Book - 4 of 'Sufi World'. In this issue , we are placing before our readers about life and teaching of one of the greatest Sufi Saint Islam has produced namely Ghouse al-Azam Shaikh Mohiyudin Abdul Qadir Gilani the Saint of Baghdad. There is no two opinion of his greatness and achievement in reviving the religion.

We have included the opinion of another great scholar Haji Imdad Ullah Muhajir Makki on several aspects of Sufi practices like celebrating Maulood un Nabi, Fateha, Mrso saints, visiting the tombs etc for our readers benefit.

We hope that this issue will enlighten our readers.

Syed Liaqath Peeran
Editors

Bangalore
July 2005

Hujurat, or the Inner Apartments.

In the name of God., Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Oye who believe !
Put not yourselves forward
Before God and His Apostle ;
But fear God : for God
Is He Who hears
And knows all things.

2. Oye who believe !
Raise not your voices
Above the voice of the Prophet,
Nor speak aloud to him
In talk, as ye may
Speak aloud to one another,
Lest your deeds become
Vain and ye perceive not.

3. Those that lower their voice
In the presence of
God's Apostle, - their hearts
Has God tested for piety :
For them is Forgiveness
And a great Reward.

4. Those who shout out
To thee from without
The inner Apartments -
Most of them take understanding.

5. If only they had patience
Until thou couldst
Come out to them,
It would be best
For them; but God is
Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

6. Oye who believe !
If a wicked person comes
To you with any news,
Ascertain the truth, lest
Ye harm people unwittingly,
And afterwards become
Full of repentance for
What ye have done.

7. And know that among you
Is God's Apostle: were he,
In many matters, to follow
Your (wishes), ye would
Certainly fall into misfortune :
But God has endeared
The Faith to you, and
Has made it beautiful
In your hearts, and He
Has made hateful to you
Unbelief, wickedness, and
Rebellion, such indeed are
Those who walk in righteousness;

8. A grace and favour
From God; and God
Is full of knowledge
And Wisdom.

9. If two parties among
The Believers fall into
A quarrel, make ye peace
Between them : but if
One of them transgresses
Beyond bounds against the other,
Then fight ye (all) against
The one that transgresses
Until it complies with
The command of God;

But if it complies, then
Make peace between them
With justice, and be fair :
For God loves those
Who are fair (and just).

10. The Believers are but
A single Brotherhood :
So make peace and
Reconciliation between your
Two (contending) brothers :
And fear God, that ye
May receive Mercy.

SECTION - 2

11. Oye who believe !
Let not some men
Among you laugh at others :
It may be that
The (letter) and better
Than the (former) :
Nor let some women
Laugh at others :
It may be that
The (letter) are better
Than the (former) :
Nor defame nor be
Sarcastic to each other,
Nor call each other
By (offensive) nicknames :
Ill-seeming is a name
Connoting wickedness,
(To be used of one)
After he has believed :
And those who
Do not desist are
(Indeed) doing wrong.

12. O ye who believe !
Avoide suspicion as much
(As possible) : for suspicion
In some cases is a sin :
And spy not on each other ,
Nor speak ill of each other
Behind their backs. Would any
Of you like to eat
The flesh of his dead
Brother ? Nay, ye would
Abhor it... But fear God :
For God is Oft - Returning,
Most Merciful.
13. O mankind ! We created
You from a single (pair)
Of a male and a female,
And made you into
Nations and tribes, that
Ye may know each other
(Not that ye may despise
(Each other). Verily
The most honoured of you
In the sight of God
Is (he who is) the most
Righteous of you.
And God has full knowledge
And is well acquainted
(With all things).
14. The desert Arabs say,
"We believe" Say, "Ye
Have no faith ; but ye
(Only say, 'We have submitted
Our wills to God,'
For not yet has Faith
Entered your hearts.
But if ye obey God

And His Apostle, He
Will not belittle aught
Of your deeds : for God
Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

15. Only those are Believers
Who have believed in God
And His Apostle, and have
Never since doubted, but
Have strived with their
Belongings and their persons
In the Cause of God :
Such are the sincere ones.

16. Say : "What ! Will ye
Instruct God about your
Religion ? But God knows
All that is in the heavens
And on earth : He has
Full knowledge of all things.

17. They impress on thee
As a favour that they
Have embraced Islam.
Say, "Count not your Islam
As a favour upon me :
Nay, God has conferred
A favour upon you
That He has guided you
To the Faith, if ye
Be true and sincere.

18. "Verily God knows
The secrets of the heavens
And the earth : and God
Sees well all
That ye do."

Introduction to Futuh Al-Ghuib

by M.Aftab-ud-Din Ahmed

Hazrat Syed Abdul Qadir Gilani - the Saint of Baghdad (mercy of Allah upon him) - does not stand in need of an introduction to the Muslim world. Among the books associated with his name, the Futuh-al-Ghaib has acquired a fame that falls to the lot of very few works of this kind. Born in a province whose people are highly imaginative and mystical by nature, I felt quite early in my life drawn towards the personality of this Saint. The later rationalistic meanderings of my mind, however, disturbed the natural development of this admiration. It was, however, at the suggestion of a Bengali Muslim friend that I ultimately made up my mind to go through this particular book with a scrutiny that would enable me to present to the English-speaking world the precious gems that fell from the lips of this great mystic of the Middle East. The fruits of my first labour, however, were not so happy....

The book is evidently mystical, through not too mystical for an average intelligent man with a little introspection. It seems that the world is too much taken up with questions of material existence to find any time for a study of this nature. And yet the social and political upheavals all the world over, making the question of life and existence so uncertain, have, I believe, created a proper psychological background for the study of such a book as this. I should not be taken to mean that I am suggesting or that Islam suggests an escapist attitude under such circumstances. Islam never tries to create the escapist mentality nor does the present book encourage such a frame of mind. We are, however, for a change in the mental out-look of man which will bring about an actual solution of the tangles confronting our species in this age. It is not difficult to see that the lack of a higher vision of life has resulted in an over emphasis on comparatively less important aspects of our worldly existence, which in its turn has been the root cause of all our strifes. It is hoped that a perusal of books such as this will open the eyes of people to that higher vision and lessen the heat of ruinous competition in the field of material acquisition.

The Arabic text in my hand is the one which is to be found in an Urdu translation of the book entitled Futuh al-Bhaib Mutarjam, by Maulvi Sikandar Shah of Benares. As this translator assures us in his introduction, he took great pains in securing the complete and

correct text of the original Arabic before he took up his work of Urdu translation, and yet the text which accompanies this translation is not free from mistakes some of which are extremely disappointing. One will understand what I mean if one examines carefully pages 46 to 49. In spite of this drawback, the text may be regarded as fairly dependable and helpful in that it provides vital points which are fairly accurate. As for the Urdu translation itself, though rather free here and there, it undoubtedly shows the deep learning of the translator as well as his acquaintance with matters connected with Islamic spiritual science, otherwise known as tasawwuf.

A few words about this science will, I hope, be of use to such of the readers as are not conversant with the traditions of Islam. The word "mysticism" which is generally used to indicate this aspect of Islam is a little misleading. The English word has an elusive atmosphere about it, whereas "tesawwuf" is a regular science with its set laws and a full scheme in detail. It is based on palpable experience which can be reproduced, like in any other science, under set circumstances. Every pilgrim has to pass through the same stages in his spiritual journey and these stages are readily recognisable by their detailed descriptions given unanimously by all masters. The landmarks and pitfalls are described in equally exhaustive particulars. Just as in any other course of study, there are methods in it to test the progress of the disciple and his merit. As in any other branch of knowledge, there are geniuses in this branch of study who create a stir in the world, but even the humblest learner can at least aspire to develop a living sense of the presence of God in the midst of our struggle for material existence. He also develops a taste for this culture and an interest in those who follow this path and thereby acquires an increasing control over his passions and desires for things worldly. It can be readily understood that this paves the way for real social peace, the crying need of the times. As for the more gifted pilgrims, but for them God would be a mere hypothesis. It is these experiences that have made God a palpable fact of experience and have made thinking humanity believe in the continuity of life after death. It is they who radiate a faith in life everlasting which in its turn takes away the sting from death and enables us, average men, to view life with a sense of ease. They attain to a perfect certainty about the existence of God by a speaking contact with Him and thereby act as the vicegerents of the Holy Prophet (may Allaha's peace and blessings be upon him). It is to these people that the Holy Prophet refers in his oftquoted saying : "The learned among my followers are like the prophets of Israel" or in another saying : "The learned are the successors of the Prophets".

The law being complete in the shape of the Holy Qur'an, no Prophet is needed after the Holy Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) yet these spiritual luminaries must be there to testify to the existence of God, to the truth of the Qur'anic revelation and to the continuity of the Holy Prophet's spiritual regime. Without these personalities belief in all these verities will be reduced into a mere makebelieve, devoid of any power to influence people's thought and action. This has exactly been the fate of all religions excepting Islam, which, though professed by a politically backward people at the moment, is yet rich in the tradition of these living experiences.

I, therefore, appeal to the scientific - minded people of other faiths to read these discourses carefully and ascertain for themselves if their approach is not a perfectly scientific one. And we should bear in mind that this is only one of many such works by people of this line. In fact, it is these works that have saved Islamic theology from appearing the dry thing which it is in every other religion. It is not here a speculative philosophy or a dogmatic theology, but an experimental science with its attractions as such. To describe briefly the general frame work of this science, human consciousness is divided into three conditions rising upward in the scale of evolution:

1. Nafs Ammara, i.e. unruly animal self.
2. Nafs Lawwama, i.e. struggling moral self.
3. Nafs Mutmainna, i.e. composed Allah - realised self.

In the first stage man is a pure animals, restless self-animal urges, impatient of restrictions and stranger to any pricking of conscience. By a systematic course of religious training, of which obedience to commands and prohibitions is the chief feature, he develops a sense of propriety and impropriety and repents after every falling into error. This is the Lawwama state. This stage begins with a faint dawning of the moral sense and ends in a complete surrender of the animal ego in man, which marks the third and the highest stage, viz. Mutmainna. The struggle between the lower and the higher selves having now ended, the pilgrim enters a condition of perfect peace, of purity, of rectitude, and of knowledge.

To indicate the experiences, starting from the threshold of this stage, further on, the Sufis have coined three more terms:

1. Fana . A complete subjugation of the animal self. At this stage man ceases to be disturbed by any urge of desire. The only urge left in him is prayerful surrender of his whole being.

2. Baqa. This means a restoration of the self in a new consciousness, this time not of the flesh but of the spirit. The urges of the self are no longer from the animal passions which drive a person to acts involving violation of others' rights and this leading to disturbance in the society, but from Allah-controlled spiritual region, the source of actions invariably beneficial to humanity and creation.

3. Liqa. This is the stage wherein man's spiritual knowledge rises to such a high pitch that the rewards for his faith, sincerity and devotion no longer remain a matter of belief but a palpable certainty and an experience, as if he has then already and his faith in Allah reaches a point wherein it seems to him that he is seeing Him face to face. Such a man becomes free from all fears about the future and from all sorrows about the present and past. In such a condition a man is free from all hesitation and obscurity of judgement and doubts and misgivings. In this condition the devotee is coloured by the attributes of Allah in the manner of a piece of iron, assuming the colour of fire if it is kept long enough in it. And in moments of commotion such a man's feelings partake of Divine powers, so much so that this pleasure brings in the pleasure and blessing of Allah and his anger brings the wrath and curse of Allah, and events seemingly contrary to the laws of nature come into being through his attention. Receiving powers from Allah he possesses a power of creation. He creates events and even determines the course of history.

It should be borne in mind that after a pilgrim has entered the state of Fana, which in the language of the Qur'an is called "Istiqama", the next two stage of Baqa and Liqa follow as a matter of course. The reason is that when a person becomes completely void of attachment to creation and desire and personal will, he automatically enters the state Baqa. And so long as a man is not confirmed in the state of self-annihilation his surrender to Allah does not become a spontaneous affair, he cannot be said to be in the state of Baqa, which requires that all acts of devotion and surrender should become natural acts, not needing any effort. When such a state is attained, the man feels that all that belongs to him is really Allah's. And while other people of the world relish the satisfaction of their personal desires, such a person enjoys the worship of Allah and His remembrance.

Thus, when the pilgrim is confirmed in this state of Baqa and it becomes the warp and woof of his very being, a light appears to descend from heaven and mist of uncertainty is altogether lifted from his heart, which is filled now with a sweet felling of love, never experienced before, like the one which one experiences at the time of reunion with a loving friend after a long separation. This is accompanied by a highly pleasing shower of Divine communications every now and then which may be said to be attended by a heavenly sweet smell and a coolness like that of spring breeze. At this stage the devotee feels pleasure in sacrificing his everything for the sake of Allah, even his honour and life. His heart gets so filled with Light Divine that it seems if he is experiencing the rays of the midday sun within his bosom and as if Allah Himself has descended on his heart with all His glory. And these are the signs of the state of Liqa.

It is also to be remembered that, while attainment of Fana is the result of human efforts, the two higher stages Baqa and Liqa are the gifts of Allah proceeding from His grace. The pilgrim's spiritual struggles take him up to the stage of Fana only. After this, Divine grace takes him by the hand and carries him to the higher regions. So the rigours of journey are felt only up to the stage of Fana.

It seems also necessary to explain another set of ideas and corresponding terms in Sufism. It is in relation to the order of saints. According to the Sufis, there is a hierarchy of Saints (or awliya) at all times in the world, through whom Allah manifests His mercy in the world of humanity. In the absence of the Prophet they are the vicegerents of Allah on earth on his behalf. They are of three different grades - Badal (pl-Abdal), Ghauth, and Qutub. Badal - literally "substitute" - is so called because if any one of these saints happens to pass away, Allah immediately substitutes him by another (Sihah). They are righteous persons of whom the world is never destitute (Ibn Durayd, Sihah Mukham, Qamus). But more authoritative view is that they are given this name because of their ever-changing spiritual condition. They are in a flux and are not allowed to remain in one state. Being still on their way to Allah-realisation they are not allowed to settle down at any intermediate point. As to their exact number and their postings. opinions are divided. They seem to be the lowest in rank among the spiritual successors of the Prophet.

Ghauth and Qubub. According to the best authorities, "they are a hierarchy of the saints of a particular generation, and are supposed to be pre-eminently endowed with sanctity and with miracle-working faculties. If anybody is Qutub or a Ghauth, he is

recognised as such only by his agents, Badals, unless, of course, he himself reveals his position to a particular man. The literal meaning of Qutub is "axis", or "Pivot", the point upon which a thing turns, "the chief upon whom the state of affairs turn". So a Qutub is he whose attention and prayers decide the course of events in a particular society of people. He may be regarded as a kind of spiritual agent in a particular community. The literal meaning of Ghauth is "aid, "succour" in the midst of difficulties. So a Ghauth is a kind of intercessor who intercedes at a moment when the sins of a nation or humanity are at the point of being punished. These seem to be particularly tender-hearted like the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself, whose hearts melt at the woes and sufferings of humanity and who are, therefore, a means to avert Divine punishment. With the acceptability of their prayers assured, their prayers become a plea for Divine forgiveness and mercy. So Badal or Abdal may be regarded as spiritual magistrates. Above them are the Qutubs and in the highest rank are the Ghauth.

Together they constitute the make-weight of spiritual humanity at the particular moment, acting on behalf and under the stamp of the Holy Prophet - peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. But unlike the Mujaddids who are not only authorised but even commanded to announce their existence and authorised but even commanded to announce their existence and authority, not to speak of the Abdal, neither the Qutub, nor even the Ghauth are authorised to proclaim their existence and position. They act in silence, serve humanity by their precepts and examples and pray incessantly for the general forgiveness of human sins.

Some people have contended that the idea that such people exist and that they are kind of intercessors for humanity is not Islamic. A perusal of verses 20-27 of Sura Yasin (The Holy Qur'an) will show that even in a nation doomed to destruction for its inequities, there live persons who testify to the truth of a Prophet appearing among them by their power of readily recognizing the will of Allah. The event is begun with the following words :

"And from the remote part of the country there come a man running, he said 'O my people ! follow the messenger".

Now, who was this man ? I suggest it was either a Ghauth or a Qutub.

As for the idea that punishment for the sin of a nation is averted by the presence of an eminent man of spirituality, this can be deduced from the story of Prophet Lot as given in Sura Hud (The Holy Qur'an). This narration shows that the punishment even of a doomed nation is deferred out of a deference to a spiritual personality living in its midst. Even the punishment of the Quraish was deferred till the migration of the Holy Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) from Mecca. The Holy Qur'an lays down this principle in so many words: "Nor is Allah going to chastise them while you are among them". So the idea of the Sufis can be traced to principles laid down in the Holy Qur'an itself apart from its verification by invariable experiences of saints throughout our history.

The well-known hadith (Code of Islamic Conduct as preached and practised by Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) ascribing to Allah the words:

"One who is hostile to My Wali receives an announcement of war from Me" presents only the counterpart of this idea. Because if hostility to a Wali excites the wrath of Allah, his attention and prayers must be able to draw the mercy of Allah. Of course, the Wali spoken of here is of the higher type, which forms the subject of our discussion.

A few words would also seem necessary in explanation of another set of terms used in the pages that follow. It is again a trio - Siddiq, Shahid and Salih. But unlike the previous set these terms are no creation of the Sufis but are Qur'anic in origin. It is the Holy Qur'an which divides those favoured by Allah into four groups - Prophets, Siddiqs, Shahids and Salihs. The circle of the first group has been closed after the appearance of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), because Divine law has reached its completion in the Holy Qur'an. But the other three groups are to continue extending their circles till the end of human history.

Siddiqs are next to the Prophets in rank. The root word is Sidq meaning "truth" and the particular word indicates an intensified form of this quality. Thus Siddiq may be said to be an embodiment of truth. Strict truthfulness in speech is the minimum requirement. Conformity of speech with action and a deep inalienable love for truth in all its forms are its higher demands. Such a person recognises truth in all its manifestations. He hates the very semblance of falsehood and loves truth in all its manifold phases. Hazrat Abu Bakr

Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) was a type of this. This is why his epithet "Siddiq". He recognised the prophethood of the Holy Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) without asking either for argument or for miracles. Then his constant companionship of the Holy Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) at all kinds of risks, particularly at that most critical moment of his life when he migrated from Mecca to Medina to be away from his enemies who were thirsting for his blood, shows that his attachment to truth was not confined to his thought and speech but it went deeper and sank in his very being. It was this devotion to truth that gave him that unshakable faith which enabled him to withstand the utter confusion that followed the Holy Prophet's (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) demise and threatened the budding spiritual commonwealth with disruption.

Next in grade comes the Shahid. The root word is Shahida, i.e. he witnessed or experienced. A Shahid reaches a state of spiritual journey wherein he may be said to be witnessing the glory and power of Allah. He feels as if he is in His very presence. The spiritual values of things and people which are hypothetical and are matters of belief to an ordinary pilgrim and hence have to be maintained with an effort are to the Shahid manifest truths, for which he would pay any price. Acts of virtue proceed from him spontaneously as out of natural desires. Hence he feels pleasure at sacrificing everything that he has at the alter of truth. One need not actually be killed to prove oneself a Shahid, but one must be fully prepared to die a martyr's death at all moments of one's life.

The last in the grade comes the Salih. The root word is Salaha (he became sound or healthy). It is the barest requirement of spiritual health that a man should relish requirement of spiritual health that a man should relish devotional practices. He should enjoy religious acts. For such a relish he should first be cleansed of all impure elements in his spiritual being - such as insincerity, greed, jealousy, show and ostentation pride and arrogance, cruelty, etc. He must be, so to speak a living embodiment of piety and moral caution, the minimum qualification for a Godly man.

A ward more to the non-Muslim readers of this book. it has been suggested by outsiders that Sufism is a borrowed plume and not of the soul of Islam. This is based on crass ignorance. All the affairs that led to the formation of the Islamic society and civilisation were based on the verbal revelation coming to the Holy Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) in moments of spiritual trance and minor revelation

coming to his companions every now and then are indisputable facts of history. Exclusive devotional practices of a whole band of disciples called As-hab-e-Suffa are also among the outstanding facts of the Prophet's time. To say in face of this that Islam was a dogmatic and ritualistic faith in its origin and that tasawwuf was a later growth is to deny a broad daylight fact of history. The fact is that tasawwuf is the soul of Islam and political Islam its physical manifestation. Of course, much of what passes for Sufism is not tasawwuf. Ideas and practices foreign to Islam and even antagonistic to it have undoubtedly entered the body politic even of this living faith, particularly for the last few centuries, because of the general decadence in the Islamic socio-intellectual order. But disease does not prove the non-existence of health altogether nor decay the non-existence of body. In spite of corrupting influences from outside and their effects on our spiritual system, tasawwuf in its pristine purity has throughout existed in the Islamic society. It needs eyes, however, to see it. Eyes that can see nothing but howling and dancing darwishes as samples of Islamic mysticism, must undergo a major spiritual operation to be fit to discover tasawwuf in Islam.

In conclusion, I pray in all humility to the Al-Merciful Allah that He may make me and the readers inspired by the words such as those that follow to follow the path of these luminaries of spiritual humanity to the best of our efforts. Ameen.

The Qur'anic verses in English have been taken from the work of Muhammad Ali, the pioneer translator of the Holy Book into English. May Allah bless him for this sacred work !

A Life - Sketch of Ghauth al-Azam Mohy-ud-Din Sayyid Abdul Qadir Gilani

by M.Aftab-ud-Din Ahmed

Sayyid Abut Muhammad Abdul Qadir was born in Naif in the District of Gilani in Persia in the month of Ramadan in the year 470 A.H. corresponding to 1077 of the Christian era or thereabout. His father's name was Abu Salih, a God-fearing man and a direct descendant of Hazrat Imam Hasan, the eldest son of Hazrat Ali, Karrammallahu Wajhu the Holy Prophet's first cousin, and of Bibi Fatima (may Allah's blessings be upon her) his beloved daughter. His mother was the daughter of a saintly person - Abdullah Sawmai who was a direct descendant of Imam Hussian, the younger son of Hazrat Ali and Bibi Fatima. Thus Sayyid Abdul Qadir was both Hasani and Husaini (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon them all).

EARLY LIFE

From his early childhood he was quite and sober, given to contemplation and used to what, for want of a better expression, is called 'mystic experiences' in English. When he was about eighteen years old his thirst for knowledge and eagerness for the company of holy men took him to the distant city of Baghdad, at that time the centre of learning of all kinds. Later in life he was given the title of "Ghauth-al-Azam Dastgir", i.e. the greatest of all saints called Ghauth. In the Sufi terminology a Ghauth is next to a Nabi in spiritual rank and in the dispensation of Divine mercy and favour to mankind. A great authority of our times, however, has ranked him with the Siddiqun, as the Qur'an would call such people. And he bases his view on an incident that took place in the course of the about to leave home on this momentous journey his windowed mother sewed eighty gold coins inside his coat just below his armpits as a provision against hard times. This money was his share of the patrimony / As he was taking leave of his mother, a saintly mother of a saintly son, her parting advice was that he should not speak an untruth at any cost whatsoever. The son promised to bear this advice always in mind. The caravan with which he traveled had gone only as far as Hamadan when it encountered a gang of robbers. In the course of their loot the robbers did not take much notice of him because he looked quite simple and poor. One of them, however, casually asked him if he had any money on him. The young Abdul Qadir, remembering his promise to his mother,

unhesitatingly replied, "Yes, I have eighty gold pieces sewn into my garment by my mother". The robbers were astonished to hear him make this statement. They could not imagine a man could be so truthful as that. They took him to their leader, who put the same question to him and his reply was the same as before. The leader then ordered that the particular part of his coat be opened and, as it was opened, the eighty gold coins were found as stated. The robber chief's astonishment knew no bounds. He inquired of the young traveller the basis of this surprising veracity. The shaikh related all that had taken place between himself and his mother at time of parting and added that if he had told a lie on the very first stage of his journey undertaken for the sake of religious knowledge, he had obviously no chance of acquiring any real knowledge of religion at subsequent stages of his career. On hearing this the leader of the gang burst into tears, fell down at his feet and repented for all past sins. It is reported that he was his first disciple. Our authority is of opinion that this incident showed the Siddiq in the making. Had his very nature not be truthful in origin, such a courageous and unwavering stand of truth, in the face of such heavy odds, would not have been possible for him.

A STUDENT IN BAGHDAD

Truthful and charitable to the extreme, he had to endure great hardships during the period of his study at Baghdad. By dint of his natural talents and devotions he became very soon the master of all the different subjects that could be learnt by a scholar in those days. He proved to be the greatest jurist of his time. But his deeper spiritual yearnings were restless to manifest themselves. Even in his adolescence when he was engaged in his studies he was fond of mujahida or the struggle to conquer the self to rise above his animal self. He often resorted to fasting and would not ask for food from anyone even if he had to go without any mean for days together. He used to find out the spiritually - minded in Baghdad and cultivate intimacy with them. It was in the course of this search that he came across Hazrat Hammad, a vendor of syrups but a great saint of his time. Gradually this saint became a sort of a spiritual tutor to our hero. Hazrat Hammad, however, was a very dry and harsh kind of person and his treatment to our budding Sufi was extremely severe. But our would be Ghauth bore all this as a kind of corrective for his own spiritual defects.

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

After he finished his studies he became more severe on his own self. He began to deny himself all the needs and comforts of life excepting the barest minimum that would sustain life. The time and energy he would thus save he would imply in prolonged prayers and in the reading of the Holy Qur'an. So engrossed did he become in his prayers that he could be seen saying his morning prayers with the ablution performed for the prayers of the previous night. It is reported that very often he was seen finishing the recitation of the whole Qur'an in a single night. During this period he avoided all contacts with people and would not meet or talk to any one. If he went out he would roam about in the deserts. Eventually he left Baghdad and came to stay at Shustar, a place twelve days' journey from Baghdad. For eleven years he thus shut himself out from the world. The end of this period marked the end of his training as well. He received the illumination, as it is called. His animal self had by now vacated his soul in favour of his higher being. He was now established in Allah's consciousness.

TEMPTED BY THE DEVIL

A spiritual event took place on the eve of this new role which is narrated in the form of a story. Similar stories are related to practically all religious figures known of history. It is a story of temptation. It appears that all such stories express a natural event of life in the language of allegory. We read, for example, of the temptation of Prophet Jesus - how the devil took him to the hilltop and from there showed him the kingdoms of the world and asked Jesus to worship him if he wanted to be the master of those kingdoms. We know the memorable reply of Jesus worthy of his position as a spiritual leader of men. For all we know it might be just an event of inner struggle of the master at a delicate point of his life * An incident of this nature also took place in the life of the most historical of all religious personalities - I mean the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). When he persisted in his preachings against the idolatrous practices of his countrymen, his opponents, the leaders of the Quraish, tempted him with their offers of beauty, wealth and power. And no Muslim can ever forget his memorable reply on this occasion - "I want neither pelf nor power. I have been commissioned by Allah as a warner unto mankind, deliver His message to you. Should you accept it you shall have felicity in this life as well as in the life to come. Should you reject the word of Allah, surely Allah will decide between you and me".

It was not a vision in this case but a solid fact of earthly existence.

Quite in keeping with this tradition a story is narrated about Shaikh Abdul Qadir Gilani which has two revisions. One version is that one day the Devil or Satan appeared before him, introduced himself as Gabriel and said that he had brought from Allah the Burraq (i.e. the lightning conveyance on which the Holy Prophet rode to the heavens on the night of his spiritual ascension called Mi'raj as he had been invited by Him to be in His August Presence in the highest heaven. To this the Shaikh promptly replied that the speaker of these words before him could be no other than the Devil because neither Gabriel nor the Burraq could come to the world for any person other than the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). Satan, however, had still another missile to throw. He said, "Well, Abdul Qadir, you have saved yourself by dint of your knowledge." "Be off Satan," the Saint retorted, "do not tempt me any further; it is not through my knowledge but through the grace of Allah that I have escaped from your trap."

The other version of the story is that once the Shaikh was in the wilderness and was without food and drink for a long time. A cloud appeared overhead and showered rain. The Shaikh quenched his thirst with it. Presently a luminous figure appeared on the horizon and said, "I am your Allah, I now make all unlawful things lawful for you." At this the Shaikh recited the formula, "I seek the protection of Allah from Satan the accursed." At this the figure changed into a cloud and it was heard saying, "By your knowledge and by the grace of Allah you have been saved from my deception." Then the Satan asked the Shaikh how he could recognise him so quickly. The Shaikh replied that his announcement making unlawful things lawful betrayed him, because such an announcement could not have been from Allah.

This story has a similarity with the vision of Peter. But whereas this great disciple of Jesus, falling a prey to the Devil's deception, abrogated the law about prohibited food, throwing into the winds sermons and many of them embraced Islam at his hands. The Muslim sinners would suddenly change their course of life if they happened to listen to his discourses - such was the spiritual force at the back of his sermons. Indeed, the spiritual awe of his personality was so great that he was feared by the greatest men of the realm. The fact is that these spiritual personalities do not take to any occupation of their own choice. They surrender their whole being to their Creator and would not move in any matter unless they are directly handled by Allah and made to move in a particular affair.

Public preaching is, therefore, no act of their own, and as such is not backed by any human preparation. Their preparation is done by Allah Himself and the whole inspiration for public preaching comes from Him direct. So when they speak they are prompted by the holy spirit of Allah. Hence the miraculous and revolutionary power of such utterances.

DOMESTIC LIFE

His public appearance, it is interesting to note, synchronises with his married life. Upto A.H. 521, i.e. the fifty-first year of his age, he never thought of marriage. He even regarded it as a sort of impediment in the path of spiritual efforts. But as he came to establish contact with the people, in obedience to the commandment of the Holy Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and in deference to his example he married four wives, all of whom were models of virtue and devoted to him. He had forty nine children - twenty seven sons and the rest daughters.

Four of his sons became noted for their erudition and learning.

1. Shaikh Abdul Wahhab, the eldest born, was a great scholar and was given charge of the madrasa of his father in 543 A.H. After the Saint's expiry he also used to deliver sermons and give his opinions on questions of Islamic Shar'a. He also held an office under the State and was very popular.

2. Shaikh Isa. He was teacher of Hadith and a great jurist. He was also known to compose poems. He was a good preacher and also wrote books on Sufism. He settled down and finally died in Egypt.

3. Shaikh Abdur Razzaq. He was a scholar and even a hafiz of Hadith. Like his father he had a reputation for truthfulness. He possessed to some extent the spiritual trend of his father and became like him a very popular personality in Baghdad.

4. Shaikh Musa was also a scholar of renown. He migrated to Damascus where he eventually died.

It was Shaikh Isa through whom the seventy eight discourses of the Saint have been handed down to us. His name is accordingly mentioned at the very beginning of this book. Abdul Wahhat is the source of the last two discourses that present an account of the

Saint in the last moments of his wordly existence. Shaikh Musa is mentioned towards the end of the book in the 79th and 80 th discourses.

In the last two discourses a mention is made of two of the sons who were by the bed side of the Saint in his last moments - Abdul Razaq referred to above and Abdul Aziz.

USUAL OCCUPATIONS

As we have already see, the Saint used to deliver three public sermons in a week. Besides these sermons every day in the morning and afternoon he used to give lessons on Tafsir or the commentary on the Qur'an, the Hadith, or the Traditions of the Prophet and principles of Islamic law and other allied subjects. After midday prayers he was seen issuing fatwas or verdicts on legal questions presented to him from all parts of the world. Every evening before the Maghrib prayers he would distribute food amongst the poor. After the evening prayers it was his habit to take his meals because usually he fasted during the day all throughout the year. But before every such meal it was his practice to have it proclaimed that anybody who needed food and was present in the neighbourhood could come and join him in his meals. After Isha prayers after the manner of all saintly persons he would retire to his chamber and spend the greater part of the night in the worship of Allah- a practice recommended by the Holy Qur'an for all who would claim to be in close spiritual relationship with the Holy Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). So like a true follower of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), he used to serve humanity all the hours of the day and serve his Creator during the greater part of the night.

DEATG

He breathed his last in 561 A.H. (1166 C.E) , at the age of ninety-one. The day was the 11th of Rabiussani. This date is commemorated by his admirers up to this day and is known as Giarwin Sharif in the Indo-Pakistan sub - continent.

HERITAGE

After the Saint's demise his sons and disciples continued his way of spiritual practices for the cultivation of real Islamic spiritual and dissemination of correct Islamic teaching

among the people of the world. This was named after him as the Qa'adariyyah Order which is noted for its adherence to the principles of the Shari'a up to this day. In its own time it did great service to the general cause of Islam in the world and its contribution to the Islamic spiritual science has been enormous. Among the recorded teachings and exhortations of the Saint three are extant and enjoy worldwide reputation. The foremost of these is Futuh al-Ghaib, of which a translation is presented in the following pages.

Next in importance comes Fath-al-Aabbani - collection of sixty eight sermons delivered in the years 545-6 A.H.

The third one is a Qasida or a poem that explains the role and rank of the Saint in an ecstatic language. It is called "Qasidat al-Ghawthiyya".

Like all other religious orders the Qa'adariyyah Order of our day seems more interested in this last mentioned treatise than in the other works that contain exhortations for self-improvement and convey a message from the world unseen.

But whatever the lapses of his later day admirers, the Saint's influence on Islamic history has been enormous and his personality shines out as a sparkling jewel of Islamic spirituality today as at all previous epochs of history.

PRELIMINARY TO FUTUH-UL-GHAIB

The glory of the learned, the light of Iraq and Egypt, the spokesman of theologians, the interpreter of men of spiritual knowledge, the unique leader, the honour of religion, Shaikh Isa, Abu Abdul Rahman, mercy of Allah upon him and upon his progeny, said that :

My father the peerless chief, the most learned and possessed of very high and perfect spiritual knowledge, the leader of the leaders, the leader of nations, the chief of chiefs, the succour of men and the Jinn, the reviver of religion Abu Muhammad Abdul Qadir, son of Abu Salih, son of Abdullah, son of Yahya, the great ascetic, inhabitant of Jilan, may Allah sanctify his soul and illuminate his tomb said :

Praise be unto Allah - the Lord of the worlds, first and last, outwardly and inwardly, as many time as the number of His creations and equal to the measure of His words and to the weight of His throne and to the extent of His own pleasure and to the number of all things single and in pairs and of things wet and dry and of all that our Lord has created and spread for every and - in all its purity and blessedness - praise to Him Who has created then made complete and Who has made things according to their measure and then guided (them to their goal), to Him Who causes death and gives life, Who makes one laugh and weep, Who makes one near and still closer. Who shows mercy and abases, Who gives food and drink, Who gives one good and bad luck, Who withholds gifts and then bestows them, by Whose command the seven strong heavens stand and the mountains are fixed like pegs and the spread out earth is staved and in Whose mercy no one can be disappointed and from Whose planning and enforcement of order and dignity and command, no one can escape and to Whose service no one can be averse and of Whose blessings no one can be devoid ; so He is praised because He has been affectionate and He is given thanks because He affords safety.

Then blessings on His Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) the chosen - anyone who follows what he has brought receives guidance and whoever turns away from him is misguided and perishes - the truthful Prophet of recognised truthfulness, abstainer from the world, seeker of and inclined to the Friend on high, one who has been chosen from among all His creatures and selected from the whole

of His creation, one with whose advent the truth has come and with whose appearance falsehood has disappeared and with whose light the earth is illuminated.

Let us once more invoke blessings on him - blessings abundant and pure and blessed, as also on the pure among his offspring, companions and his followers, together with His favours - such of them as are best to their Lord in respect to action and most right in respect of their words and most correct in following His path. Next our entreaties and prayers and recourse are to Him our Lord and Creator Who gives us food and drink and confers benefits on us and protects us and keeps us safe and gives us life and drives and keeps away from us all that injures and gives us trouble and all this just out of His mercy any compassion and as an act of favour and because of His will to give us standing protection in all words and deeds, in secret and in open and in our expressions and in our reticence and in our straitened circumstances and in ease and comfort. Surely He is the absolute doer of whatever He likes and orders whatever He wills, and knows whatever is hidden, and is informed of all affairs and conditions both of sins and errors as well as acts of obedience and states of nearness to Allah and hears all noises and accepts all prayers from whomsoever He likes and wills, without any contention and hesitation.

Now verily the favours of Allah are on His servants in abundance and ceaselessly in all hours of night and day and at all times and moments and in all conditions as Allah the Exalted has said : "And if you enumerate the favours of Allah you will not be able to count them" Elsewhere He the exalted says again: "And whatever of blessings is with you it is from Allah". So I have neither the power nor the heart nor yet the tongue with which I can count and enumerate these blessings. Nor can numbers comprehend them, nor yet can human thoughts and minds grasp them, nor yet can hearts count them, nor yet can tongues describe them. So among the blessings which He has enabled the tongue to describe and power of speech to express and the fingers to record and the power of description to describe are these few words that have been revealed to me from the inspirations from the unseen world and these alighted in my heart and filled up its space and the return of normal state brought them out on the surface. And then the favour and mercy of Allah the Lord of people helped me to express words in a right form of speech to serve as guidance for the seekers of truth.

Thus spoke the great Saint (Allah be pleased with him).

The Qa'adariyyah Order is the main system of elevation on the spiritual place. The Chishtia Order is the main offshoot and all the other Orders are the branches varying on the personal experiences of the leaders of the Orders.

Books like 'Futuh-al-Ghaib' and "Fath-al-Rabbani" are in the courses of study of the wayfarer on the path of attainment the closeness of Allah, His Raza (willingness). The Murshid (the spiritual guide or leader) strives to inculcate Islamic discipline into the heart of the Mureed (a disciple who resolves to purify his heart of all the things and thoughts worldly, thereby to attain spiritual elevation), and the method so adopted or followed, comes to us, the readers, in the form of such books. While we, the ordinary readers, read these books to increase our knowledge, the Mureed goes through the experience physically, mentally and spiritually till the attainment of certainty. Living in the company of the Murshid, teaches a Mureed more than what he can absorb through reading such books. The Murshid invariably practices what he preaches and becomes a living model amongst his Mureeds. No conversion of hearts has ever taken place merely by reading books, commentaries or explanations.

"Qasidat-al-Ghawthiyya" enjoys unique place in the spiritual journey. This poem is rich with spiritual vigour and as such it has to be learnt by heart, and the Mureed has to include it in his Wazaif / Aurad (certain key words or sentences as prescribed by the Murshid for the Mureed to be repeated daily for a set number of times after his prayers). The Murshid is a Prefect Master in the spiritual field and he is well aware of the spiritual condition of his Mureed. Just as a physician knows his patient and prescribes necessary medicines for eradication of his physical ailments, so also the Murshid looks after the welfare of his Mureed.

EXCERPTS FROM 'THE SECRET OF SECRETS'

By Ghouse al Azam

Translated by Shaykh Bayrak al - jerrahi (Courtesy : Muslim Media Delhi India)

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

The venerable Muhyiddin Abu Muhammad 'Abdul-Qadir al-Jilani, may his soul be sanctified, is al-ghawth al-a-zam the manifestation of Allah's attribute 'the All-Powerful', who hears the cry for help and saves the ones in need, and al-qutb al-a-zam - the pole, the centre, the summit of spiritual evolution, the spiritual ruler of the world, the source of wisdom, container of all knowledge, the example of faith and Islam; a true inheritor of the perfection of the Prophet Muhammad; a perfect man; and the founder of the Qadiriyya, the mystical order that has spread far and wide and preserved the true meaning of Islamic Sufism throughout these centuries until our time.

He was born in 470 A.H. (1077-78 C.E.) in the region called al-Jil in what is today Iran. This date is based on his statement to his son that he was eighteen when he went to Baghdad, in the year that the famous scholar al-Tamimi died. This was 488 A.H. His mother, Ummul-Khayr Fatima bint al-Shaykh 'Abdullah Sumi, was from the line of the Prophet Muhammad, through his grandson, the venerable Husayn.

His mother relates,

My son 'Abdul-Qadir was born in the month of Ramadan. No matter how hard I tried, he refused to suckle in the daytime. Throughout his infancy he would never take food during the month of fasting.

One Ramadan during his infancy the start of the month fell on a cloudy day when people could not see the new moon. Not knowing if the month of fasting had actually begun or not, they came to Ummul-Khayr and asked if the child had taken food that day. As he had not, they surmised that the fast had begun. The venerable 'Abdul-Qadir relates,

When I was small child, every day I was visited by an angel in the shape of a beautiful young man. He would walk with me from our house to school and make the children in

the class give me a place in the first row. He would stay with me the whole day and then bring me back home. I would learn in a single day more than the other students learned in a week. I did not know who he was. One day I asked him and he said, 'I am one of Allah's angels. He sent me to you and asked me to be with you as long as you study.'

Speaking again about his childhood, he relates,

Each time I felt a desire to go and play with other children I would hear a voice saying, 'Come to Me instead, O blessed one, come to Me'. In terror I would go and seek the comfort of my mother's arms. Now, even in my most intense devotions and long seclusions, I cannot hear that voice as clearly.

When he was asked by someone what brought him to his high spiritual level, he said, 'The truthfulness which I promised to my mother.' He related the following story :

One day, on the eve of 'Id al-Adha, I went to our fields to help till the ground. As I was walking behind the ox, it turned its head and looked at me and said, 'You were not created for this!' I was very afraid and ran home and climbed up on our flat roof. As I looked out I saw the pilgrims gathered on the plain of 'Arafat, in Arabia, right in front of me.

I went to my mother, who was then a widow, and asked her, 'Send me to the path of Truth, give me permission to go to Baghdad to acquire knowledge, to be with the wise and those who are close to Allah.' My mother asked me what was the reason for this sudden request. I told her what had happened to me. She cried, but she brought out eighty pieces of gold, which was all that my father had left as inheritance. She put aside forty pieces for my brother. The other forty she sewed into the armpit of my coat. Then she permitted me to leave, but before she let me go she made me promise her that I would tell the truth and be truthful, whatever happened. She sent me off with these words : 'May Allah protect and guide you, my son. I separate myself from that which is dearest to me for Allah's sake. I know that I will not be able to see You until the day of Last Judgment.'

I joined a small caravan going to Baghdad. As we left behind the city of Hamadan, a band of highwaymen, sixty horsemen strong, attacked us. They took everything that everyone had. One of these came to me and asked, 'Young man, what possessions do you have?' I told him, 'Under my armpit'. He laughed and left me alone. Another bandit came

and asked the same, and I told him the truth. He also left me alone. They must have repeated the incident to their leader, because he called me to the place where they were dividing the booty. He asked if I had any valuables. I told him that I had forty pieces of gold sewn in my coat under my arm. He took my coat, tore the armpit, and found the gold. Then he asked me in amazement, 'When your money was safe, what compelled you to insist on telling us that you had it and where it was hidden?' I answered, 'I must tell the truth under any circumstances, as I promised to my mother.' When the chief of the bandits heard this he wept and said, 'I reneged on my promise to the One Who created me. I stole and killed. What will happen to me?' And the others, seeing him, said, 'You have been our leader all these years in sinning. Now be also our leader in repenting!' All sixty of them held my hand and repented and changed their ways.

Those sixty are the first who took my hand and found forgiveness for their sins.

When the venerable 'Abdul-Qadir came to Baghdad, he was eighteen years old. As he reached the gates of the city, Khidr appeared and prevented him from entering. He told him that it was Allah's order that he not enter Baghdad for another seven years.

Khidr took him to a ruin in the desert and said, 'Stay here and do not leave this place'. He remained there three years, Every year Khidr would appear to him and tell him to stay where he was.

The saint tells about these years :

During my stay in the deserts outside Baghdad, all that appears beautiful but is temporal and of this world came to seduce me. Allah protected me from their harm. The Devil, appearing in different forms and shapes, kept coming to me, tempting me, bothering me, and fighting me. Allah rendered me victorious over him. My ego visited me daily in my own form and shape, begging me to be its friend. When I would refuse, it would attack me. Allah rendered me victorious in my continuous fight against it. In time I was able to make it my prisoner and I kept it with me all those years, forcing it to stay in the ruins of the desert. A whole year I ate the grasses and roots I could find and did not drink any water. Another year I drank water but didn't eat a morsel of food. Another year I neither ate, nor drank, nor slept. All this time I lived in the ruins of the ancient kings of Persia in Karkh. I walked barefoot over the desert thorns and didn't feel a thing.

Whenever I saw a cliff, I claimed it; I didn't give a minute's rest or comfort to my ego, to the low desires of my flesh.

At the end of seven years I heard a voice at night : 'O 'Abdul-Qadir, you are now permitted to enter Baghdad.'

I came to Baghdad and spent a few days there. Soon I could not stand the sedition, mischief, and intrigue that dominated the city. To save myself from the harm of this degenerate city and to save my faith, I left, All took with me was my Qur'an. As I came to the gate of the city, on my way to seclusion in the desert, I heard a voice. 'Where are you going?' it said, 'Return. You must serve the people.'

'What do I care about the people?' I protested. 'I have my faith to save!'

'Return, and never fear for your faith,' the voice continued, 'Nothing will ever harm you.' I could not see the one who spoke.

Then something happened to me. Cut off from the outside, I fell into an inner state of meditation. Until the next day I concentrated on a wish and prayed to Allah that He might part the veils for me so that I knew what should be done.

The next day, as I was wandering through a neighbour hood called Muzaffariyya, a man whom I had never seen opened the door of his house and called to me, 'Come in, 'Abdul-qadir!' As I came to his door, he said, 'Tell me, what did you wish from Allah ? What did you pray for yesterday?' I was frozen, with amazement. I could not find words to answer him. The man looked at my face and slammed the door with such violence that the dust was raised all around me and covered me from head to foot. I walked away, wondering what I had turned back to tell the man, but I could find neither the house nor him. I was very worried, as I realized he was a man close to Allah. In fact, later I was to learn that he was Hammad al-Dabbas, who became my shaykh.

On a cold and rainy night an invisible hand led Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir to the tekke, the mystical lodge, of Shaykh Hammad bin Muslim al-Dabbas. The shaykh, knowing by divine inspiration of his coming, had the doors of the lodge shut and the lights put out. As 'Abdul-Qadir sat at the sill of the locked door, sleep came upon him. He had a nocturnal emission and went and bathed himself at the river and took his ablution. He fell asleep

again and the same thing happened - seven times during that night. Each time he bathed and took ablution in the ice-cold water. In the morning the gates were opened and he entered the Sufi lodge. Shaykh Hammad stood up to greet him. Weeping with joy, he embraced him and said, 'O my son 'Abdul-Qadir, good fortune is ours today, but tomorrow it will be yours. Do not ever leave this path.' Shaykh Hammad became his first teacher in the sciences of mysticism. It was by holding his had that he took his vows and entered the path of the Sufis.

He relates :

I studied with many teachers in Baghdad, but whenever I couldn't understand something or came upon a secret that I wished to know, it was Shaykh al-Dabbas who would enlighten me. Sometimes I would leave him to seek knowledge from others - to learn theology, traditions, religious law, and other sciences. Each time I returned he would tell me, 'Where have you been? We have had so much wonderful food for our bodies, minds, and souls while you were gone and we haven't kept a thing for you!' At other times he would say, 'For Allah's sake, where do you go? is there anyone around here who knows more than you do?' His dervishes would tease me continuously and say, 'You are a man of law and a man of letters, a man of knowledge, a scientist. What business do you have among us? Why don't you get out of here?' And the shaykh would child them and say, 'Shame on you! I swear that there is none like him among you. None of you will rise above his toe! If you think I am harsh with him and you imitate me, I do it to bring him to perfection and to test him. I see him in the spiritual realm sturdy as a rock, as big as a mountain.'

Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir was the greatest example of the fact that in Islam, to seek knowledge is a sacred obligation - for all men and women, from the cradle to the grave. He sought out the greatest wise men of his time. He memorized the Holy Qur'an and studied its interpretation from 'Ali Abul-Wafa al-Qayl, Abul-Khattab Mahfuz, and Abul-Hasan Muhammad al-Qadi. According to some sources, he studied with Qadi Abu Said al-Mubarak ibn Ali al-Muharrami, the greatest man of knowledge of his time in Baghdad. Although Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir learned the sciences of the mystic path from Shaykh Hammad al-Dabbas and entered the Sufi path by his hand he was given the dervish cloak, the symbol of the mantle of the Prophet by Qadi Abu Said. The spiritual lineage of Qadi Abu Sa id passes through Shaykh Abul-Hasan 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Qurashi, Abul-

Faraj al-Tarsusi, al-Tamimi, Shaykh Abu Bakral-Shibli, Abul-Qasim al-Junayd, Sari al-Saqati, Maruf al-Karkhi, Dawud al-Ta, Habib al-Ajami, and Hasan al-Basri, to Hadrat 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. Hadrat Ali took the cloak of service from the hands of Muhammad, the Beloved of the Lord of the Universe, and he from the archangel Gabriel, and he from the Divine Truth.

Someone asked Shaykh 'Abdul-Qadir what he received from Allah Most High. He answered, 'Good conduct and knowledge.' Qadi Abu Said al-Muharrami said, 'Indeed, 'Abdul-Qadir al-Jilani took the dervishes' cloak from my hand, but I as well received my cloak of service from his hand.'

Abu Sa id al-Muharrami taught at a school of his own at Bab al-Azj in Baghdad. Later he gave that school to Shaykh 'Abdul-Qadir, who began to teach there.

Shaykh 'Abdul-Qadir was over fifty years old by that time. His words were so effective and miraculous that they transformed the ones who heard them. His students and congregation increased in number very rapidly. Soon there was no place either in or around the school to accommodate his followers.

Shaykh 'Abdul-Qadir tells about the beginning of his teaching:

One morning I saw the Messenger of Allah. He asked me,

'Why do you not speak?'

I said, 'I am but a Persian, how can I speak with the beautiful Arabic of Baghdad?'

'Open your mouth', He said. I did. He blew his breath seven times in my mouth and said, 'Go, address mankind and invite them to the path of your Lord with wise and beautiful words'.

I performed my noon prayer, and turned to see many people waiting for me to speak. When I saw them I became excited and tongue-tied. Then I saw the blessed Imam 'Ali. He came to me and asked me to open my mouth, then blew his own breath into it six times. I asked, 'Why did you not blow seven times like the Messenger of Allah?' He said, 'Because of my respect for him.' and disappeared.

From my open mouth came the words, 'The mind is a diver, diving deep into the sea of the heart to find the pearls of wisdom. When he brings them to the shore of his being, they spill out as words from his lips, and with these he buys priceless devotions in Allah's markets of worship.....' Then I said, 'In a night such as one of mine, if one of you should kill his low desires, that death would taste so sweet that he would not be able to taste anything else in this world!'

From then on, whether I was awake or asleep I kept my duty in teaching. There was such an immense amount of knowledge about faith and religion in me. If I did not talk and put it out, I felt that it would drown me. When I started teaching I had only two or three students. When they heard me, their numbers increased to seventy thousand.

Neither his school nor its vicinity could contain his followers. More space had to be found. Rich and poor helped in adding buildings, the rich aiding financially and the poor helping with their labour. The women of Baghdad also worked. A young woman who was working as a labourer without pay brought her husband, who was unwilling to work for nothing, and presented him to the shaykh. 'This is my husband,' she said. 'I took twenty pieces of gold from him as dowry. I will give half of it back to him free, and for the other half I wish him to work here.' She gave Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir the gold, and the man started working. He did not stop when the money ran out. Nonetheless the shaykh kept paying him, because he knew that he was needy.

Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir al-Jilani was the authority, the imam, in religious matters, theology and law, and the leader of the Shafi and Hanbali branches of Islam. He was a man of great wisdom and knowledge. All men profited from him. His prayers were immediately accepted, both when he prayed for good and when he prayed for punishment. He performed many miracles. He was a perfect man, of continuous consciousness and remembrance of Allah, meditating, thinking, taking and giving lessons.

He had a soft heart, a gentle nature and a smiling face. He was sensitive and possessed the best of manners. He was aristocratic in character, generous and giving both of material things and of advice and knowledge. He loved people, but especially those who were believers and who served and worshipped the One in Whom they believed.

He was handsome and well-dressed. He did not speak excessively, but when he did speak, though he spoke fast, every single word and syllable was clear. He spoke beautifully and he spoke the truth. He spoke the truth without fear, for he did not care whether he was praised or criticized and condemned.

When the Caliph al-Muqtafi appointed Yahya ibn Sa'id as Qadi, or Chief Justice, Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir accused him in public, saying, 'You have appointed the worst tyrant as judge over the believers. Let us see how you will answer for yourself tomorrow when you will be presented to the Great Judge, the Lord of the Universe!' Hearing this, the caliph started to shake and shed tears. The judge was immediately dismissed.

The population of the city of Baghdad was degenerate in its morals and behaviour. Through his influence, most of the city's people repented, and followed the good morals and prescriptions of Islam. He came to be loved and respected by everyone, and his influence spread everywhere. As the righteous loved him, so tyrants and wrongdoers feared him. Many people, including kings, viziers, and wise men, came to him to ask questions and seek solutions. Many Jews and Christians accepted Islam through him.

There was a very wise and influential priest in Baghdad who had many followers. This man had vast knowledge not only of the Judaic and Christian traditions but also of Islam; He knew Islam and the Holy Qur'an and had great love and appreciation for the Prophet Muhammad. The caliph respected the priest and hoped that he was ready to accept the religion, except for one thing. The thing that prevented him, which he could neither accept nor understand, was the physical ascension of the Prophet Muhammad to the heavens during his lifetime.

The Ascension took place when one night, the Prophet was brought body and soul from Medina to Jerusalem and from there to the seven heavens, where he saw many things. He visited Paradise and Hell, and went beyond these to meet his Lord, Who spoke ninety thousand words with him. He returned before his bed had cooled, and before a leaf which he had touched in passing had stopped trembling.

The mind of the priest could not accept the ascension of the Prophet and his coming back to tell about it. Indeed, when the Prophet himself declared it the day after it happened, many Muslims did not believe and left their religion. This then is a test of true faith, for the mind cannot conceive of such a thing.

The caliph introduced all the wise men and teachers of his time to the priest in order to eliminate his doubts, but none of them succeeded. Then one evening he sent word to Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir, asking him if he could convince the priest of the truth of the Ascension.

When Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir came to the palace he found the priest and the caliph playing chess. As the priest lifted a chess piece to move it, his eyes met those of the shaykh. He blinked his eyes... and as he opened them again he found himself drowning in a rapidly running river! He was shouting for help when a young shepherd jumped into the water to save him. As the shepherd held onto him, he realized that he was naked and had been transformed into a young girl!

The shepherd pulled her out of the water and asked her whose daughter she was and where she lived. When the priest mentioned Baghdad, the shepherd said that they were then at a distance of a few months journey from that city. The shepherd honoured her and kept her and protected her, but eventually as she had nowhere to go he married her. They had three children, who grew up.

One day as she was washing laundry in the same river where she had appeared her eyes... he found himself sitting across from the caliph, holding the chess piece and still looking up into the eyes to Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir, who said to him, 'Now, venerable priest, do you still disbelieve ?'

The priest, unsure of what had happened to him and thinking that it was a dream, responded with the words, 'What do you mean?'

'Perhaps you would like to see your family?' the saint inquired. As he opened the door, there stood the shepherd and the three children.

Seeing this, the priest believed. He and his congregation number among the five thousand Christians who became Muslim by the hands of Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir.

In his teaching and his service to mankind he applied qualities which he inherited from the highest. He said,

A spiritual teacher is not a true teacher unless he possesses twelve qualities. Two of these qualities are from the attributes of Allah Most High. They are to hide the faults of

man and the rest of creation, not only from others, but even from themselves and to have compassion and forgiveness for even the worst of sins. Two qualities are inherited from the Prophet Muhammad - love and gentleness. From Hadrat Abu Bakr, the first of the four Caliphs, a true teacher inherits truthfulness, honesty and sincerity, as well as devotion and generosity. From Hadrat 'Umer, justice and imposing the right and preventing the wrong. From Hadrat 'Uthman, humility, and staying awake and praying while the rest of mankind are asleep. From Hadrat 'Ali, knowledge and courage.

He was as devoted as a father to all his tens of thousands of followers. He knew them by name, and cared for their worldly affairs as well as their spiritual state. He helped them and saved them from disasters, even if they were at the other end of the world. He was a child with the children, and treated them with the utmost tenderness and compassion. With those much older than he, he became as if older than they, and treated them with respect.

He kept the company of the poor and the weak; he did not seek the company of the famous and powerful. With such people he behaved as if he were the king's own King.

One of the sons of his servant related that his father, Muhammad Ibn al-Khidr, served Shaykh 'Abdul-Qadir for thirteen years. He never saw a fly sit on him, nor did he ever see him blow his nose. Although the shaykh treated the weak and the poor with great respect, his servant never saw him get up when sultans came to visit him, neither did he visit them, nor did he eat their food except once. When a king came to visit him he would leave the reception room and would come back after the king and his party were settled, so that they would greet him by standing up. When he wrote a letter to the caliph he would say that 'Abdul-Qadir orders him to do this or that, and that it was an obligation for the caliph to obey him, since he was their leader. When the caliph received such a letter he would kiss it before he read it and say, 'The shaykh is right, indeed he is telling the truth!'

One of the great jurists of the time, Abu-Hasan, relates :

I heard the caliph al-Muqtafi tell his minister Ibn Hubayra, 'Shaykh 'Abdul-Qadir is ridiculing me, making it clear to those around him that he means me. It was reported to me that he pointed at a date-palm in his orchard and said, 'You'd better behave. Don't go too far or I will behead you!' Go to him and talk to him alone and say, "You should not

ridicule and threaten the caliph. You must know that the station of the caliph is sacred and has to be respected."

The vizier Ibn Hubayra went to the shaykh and found him in the company of a vast crowd. In his talk, at one point he suddenly declared, "Indeed, I would behead him, too!" The vizier felt that the shaykh meant him, and terrified, he fled and told what had happened to the caliph. The caliph was brought to tears and said, "Truly, the shaykh is great". He went to see him himself. The shaykh gave him much advice and the caliph cried and cried.'

Although he was most compassionate and had the best character and manners - gentle and loving, keeping his promises - he was just, and stern in his justice. He never showed anger because of anything done to him, but if any wrongful act were committed against the faith and the religion, in his anger he would become awesome and his punishment would be swift and hard.

A shaykh of the time, Abu-Najib al-Suhrawardi, relates:

In the year 523 Hijri I was with Shaykh Hammad, the teacher of Shaykh 'Abdul-Qadir, who was also present. Shaykh 'Abdul-Qadir made a grand statement. At that Shaykh Hammad told him, 'O 'Abdul-Qadir, you talk too loftily! I fear for you the disapproval of Allah.'

'Abdul-Qadir put his hand on the chest of Shaykh Hammad. 'Look at my palm with the eye of your heart', he said, 'and tell me what is written on it.' When Shaykh Hammad could not say, 'Abdul-Qadir lifted his hand from the shaykh's chest and showed the palm to him. On it was as luminous writing saying, 'He has received seventy promises from Allah that he will never be disappointed.'

When Shaykh Hammad saw this, he said, 'There could never be an objection to a man blessed with such a divine promise. No one could ever object to him. Allah blesses whom ever he wills among His servants.'

Shaykh 'Abdul-Qadir used to say :

None of my followers will die before they repent. They will all die as faithful servants of Allah. Each of my good followers will save seven of his sinful brothers from hellfire.

If, in the far west, the private parts of one of my followers were to be inadvertently exposed, we, although we were in the far east, would cover them before anyone could notice.

I have been given a book, a book as long as any eye could see, which contains all the names of the ones who will follow me until the end of time. With Allah's blessing we will save all of them. Blessed are those who see me. I yearn for the ones who will not see me.

All those who attached themselves to him were always at peace and joyful. Someone asked him, 'We know the state of your good followers and what awaits them in the Hereafter. But what about the bad ones?' He answered, 'The good ones are devoted to me and I am devoted to saving the bad ones.'

A young girl who was a follower of the shaykh lived in Ceylon. One day she was attacked in a lonely place by a man intending to dishonour her. Helpless, she shouted, 'Save me, O my shaykh 'Abdul-Qadir!' At that moment the shaykh was taking his ablution in Baghdad. People saw him stop, angrily grab his wooden shoe, and throw it in the air. They did not see the shoe fall down. That shoe fell on the head of the villain who was attacking the girl in Ceylon, and killed him. It is said that the shoe is still there, kept as a relic.

Sahl ibn 'Abdullah al-Tustari relates that one day Shaykh 'Abdul-Qadir's followers in Baghdad lost him. They looked everywhere for him. Someone told them he had been seen going toward the Tigris River, and his followers ran there after him. When they arrived at the river, he was in the midst of it, walking over the water towards them. All the fish were putting their heads out of the water and giving him greeting.

It was the time of the none prayer. They saw above them a vast carpet spread over their heads, covering the whole sky. It was a green carpet, and on it in gold and silver were embroidered the words:

Indeed for the friends of Allah there is neither fear nor sorrow. (Sura Yunus, 62) O family of the Prophet, Allahs peace and blessings be upon you. Indeed He alone is praiseworthy and most glorious! (Sura Hud, 73)

The carpet floated like the flying carpet of the prophet Solomon, and descended to the ground. The people, inspired, quiet and peaceful, walked towards it. The shaykh, clad in beautiful clothes, stepped upon the carpet and led them in prayer upon it. When he raised his hands and said, 'Allah is great,' the whole sky echoed the same words. As he prayed, the angels of the seven heavens in chorus repeated his prayers. When he said, 'All praise is due to Allah,' a green light emanated from his mouth, covering the sky. At the end of the prayer he opened his hands and said, 'O Lord, for the sake of my ancestor your beloved Muhammad, peace be upon him, and for the sake of those among your creation until they are forgiven of their sins and until their faith is complete.' One and all heard the hum of the angels saying, 'Amm.' Following the angels, they too said 'Amm,' Then they all heard a voice from inside of them saying, 'Rejoice! I have accepted your prayers.'

The Prophet Muhammad says, 'The perfect shaykh is like a prophet to his people.' Indeed Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir was one of those perfect shaykh who opened to people the gates of felicity in this world and the gates of Paradise in the next.

It was only after Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir had mastered his ego and become a perfect man, and only by the inspired command of the Holy Prophet, that he became a teacher and established contact with the people. It was also at this time that following the example of his ancestor the Prophet Muhammad, he married four wives, each a model of virtue and devoted to him. He was fifty-one years old. He had forty-nine children: twenty-seven sons and twenty-two daughters.

One day his wives came to him and said, 'O possessor of the best of characters, your little son has died, and we haven't seen a single tear in your eyes, nor have you shown any sign of sadness or concern. Don't you have any compassion for someone who is a part of you? We are bent over double in sorrow, yet you go about your business as if nothing has happened. You are our master, our guide, our hope for this world and the Hereafter, but if your heart is hard and there is no compassion there, how can we, who hope to hold onto you on the day of Last Judgement, have faith that you will save us?'

The shaykh said, 'O my dear friends, do not think that my heart is hard. I pity the unfaithful for his unfaithfulness, I pity the dog who bites me and pray to Allah that it stop biting people, not that I mind being bitten, but because others will throw stones at it.'

Don't you know that I have inherited compassion from the one who Allah sent as mercy upon the universe?'

The women said, 'Indeed, if you have feeling even for the dog which bites you, how is it that you do not show any feeling for your own son who has been smitten with the sword of death?'

The shaykh said, 'O my sad companions, you cry because you feel separated from your son whom you love. I am always with the one I love. You saw your son in the dream which this world is, and you have lost him in another dream. Allah says, "This world is but a dream." It is a dream for the ones who are asleep. I am awake. I saw my son when he was within the circle of time. Now he has walked out of that circle. I still see him and he is with me. He is playing around me just as he did before. For when you see that which is real with the eye of the heart, whether dead or alive, the truth does not disappear.'

One day the shaykh and some of his followers were travelling on foot in the desert. It was the month of Ramadan and the desert was hot. He related:

I was exceedingly tired and thirsty. My followers were walking ahead of me. All of a sudden a cloud appeared overhead, like an umbrella protecting us from the hot sun. In front of us appeared a gushing spring and a date-palm laden with ripe fruit. Finally there came a round light, brighter than the sun and standing apart from it. A voice came from its direction. It said, 'O people of 'Abdul-Qadir, I am your Lord! Eat and drink, for I have made lawful for you what I have made unlawful for others!' My people, who were ahead of me, rushed to the spring to drink, and to the date-palm to eat from it. I shouted at them to stop, and lifting my head towards the direction of the voice I shouted, 'I take refuge in Allah from the accursed Devil!'

The cloud, the light, the spring and the date-palm all disappeared. The Devil stood in front of us in all his ugliness. He asked, 'How did you know that it was me?' I told the Accursed One who had been thrown out of Allah's mercy that the address of Allah is not a sound heard with the ears, nor does it come from outside. Furthermore, I knew that Allah's laws are constant and are meant for all. He neither changes them, nor renders that which is unlawful lawful to the one He favours.

Upon hearing this, the Devil tried his last temptation of arousing pride. 'O 'Abdul-Qadir,' he said, 'I have fooled seventy prophets with this trick. Your knowledge is vast, your wisdom is greater than that of the prophets!' Then pointing to my followers he went on, 'Is this handful of fools your only following? The whole world should follow you, for you are as good as a prophet.'

I said, 'I take refuge from you in my Lord Who is All-hearing and All-knowing. For it is not my knowledge, nor my wisdom, which saved me from you, but the mercy of my Lord.'

He saw everything as from Allah, did everything for Allah's sake and attributed nothing to any created being, including himself. What he said, he did. Compliment or criticism, benefit or loss, were the same to him. His knowledge was all encompassing and his wisdom supreme. He considered the ones who know and do not apply their knowledge as no better than donkeys carrying heavy books.

One of the great shaykhs of the time, Shaykh Muzaffar Munsur ibn al-Mubarak al-Wasiti, relates :

I came to visit Shaykh 'Abdul-Qadir with some of my students. I was carrying a book on philosophy in my hand. He greeted us and looked at us, then said to me, 'What a bad and dirty friend you are holding in your hand! God and wash it!' I was awed by the shaykh's angry words. He could not have known the contents of the book, which I loved and which I had almost memorized.

I debated with myself whether to get up and hide the book some where and pick it up on my departure. As I was about to go and do this, he gave me a strange look and I couldn't lift myself from my seat. He ordered me to give the book to him. As I was doing so I opened it for a last look. I saw only empty white pages! All that was written had disappeared.

I gave the book to him. He took it, browsed through it, and gave it back to me saying, 'Here it is, 'The Wisdom of the Qur'an" by Ibn Daris, I took it and opened it, and indeed the book of philosophy had been transformed into Fada'il al-Qur'an Ibn Daris, written in the most beautiful calligraphy. Then he said to me, 'Do you wish your heart to repent when you voice your repentance?' I answered, 'Indeed I do '. He said, "The stand up'. As

I rose to stand, I felt all of my knowledge of philosophy descend from my mind and sink to the ground. Not a word of it remained in my memory.

Another time a great number of people gathered around Shaykh 'Abdul-Qadir, hoping that he would speak. He sat for a very long time without saying a word; the congregation also sat and waited silently. After a while a strange ecstasy overcame them, as if they had been emptied of all thought and imagination. Then all of them together thought the same thing: 'What is the shaykh thinking about?'

As soon as this question was raised in their minds, Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir spoke. 'Just now a man was transported from Mecca to Baghdad in an instant, repented in my presence, and flew back,' he said.

The congregation thought as one: 'Why should a man who could fly in an instant from Mecca to Baghdad need to repent?'

He said, 'To fly in the air is one thing, but to feel love is something else. I taught him how to love.'

'Abdullah Zayal relates:

In the year 560 I was at the school of Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir. One day I saw him leaving his house with his staff in his hand. I said to myself, 'I wish he would show me a miracle with that staff!' He looked at me and smiled and stuck the staff into the sand. Instantly it turned into a beam of intense light rising out of sight into the sky, illuminating everything for an hour. Then he held that beam of light. It turned back into an ordinary staff. He looked at me and said, 'O Zayal, is that all that you wanted?'

At his hands more than five thousand Jews and Christians became Muslims. More than a hundred thousand ruffians, outlaws, murderers, thieves, and bandits repented and became devout Muslims and gentle dervishes. He explains how he reached that blessed state.

For twenty-five years I wandered in the deserts of Iraq. I slept in ruins. In a place at Shustar, a ruined castle in the middle of the desert twelve days' journey from Baghdad, I staying of the desert twelve days' journey from Baghdad, I stayed in seclusion for eleven years. I promised my Lord that I would neither eat nor drink until I reached spiritual

perfection. One the fortieth day a man came with a loaf of bread and some food and placed them in front of me and disappeared. My flesh screamed, 'I am hungry, I am hungry!' My ego whispered, 'Your promise is fulfilled. Why don't you eat?' But I did not break my vow to Allah.

By chance the scholar Abu Sa'id al-Muharrami happened to be passing by. He heard the screams of hunger of my flesh, though I was deaf to them. He came and saw my emaciated state and said to me, 'What is this I see and hear, O 'Abdul-Qadir?'

'Don't mind it, my friends,' I said, 'It is only the voice of the disobedient, unruly ego, while, I tell you, the soul is bowed, in front of its Lord and is hopeful and peaceful and joyful.'

'Please come to my school at Bab al-Azj,' he asked. I did not answer, but inwardly I said, 'I will not leave this place without divine order.' Not long after Khidr came to me and told me, 'Go and join Abu Sa'id '.

When I received the order, I went to Baghdad, to the school of Abu Sa'id, and found him waiting for me at the gate. 'I begged you to come!' he said. Then he invested me with the clock of the dervish. From that time on I never left him.

Forty years I never slept at night. I made my morning prayer with the ablution I had taken to make my night prayer. I read the Qur'an every night so that sleep should not overtake me. I stood on one foot and leaned against the wall with one hand. I did not change this position until I had read the whole Qur'an.

When I could not fight sleep myself, I would hear a voice that shook every cell in my body. It would say, 'O Abdul-Qadir, I did not create you to sleep! You were nothing. I gave you life. So while you are alive you will not be unaware of Us.'

One day someone asked him, 'O 'Abdul-Qadir, we pray, fast and deny the low desires of our flesh just like you. How is it that we do not receive high mystical states and the ability to perform miracles, as you do?'

He answered, 'I see that not only do you try to compete with me in actions- thinking that you do what I do while you merely do what you see me do - but you reproach Allah for not giving you the same rewards! Allah is my witness that I have never eaten or drunk

unless I heard my Creator say, "Eat and drink - you owe it to Me for the body I have given you." Neither have I done a single thing without the order of my Lord.'

Shaykh 'Ali ibn Musafir relates:

I was among thousands of people gathered to hear him in the open air. As he spoke, a heavy rain started pouring down and some people started to leave. The sky was dark with clouds promising more rain. Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir lifted his head and his hands in prayer and siad, 'O Lord, I try to gather people for You. Are You trying to chase them away from me?' As soon as he said this, it stopped raining on us. Not a drop fell on us until he finished speaking, though it was pouring outside the place we were gathered.

Yahya ibn Jina al-Adib recalled:

Shaykh 'Abdul-Qadir used to interject poetry into his talks. One day he was talking about the soul and he recited the poem,

My soul, before it came to be in the realm of nothingness, loved You.

If I withdrew from the realm of love, now,

Would my feet carry me away?

Inwardly I said to myself, 'Let's see how many poems he will recite today.' I had a piece of thread with me and I put a knot in it under my cloak each time he recited a verse. I was sitting far away from him. He could not possibly have seen me. He looked at me and said, 'I try to unravel, and you seem to tie knots!'

His devout servant Abul-Rida relates:

One day, while preaching, the shaykh stopped in the middle of a sentence and declared, 'I will not continue unless you give me a hundred pieces of gold right now!' Quickly people gathered a hundred dinars and placed them in my hands. Everyone was shocked, not knowing what to do, looking at him in amazement. I brought him the money. He gave the hundred dinars back to me and said, 'O Abul-Rida, go to the cemetery of Shuniziyyah. You will find there an old man playing a lute to the graves. Give this gold to him and bring him to me.'

I went, and indeed, there was an old man playing his lute and singing to the tombs. I offered him salutations and gave him a bag of gold. He was awestruck, gave a long scream, and fainted.

When he revived I brought him to Shaykh 'Abdul-Qadir, who asked him to come up to the pulpit. The man climbed the steps with the lute on his shoulders. 'Friend, tell them your story.' the shaykh said.

The lute-player told us that he had been a popular singer of fame in his youth. Yet when he grew old no one sought him or wished to hear him anymore. Sad and abandoned by everybody, that every day he had vowed he would never sing to anyone but the dead. He had come to the cemetery and as he sat there singing and playing his lute the grave nearest him split open! The dead man raised his head and said, 'All your life you have sung for the dead. Sing for once for the Ever-living, for Allah. He certainly will give you more than you have ever received - more than you ever hoped to receive!' When he saw and heard that, he fainted in fear and awe. Then, coming to himself, he began to sing:

O My Lord, on the day I meet You I will have nothing to bring but begging on my lips and hope for mercy in my heart.

All will be gathered with hope in Your presence, woe to me if I am left empty-handed!

If only the good come begging to Your gate, to whom should sinners go, seeking?

O Lord, when I come to You in shame on the Day of Reckoning, will You not save me from the Fire?

Abul-Rida further relates:

In the middle of the verse I came to him with the hundred dinars from my master as a reward for his entreaties to his Lord, and in amazement he fainted.

The lute player, tears pouring from his eyes, repented. He threw down his lute and broke it. The shaykh said, 'If this is Allah's reward for the sincerity of someone who took this life as a game, what shall be the reward of the servant of Allah who is true and sincere all of his life? Keep sincerity in your heart, for without it you will not advance towards your Lord even an inch.'

'Abdul-Samad ibn Humam was one of the wealthiest men in Baghdad. A worldly, proud, and arrogant man, he believed he owned the world and the people who worked for him. He supposed he could control them, doing with them whatever he pleased. A materialist in every sense of the word, he disliked the shaykh profoundly and denied his miracles. He relates:

As you know, I never liked the shaykh. Although I am a man of means and have all that I wish, I was never content, happy or at peace.

One Friday, as I was passing by his school, I heard the call to prayer. I said to myself, 'Let's take a closer look at this man who impresses others with his so-called miracles, I'll go and make my Friday prayer in his mosque.'

The mosque was packed solid. I pushed myself forward in the crowd and found a place right at the foot of the pulpit. The shaykh started delivering his sermon and the thing he said angered me.

All of a sudden I had a terrible urgent need to relieve myself. There was no way out of the mosque. I was filled with horror at the terrible shame, as I was about to defecate right there and then. My anger toward the shaykh increased.

At that moment he calmly descended the steps of the pulpit and stood above me. While continuing to talk, he covered me with the skirt of his cloak. All of a sudden I found myself in a beautiful green valley where a pure brook flowed. There was no one around. I relieved myself and cleansed myself and took ablution in the brook. As I decided to make my prayer, I found myself again under the shaykh's cloak. He lifted it from me and returned up the steps of the pulpit.

I was awestruck. Not only was my belly comfortable but so was my heart. All the discontent, anger and negative feeling had been wiped out of it.

After the prayer I left the mosque and walked home. On the way, I realized that I had lost the key of my safe. I went back to the mosque and looked for it, but I couldn't find it anywhere. I had a hard time getting the locksmith to open my safe.

The next day I had to go on a business trip. Three days out of Baghdad we passed by a very beautiful valley. It was as if a force pulled us to the side of a beautiful brook. I

realized immediately that this was the place I had been and the brook where I had washed myself. I washed myself again at the same place. There I found the lost key to my safe! When I returned to Baghdad I became a follower of the shaykh.

A woman of Baghdad, very impressed with the fame and wealth of the shaykh, decided to leave her son in the care of Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir. She brought the child to him and said, 'Take this child as your own - I renounce all right to him - and raise him to become like you.' The shaykh accepted the child and started to teach him piety, asceticism and denial of the ego's low desires.

After some time the mother came to see her son and found him thin and pale and eating a crust of bread. She was angry at the shaykh and asked to see him. When she came upon him she found him well-dressed, seated in a pleasant room and eating a chicken. 'While you eat your chicken,' She reproached him, 'my poor son, whom I left in your care, has nothing but a piece of dry bread!'

The shaykh placed his hand over the bones of the chicken. 'In the name of Allah Who revives bones from rise!' He lifted his hand and the chicken was alive. It ran about the table saying, 'There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger and Shaykh 'Abdul-Qadir is the friend of Allah and His Messenger!'

The shaykh turned to the woman and said, 'When your son can do this, he can also eat whatever he wishes.'

One night, later in his life, fifty of the elite of Baghdad were gathered in his house. The company included all the great shaykhs of the time, among them Hafiz Abul-Izz Abdul-Mughith ibn Hard. He recalls :

That night the shaykh was in a state of inspiration. Pearls of wisdom poured from his mouth. All of us were in a perfect state of peace and bliss, of a kind we had never experienced before. A moment came when the shaykh pointed to his foot and declared, 'This foot is over the necks of all the saints'. No sooner had he said this than one of his students, Shaykh 'Ali ibn al-Hili, threw himself at his master's feet. He took the shaykh's foot and placed it upon his neck. Then all the rest of us did the same.

Another the those present, Shaykh Abu Sa'id al-Kaylawi, said:

When he said, 'The foot is over the necks of all the saints, 'I felt Allah's truth manifest in my heart. I saw all the saints of the world standing in his presence, filling my whole vision. The ones who were of this world were present bodily; those who had passed away were present spiritually. The sky was filled with angles and other beings invisible to the eye. A group of angels descended and bestowed upon the saint the clock of the Messenger of Allah. As we all prostrated ourselves and stretched our necks we heard a sound less voice say 'O sultan of the time, guide of the religion, of the place, O executor of the world of Allah the Compassionate, inheritor of the Holy Book, deputy of Allah's Messenger, O he to whose orders the earth and the heavens are given, whose prayer is accepted, when he asks for rain the rain comes and milk comes from dry breasts, O beloved and respected of the whole creation.....

After Shaykh 'Abdul-Qadir pronounced those words, not only those in his presence, but all the men of religion felt an increase in their knowledge and their wisdom, in the divine light in their hearts, and in their spiritual levels.

As this event became known all over the Muslim world, all the shaykhs and teachers put their heads on the floor in great humbleness and accepted his leadership. Sinners among the people came into his presence, repented, and became pure. Bandits, thieves, outlaws came to him and became his followers. He became the centre, the pole.

Three hundred and thirteen saints of the time, among them seventeen in the holy city of Mecca, sixty in Iraq, forty in Iran, twenty in Egypt, thirty in Damascus, eleven in Abyssinia, seven from Ceylon, twenty-seven in the West, forty-seven in the inaccessible lands beyond Mount Qaf, seven in the lands of Gog and Magog, and twenty-four in the islands of the oceans, all heard it and put their heads to the ground in obedience - with the exception of one Persian.

This Persian was a very devout shaykh. He prayed more than anyone and fasted continually. He made numerous pilgrimages to the Ka'bah. He was very ambitious to obtain Allah's pleasure. For fifty years he remained in seclusion from the world with his four hundred disciples, whom he made work day and night to perfect themselves. He had great knowledge, and he could work miracles. When word of Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir's declaration reached him, he was at the Pilgrimage with his disciples, in the holy city of Mecca. Either he underestimated the greatness of Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir or he

overestimated his own. He refused to lower his neck in obedience to 'Abdul-Qadir's call. That night he dreamed that he went from Mecca to Byzantium and there he worshipped an idol. Depressed by this oppressive dream he gathered his disciples and said that he must go at once to Byzantium, where he hoped to discover the meaning of this dream. His loyal disciples followed him to Byzantium. As they entered the city the shaykh caught sight of a beautiful girl standing on a balcony. Her hair was black as night, her eyes were twin moons with arched brows like tender sickles over them, her look a lure for lovers. Her moist lips, the colour of rubies, rendered who looked upon them thirsty. Her mouth was so small that even words could not pass, her slender waist was clasped by the idolater's belt. As soon as the shaykh saw her his heart caught fire, his eyes became fixed on her, his will slipped from his hands. As his heart was filled with love for her, religion and faith left it. For all her beauty, that woman was a harlot, a temptation of the Devil. The shaykh stood at the door of this pagan harlot, his mouth open, his eyes fixed on the balcony, hoping to see her. Inwardly he was in torment. He thought that all these years he had fasted, had tormented his flesh, but never had he suffered like this. He sought his knowledge, his reason, to make sense out of this situation, but all reason and knowledge had left him. His companions came to him in terror and distress and begged him to come away, to repent, to pray. The shaykh replied that if he had to repent now, he would repent for the absurdity of giving up the world and its pleasures for the sake of his faith, and as for praying and begging, he would rather beg from this girl than from God. When he was reminded of Allah's punishment and Hell, he said that his separation from his beloved and the fire of love in his heart, could feed seven Hells. His disciples pleaded with him for a long time, but seeing that their efforts produced no effect on the shaykh, they left him.

The shaykh stayed a whole month at the door of the pagan harlot. The dust was his bed and the doorstep his pillow. He slept on the street with the street dogs.

Finally the beautiful pagan came to her door to meet him and said to him, 'O old man who calls himself a shaykh and a Muslim, you are so drunk with the wine of giving partners to God that you show yourself in such a state in this pagan street!' The shaykh said, 'I will give up not only my religion but my life for one touch of your lips.' The harlot said, 'Shame on you, you old slave of your passions. How dare you suggest kissing me

when you are ready to wrap yourself in your shroud and go to your tomb. Go away! I cannot love you.'

No matter how she insulted him, the shaykh stood at her door. Then she came down again and told him, 'If you love me as you say you do, then you must leave Islam, burn the Qur'an, bow your head and prostrate yourself before the idols and drink wine.' He said, 'I cannot yet truly abandon Islam nor can I burn the Qur'an, but I am willing to drink wine to your beauty.' She said, 'Then come and drink wine with me. You will soon agree to do all the other things which I ask of you.' As he sipped the wine from her hands, his heart and his mind blazed with fire. He tried to recall the Qur'an which he had memorized, the books he had read and written on Islam, but he had forgotten them all. Drunk, he tried to touch her. She said, 'Not until you become a pagan like me and burn your Qur'an.' He threw the Qur'an and his dervish cloak into the fire, left his faith, and bowed to the pagan gods, and tried again to touch her. She said, 'You old driveller, slave of passion, who possesses neither worldly goods nor fame, how can a woman like me be caressed by such a beggar ? I need silver and gold and silk. Since you have none, take your ugly self away!'

More time passed. The poor old man, wasted, stood at her gate. Finally, one day she gave herself to him. Then she said, 'Now for my price, O filthy old man, go and look after my herd of pigs for a year.' Without protest the one-time shaykh of the Ka'bah became a swineherd.

The sad news of the shaykh who did not bow his head to Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir spread, and his disciples who had abandoned him reached Baghdad. They asked to see the shaykh. When they told him what had happened and that their shaykh had forsaken his religion, become a pagan and a swineherd, Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir said, 'If one does not submit and become a lamb to a shepherd, then one becomes a shepherd to a herd of pigs. For each man has his herd of a thousand pigs, a thousand idols in his heart, unless he drives them away by submission and repentance.' Then he reproached them for having left their shaykh and told them that they should even have become pagans for his sake! He added that a real friend is a friend upon whom you can rely in misfortune; in good fortune, everyone feigns to be your friend. Then the shaykh prayed for the misguided shaykh and told them to go back to Byzantium and tell him that 'Abdul-Qadir bids him come back.

The disciples at once set out for Byzantium. They prayed for their shaykh all the way. They fasted and asked Allah to give their rewards to their shaykh. They sent numerous blessings to the Prophet Muhammad and asked for his intercession. The arrow of prayer reached its mark. When they came upon the shaykh they found him radiant among the many pigs, and when they told him of the call of Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir he tore away the girdle of the pagan, shed torrents of tears of remorse, lifted his hands to heaven in thankfulness, and all that he had forsaken - the Qur'an, the divine secrets - came back to him and he was delivered from his misery and folly. Then he bathed himself and performed his ablutions and put on his dervish cloak and set out for Baghdad.

While all this was happening the pagan girl saw in a dream a light descending upon her and heard these words : 'Follow your shaykh, embrace his faith, be the dust beneath his feet. You who have been soiled are as pure as he is now. You led him in your way. Enter now into his.' When she awoke she was transformed. She rushed to catch up with the shaykh and his disciples, She ran, without eating or drinking, over mountains and plains. Finally, in the middle of the desert, she fell to the ground. She prayed, 'O You Who have created me, forgive me, do not strike me down. If I revolted against Your faith and Your ways, I did it in ignorance, as my shaykh did in arrogance. You forgave him, so forgive me. I submit and accept the true faith.'

Allah made the shaykh, who was not far away, hear her words and he and his disciples went back to where the girl lay. She said, 'I am consumed with shame because of you. Instruct me in Islam so that I may meet my Lord on the way,' As the shaykh witnessed her faith and his companions shed tears of joy, she bade them farewell and joined her Lord. She, a drop in the sea of illusion, returned to the true ocean and the shaykh came to Baghdad and stretched his neck in humbleness under the feet of Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir.

As Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir's influence spread to all corners of the world, many of his disciples obtained important positions and many rulers of men became his disciples. In accordance with their abilities, inner qualities and spiritual levels, he charged many of his followers to act as his deputies. Some he made spiritual teachers and others jurists. Some he even appointed as governors and wielders of worldly power.

There was a dervish who had been with Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir for forty years, who had entered his service and had made all efforts to please him. He would see other disciples much younger than he, who spent much less time than he did with the shaykh, delegated by the shaykh to receive important posts. One day he came to Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir and made a request. He had served him for so many years and now he was getting old. Why could he not also receive an important and lofty post like some of the others?

As he was speaking, a group of emissaries from India arrived. They wished Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir to appoint a maharajah to their kingdom. The shaykh looked at his dervish and said, 'Would you like this post? Do you feel that you are qualified?' The dervish was overjoyed.

After the emissaries left, the shaykh said to the dervish, 'If you feel qualified to serve in my name. I will appoint you to that kingdom in India. I have a condition. You must promise to give me half of all the profit and goods you will receive during your reign.' The dervish readily accepted.

This dervish was a cook at Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir's school. That day a dessert was being prepared which had to be stirred continuously. After his talk with the shaykh he returned to the kitchen to stir the heavy dessert in a giant cauldron with a wooden spoon. While he was engaged in this he was called to accompany the emissaries to India as their king, and he left.

The dervish became a maharajah. He gathered enormous wealth, built many places for himself, married and had a son. He forgot all about his shaykh and about his promise.

Then one day he received a message that Shaykh 'Abdul-Qadir was coming visit his kingdom. He prepared to receive him with great pomp. After lavish ceremonies, processions, and feasts, they were left alone to speak. The shaykh reminded the maharajah of their agreement : he was to receive half of all that he had accumulated during his reign. The maharajah was displeased at being reminded of his promise but nevertheless avowed that by the following day he would prepare an account of all he possessed and would offer half to the shaykh.

His ambition and his hunger for wealth - which had increased many times, the more wealth he acquired - did not permit him to account truthfully for his possessions. The

next day he brought a list and presented it to the shaykh. Although it enumerated many palaces and many treasures it represented only a fraction of what he actually owned.

Shaykh 'Abdul-Qadir seemed to be satisfied with his share. Then he spoke. 'I hear that you also have a son.'

The maharajah responded, 'Yes, unfortunately only one. If I had two I would gladly give you one.'

'Nonetheless, bring the child,' the shaykh returned. 'We can always share him.' The boy was brought into their presence. The shaykh unsheathed his sharp sword and held it over the child's head. 'You will have half and I will have half!' he declared.

The father, horrified, pulled out his dagger and with his two hands plunged it into the heart of the shaykh.

He blinked his eyes: as he opened them he found himself at the edge of the cauldron of dessert, plunging the wooden spoon into it. Hadrat 'Abdul-Qadir looked at him and said, 'As you see, you are not yet ready to be my representative. You have not yet given everything, including yourself, to me.'

He himself had given all of himself to Allah. His nights passed with little or no sleep in secluded prayer and meditation. He spent his days like a true follower of the Prophet in the service of humanity. Three times a week he would deliver public sermons to thousands of people. Every day in the morning and the afternoon he gave lessons in Qur'anic commentary, Prophetic traditions, theology, religious law and Sufism. He spent the time after the midday prayer giving advice and consultation to people, whether beggars or kings, who would come from all parts of the world. Before sunset prayers, rain or shine, he took to the streets to distribute bread among the poor. As he spent all his days in fasting he would eat only once a day, after the sunset prayer, and never alone. His servants would stand at his door asking passers-by if they were hungry, so that they could share his table.

He died on Saturday the eighth day of II Rabi in 561 A.H., 1166 C.E. at the age of 91. His blessed tomb, at the madrasa of Bab al-Daraja in Baghdad, has become an important place of visitation for Sufis and all Muslims.

When he contracted the illness from which he died his son 'Abdul-'Aziz saw that he was suffering great pain, tossing and turning in bed. 'Do not worry about me.' he said to his son. 'I am being turned over and over again in the knowledge of Allah.'

When his son 'Abdul-Jabbar asked him where it hurt him he said, 'All of me aches except for my heart. There is no pain in it, for it is with Allah.'

His son 'Abdul-Wahhab said to him, 'Give me some last advice upon which to act after you have left this world.'

He said, 'Fear Allah and none other. Hope from Allah and entrust all your needs to Him ; hope and want nothing from anyone except Him. Rely on Allah and one none other. Unite with Him, unite with Him, unite with Him.'

Before he left this world he looked around and said to the people present, 'Others whom you do not see have come to me. Make room and show courtesy to them! I am the core without the shell. You see me with you, while I am with someone else. It is best that you leave me now.' Then he said, 'O angel of death, I do not fear you nor do I fear anything except Him Who has befriended me and has been generous to me !'

At the last moment he raised his hands and said, 'There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet. Glory be to Allah, the Exalted, the Ever -living, glory be to Him, the All-Powerful, Who overpowers His servants by death.'

Then he gave a loud cry and said, 'Allah, Allah, Allah ! and his blessed soul left his body.

May Allah's pleasure be upon his soul and may his spirit intercede for this faqir, the writer of these words, and for those who read them.

AN ADDRESS TO THE READER

(From a letter by Hadrat 'AbdulQadir al-Jilani)

DEAR FRIEND, Your heart is a polished mirror. You must wipe it clean of the veil of dust which has gathered upon it, because it is destined to reflect the light of divine secrets.

When the light from Allah (Who) is the light of the heavens and the earth..... begins to shine upon the regions of your heart, the lamp of the heart will be lit. The lamp of the heart is in a glass, the glass is as it were a brightly shining star.... Then within that heart, the lightning - shaft of divine discoveries strikes. This lightning shaft will emanate from the thunderclouds of meaning neither of the East nor of the West, lit from a blessed olive tree... and throw light upon the tree of discovery, so pure, so transparent that it sheds light though fire does not touch it.' Then the lamp of wisdom is lit by itself. How can it remain unlit when the light of Allah's secrets shines over it ?

If only the light of divine secrets shines upon it, the night sky of secrets is lit with thousands of stars.... and by the stars (you) find (your) way.... It is not the stars that guide us but the divine light. For Allah has... decked the lower heaven with beauty (in) the stars. If only the lamp of divine secrets be kindled in your inner self the rest will come, either all at once or little by little. Some you already know, some we will tell you here. Read, listen, try to understand. The dark skies of unconsciousness will be lit by divine presence and the peace and beauty of the full moon, which will rise from the horizon shedding light upon light, ever rising in the sky, passing through its appointed stages as Allah has.... ordained for it Mansions, until it shines in glory in the centre of the sky, dispersing the darkness of heedlessness. (I swear) by the night when it is still..... By the glorious morning light..... your night of unconsciousness will see the brightness of the day. Then you will inhale the perfume of remembrance and repent in the early hours of the morning of unconsciousness and regret your life spent in sleep. You will hear the songs of the morning nightingales and you will hear them say

They were in the habit of sleeping but little by night, and in the hours of early dawn they (were found) praying for forgiveness.

Allah guides to His light whom He pleases.

Then you will see from the horizon of Divine Reason the sun of inner knowledge rising. It is your private sun, for you are the one whom Allah guides and are one the right path and not the one He leaves in error. And you will understand the secret that

It is not given to the sun to catch up with the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day. Each swims along in (its appointed) orbit.

Finally, the knot will be untied in accordance with the parables which Allah sets forth for me, and Allah is the Knower of all things, and the veils will lift and shells will shatter, revealing the fine beneath the coarse; the truly will uncover her face.

All this will begin when the mirror of your heart is cleansed. The light of the divine secrets will fall upon it if you are willing and ask for Him, from Him, with Him.

NOTES

1. All the above are quoted from the Verse of Light(Sura Nur 35)
2. Sura Nahl 16, 3. Sura Ya sin, 36 4. Sura Nur, 35

Address to the Reader

5. Sura Ye sin, 39
6. Sura Duha ,2
7. Sura Duha, 1
8. Sura Al-Imran, 17
9. Sura Fatiha, 1718
- 10.Sura Nur, 35
11. Sura A'raf, 178
- 12.Sura Ya Sin, 49
13. Sura Nur, 35

EXCERPTS FROM 'FUTUH AL-GHAIB

By Ghouse al Azam

THE SEVENTH DISCOURSE

In the name of the Allah the most Merciful and the Beneficent

He (Allah be pleased with him) said :

Get out from your own self and be away from it and be a stranger to your sense of self and surrender everything to Allah and become His gatekeeper at the door of your heart and keep His commandments by admitting whomsoever he permits to be admitted and honour His prohibition by keeping out everything which He forbids so as not to allow the desire of the flesh to get into your heart after it has gone out of it. And to expel the desire of the flesh from the heart one has to put up resistance to it and refuse subordination to it in all conditions, and to admit it into the heart means to acknowledge subordination to it and to make alliance with it. So do not will anything which is not the will of Allah. Any will of yours which is not the will of Allah is a desire of the flesh, which is, so to say, the wilderness of the fools and it is death for you and a cause of falling away from the sight of Allah and of screening Him away from yourself, if you are in this wilderness. Always guard the commandment of Allah and abstain from His prohibitions and surrender to Him always in all the He has ordered and do not associate with Him anything form His creation. Thus your will and your desire and your passions are all His creations. So do not will anything nor desire anything nor indulge in any passion so that you may not prove to be a polytheist, Allah says :

"Whoever hopes to meet his Lord he should do good deeds, and not join anyone in the service of his Lord."

Polytheism consists not merely in idol-worship. It is also polytheism to follow the desire of the flesh and to adopt anything of this world and of the hereafter in association with Allah. Because whatever is, besides Allah is not the Master. Thus when you are engaged in anything which is besides Him you are undoubtedly associating that other thing with Allah. Therefore beware and do not rest, and fear and do not feel secure, seek and do not remain indifferent; then alone will you attain security. And do not ascribe any

condition and position of yours to your own self and do not claim anything among these for yourself. Thus if you are placed in any condition or raised to any position do not speak of it to anyone. Because in the changing of circumstances from day to day, the glory of Allah manifests itself in an ever-new aspect: and Allah intervenes between His servants and their hearts. It may be that the things about which you speak may be removed from you and the thing which you think to be permanent and abiding may undergo a change so that you will be put to shame before those to whom you spoke about them. You should rather reserve the knowledge of this within your own self and should not communicate it to others. Then if the thing continues to existence know it to be the gift of Allah and ask for power to be thankful and for an increase in the favours of Allah, But if the thing ceases to exist it will bring progress in knowledge and light and wakefulness and regard. Allah says:

"Whatever communication we abrogate or cause it to be forgotten, we bring one better than it or like it. Do you; not know it that Allah has power over all things?"

So do not consider Allah to be powerless in anything and do not ascribe any shortcoming to His decree and His procedure and do not entertain doubt about His promise. In this matter let there be an example for virtuous conduct in the Holy Prophet of Allah. Verses and chapters that were revealed to him and were adopted in practice were recited in the mosques and written in books, even these were taken up and changed and replaced by others and attention of the Holy Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) was directed towards these new revelations which replaced the old ones. This happened in the external law.

As for the inner things and knowledge and spiritual state which obtained between him and Allah, he used to say that his heart used to be clouded and he used to seek the protection of Allah seventy times each day, and it is also narrated that a hundred times a day the Holy Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) used to be taken from one condition to another and from this to still another and thus he would be made to attain higher and higher stages in the nearness of Allah and stages in his match in the unseen and the robe of light with which he was clothed used to be changed accordingly, every progressive step making the previous stage appear dark and defective in comparison and comparatively faulty in respect of obedience to the commandments. So he used to receive instructions for the asking of protection from Allah because the best of

all states in a servant is the state of seeking protection and of turning to Allah. This is because in it there is acknowledgement of his sin and fault and these are the two qualities which are found in a servant in all conditions of his life and which belong to him as a heritage from Adam (peace be on him) who was the father of mankind and the chosen one of Allah. When the darkness of forgetfulness to the promise and covenant besmirched to clearness of his spiritual condition and he manifested the desire to abide in the abode of peace and in the neighbourhood of the Beneficent and Benevolent Friend (Allah), and he wished for the coming of honoured angels to him with blessings and peace, at that time his personal desire manifested itself and the will of Adam was found mixed up with the will of Allah. So this will of his was smashed and the first state was made to disappear and the nearness to Allah then existing was taken away and his the then position slipped away from him and the light of faith that was with him was changed into darkness and the purity of his spirit was thereby darkened. Then this chosen one of Allah was reminded (of his fault) and was made to acknowledge his sin and mistake and was instructed to admit his fault and imperfection.

Then said Adam (peace be on him), "Our Lord! we have been unjust to our own souls and if Thou will not forgive us and have mercy on us we shall most surely be among the loses." Then came to him the light of guidance and the knowledge of repentance and the knowledge of reality consequent thereon and the knowledge of the wisdom that was hidden in the incident before this and would not be revealed but for this incident, then Allah turned towards them mercifully so that they might repent. Then that purpose of his (Adam's) was changed for another and his previous condition also and there came to him the higher state of saintliness (Wilayat) and he was given a station in this world and in the hereafter. Thus did this world become a living place for him and his progeny and the hereafter the place for their return and eternal rest.

Thus thou shouldst take the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) who is His friend and the chosen one, and his great ancestor Adam the chosen of Allah, both of whom were among the friends of Allah, as your example in the confession of your fault and in seeking His protection from sins and in the adoption of humility and meekness in all conditions of life.

THE EIGHTH DISCOURSE

He (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

When you are in a particular condition do not wish for another condition either higher or lower. Thus when you are at the palace gate of the King do not wish for an entrance into the palace unless you are made to enter it by compulsion and not of your own accord. And by compulsion I mean a stern order which is repeated. And do not consider it enough to have the mere permission for entrance, because this may just be a trick and a deception from the King. You should rather hold your patience till you are compelled to enter the house by the sheer force of command from and action of the King. For then you will not be overtaken by any chastisement from the King on account of this action of His own. If, however, you meet with any punishment it will be on account of the evil of your liking and greed and impatience and unmannerliness and want of contentment with the condition of life you were in. Then when it so happens that you enter the palace under such a compulsion, enter it in all silence and with your looks cast down, observing proper manners and being attentive to whatever you are commanded to do by way of any service and occupation, without asking for any promotion in the station of life. Allah said to His Prophet Muhammad, His chosen one (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him):

"And do not stretch your eyes after that with which We have provided different classes of them, of the splendour of this world's life, that We may thereby try them; and the sustenance (given) by your Lord is better and more abiding".

Thus by His words, "The sustenance (given) by your Lord is better and more abiding." Allah administers an admonition to His Holy Prophet, the chosen one (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) to make him regardful of the existing condition and to remain contented with the gifts of Allah. To put this commandment in other words, "Whatever I have given you of good things and prophethood and knowledge and contentment and patience and kingdom of religion and fighting for the sake of religion - all these are better and worthier than what I have given to others". Thus all good lies in being regardful of the existing condition and in being contented with it and in warding off all desires for anything which is besides it, because such a thing must be either one that is allotted to you or one which is allotted to another person or the one which is allotted to nobody, but has been created by Allah as a trial. So if it is destined for you, it is bound to come to you, whether you like it or dislike it. It is not proper, therefore, that any unmannerliness should be manifested from you or any greed in your desire for it, because it is

disapproved by the another man, why should you bear hardships for a thing which you cannot get and which is never to reach your hands. And if it is a thing which is not to fall to the lot of any man that is only a trial; how can an intelligent person like and approve that he should ask for himself a trial and actively seek for it? Thus it is proved that good and safety lies wholly in paying regard to the existing condition. Then when you are made to climb up to the upper storey and from there to the roof of the palace you should observe, as we have already stated, respectfulness, silence and good manners. Nay you should do more than this because you are now nearer the King and closer to dangers. So do not desire any change from your existing state to any other state, higher or lower, nor should you desire either for its continuity and permanence or for any change in it. Nay, you should have no option whatsoever in the matter because that will amount to ingratitude in respect of the existing blessings and such a sense of ingratitude, of necessity, renders him, who is guilty of this, abased in this life and the hereafter. So keep on acting as we have told you, until you are raised to a position where you will be granted a fixed status wherefrom you will not be removed, you should then know that it is a gift of Allah accompanied as it is with the manifestation of its indications and signs. You should, therefore, stick to it and not allow yourself to be removed from it. The Ahwal (states of spiritual changes) being to the Awliya (ordinary saints) whereas Muqamat (stations of spiritual establishment) to Abdal (or advanced saints).

FAISLA HAFT MASLA

(Decision on seven controversial Religious issues)

By Haji Imdad Ullah Muhajir Makki

(Translated by A.Mugal Ahle Sunnat orgn London)

Chapter -1

Preface

Alhamdo lilahay nahamdo wa nastaeno wa nastaghfaro wa nomina behee wala tawakalo wa naooz billahay min sharoor-e-un fosayna wamin saeyat-e-amalayna min yohdi Allah fala mudil lahoo wa min yohdil lalah fala hadi alla wa nashhado an lailaha il Allah wahda hoo la sharik ala hoo wa nashhado ana sayedna wa maulana Mohammad an abda hoo wa Rasulo (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam)

I, Imdad Ullah, Hanafi, Muhajir Makki, Allah's humble servant wish to emphasise to all Muslims in general and my associates in particular that the unity amongst us Muslims is the real key for our worldly progress and for getting the Divinely Blessings. Unfortunately, certain Religious matters have become a bone of contention among the Muslim ummah these days. This is resulting in Muslim scholars wasting their precious time and energy on the one hand and the detonation of Deen of the Muslim Ummah on the other hand. But in actual fact, in most of these so called controversial matters, the differences lie not in the essence but only in the wording and expression.

Being desperately concerned at the frustration these matters have caused to my associates in particular and to our Muslim ummah in general, I deeply felt the need to write and publish a booklet concerning these matters with a firm hope that the present prevailing arguments and controversies will come to an end. Though at present there are many controversial matters but I have picked up only those in which my associates differ. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the controversial matters are so numerous that it is difficult to cover them all and that there is least likelihood that my explanation will be accepted by scholars other than my associates. Secondly, the differences among my associates are only in a few matters and there is every likelihood that my point of view will be accepted by my associates.

The matter in which my associates mostly argue are only seven, five of which involve Islamic practises while the other two come under belief. The order of preference in which these matters are being discussed is based upon their level of controversy. I have also mentioned the righteous practice and my practice in these disputed matters. I pray to Allah Almighty that this attempt of mine becomes the tool in eradicating the controversies and quarrels among Muslims. Furthermore, persons other than my associates who also accept it and benefit from it, are requested to pray for me. I also wish to mention that nobody should waste energies in publishing answers refuting my deliberations because I do not want to enter into any dialogue whatsoever.

Maulood Un Nabi

(Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam)

There is no controversy that the Dhikr (remembrance) of the birth of the Pride of Adam and the best of Allah's creation (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) is a means of Allah's Blessings and Good Tidings, both in this world and in the world hereafter. The disputes, however, are about fixing of date and time and celebrating in a special manner, under some restrictions, the prominent being the Aqama (standing position) during Salaam. Some scholars forbid this practice on the basis of the Tradition "kulo bidah dalala" (Sahih Muslim, Abwab-Juma) i.e. "every innovation is wrong". But most of the scholars, however allow it on the grounds of great blessings and honour that the Dhikr brings to us. In actual fact and in every fairness bidah applies only if something alien is introduced in the Deen as is apparent from the following Tradition "Mun ahdasa fi amrena haza ma laisa minho fahowa radan" (Sahih Bukhari, Kitab ul Sulhah) i.e., introducing something new in Deen which is not part of the Deen is not acceptable. Thus if a believer considers that his primary aim, the Dhikr of the Holy Prophet (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) with respect is Ibadah and mean of Allah's blessings while the conditions are only optional and not obligatory which he follows due to certain interpretations, then this will be far from innovation. If a believer considers that the Dhikr of the Holy Prophet (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) with respect is Ibadah and that he can do it at any time though he fixes some time and date like 12th Rabi ul -awwal due to certain reasons, conveniences or interpretations lest he forgets and misses this (Blessed Dhikr), then there is nothing wrong

with it. Talking of interpretations, there are so many of them and that they vary from situation to situation. If one is not aware of them all, one should follow those scholars who have the knowledge of the way the earlier believers would have done in these matters. The specific spiritual practices, meditation, the establishments of schools and Darghas are result of these interpretations. However, if a believer considers all the things discussed above as obligatory (like Sallat and Fasting), then these become innovation. Thus for example if anyone believes that there will be no Divinely blessings if Maulood is not performed on a fixed date or in a position other than Aqama or perfumes and food are not made available at the occasion, then such a belief is certainly wrong because it amounts to exceeding the limits of the Shariah. Similarly considering any Mubah (good action permissible in Shariah) as Haram (sin) is also wrong and amounts to exceeding the bounds of Shariah. In both these cases, considering a Mubah as Wajib (necessary) or Haram will amount to exceeding the limits of Shariah and are wrong. If one does not consider these things as Wajib from the Shariah point of view but follows them because there are certain blessings associated with them and certain desired effects are not attained without adhering to them, then there is no justification to call them Bidah. For example there are certain actions which only produce specific effects and results when performed in standing posture only and that these effects are not possible in sitting posture. The reason for such a belief is based upon the Kashf (inspiration) or Ilham (revelation) of the initiator of that action. In the same way, based upon one's own experience or on the evidence of the person blessed with spiritual knowledge and Divinely wisdom, if one considers that special effects would not be possible except carrying is something hidden and cannot be known unless asked about it. It is, therefore not right to doubt anybody's Iman from merely seeing some of the outward signs of his actions.

Some people, however criticise those who do not stand up during Maulood. Such criticism is not right because from Shariah's point of view, standing position is not Wajib. According to Muslim Jurists even a Mustahhab (likeable action) becomes Masiat (disobedience or bad tidings) when insisted upon. One should insist only on the Wajib and not on potional actions. But to regard such a critic as the supporter of Qiyam from Shariah point of view is also not right. There are so many reasons on which this criticism could be based. It could be on the grounds of beliefs, customs or habits, which could be religious or otherwise. Sometimes a critic, rightly or wrongly, directs his criticism on an

activity, which in his opinion is a symbol of a non-believer's community. Thus if a holy person comes to a meeting and everyone stands up in respect except one person, the later is criticised not because he has contravened any Wajib of Shariah but on the grounds that he has acted against the Aadab (manners) of the Majlis (association). Another example is the custom prevalent in Indo-Pak Sub-continent, of the distribution of sweetmeats at the completion of Holy Quran at the end of Tarawih during Ramadhan. Those who do not distribute sweetmeats at such occasions will be criticised but this criticism is only on the grounds that a good custom was ignored. Sometime in the past saying, "Bahaq" was a symbol of Mutazila (1*) sect. If an ignorant person these days, finds someone calling Bahaq, accuses and criticises the later for belonging to and for possessing the same beliefs as Mutazila will be committing a great mistake. It is therefore apparent that simply on the basis of an action, we cannot regard the critic to be believing in the action as Wajib. If, however, we assume that someone in the community believes that such an action is obligatory or Wajib, it will be Bidah for that specific person only. It will still be permissible and likeable action for those who do not believe this way. Another example is of Rujat-e-Qahqary (2*). If anybody considers Rujat-e-Qahqary as likeable action though not necessary (from Shariah point of view), it will be far from Bidah. On the basis of certain silly actions like reading of week Traditions or singing etc., of ignorant people in some meetings, some scholars give a general verdict of Haram or Bidah on such meetings. This is not justified. If because of some speakers preaching week Traditions or due to the mixed assemblies of men and women trouble shoots out, all religious assemblies will not be banned. There is a well known saying "Do not burn your blanket because of one bug".

To regard the belief that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) actually honours the meeting of Maulood by his presence, as Kufr or Shirk is exceeding the limits and is outrageous. This is possible both rationally and through recorded experiences. Actually it does happen on certain occasions. The doubt how the Prophet (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) could know about the Maulood meeting and how he could be present at many places at one time is very weak and baseless doubt. These things are insignificant before the vast Divinely Wisdom and Spiritual powers of the Holy Prophet (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) which are supported by right Traditions and proved by people of inspirtion and revelations. Besides, nobody can doubt the powers of Allah Almighty who could lift all the veils so that the Prophet (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam)

can see everything while sitting in his own place (*3). In fact, in every respect this is possible. This belief does not mean that Sayadna Mahammad (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) possesses Ilm -e-Ghaeb (Knowledge of Unseen) specific to Allah Almighty. One is said to have Ilm-e-Ghaeb when such knowledge is specific and peculiar to one alone without being informed from the outside agency. This type of Ilm-e-Ghaeb is characteristic of Allah Almighty alone. The knowledge given to someone else by Allah Almighty is, therefore not someone's personal knowledge but dependent on The Informer (Allah Almighty). This sort of knowledge is not only possible for the Allah's creations but there are prominent and famous instances of its occurrences, examples of which are Alqa (intuition), Kashf (inspiration) and Wahi (revelations). The belief in something possible cannot be regarded as Kufr or Shirk even if such a thing does not occur, though of course an evidence is necessary for its happening. If this evidence is available through one's own inspiration or is informed by "a person of inspiration", believing in such a thing is definitely allowed. However, without an evidence such a thing will be wrong and should be given up. But it cannot be regarded as Kufr or Shirk. This is a brief investigation of this Masla (issue).

So far as I am concerned, I, not only participate in the Maulood meeting but also hold them regularly every year as means of blessings and find pleasure and (spiritual) uplift in Qiyam. Since it is a controversial matter in which both the opposing factions have evidences from Shariah, though some of them are weak, the scholars should follow the line which they think is right on the basis of their evidences as is customary in such controversial matters. Nevertheless, they should neither hate nor look down on their opposing faction or call them Fasiq (corrupt) or Gumrah (deviator). They should, rather consider the differences in this matter like the differences of Hanafi and Shafi (jurisprudence).

Moreover, both factions should meet and greet each other, communicate through letters and writings and keep up their love and co-operation with each other. They should refrain from debating and contradicting with each other. They should specially avoid involving indecent and evil people from the public since it is contrary to the dignity of a Muslim scholar. They should neither give fatwa (definite decision based on Shariah) nor sign or put their seal on any document relating to these matters since it is needless and useless. Furthermore, they should accommodate each other. Thus, if people who support

Qiyam happen to be in the company of those who do not support Qiyam, it is better not to insist in holding Qiyam in that meeting. If, however, those who do not support Qiyam happen to be in the company of those who support Qiyam, the former should join the Qiyam. The aim should be to avoid any trouble erupting out. Any objectionable extremes practiced by some members of general public should be pointed out and advised to be given up. This is better done by those scholars who support and are involved in Qiyam and not by those scholars who oppose it. The latter should not talk about it, rather should remain quiet. In brief do not oppose these things where these are in practice but do not invent them where these are not in practice. The case of Hateem (4*) is a good evidence in this matter. Those who support Qiyam should accommodate the opposing faction assuming that the latter's stand is based upon their own interpretation and on the grounds that the public can give up the extremities only when told to stop the activity. Similarly, those who oppose the Qiyam should accommodate the supporters of Qiyam assuming that the latter's stand is based upon their interpretation coupled by being overwhelmed with the love of the Holy Prophet (Shallal laahu alaihi wasallam) and that they give permission to other Muslims with good intentions. This should be the line of action of the scholars while the public in general should follow that scholar whom they consider pious and verifier. Nevertheless, they should not criticise people and in particular insult scholars from the opposing faction which amounts exceeding one's limits. Remember jealousy and backbiting destroy your good deeds and therefore refrain from these bad things. Do not let envy and hatred overtake you. (The general public is advised that) reading of books and magazines relating to these matters is Ulama's job and not yours because if you do, these will build up suspicions against the Ulama and worries for you in these matters.

The investigations and the line of action which has been discussed and commented as regards to the above matter are not specific to it only but are so useful that they can be rightly applied to most of the disputed matters because they are based upon the same principles. Put this to your mind, it will certainly benefit you.

(1*) Mutazila was a sect in Islam who claimed to be People of Justice and Tawheed. They believed that Man was master of his own fate and destiny and Allah had nothing to do with it.

(2*) Rujat-e-Qahqary is walking back without turning one's back on the Holy Kaaba. Some people insist after Tawaf-e-Widah (farewell circumulation of the Kaaba). when walking away, one should not turn one's back to the Kaaba. They believe it is a great disrespect and therefore a sin. Though it is a wrong belief, yet anyone who hasn't got this belief but does it as a mark of respect only cannot be blamed to be doing an act of Bidah.

(3*) until the time of the author, radio, television and Tele-communication systems were not invented and some readers could not easily conceive the idea how the Holy Prophet (salallahu-ho-alehay-wasallam) could receive messages from his Ummah from around the globe. Modern technology has enabled us to communicate, receive and send messages and believes in it. Is it not conquering the world of unseen or Ghaeb for a person sitting in London and talking to a person in Canada, thousands of miles away? None of the Islamic Scholars have called this thing a Shirk. If any scholar does, he will be considered as ignorant and stupid. When ever Muslim believes that the Holy Prophet (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) is alive in his grave and even Wahhabis believe that the Holy Prophet (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) can listen to the salaam and Duroods of everybody visiting his grave, why one cannot conceive the idea that Allah's most beloved prophet (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) bestowed with great Spiritual Powers from Allah Almighty, supported with the army of Angels can receive the Messages. Duroods and Salaams of his Ummah from around the globe irrespective of distances. Are Allah Almighty's powers less than modern technology.

(4*) Hateem (Original inside portion of Kaaba now left outside the building)

The Holy Prophet (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) said "If the Muslims were not close to Kufr (being newly converted to Islam), I would have ordered to demolish the building of Kaaba and got it rebuilt including Hateem in it". Accordingly, Hadhrat Abdullah bin Zubair (Raddi Allahu Unho), in his time, got it rebuilt including Hateem in it. After the martyrdom of Hadrat Abdullah bin Zubair (Raddi Allahu Unho). Hajjaj bin Yousaf, rebuilt it in the original design, Hadhrat Abdullah bin Zubair (Raddi Allahu Unho) did something which the Holy Prophet (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) and the four righteous

caliphs did not do. It cannot be called Bidah since he did it in good faith just to fulfil the wishes of the Holy Holy Prophet (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). Nor the action of Hajjaj bin Yusuf be considered a sin for demolishing a part of the Holy Kaaba since he wanted to bring it back to the same design as was in the time of the Holy Prophet (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). Therefore every action should be judged according to the circumstances and should not be right away stereotyped as Bidah or otherwise.

Chapter 3

The Prevalent Fatiha

This matter be dealt in the same way as the Maulod Sharif discussed in the previous chapter. In principles no faction denies sending blessings for the departed sould. Even in this matter, if anyone considers the blessings of Fatiha restricted to specific conditions as are prevalent these days or consider them necessary or obligatory, these cannot be permitted. However, if one does not consider them necessary but follows them only to make Fatima convenient, there is not reason for any objection. In the same way many Muslim jurists have allowed specific Surahs to be recited in certain Salats like Salat-ul-Tahajad due to certain reasons and interpretations and these have been customary of many Mashaikhs. Pondering over how the prevalent Fatiha took the present shape, it appears that in the beginning the poor and destitute were fed with the intention in the heart to pass on its thawaab (blessings) to a certain soul. Afterwards, someone thought to express the intention in words as well just like in Salat the intentions in heart and in words were considered better for general public, though of course the intention in heart is quite enough, so it might have been thought that transferring the "Thawaab" in words publicly could be better. Then someone thought that the intention would be better concentrated, if food was put in front during "Dua" (supplication). Further, it might have been thought that reciting the Holy Quran at the occasion could enhance the chances of acceptance of the "Dua" because of two "Ibadas" being carried out together, i.e. getting two rewards from a single act. Consequently, short Surahs carrying big "Thawaab" started being recited. Realising that raising hands for Dua at these occasions became a custom. Considering that serving of water with the food to the poor people is a great "Thawaab", provision of water at the occasion also became a habit. This is how the prevalent form of Fatiha took its shape. Regarding fixing of date, our experience tells us that fixing a date for an event reminds us and helps us to hold the event without fail otherwise we may not remember it for many years to come. Though there are so many reasons, excuses and interpretations for such things but I have mentioned only a few, the rest an intelligent person can follow. In addition, there are certain spiritual secrets involved in them. It can be therefore, concluded that there is no harm in adopting a certain form of Fatiha due to reasons mentioned above. If, however the general public exceeds the limits, it should be advised and corrected but there is no need to try to stop

the actual event. If the general public commits excess in anything, it does not mean that the action of men of knowledge (Ulama) is wrong. "Lana Amalayna walakum Amalakum" (For us are our actions and for you are yours.)

Some people refer to Fatiha as "Tashba" (5*). Tashba involves a very long discussion, though it is enough to understand that "Tashba" applies only when a certain custom of a nation is so specific to it that any outsider who practices it either wonder strikes its community or is considered to be one of them. If, however such customs spread so widely in order nations that they become common in all, Tashba ceases to apply. Thus we see so many customs and habits of others nations have infiltrated in the Muslim Ummah that even the Ulama and "Dervish" (pious people) could not escape (6*).

All such things are not considered bad. The case of "Taha rat" (cleaning of the anus) by Ahla-Qaba (7*) is a testimony to this effect. If, however a custom has not become general internationally but is specific to an alien nation only, its following comes under "Tashba" which is not allowed. Therefore, the form of sending "Thawaab" prevalent these days is not specific to any one nation. Thus the "Ghyarwi Sharif of Ghaus -e-Azam, 10th, 20th, 40th days (Chehlum), quarterly and annual Fatihas, "Tosha" of Sheikh Ahmad Abdul Haq Rodlavi, "Shamani" of Hadhrat Bu Ali Shah Qalander, the "Halwa" on the "Night of Shab-e-Barat" and other means of passing Thawaab are based upon the same principles. My practice in these matters is that I do not follow the specific forms but do not criticise those who do. This matter be acted upon the way as been described in Milad Sharif, i.e., both the factions should live with each other in harmony without entering into arguments and discussions. They should not call each other Bid'atis or Wahhabis. They should stop the general public from following extremes and from fighting with each other.

(5*) TASHBA means to do an activity similar to a non-Muslim nation. There is a Tradition about it : "Min Tashba biqoomay fahowa minhum (18)

6) The celebrations of national independence days, father's days, birthdays, anniversaries, labour day, May day, wearing of suits and neckties, etc., are some of typical examples.

(7*) TA HARAT : The case of Taha'rat (cleaning of anus) of Ahle Qaba is referred to in this Ayat : "Fihay rijalun yohiboona anyatatahharo wallaho yohibul muttahaayreen" (Sura Tauba, Ayat 108), meaning, "In it (Masjad e Qaba) are men who love to be purified, and God loveth those who make themselves pure". It is mentioned in Masnad - e-Ahmad that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) visited Masjad-e-Qaba and told his Companions who used to pray in that mosque that Allah Almighty had admired their Taha'rat. The holy Prophet (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) asked them about the special Taha'rat they practiced for which Allah Almighty admired them. The Companions (Raddi Allahu Anhum) replied that having known from the Jews, they had started washing the anus with water after toileting. The Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) endorsed their action and advised them to follow that way of Taha'rat. There is enough evidence from many Traditions that washing with water was the custom of non-Muslims. The Muslims were initially commanded to use pieces of earth for Taha'rat. The use of water was adopted by ANSAR Muslims, it no longer remains under TASHBA, rather had been greatly admired.

Chapter 4

Urs and Sama

The word URS is derived from the Tradition "Num Kanuma tal arus" i.e., "after death, a pious person is told to go to sleep like a bride" (Abwab-ul-Khabaer, Tirmazi). The death of Allah's beloved people is in fact their meeting with Allah Almighty and therefore, termed as "Wisal" or union with Allah. What more pleasure will there be for a person having union with Allah? The reason behind holding the Urs have been to pray for "Thawaab" for the soul which is very likeable action particularly for those holy people to whom we owe so much for giving us spiritual benefits and bounties. Besides, we get an opportunity to meet other mureeds of our Sheikh which in addition to bringing good tidings and blessings, enhances our love for each other. Moreover so many Mashaikhs attend such meetings which help the seekers of Allah's love to choose a sheikh of their choice. In this way, all mureeds of a spiritual order assemble and meet one another on one fixed date in addition to offering and gifting "Thawaab" of reciting the Holy Quran and of distributing the food, to the holy person in the grave. This is why a specific date is

fixed for the occasion. But why this date be the date of passing away from this world. There are certain reasons behind it which are not necessary to be revealed out.

There is a custom of "Sama" or singing in some spiritual orders which was introduced to enhance spiritual delight, ecstasy and love for Allah. This is the true picture of "URS" and there seems nothing wrong with it. In fact some Ulama have proved it through Traditions. The Hadith "La tat khizu qabri eid" i.e., "do not make my grave a place of Eid or fair", creates some doubts about it. But the true meaning of this Tradition is that luxuriously decorating my grave, making it a place of merry making or holding a fair on it with pomp and show are forbidden. This is because the visiting of graves is meant for reminding, correcting and warning people of the short comings of this wordily life and not for luxurious living which would otherwise lead one to go astray from the real path. The Tradition however, does not mean that gathering on the grave is forbidden otherwise visiting of the pilgrims to Madina Munawara to the shrine of the Holy Prophet (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) would also have been forbidden. In fact, visiting of the graves, alone or in company is both allowed. Further the remitting of the "Thawaab" through reciting of the Holy Quran and by the distribution of the food (to the destitute) and the fixing of a specific date due to certain reasons, are all allowed. Further the remitting of the "Thawaab" through reciting of the Holy Quran and by the distribution of the food (to the destitute) and the fixing of a specific date due to certain reasons, are all allowed. Regarding the objection that everybody reciting Holy Quran so loudly contravenes the Ayat, "Wa Iza Qare ul Quran fastameu lah wa ansatu laallakum turhamoon." i.e., "when the Quran is read, listen to it with attention, and hold your peace, that you may receive mercy", Ulama have mentioned two things. Firstly listening to the Holy Quran after Salaat is Mustahhab (likeable action) and not Wajib (necessary) or Fard (obligatory). Therefore, it is not that objectionable if a Mustahhab is not followed, otherwise, learning of the Holy Quran by the children in Islamic Schools (where each child is reading Quran very loudly) will be objected to. Secondly, if someone believes that listening of the Holy Quran is Wajib under all circumstances, one should advise people to recite the Holy Quran quietly instead of objecting to the URS itself. The same rule applies to the reciting of the Holy Quran loudly on the "Soyam", the Fatiha ceremony on the third day of the departed soul. One should, however, never attend those gatherings where objectionable things like dancing of girls and prostration to the graves take place.

Sama or singing, by itself, even without instruments is a disputed matter. However, the Islamic Research Scholars maintain that if it is carried out under controlled specific conditions, ensuring at the same time that no trouble will erupt out, it is allowed otherwise not. These conditions have been discussed by "IMAM GHAZALI" (Rehmat Ullah Ale) in "Ahya ul Aloom". There are also different opinions about Sama with instruments (called Qawwali). Some scholars (permitting the use of instruments) have given interpretations of instruments forbidding Traditions and have used the reasoning from "Fiqh" to support their interpretations. Qazi Sana Ullah Pani Patti has mentioned those in his magazine "SAMA". Nevertheless, all agree that certain "Aadab" (respectable behaviour) and conditions (8*) are a must which are not observed in many meetings these days. Allah did not create five fingers alike. The above Traditions, however, are "Khabere-Wahid" (narrated by one or two narrators from the beginning to the end) and their interpretation, though a bit difficult, is possible. Besides, these people (who attend with instruments) may be considered to be overwhelmed by ecstasy under which conditions it is very difficult to criticise them.

My way in this matter is that every year I remit "Thawaab" to the soul of my Peer-o-Murshad (Sheikh). In the first place the Holy Quran is recited. Sometimes, if the time permits Maulood Sharif is held. Then the food is distributed and its "Thawaab" is remitted. I do not do anything other than these. I never had a chance to attend "Sama", neither with or without instruments. Nevertheless, I do not object in heart to people of "HAL" (in the state of ecstasy). But to pretend to be one in that state is cheating which is extremely bad though to blame someone to be a cheater without a proof based upon Shariah is also not participate be considered to be highly fond of Sunnah while those who participate be taken as "Ahle Muhabat" (the people of love). Do not criticise each other and try to stop the excesses committed by public with kindness and love.

(8*) SAMA (singing) or Qawwali as it is commonly called is generally allowed in CHISTI TARIQAT but there are some conditions which should be adhered to which are :

i) Permission from Sheikh because for some SAMA could be beneficial while for others it could be detrimental. The Sheikh should preferably be present and lead the SAMA.

ii) The Time : SAMA should be attended when it does not conflict with the time of the obligatory prayers, there is no confusion in thoughts nor any fear losing concentration, the mind is intoxicated with the Dhikr of Allah and the heart is overwhelmed with His love.

iii) The Place : It should be such that it is not a thoroughfare, it does not cause any trouble to the participants or public, it is not a place of recreation or a place where fairs are held but a place of tranquility suited to meditation and Dhikr-e-Allah.

iv) The Association: All the participants in the meeting of "Sama" should have similar spiritual taste and thoughts, not overpowered by the demand of their egos, have control over their evil habits and are Mutaqi and pious. They should not be hypocrites, cheaters, treacherous, lover of worldly power and glamour. They should come with Wudu (ablution) with the intention of getting Allah's Noor and Blessings.

v) The Qawwals or singers : They should be pious and Mutaqi, fond of Allah's Dhikr, followers of tenants of Islam (Salaat, Fasting etc), not greedy and be with Wudu.

According to Mashaikhs, the attendance of "Sama" in which above conditions are not adhered to is not acceptable and should not be attended.

Chapter 5

Calling Upon Someone other than Allah

To have the real conception of this matter, one should know that there are varieties of aims and objectives of calling (someone other than Allah). Sometimes, it is to express someone's fondness, sometimes to express grief while at other times it is to send a message. Therefore, calling someone from a distance, either for remembrance, desirous of union or anxiety of separation, just like a lover calls his beloved, to give consolation to his heart, is not a sin. The example of this is the case of "Majnoon" as given in "Masnawi" (of Maulana Rumi):

"Someone in the desert saw Majnoon sitting alone in his vast barren world of grief and despair, writing letter to someone using his finger as a pen and sand as paper. When he was asked, "O, lovelorn Majnoon what is all this? To whom are you writing this letter?" Majnoon said, "I am practising the name of "Laila" to give consolation to my heart."

This type of call by the Companions (Raddi Allahu Anhum) is found in so many traditions whose fact is known to those who made a thorough study of the lives of the Companions (Raddi Allahu, Anhum). The other sort of calling is where the caller wishes that the called one actually hears the call. In this case, if the caller, through the cleanliness of his heart is seeing the person called spiritually, such a call is permitted. If however, the caller does not see the called one but believes that the called one will receive his message through some means supported by evidence, even then the call is permitted. The typical example supported by Tradition is the Angels take and present our Durood Sharif to the Holy Prophet (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). On the basis of this belief, it is quite in order to say, "Asalato-Wasalam-o-Aleka-Ya-Rasool-Allah" (see also footnote 3, chapter 2). However, if someone calls a "Wali Allah" (Allah's friend) from a distance but is neither witnessing, nor wishing to send a message and does not have any evidence from Shariah for its means, such a call is prohibited. Such a belief is distrust in Allah Almighty, claiming of "Ghaib" (knowledge of unseen) and resembles Shirk. It is, therefore advised to refrain from such unnecessary calls. However, stereotyping it right away as Kufr or Shirk is outrageous because there is a possibility that Allah might inform the Wali Allah, believing in something which is possible is not Shirk, even though the thing which is possible may not happen. Nevertheless, the call which is in Tradition, "Ya Ibadah Alla Aenooni" i.e., "O servants of Allah help me", is accepted by all factions.

The above explanation is for the general public. Different conditions and rules apply to people of ecstasy for whom such an action actually becomes "Ibadah". The people with ecstasy will understand this point and will not need any further explanation. From this we get the permission of the Wazifa: " Ya Sheikh Sayed Abdul Qadir Sheun Lillah". If anyone considers that the Sheikh can help with the power he possesses of his own, it will be tending towards Shirk. But if the Sheikh is considered as "Wasila" (means) or these words are uttered with an empty mind considering them to carry "Barakats" (blessings), then there is nothing wrong with them. This is the true interpretation of this matter. Some Ulama forbid this sort of calling on the grounds that a lay person cannot maintain distinction between these rules even though their intentions may be good. "Ina-mal-amal-e-bin-niyate" i.e., "verily actions are dependent on intentions". The best way to handle this issue is, if a caller is knowledge, he may be considered right. If the caller is ordinary ignorant person, he be stopped if there is anything wrong in his belief in this matter. But it is not good at all to stop from the very act in all circumstances. One thing which is

worth remembering and which is useful is that there could be so many situations in it. If any person is involved in wrong action and it appears certain from his circumstances that he will not give up that action, he should neither be told to stop since it might lead to trouble and enmity, nor he be left alone because it is against Islamic affection and brotherhood. He should be given permission for that action but be corrected in the things wrong in his action. With this attitude, there are more chances of acceptance. Allah Almighty's command is 'Ud ou ila Sabile Rabeka bilhikmate wal moezatil hasnate... Sura Nahl, Ayat 125" i.e., "O Prophet (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) invite all to the way of the Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching".

A study of how laws of Shariah were put in practice during the early days of "Jahalia" (ignorance), reveals that the above code of conduct was applied. As far as I am concerned, it is not my practice to make such calls though in some poetic verses, overwhelmed with ecstasy, I have made some calls. Nevertheless, the attitude in this matter should be same as in the other three matters discussed above

Chapter 6

Second Congregational Salaat

(This is about the second congregational Salaat after the first one has already been performed in the mosque). There have been different opinions about this matters from very early times. Imam Abu Hanifa (Rehmat Ullah Ale) does not like the second congregational prayer but Imam Abu Yusuf (Rehmat Ullah Ale) permits it under certain conditions. There are evidences for the against this matter. There is no use dragging this discussion since one can follow any option. The best thing is to combine the statements of both factions. This would employ that if the first congregational Salaat has been missed through sheer laziness, the second congregational Salaat in such a case be regarded as "Makruh" (a disliked act) to serve as a warning (for future guidance). Those who declare such a Salaat as "Makruh" also base their reasoning on the fact that the attendance of the first congregational Salaat will be severely affected if unconditional permission is given for the second congregational Salaat. If however, due to a reasonable excuse, the congregational Salaat is missed, joining the second congregational Salaat is better than to pray alone. There is no point in stopping a person from joining the second congregational Salaat, if he is so lazy and ignorant that he gets no warning from it, rather

considers praying alone as a booty, performs his Salaat quickly like hitting his head against the ground and walks away. At least he will pray his Salaat with peace and satisfaction in the congregation. Even in this matter both the factions should exhibit love and respect for each other since there are evidences in favour of both of them. In mosques, where second congregational Salaat is not allowed, do not try to hold one of your own, rather say your Salaat individually. If however, the second congregational Salaat is being held, join it and do not object to it.

The above (five) matters (discussed hitherto) involve practical activities while the remaining two are educational (and relate to belief) are being discussed in the following pages.

Chapter 7

Imkan -e- Nazir and Imkan-e-Kazab

(Imkan-e-Nazir i.e. Allah creating replicas of someone. Imkan-e-Kazab i.e. Allah is capable of lies)

If anyone wants to investigate these matters in details, one cannot do it without grassroots research of the underlying wisdom of the various facts relating to these matters. Since the matters are very delicate, one should believe in two things. The first is the Ayat, "In Allah ha a 'la kule Sheyin Qadeer..... Sura Nahi, Ayat 77" i.e., "Allah hath power over all things." The second is Ayat, "Subhan Allah he ama yasayfoon..... Sura Muminum, Ayat 91" i.e., "Allah is free of all defects and vice". The nearest meanings (which apply here) are not to contradict one's own statement or give information about something which in reality does not exist etc., etc. (9*)

It is not our responsibility to investigate which things come under first Ayat over which Allah be considered to have the power nor about things which come under defects and vice from which Allah be considered to be free under the second Ayat, specially when the evidences are conflicting. In view of the delicate nature of these matters, it won't be surprising if discussions or investigations in these matters is forbidden. Take for example the matter of "Fate". The Holy Prophet (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) has strictly forbidden to discuss this matter because of the complications involved in it. On the same basis, when these matters are so complicated because of the opposing intellectual and

written evidences, there would be no justification for permission to talk about or discuss these matters. One of my associates had a dream relating to these matters which I really liked very much. There is no other better way of resolving these matters. If, anyone has the habit of discussing these matters, one should do in privacy. If someone wants to do written arguments, it should be done through letters and not through books or magazines. If someone is very fond of writing, he should be doing in Arabic so that the general public does not get frustrated. It is imperative that these matters are not discussed in public.

(9*) Ut was not until some two hundred years ago, a so called Muslim scholar, later followed by his disciples from Indian Sub-continent brought up a new but an evil interpretation to the Ayat. "Allah hath power over all things," which baffled the Muslim Ummah. According to these so called scholars, since Allah Almighty is All Powerful, He could create another like the one He had already created and could also tell lies. While promoting this stupid interpretation, they paid no regard to the Ayat "Allah is free of all defects and vice". They started preaching that Allah Almighty could create (Naozbillah) many like the Holy Prophet (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) and that He could lie, break His promise, punish those whom He promised to reward and vice versa. This put the Muslim Ummah in immeasurable divisions, unimaginable controversies and quagmire of confusions. This action on their part is in direct confrontation with Allah Almighty's command "Behold the rope of Allah and do not be divided." Naturally the question arises as what purpose this "Fitna" (sedition) served him and his accomplices. The minute study and research reveals that this served them two purposes, firstly to take away the love and honour of the Holy Prophet (Sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) from the hearts of Muslims so that they could project themselves and their evil beliefs and secondly to create an atmosphere favourable enough for them to declare their prophethood. While they were gathering their courage for their evil claim, a person of Satanic character and vision, Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani of the Indian sub-continent, supported by the British Government of India, jumped on the bond wagon and claimed for himself prophethood.

(Courtesy ahle-sunnat org.U.K)-**A. Mugal, Translated London**

FAKIRS

By Dr. S.L.Peeran

The word 'Fakir' signifies - fasting in the name of the persistence and perseverance in prayers with fortitude of the beloved persistence and perseverance in prayers with fortitude and patience, subjugation of despicable elements, total faith in the will of Supreme Being-Allah and to practice pure thoughts and lead a life of Truth, to achieve a blissful life.

One who practices regularly these four qualities can rightly call himself a 'fakir'. To become a fakir, a person has to become first a true and pious Momin and should practice austerity, humility and should develop in oneself sincerity and love for humanity.

Fakir's way of life began with the advent of Islam. The lovers of Hedrat Ali (radiallahu t'ala 'anhu) resolved themselves to persistently and with firmness, to follow the tenets of Islam and to live a spiritual way of life, to reach higher realms of consciousness, acquire knowledge and to evolve themselves as refined human beings. These fakirs live in a most humblest of ways and eat the most simplest of foods. Every breath in them is charged with the zeal and love of their beloved, Allah. The mundane existence is pondered upon and by simple living and high thinking understood and realised the true ideals of love, truth and beauty.

The inner qualities of man are reflected upon and every quality and feelings is analysed and self realisation is achieved. The animal feelings are subjugated and the higher ideals and qualities evolved. Day in and day out, they put in efforts to fight against low desires of the self. By this practice, the self, becomes 'Allah imposed' self or a purified self. The soul achieves enlightenment. Thus, they reach 'Wilayat' or Sainthood, and they come to be recognised as 'Peers'.

Years of practice of self control and self analysis, by prayers, by correcting and polishing their behaviour, they achieve true understanding of their consciousness. These saints become true personification of all virtues and saviours of humanity. They teach people ways to achieve mastery over the lower self, and instruct their followers to achieve true love. In all their actions, the followers, are able to see the light of their Beloved and in their every thought, they feel the greatness of their Lord. The followers

subject themselves humbly to these saints. The 'Peers' guide their followers to revive spiritual succour, enlightenment, joy and supreme bliss. In the glory and brilliance of the light, - 'noor' their followers are able to feel the insignificance, total helplessness and despondency of man.

The understanding of human nature, enable, a disciple, 'Mureed' to achieve the ability to guide their fellow beings. These saints and fakirs become succours of peace. By their nobility of mind and qualities of head and heart. they endear themselves to one and all of their fellow beings.

A POEM FROM DIVANI SHANS TABRIZ

By Moulana Rami

Divid Said : 'O Lord, since thou hast no need of us,
Say, then, what wisdom was there in creating the two worlds?'
God said to him : 'O temporal man, I was a hidden treasure;
I sough that that treasure of loving kindness and bounty should be revealed.
I displayed a mirror - its face the heart, its back the world -
Its back is better than its face - if the face is unknown to thee.'
When straw is mixed with clay, how should the mirror be successful ?
When you part the straw from the clay, the mirror becomes clear.
Grape-juice does not turn to wine, unless it ferment awhile in the jar;
Would you have your heart grow brightly, you must take a little trouble.
The sould which issued forth from the body-my king saith to it :
'Thou art come even as thou wentest: where are the traces of my benefactions ?'
'Tis notorious that copper by alchemy becomes gold :
Our copper has been transmuted by this rare alchemy.
From God's grace this sun wants no crown or robe:
He is cap to a hundred bald men and cloak to ten naked.
Child, Jesus sate on an ass for humility's sake :
How else should the zephyr ride on the back of an ass?
O spirit, make thy head in search and seeking like the water of a stream,
And O reason, to gain eternal life tread everlastingly the way of death.
Keep God in remembrance till self is forgotten,
That you may be lost in the Called, without distraction of caller and call.

O CHOSEN ONE

By Dr. S.L.Peeran

O chosen one! I place my loving heart
At thy holy feet, my fierce loyalty
My burning faith, my zeal, my sincerity
My enthusiasm, my sound mind.

O chosen one! I shall not waver
In my duty's call, in my devotion
In my supplication from the commands
Of the Holy Book: in thy pleasure.

O chosen one! The springs of Love
Have purified me: the burning
Spirits have cleansed me
Now, I am ready to soar, to fly.

O the perfect one ! Thou shall forsake
Me not, on the day of the judgement !
Thou shall grant me thy grace
May Heavenly blessings shower on thee

(Amen)

INNER PEACE

By Dr. S.L.Peeran

Look to the inner voice
Its light is eternal
Its joys are multiple
Its grace is divine
It is soothing and pleasing
Its voice is melodious
It has motherly concern and care
It knows your anguish and pain
Listen to it
Sit in silence
In meditation
In calm stillness
Close your eyes
In your heart - recite -
"La illaha ill Allah
Mohammadur Rasool Allah
Allah hu hu Allah, hu hu
Allah hu hu Allah hu hu ".