

Chapter – 49

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani

(1077 - 1166 AD)

His name is Mohiuddin, but Sheikh Az-Zahabi told that his name is Abdul Qadir, and he is also famous with this name. Some have told that Mohiuddin is his title. His Kunniya is Abu Muhammad. Sheikh Abdul Qadir was born in "Gilan" on the southern coast of northern Iran. Gilan's Arabic pronunciation becomes Jilan, that is why he was called Jilani. His father's name is Abi Saleh Musa. Mother's name is Umm al-Khair Umm-al-Jabbar Fatima. His ancestral lineage from his father corresponds to the lineage of Imam Hassan and the maternal lineage corresponds to Imam Hussein. His father died when he was very young. Initially, he was supervised by his maternal grandfather, Syed 'Ubaidullah Somui', but he too soon passed away. So his whole upbringing came through his mother.

Sheikh received his early education in Jilan. At about 18 years of age he requested his mother to give him permission to go to Baghdad for higher education. In this regard, he gave this statement: *"I told my mother to put me in the work of Allah and allow me to go to Baghdad to engage in getting knowledge and meeting the righteous people"*. She gave me permission with a pledge to *"stay true in every circumstances"*. Mother came out of the house to say goodbye and said, *"I accept your separation on the way of Allah. Now you probably won't see me again."* Sheikh's father had left 80 dinars as inheritance, so his mother gave 40 Dinars while he was leaving for Baghdad.

Sheikh Abdul Qadir arrived in Baghdad and got admission in the famous Islamic institute named Madrasa Aaliyah Nizamia. Allamah Abu Saeed was his teacher in the teaching of the Quran. Among the teachers of the hadith the top of the list names are Abu Ghalib Muhammad and Abu Muhammad Jafer Siraj. He studied Jurisprudence with the renowned Faqih, Abu al-Wafa 'Ali ibn Aqeel Baghdadi. He studied Arabic language and literature from Imam Abu Zakariya Yahya al-Tabrizi. As a result, he developed the essence of poetry and speech in Arabic with a very high level of power and eloquence.

After completing education, Sheikh started teaching. In 528AH/1133AD, he began to perform the duties of a teacher in the Madrasa established by his teacher and mentor, Qazi Abu Saeed al-Makhrami. He was teaching people different subjects, especially Tafseer of Quran, Hadith, Hanbali Jurisprudence, Jurisprudence with different other sects, Principles of Jurisprudence and syntax. He was also responsible for the work of Dar-ul-Ifta. He used to write Fatwas according to Hanbali and Shafii' sects.

For general character development of the people, Sheikh Sahib also paid attention to the preaching and the sermons. He started the general sermons in 521AH/1127AD. The Sheikh also proved to be a high-profile speaker. The popularity of these meetings increased so much that the building of the Institute had to be expanded. In these meetings, it was as if the entire city of Baghdad have rushed to this place. Even the scholars used to carry a paper pen during his sermons. These meetings gained so much popularity that it drew countless disciples from other areas of the Islamic world. The effects of these sermon series went even beyond the Great Reform Movements. On one hand it helped the Muslims to come out of their inadequacies,

and on the other hand a cadre of non-Muslims to become Muslims in abundance.

The ultimate messages of his sermons were to say:

"O people! Follow Allah and His Messenger Muhammad. Do not disobey God. Follow His commands honestly. Anything new in religion should not be introduced. Do not let patience go out of hand. Be one with zeal for remembering Allah. Do not create dissatisfaction with one another. Repent, and be free from the pollution of sins, and never leave the door of your Almighty God."

No one could have found a better and more effective way than Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani to improve the morality of the people and to correct the corrupt. His unique approach of preaching brought revolutionary changes even among big rebels, robbers and thieves.

Sheikh Abdul Qadir was a special caretaker of the poor needy and helpless people. He used to say "When I consider good deeds after the duties, I find no better job than feeding the needy and the guests, and treating with love and affection with every common man." In this regard, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani also fascinated people by his actions that people started calling him unintentionally as "پیر دستگیر" (*Highly Generous Mentor*)

In that period, Sufism was at its peak and the Sufi dealings were expanding. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani was introduced by Sufism by Abu al-Khair Hammad ad-Dabbas. The Khilafat (*successorship*) was given to him by his mentor. He made the language of Sufism easy to understand. He also played an important role in harmonizing Sharia with its practice. The procedure of allegiance was already in practice, but a freshness was given by Sheikh Sahib, and he created a regular discipline in it. In this way, he was not only a great scholar and speaker but in Sufism he was also the founder of the "Qadriyah Chain". What greater reason would there be for him that his intellectual superiority and personal excellence is

being acknowledged constantly till today. And without exception, the seniors of all chains have placed him in the list of most favorable mentors.

Among his writings, the famous books are "فتح الغيب" and "غنية الطالبين طريق الحق". Nevertheless, some people are reluctant to accept that "Ghunyat at-Talibeen" is Sheikh's book. However, his "Futooh al-Ghaib", is acknowledged as a great book on Sufism. This book contains various articles. In this book Sheikh has collected the sermons of the Holy Prophet as well. "Ghunyat at-Talibeen" gives a brief explanation of the specific method of Sufism and its practice. In this book it has also given a brief description of the 72 sections in Islam. Moreover, it also describes about the specific practice in Sufism. Sheikh's maternal grandchildren has compiled all his sermons in a book form with the name "فتح ربّاني".

Following are the main points of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani's teachings:

1. Without practice, knowledge does not bring absolute benefits. Any practicing religious scholar is a Caliph of God.
2. The world may be in your hands, but your heart should not occupy it. Keep your heart for Allah's remembrance.
3. As long as the door to life is open, consider it a blessing.
4. Believers are tested.
5. Earn and eat from your legitimate business. Simultaneously help the poor.
6. Do not desire to be rich. Do not adopt extra desirousness. Do not discriminate between the rich and the poor.
7. Do not complaint for the people with Allah.
8. Serve! You will be served.

From the time of childhood when the Sheikh reported the beginning of the month Ramazan by refusing to be breastfed by

his mother, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani had shown the most unusual of miracles and abnormal habits throughout his life. For the scholars, events involving miracles and unusual things are considered reliable after examining them with wisdom and thorough check. So Sheikh Sahib's miracles and unusual things have frequently been quoted by many scholars. Although it is not necessary that they all meet to the academic standards, even critics like Ibn Taymiyyah and Izuddin are forced to say that the miracles of Sheikh Abdul Qadir reach to the notable limits.

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani is distinguished in his conduct by his contemporary saints. None of his match is available as regards to his personality and character. After his death, the Qadriyah Chain became a major source of teachings and guidance not only in the Muslim world but in non-Muslim people as well. That is why this prominent leader of Islam till today holds the status of "پیران پیر" (*Saint of the saints*) and "غوٹ اعظم" (*A Grand Relief*).

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