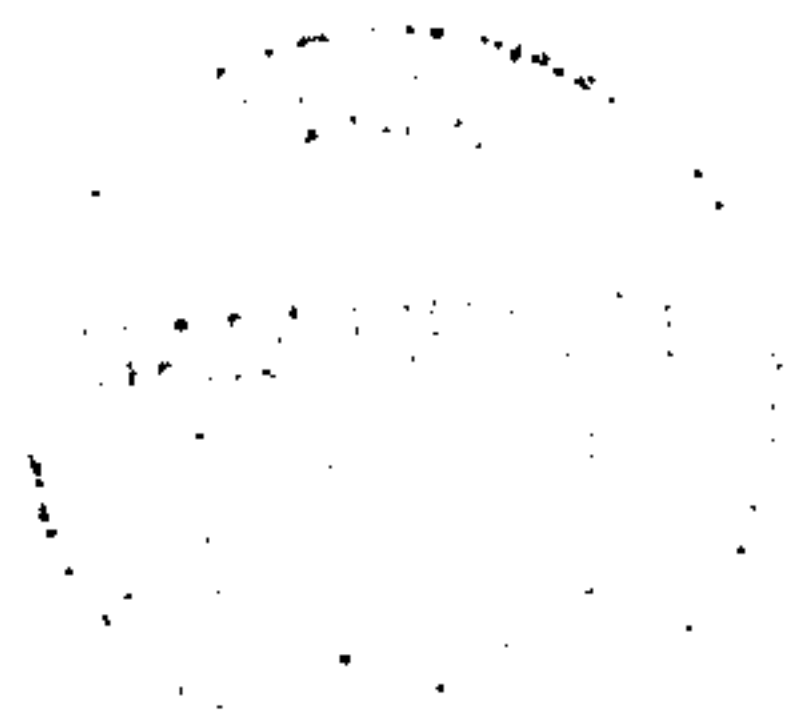


ABD AL-QADIR AL-JILANI:  
HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE METHODOLOGICAL  
STUDIES OF ISLAMIC DA'WAH (MISSION).

BY  
ABDULLAH MUHAMMAD ZIN

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of  
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## ABSTRACT

ABD AL-QADIR AL-JILANI:  
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UNIVERSITY OF KENT AT CANTERBURY, 1990.

Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, a Muslim scholar who lived in Baghdad during the eleventh and twelfth centuries was active in da'wah during his lifetime. Baghdad at the time was the capital of the Abbasid caliphate and the centre of the Muslim world.

This thesis is an attempt to analyse al-Jilani's contributions to the methodological studies of Islamic da'wah. He is commonly known as a great sufi and the founder of the Qadiri Order. However, in this study I would like to highlight other dimensions of al-Jilani's expertise, namely those in the field of Islamic da'wah.

Al-Jilani's methodology in da'wah can be taken largely from his books *al-Fath al-Rabbani* and *al-Ghunyah*. After examining the contents of these books, besides

other sources which were written by historians and biographers, his methodology in da'wah can be summarised as follows: da'wah by goodly counsel, education, *fatawa* (legal decisions or interpretations), exemplary conduct and providing services and aids.

In his capacity as principal of his school in Baghdad, al-Jilani was responsible for the spread of Islam among the people. His preaching instilled "faith in dead hearts" whilst simultaneously initiated productivity and energy in the people. As a sufi al-Jilani introduced a method of spiritual education for his disciples and made regulations for them to follow and practise in his book, *al-Ghunyah*. Al-Jilani frequently delivered *fatawa* and he often gave religious opinions as guidance, in addition to being a prolific writer.

Al-Jilani was therefore, an outstanding figure in the field of da'wah in his time. His powerful personality and broad knowledge coupled with his spiritual strength helped him to spread Islam worldwide. The combination of sufism and *shari'ah* in his works showed his general spirit of reform in the field of da'wah. The connections between sufism, reform and da'wah are thus examined and discussed for their importance in Islam.

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is widely believed at the present time that the Islamic da'wah movements began as a late reaction against western colonialism in Muslim Countries. But thorough study in the field of movements in Islam must run deeper into history than the nineteenth century. One becomes aware that much of what is recognized as da'wah activity and methodology today are to be found in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the time of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, who was born in Jilan, a district in Iran, in 470A.H/1077A.D. and died in Baghdad in 561A.H/1166 A.D.. After the completion of his studies, he practised the spiritual life for about twenty five years, and travelled alone in the deserts and ruins of Iraq. However in or about 521A.H./1127A.H. at the age of fifty-one, he settled in Baghdad and started to establish contact with people by preaching and education. Subsequently his influence has left its mark in all these fields.

### 2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main theoretical issues that are directly dealt with in this study concern al-Jilani's contributions to Islamic da'wah. More specifically, how did al-Jilani bring Islam to the public, or what is the methodology of his



da'wah?.

With regard to the above issues, the central purpose of this study is to present a genuine understanding of al-Jilani's theory and practice of the Islamic da'wah from the point of view of Muslims. This entails a study of the significance of al-Jilani works for the Islamic da'wah, and then a construction of his methodology for Islamic da'wah which may be viable for present and future in the field of Islamic studies.

This study also attempts to answer the question about the criteria of sound sufism according to the Islamic point of view and the relationship between sufism and da'wah. More intensive study in the time of al-Jilani in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, however, reveals that the trend of sufism at these times went far beyond the Islamic doctrine and was regarded by al-Jilani as unacceptable and contradictory to the standards of the Qur'anic revelation and the Traditions of the Prophet. His own ideas in his teaching, preaching and legal decisions or interpretations (*fatawa*) showed substantial evidence of his adherence to the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*.

On the other hand, sufism and da'wah are widely believed among common people to be in conflict because they believe that the sufi is occupied exclusively with God and is lost in Him, attending only to the most

fundamental duties of religion such as prayer (*salah*), and care little for himself or for others, while *da'wah* deals with public affairs and is concerned with the welfare of people. Al-Jilani was an outstanding sufi in his time and was exemplary in this role. After his spiritual training, he came to the public in Baghdad, inviting people to practise Islam and developing their spiritual education. Thus, he became an outstanding *da'i*, as well as a sufi. The works of al-Jilani show this general spirit of reform in the field of sufism and *da'wah*.

### 3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

To my knowledge, previous studies on al-Jilani have been mainly centered around his mystical teachings. In this research I attempt to uncover al-Jilani's methodology of the Islamic *da'wah* and his contributions to the teaching of Islam.

This study will be of great value to the *da'is*, the sufi orders, especially the Qadiri Order, *da'wah* movements, political and religious leaders, and especially to those who are responsible for the future development of *da'wah* in the world in light of the past of the al-Jilani's methodology in *da'wah* and his mystical teaching and the Qadiri Order. It would be seem to be even more useful to the members of the *da'wah* movement as a guide to them.

#### 4. WORKS AVAILABLE

In spite of the importance of al-Jilani's works in Islamic da'wah, a few scholars only have concentrated on his career in the field of da'wah as an outstanding da'i. He is more well-known among people as the famous sufi and founder of the Qadiri Order who has a legendary status.

A selected bibliography is attached to the end of the thesis and contains the most important sources related to the subject which are available in libraries. Among the books listed, the following secondary sources are particularly useful: Margoliouth's article, *Contributions to the Biography of Abd al-Kadir of Jilan*; Abu al-Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Saviours of Islamic Spirit Vol.I*; al-Dila'i, *Natijah al-Tahqiq*; Salik, *The saint of Jilan*; Abd al-Hay al-Qadiri, *al-Zawiyah al-Qadiriyyah 'Abra al-Tarikh wa al-'Usur*.

The greater part of my own study depends on available primary sources such as al-Jilani's books and those of historians and his biographers.

#### 5. METHOD OF THE STUDY

The method used in the present study of al-Jilani's contributions to the methodological studies of Islamic da'wah falls into two main categories, namely, the historical and "ideational".



Historically, I want to trace more clearly the influences that motivated al-Jilani's life-history and which directed him toward the respective aspects of his intellectual, spiritual and social engagement. The historical study of al-Jilani is in the second chapter in which the historical background of al-Jilani's period is dealt with; in the third chapter his parentage, education, teachers and so on are discussed; in the fifth chapter al-Jilani's activities in da'wah.

From the "ideational" point of view, I select largely three of al-Jilani's books and analyze them. These books are *Futuh al-Ghayb* which illustrated his mystical teachings; *al-Fath al-Rabbani* which was an example of his da'wah by preaching, and *al-Ghunyah li Talibi Tariq al-Haqq* for an analysis of his da'wah by spiritual education according to his tariqah (the Qadiri Order). In addition, it will be necessary to investigate other ideas of his time to identify which were causes and which were consequences of his activity in the fields of sufism and Islamic da'wah.

Most of the data for this type of research comes from published and manuscript sources. The research was conducted mainly in the School of Oriental and African studies (SOAS) Library, University of London; University of Kent Library; Senate Library, University of London; India Office Library and Records, London; Oriental

Institute Library, Oxford University, and Selly Oak Colleges Library. In these libraries I found a large number of rare books, journals and manuscripts which related to my research. Additional materials were obtained by friends of mine who sent relevant materials from Arab countries.

The major sources of information employed in the study have been drawn from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) Library, and the University of Kent Library. In addition, I had made use of my experience gained from studying in Arab countries for more than seven years as a student of the Islamic University of Madinah, Saudi Arabia for the degree of B.A. in Da'wah and Theology, and a student of al-Azhar University, Cairo for the degree of M.A. in Da'wah and Islamic culture, and a student of 'Ain Shams university, Cairo for the diploma in Education. After studying, I returned to Malaysia and serving for more than ten years first at Muslim College, Klang as a teacher for about a year, and then subsequently at the National University of Malaysia (Universiti kebangsaan Malaysia), Bangi as a lecturer in the Department of Theology and Philosophy and later as a lecturer in the Department of Da'wah and Leadership.

The material will be presented in two categories. The material for the first and second chapters of the

thesis is derived from secondary sources including books, unpublished doctoral theses and dissertations and relevant referred journals. In the third chapter up to the last chapter of the thesis, primary sources have been used extensively. These sources include the works of al-Jilani, his contemporaries and biographers.

The study begins with the conception and foundation of Islamic da'wah, there follows an historical account beginning with the conditions of the Muslim community in the time of al-Jilani and a biographical study of him which leads to the investigation of his doctrinal ideas on mystical teaching based on his book *Futuh al-Ghayb* and other works of him. These ideas then become the framework of his mystical views as he applies them in his activities in da'wah.

A considerable number of Qur'anic quotations appear in the text; the verses quoted appear in translation. The references and translations are given in footnotes. I refer to many translations of the Qu'ran such as A. Yusof Ali. *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation, Commentary*. USA: 1983; S.Abu A'la Maududi: *The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Brief Notes with text*. Islamic Publications (pvt) Ltd. Lahore Pakistan: 1987; and others.

This present study is limited to al-Jilani's contribution in the field of sufism and da'wah. It is



limited to his *tariqah* (the Qadiri Order) in his time in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The study does not discuss the role of the Qadiri Order after the death of al-Jilani up to the present time. Nevertheless a brief account of the development of the Qadiri Order up to date is given in an appendix.

However, for the purpose of discussion and intensive understanding in the field of Islamic da'wah, the general conceptual and methodological aspects of Islamic da'wah is also made in the first chapter.

The data used in this study is limited to the library reseach only and not field research.



CHAPTER I  
THE DEFINITION, CONCEPTION AND  
FOUNDATIONS OF ISLAMIC DA'WAH (MISSION).

1. THE DEFINITION OF THE TERM "DA'WAH" AND "ISLAM"

A. THE TERM "DA'WAH"

The term "da'wah" is used in many contexts. It more specifically covers the following range of meanings:

The word *da'wah* (plural *da'awat*) is a noun derived from the verb *da'a*. Its infinitive noun or verbal noun (*masdar*) is *du'a* and *da'wa*, literally meaning, desire for God (*raghbah ila Allah*),<sup>1</sup> the Qur'an says: "And if My servants ask you, O Prophet, concerning Me tell them that I am quite near to them. I hear and answer the prayer of the suppliant, when he calls Me (*idha da'ani*)"<sup>2</sup>

It can mean an appeal for aid or call for help (*istighathah*), the Qur'an says: "And you may call (*wad'u*) to your assistance whomsoever (of your deities) you can except Allah, if you be right".<sup>3</sup> It can also mean an appeal to God or prayer, the Qur'an says: "And when a wave (in the sea) covers them like the mountains, they appeal to Allah making their faith pure for Him alone".<sup>4</sup> Lastly, the word can also be applied to mean an invitation to a meal (*walimah*).<sup>5</sup>

According to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* the word "da'wah" in the politico-religious sense means invitation to adopt the cause of some individual or family claiming the right to leadership over the Muslims. It entails the aim of founding or restoring an ideal theocratic state based on monotheism. The organization responsible for attracting the greatest possible number of people to this idea and forgiving power to their representatives, as well as propaganda for this purpose, is thus called *da'wah* which can often be translated as mission or propaganda. The *da'wah* can be interpreted as one of the means of founding a new empire.<sup>6</sup> A good example was the Abbasid *da'wah* which was a propaganda for a member of the Prophet's family denoted by the name of *al-Rida min Al Muhammad* (the accepted member of the family of Muhammad). This is the *da'wah Bani al-Abbas* (the Abbasid *da'wah*).<sup>7</sup>

Thus, from the above facts, the word *da'wah* can also mean propaganda, regardless of the exact intention the propagandists. However present day Muslim Authors use the word *da'wah* to mean by "calling or invitation to Islam only". As an example, Abd al-Karim Zaidan; the author of the book *Usul al-Da'wah* gives the meaning of *da'wah* as follows:

"By *da'wah* we mean the "call" to Allah, as Allah the Exalted says: "Say: This is my way, I call on Allah with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follow Me",<sup>8</sup> so what is

meant by "call to Allah " is the call to His religion, and that is Islam: "Indeed religion with Allah is Islam"<sup>9</sup> which Muhammad brought from his Lord, praised and exalted is He. And Islam is, the object of the da'wah and its reality, and that is in fact the first basic or root of da'wah".<sup>10</sup>

We can conclude that the word "da'wah" in the Arabic language gives a wide meaning, but all these are derived from the primary meaning of call or invitation. However, in Islamic terminology, "da'wah" is an invitation extended to humanity by the prophets. From the Islamic point of view the religion of all the prophets is Islam, and each prophet has his own da'wah. Muhammad's da'wah was the last da'wah among the prophets; it is commonly known as the Islamic da'wah (*al-da'wah al-Islamiyyah*).

By a natural extension of the application of the word da'wah among contemporary Muslims, is denoted also the content of this appeal; the religion of Islam (*din al-Islam*), the message of Islam (*risalah al-Islam*), and the Islamic law (*shari'ah*).<sup>11</sup> So the words da'wah, *din al-Islam*, *risalah al-Islam* and *shari'ah* are often used interchangeably.

Besides the word "da'wah" which was applied to the call to Islam, there are a lot of terms in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* used with the same meaning as the term da'wah or at least in relation to da'wah. Some of these words



are as follows:

Jihad in the way of God (*al-jihad fi sabil Allah*).<sup>12</sup>

Enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong (*al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*)<sup>13</sup>

Warning from the bad news and announcement of the good news (*al-indhar wa al-Tabshir*)<sup>14</sup>

Witness before mankind (*al-shahadah 'ala al-nas*)<sup>15</sup>

Reformation (*al-Islah*)<sup>16</sup>

Good counsel (*al-nush*)<sup>17</sup>

Reminder (*al-tadhkir*)<sup>18</sup>

Conveyance (*al-Tabligh*)<sup>19</sup>

Presentation of the Religion (*izhar al-din*)<sup>20</sup>

Establishment of the Religion (*iqamah al-din*)<sup>21</sup>

Exaltation of the Word of God (*i'la' kalimah Allah*)<sup>22</sup>

Exhortation one another with truth (*al-tawasi bi al-haq*).<sup>23</sup>

Cooperation in the godliness (*al-Ta'awun 'ala al-birr*).<sup>24</sup>

## B. THE TERM "ISLAM"

According to the Arabic dictionaries, the term "islam" is the infinitive noun or verbal noun (*masdar*), derived from the fourth form of the root (*salima*), literally meaning, submission, total surrender (to God).<sup>25</sup>

To know more closely the definition and conception of Islam, it is better to refer to the use of this word in the Qu'ran and the *Sunnah*.

(I) In the Qur'anic verses the word "islam" is used only eight times whereas the word "muslim" and the plural "muslimun", as well as the verb "aslama" are used very often throughout the chapters (*surahs*) in the Qur'an.<sup>26</sup> These words have the two meanings which merge into one another, "surrender to God" which is an inner action, and "practice of Islam" which is an adherence to the message of the Prophet.

Among the many usages of the word "Islam" in the Qur'an are the following:

The use the word "Islam" with the meaning of its

quality of interiority:

"Whomsoever God desires to guide, he expands his breast to Islam".<sup>27</sup>

"Even as he is being invited to Islam, and God guides not those who do wrong".<sup>28</sup>

"Is one whose heart, God has opened to Islam so that he has received enlightenment from God".<sup>29</sup>

The usages of the word "*Islam*" with the meaning of the connection between *islam* and religion (*din*):

"Today, I have perfected your religion (*din*) for you; I have completed my blessing upon you; I have approved *islam* for your religion".<sup>30</sup>

"The religion with Allah is Islam".<sup>31</sup>

"If anyone desires a religion other than Islam it will not be accepted from him, and he will be a loser in the hereafter".<sup>32</sup>

The use of the word "*Islam*" with the meaning of "return to God" (*Tawbah*), a conversion. The Qur'an speaks of "conversion to islam" to condemn the unbelief (*Kafir*) as Allah says:

"They swear by Allah that they said nothing (wrong), yet they did say the word of disbelief, and did disbelieve after their surrender (to Allah) if they repent it will be better for them".<sup>33</sup>

"They make it a favour to you (Muhammad) that they have accepted Islam. Say to them [Do not make your Islam as a favour to me, but rather Allah has done you a favour that he has guided you to the faith]".<sup>34</sup>

A very important verse makes a clear distinction between *islam* and *iman*, the Qur'an says,

"The Bedouins say, "we believe" say, you do not believe, but rather say: "we surrender (*aslamna*)". Faith has not entered into your heart".<sup>35</sup>

(II) In the collection of *hadiths*, the word "*islam*" means "submission to God, expressed by deeds, it is therefore the prescribed acts of worship, including a feeling of great admiration and love of God, but also the good deeds (*khayrat*)". Thus by way of example, in Bukhari (*hadith* of Gabriel), after defining *iman* by its content (to belief in God, in His angels, in His books in the prophets, in the hereafter), The Prophet in reply to question "What is *islam*? replies: "*islam* is to adore God



without associating anything with Him, to observe the ritual prayer (*salah*), to pay *zakah*, to fast during month of *Ramadan*.)<sup>36</sup>

The *Musnad* of Ibn Hanbal states, "Islam is external faith belongs to the heart". The act of "surrender to God" is therefore expressed by holding fast to the ritual observances and social behaviour prescribed by the religious law. God alone judge men's hearts, and hence the reality of faith; the judgement of human being may concern itself with *islam*.<sup>37</sup>

From the above explanations, it is quite clear that the word *Islam* means submission, obedience and surrender to Allah and giving oneself in God's way. It is like giving one's liberty and initiative to Allah. To bow one's head to the commandments of God is *Islam*. Thus, a Muslim is one who submits his will and worth to God. It means that one has accepted the commandments of God as his guidelines. These comandments of God are in the form of his book (*Qur'an*) and the Prophet (*Sunnah*). One who follows these guidelines in every walk of life is a real Muslim. It means that he has surrendered totally to the will of Allah.

Let me conlude now the definition of *Islam* according to the use of this word in the *Quran* and the *Sunnah*; it means obedience to God and rejection of every law, faith

and order which comes into conflict with the guidelines set by God. This concept has been clearly defined by The Qur'an in these words: "Those who do not give a ruling (decision) according to God's Message are the people who are non-believers".<sup>38</sup> The word ruling (decision) do not stand here for some judicial proceeding only, but, rather, they stand for even the smallest decision which a person makes in his day to day life.

Nevertheless, in European languages, it has become customary to speak of Islam to denote the whole body of Muslim people, countries, and states, in their socio-cultural or political as well as in their religious sphere.<sup>39</sup>

This explanation of Islam according to the Western point of view is clearly very wide because it includes everything which connected and related with Muslims. It is better to distinguish between Islamic and Muslim in the present time because so many Muslims do not practice Islam in their daily lives, and many of them are far away from Islam. Thus, the originality of Islam is based on the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, and not based on the practice of muslim people.

At the present time, we find Muslim authors like Muhammad Abduh defines "The religion of Islam or Islam is the religion brought by Muhammad".<sup>40</sup> And the whole final

section of the *Risalah* constantly speaks in this sense of Islam, its principles, its spirit and its extension in the world.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, Islam is defined, according to this interpretation as a religion brought by Prophet Muhammad it contains three aspects or grades: faith in God (*iman*), surrender to God (*islam*) godliness (*ihsan*).<sup>42</sup>

*Iman* or faith is the foundation of the building of Islam. Upon it is built the structure of *islam* (submission to God), and then *ihsan*. Without *iman*, none of the other two can exist. Similarly, weak *iman* means that the upper structure, even if it exists, will be weak. And a limited *iman* means limited *islam* and *ihsan*. In fact, a weak and limited faith (*iman*) cannot support any true super structure at all.

## 2. THE CONCEPTION OF ISLAMIC DA'WAH

In this section, I will try to expound the concept of Islamic da'wah in more detail, based upon two sources: the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Before I go any further, I want to address myself to three questions which are related to da'wah: A. What is the nature of Islamic da'wah?. B. What is the motive of Islamic da'wah, or to put it very simply why da'wah?. C. And the practice of da'wah raises the question: what form should Islamic da'wah take?, or how



da'wah?. The question of "how da'wah?" is of course closely related to the question "why da'wah?".

#### A. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF ISLAMIC DA'WAH?

The what of Islamic da'wah means as denoted before<sup>43</sup> "an invitation extended to humanity by Prophet Muhammad to believe in Islam". From the definition of Islamic da'wah we can understand that the word "invitation" is including admission, inviting, request, and call to come to Islam as faith and as away of life, as *al-din*. This is an invitation to all human beings and the invitation becomes more pressing for those who respond to this call, for they have to engage themselves in an unceasing struggle to transform their own lives, individual and social, in accordance with this code of guidance (*shari'ah*).<sup>44</sup> It is addressed to the "self" as well as to the society, to the black as well as to the white, to the Muslim as well as to the non-Muslim. It cannot be restricted to any race, colour, community or religion.<sup>45</sup>

Da'wah is the most obvious *Sunnah* of the Prophet. The Qur'an says: "O messenger! deliver that which has been sent down to you from your Lord. If you do not, you will not have delivered His message. God will protect you from men"<sup>46</sup>

It should be mentioned here that the invitation is

not only to a new faith (*iman*), a new out look in life, but also to a new order, the Islamic way of life. The Prophet Muhammad represents the last expression of Islam. before him all prophets of God fulfilled this function of invitation (*da'wah*). The Qur'an contains the word of God as it was revealed to the Prophet and his *Sunnah* provides the living model which Muslims try to follow and to approximate.<sup>47</sup>

The word "*al-din*" (a faith and a way of life) in Arabic applies to many meanings such as honour, state rule, monarchy, authority ect. It can also mean obedience, slavery and servitude. It can also mean accountability, to give rulings, to punish and to reward. This multifarious set of meanings denotes the richness of the Arabic language as well as the depth and magnitude of the word "*al-din*".<sup>48</sup> In the Qur'an the word *al-din* has been used in several senses. But the highest meaning is clear in the verse: "For Allah, the real *al-din* is Islam only".<sup>49</sup> This means God has authorized that only Islam is the only creed, faith or religion to be followed.<sup>50</sup>

After having accepted that Allah is the Ultimate Ruler and also that the Prophet is His deputy with powers conferred on him by the Qur'an, the person has entered the gates of Allah's "*din*". Now to follow this *din*, the Muslim should take the *shari'ah* as his guidance in daily life. God's will is not something mysterious or unknown.

It is revealed in the code for human conduct, the law, the *shari'ah*. Islam acknowledges no separation between the religious and the secular, the realm of Caesar and realm of God. It is a complete religion, it is a *din*, a complete way of life.<sup>51</sup>

Thus, the *shari'ah* is a code planned by God as a way for acting on the *din*. And this has been revealed by God through His Prophet. The Prophet told people what is good and what is bad, how to pray and worship, how to take the right path, how to be pure and clean, how to distinguish between right and wrong. In short, he laid down the code of life in accordance with Divine Law.<sup>52</sup>

Another point to make here is that the faith in God is one from the beginning to the end of life on earth, but the codes (*shari'ah*) have changed. Codes came and went, because faith belongs to Allah and the code to the prophets. Prophets Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Solomon had the same faith, but their codes were different according to the times and their situations and conditions.<sup>53</sup>

#### B. WHAT IS THE MOTIVE OF ISLAMIC DA'WAH OR WHY DA'WAH?

Humanity, according to Islam, does not need to know the person of God, but has need of Divine guidance (*hidayah*). The Qur'an says: "Show us the straight way".<sup>54</sup>



This *hidayah* is very important to him as a guidance to know the commandments of God and to practise this in his deeds. Prophet Muhammad is the last prophet and messenger to mankind, who came to close the cycle of prophecy, so how does the mechanism for guidance operate after him?. The Islamic position is ensured first by preservation of the Divine guidance in its pure and pristine form in the Qur'an and secondly by making the Muslim *ummah*,<sup>55</sup> every Muslim and all Muslim the witness of Truth before mankind in the same way as the Prophet was a witness of the Truth unto them.<sup>56</sup>

The Muslims have also been enjoined in a number of places in the Qur'an as also by the Prophet. The Qur'an says: "There should always be among you some people who invite to what is good and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong".<sup>57</sup> "Now you are the best community which has been raised up for the guidance of mankind: you enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah."<sup>58</sup>

According to Islam, *da'wah* is an obligation. This task should be performed by every Muslim as an individual and by the whole nation on a collective basis.<sup>59</sup> This was the call to Islam addressed by all the prophets to the people and they were ordered to convey this message of Islam to mankind; as Allah says to Prophet Muhammad, "He had ordained for you that religion which He commanded



unto Noah and that which We inspire in you (Muhammad) and that which We commanded unto Abraham and Moses and Jesus, saying: "Establish the religion and be not divided therein".<sup>60</sup>

After the passing of the Prophets of Allah, their successors were made responsible for the fulfilment of this obligation, as Allah says: "And verily We sent Noah and Abraham and placed prophethood and the scripture among their progeny and among them there is one who goes right, but many of them are evil doers".<sup>61</sup>

In short, the *ummah* of Prophet Muhammad is responsible for the discharge of the duty of da'wah. The Prophet says: "He who sees indecency and has power to change it with the force of his hand, he must change it. But if he has not the power, he must do it by his tongue, and if he has not the power, he must deprive it in his heart, and this is the lowest stage of religious belief".<sup>62</sup>

The above discussion should be enough<sup>63</sup> to help us formulate most of the general principles and ideas of the motive of Islamic da'wah or the why of da'wah?. Da'wah is seen as the personal duty of every individual Muslim, who is called as part of his or her responsibility and obligation in Islam. The evidence is found in a lot of verses in the scripture; the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Da'wah is the fulfilment of those commandments to call mankind unto the way of Allah. Besides, it is the effort by Muslims to enable other men to share and benefit from the teachings of Islam.

#### C. WHAT FORM SHOULD ISLAMIC DA'WAH TAKE OR HOW DA'WAH?

In this section I do not intend to discuss in detail what I shall explain about the methods and the means of da'wah under the topic da'wah methodology.<sup>64</sup> Rather, I shall attempt to formulate in brief the basic conception of the how of the da'wah.

Following the examples which Prophet Muhammad has set in da'wah methodology, one can say that he presented Islam primarily through preaching among the people, and by practising the Islamic teachings in his words and deeds to give people the best example. He taught them by doing himself what he wanted them to do.

Thus, the Prophet's methods and means in da'wah were methods and means of planning, communication, discussion and permission on the one hand, education and purification and exemplary godliness (*qudwah*) in lives of the people on the other. The Prophet has ruled out coercion by instrument of da'wah. So da'wah is gentle in its methods and means.

### 3. JIHAD, AMR MA'RUF AND NAHY MUNKAR AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH DA'WAH.

The words "jihad", "amr ma'ruf", "nahy munkar" and "da'wah" are often used interchangeably. In the following pages, I will try to explain the concepts of jihad, amr ma'ruf and nahy munkar and their relationship with da'wah. This explanation is very important, especially with regard to jihad; the media have tried to explain the meaning of jihad, but their explanations are misleading from the Islamic point of view. The purpose of this explanation is to clear this misunderstanding.

#### A. JIHAD IN ISLAM

Before we go into further details about jihad in Islam, let us raise the following questions: (I) What is the concept of jihad? (II) How many kinds of jihad? (III) What is the relationship between jihad, war and da'wah?.

##### (I) WHAT IS THE CONCEPT OF JIHAD?

The word "Jihad" is commonly translated into English as "the war" or "the holy war". A. J. Wensinck explanation of the word as war treats the two were synonymous.<sup>65</sup> Further more, "The Encyclopedia of Islam" under the article of "Djihad" explained that "the djihad consists of military action with object of the expansion

of Islam".<sup>66</sup> This statement further suggests that the word jihad meant not only war, but holy war undertaken for the da'wah or propagation of Islam. These two explanations, intentionally or not fail to explain the true meaning of jihad because the word jihad is unique in Islam.

If they were to refer to any ordinary dictionary of Arabic language, or to the Qur'an and the Sunnah for the true meaning of the word, they could avoid the misrepresentation of the meaning of jihad.

The word "jihad" in Arabic is derived from "jahd" or "juhd" literally meaning ability, effort, endeavour, exertion of power. Meanwhile "jihad" and "mujahadah" mean the exerting of one's power and effort.<sup>67</sup> Another explanation of jihad is that the word "jihad" is the infinitive noun of "jahada, yujahidu, jihadan". This signifies the using or exerting of one's utmost power effort, endeavours or ability in contending with an object of disapprobation.<sup>68</sup>

If we refer to the word "jihad" in the Qur'an, we find that jihad is freely used in the context of exerting one's power and ability without implying war or aggression. In the text of the Qur'an there is this verse "and those who strive hard (jahadu) for us, we will certainly guide them to our ways and Allah is surely with



those who do right".<sup>69</sup>

As we have mentioned before the Arabic word (*jahadu*) is derived from *jihad* or *mujahadah*; here, indeed, the word *jihad* means "all that man can do to strive in the cause of Allah. As soon as he does that with might and main, with patience and endurance, with constancy and determination, the Light and Mercy of Allah are his reward". The *jihad* in this case is the spiritual striving to attain nearness to Allah and gain His mercy and the reward is Allah's guidance.

Among the later revelations, we may mention *al-Nahl*, the 16th chapter (*surah*) "Then surely the Lord, with respect to those who flee after they are persecuted, then struggle hard (*jahadu*) and are patient (*sabaru*), surely the Lord after that is Protecting, Merciful".<sup>70</sup>

Another two more examples, that may be quoted regarding the use of the word *jihad* are in the Mecca revelations, Firstly, "And strive hard (*jahidu*) for Allah with due striving (*jihad*).<sup>71</sup> And in the other "So obey not the unbelievers and strive (*jahid*) against them a mighty striving (*jihad-an*) with it".<sup>72</sup>

In both these cases, the carrying out of a *jihad* is clearly enjoined, but in the first case it is a *jihad* to attain nearness to God, and in the secondly, "it is a

jihad which is to be carried out against the unbelievers, but a jihad not of the sword, but of the Qur'an.

Even the word jihad in the Traditions is not used exclusively for fighting. For example, pilgrimage (*hajj*) is called a jihad, as the Prophet said, "The *hajj* is the most excellent of all jihads".<sup>73</sup> Al-Bukhari in his book of *jihad* has several chapters speaking of simple invitation to Islam. For example, the Prophet said, "To pray for the guidance of the polytheists so as to develop relations of friendship with them",<sup>74</sup> and in another place "The invitation (to the unbelievers) by the Holy Prophet to Islam and prophethood, and that they may not take for gods others besides Allah".<sup>75</sup>

From the above traditions, it is shown that up to the time of Bukhari, the word jihad was used in its wider sense as it is used in the Qur'an. Invitation to Islam being looked upon as jihad, as well as the service to Islam in any other form.

Thus, Islam correctly rejected the word "war" (*harb*) and other Arabic words bearing the same meaning i.e. *qital* and *muqatalah* and used the word *jihad*.

Indeed, if we look back to the life of the Prophet and Companions, we can easily find the meaning to the concept of jihad by their words and deeds because they

lead a life which revolved around the concept of jihad. In Mecca, they strove hard to control their evil desires, improved their understanding of Islam and applied it by their words and deeds and then they strove hard in propagating the message. After they emigrated to Medina, their striving eventually involved the taking up of arms and fighting in the way of Islam. All of these were undertaken with full dedication. Their sacrifice and martyrdom were the perfect examples of jihad.

So let me raise this question, what is the concept of jihad in Islam?. According to the Islamic point of view, which is based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, jihad means to strive to the utmost to gain and achieve one's goal. Jihad does not only revolve around aspect of war and terror, but rather represents a total effort to bring about Islamic revival.

Thus, we can conclude that any effort made according to the *shari'ah* which satisfies this definition, constitutes jihad. Its meaning covers efforts to improve oneself and even to become a better Muslim is also a jihad. So the word jihad should be understood in this comprehensive sense which applies more widely to all Muslims in general in various situations and in many different forms.

As had been understood, the examples of jihad in the

present Muslim world are very far away from the ideal of Islam. Islam is not being practised completely, whereas the Muslims are all aware of their obligation to implement its commands. So it is upon every Muslim to do jihad to raise the dignity of Islam and bring it back into practise.

From the above discussion and explanation, we can see clearly that the concept of jihad is indeed very wide.

#### (II) HOW MANY KINDS OF JIHAD?

According to Ibn al-Qayyim in his book *Zad al-Ma'ad* there are 13 kinds of jihad which can be divided into four main categories: jihad against self (*al-nafs*), jihad against satan (*al-shaytan*), jihad against unbelievers (*al-kafirs*),<sup>76</sup> and jihad against hypocrites (*al-munafiqs*). An almost similar classification of jihad was also noted by al-Asqalani in his book *Fath al-Bari*,<sup>77</sup> but his classification of jihad against hypocrites was more general and he instead termed it as jihad against the disobedient (*fasiqs*). Another writer al-Ra'ghib in his book "*al-Mufradat*" explained that jihad is of three kinds, the carrying on of struggle against a visible enemy, against the devil and against oneself (*al-nafs*).<sup>78</sup>

The above classification of jihad shows that the



enemies of believers can be divided into two: the visible enemies and invisible enemies. The visible enemies are unbelievers and the disobedient, while the invisible are oneself and the satan. So, in the following pages, we are going to describe the various classifications of jihad in brief.

#### a. Jihad Against Self (*al-nafs*)

This jihad is an effort directed upon oneself for the attainment of moral and spiritual purification (*tazkiyah*), so that he strives to purify himself from evil desires and inclinations, and to turn away from disobedience, and then to give guidance to follow the commandments of God.

This kind of jihad is one of the most difficult for the Muslims because evil desires and inclinations are always in conflict with the requirements of faith and commandments of God. The Prophet said: "The worst of your enemies is yourself within you",<sup>79</sup> and the Qur'an said about the story of Prophet Joseph, "And yet, I am not trying to absolve myself, for verily, man's inner self does incite (him) to evil".<sup>80</sup>

Thus, jihad against oneself is the first rank of all the jihads, it is put before jihad against the enemies; the Prophet called this jihad as "the greatest jihad", he

said to a group of people who had just return from a battle, "you all came from good advent; you all came from the the lesser jihad "*jihad asghir*" to the greatest jihad "*jihad akhbar*". The Companions asked him, O messenger of God! "what is the greatest jihad?, the Prophet said: it is jihad against oneself "*al-nafs*".<sup>81</sup> Also it was narrated that the Prophet said: "The warrior (*mujahid*) is a person who fought against himself and the emigrant (*muhajir*) is a person who emigrated from the thing which is forbidden by God".<sup>82</sup>

This kind of jihad was described as the greatest jihad by the Prophet because of the difficulty in carrying out the struggle against oneself (*al-nafs*) in everyday life as it needs constant effort all of the time, whereas the struggle against visible enemies is not very often, probably at some particular times only. From another point of view, the muslim could never defeat his enemy unless he overcomes himself first.

One of the many kinds of jihad against oneself is an effort directed upon oneself to improve one understanding of the Islamic teachings and to put them into practice and then upon attaining the correct understanding and practise, to move to impart this to other people (*da'wah*).<sup>83</sup> This kind of jihad was mentioned in the Qur'an: "And strive hard in God's cause with all the striving that is due to Him",<sup>84</sup> and in another verse the

Qur'an said: "And those who strive in Our (cause) We will certainly guide them to Our paths".<sup>85</sup>

b. Jihad Against Satan (*al-shaytan*)

Every effort must be made by all Muslims to fight off the satanic temptations which always go against the requirements of faith and God's commandments. It is a fact that Satan invites people to the way of Hell. The Qur'an said: "Indeed, Satan is your enemy; therefore, you also should treat him as your enemy. He is inviting his followers towards his way so that they may join the dwellers of Hell".<sup>86</sup>

Satan has always tried to lead astray Muslims from the correct path except the pious Muslim. The Qur'an narrates the saying of the Satan: "By your Honour! I shall certainly lead them astray except those of Your servants whom You have chosen".<sup>87</sup> And in another verse the Qur'an narrates: "Iblis replied, "Lord because You have beguiled me, I will create allurements for them and seduce them except those of the servants whom You have chosen for Yourself from amongst them".<sup>88</sup>

From the above verses of the Qur'an, it is clear that Satan invites people to falsehood and commands them to do evil and cause calamity. His invitation is just a lie and untruth; the Qur'an says: "O believers, do not

follow in Satan's footsteps, for he will incite to indecency and wickedness any who will follow him".<sup>89</sup>

Therefore the jihad against Satan is a duty of every muslim; each individual must fight against these satanic temptations which invite people to falsehood, evil and calamity. Allah taught the Muslims to take refuge in God from the promptings of Satan, "And pray, "Lord, I seek refuge in you from the prompyings of the satans; more than that; I seek refuge in you, my Lord, even from their coming near me".<sup>90</sup>

#### c. Jihad Against the Disobedient (*fasiqs*)

Muslims must strive to put under control the efforts of the hypocrites and the disobedient. This is done in several ways, including debates or even by physical means if he has the capability to do so within his jurisdiction.<sup>91</sup> The Prophet said: "He who sees indecency and has power to change it with the force of his hand, he must change it. But if he has not the power, he must do it with his tongue, and if he has not the power, he must deprive it in his heart and this is the lowest stage of religious belief".<sup>92</sup>

#### d. Jihad Against Unbelievers (*kafirs*)

Muslims must strive against unbelievers. This



involves several means including debates, the use of one's possessions and even risking life;<sup>93</sup> as the Qur'an said, "And to encounter them, provide whatever force and trained ever-ready horses you can afford whereby you may strike terror into the enemies of Allah and your enemies as well and others besides them whom you do not know but whom Allah knows. The reward of whatever you expend in the way of Allah shall be repaid to you in full. and you shall not be wronged in any way".<sup>94</sup> Muslims are asked by Allah in this verse always to be in readiness with the necessary military equipment and an organised army, so that they may take military action immediately when required.

Another verse of the Qur'an told Muslims to do this jihad, "And exert your utmost in Allah's way with your possessions and your lives".<sup>95</sup> The Prophet also told Muslim to do this jihad in several means including tongue (Da'wah). "Exert your utmost against unbelievers with your possessions, your lives and your tongues".<sup>96</sup>

Thus, from the above explanation of the various classification of jihad, jihad is all encompassing. It is very comprehensive, because there are many kinds of jihad; jihad against self, Satan, the disobedient and unbelievers. And in several means including jihad with possessions, lives, tongues and hearts.

### (III) WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN

#### JIHAD, WAR AND DA'WAH?

It is an accepted fact that permission to fight against unbelievers was given to the Muslims in the Medina period. When they reached Medina and had a communal identity, they had to take up military action in self-defence. This struggle also came under the name of jihad; but even in the Medina verses of the Qur'an, the word is used in the wider sense of a struggle carried out by words or deeds of any kinds.

On the other hand, Islam is against aggression; permission is given for war only in self-defence and under well defined requirements and justification. If it becomes necessary, it must be pursued with vigour. And it can be undertaken, only to restore peace and the freedom of the worshipper. In any case strict limits must not be transgressed; women, children, old and infirm persons should not be molested nor trees and crops be cut down, nor peace objected to when the enemy comes to terms.

Thus, war in Islam is allowed provided there is a good reason for it. War is distasteful and Islam preserves life and sacredness, so war is only allowed under strict conditions and as a last resort to defend Islam against an attack of its enemies. War is only waged against the combatants.<sup>97</sup> Islamic history is witness to this. During the time of the Prophet and his Companions

this concept of war was closely adhered to.

Now, it is better to raise this question, why was there so much war between Muslims and unbelievers in the time of the Prophet and his companions?.

The sword was taken up to annihilate the Muslim community or to compel it to return to unbelief. That was the challenge thrown at them, and the Prophet had to meet it. The Qur'an bears the clearest testimony to it, "Permission (to fight) is given to those on whom war is made, because they are oppressed. And surely Allah is able to assist them. Those who are driven from their homes without a just cause except that they say: "Our Lord is Allah".<sup>98</sup> This permission was given to people upon whom war was made by their enemies (*Yuqataluna*); and it was not a permission to make war against people in general, but only against people who made war on them.

The second verse giving to the Muslims permission to fight, "And fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, and be not aggressive ; surely Allah loves not the aggressors".<sup>99</sup> In this verse of the Qur'an, the Muslims shall not be the first to attack, they can fight but only against those who attack them first, aggression was expressly prohibited. So Islam is against aggression; permission is given for war only in self-defence.

A good example is that of the Prophet Muhammad with his small group of followers who braved the whole of Arabia in the midst of idol worshippers; these had taken up sword to annihilate the Muslims for the sole reason that they were believers in the Unity and Oneness of God. Historical facts indicate that Islam spread in the peninsula of Arabia after the entrance of Mecca, without any bloodshed, and only on the basis of da'wah .

The da'wah of the Prophet was to proclaim the Oneness of God<sup>100</sup> and the unity of the mankind, and to guide humanity to the path of virtue and righteousness.<sup>101</sup> In conveying his message to mankind, the Prophet was not to exercise any compulsion. The Qur'an states that "There is no compulsion in religion, right has become distinct from error".<sup>102</sup> This verse of the Qur'an is quite clear that there is no compulsion in religion, and the reason is mentioned in the following verse that the right course is clearly distinct from the wrong one. Furthermore compulsion is incompatible with religion, because religion depends on faith and will, and these would be meaningless, if approached by force .

Another question we could raise about war and da'wah concerns the words "in the way of God" (*fi sabil Allah*) which follows the jihad in the Qur'an. The question is whether there is conversion of non-Muslim by force to Islam?.



The answer to the above question probably lies in the literal translation of the Arabic word "*fi sabil Allah*" into English with "in the way of God or the cause of God". I think this translation has misled people into believing that jihad in the way of God, enjoined conversion of non-Muslims by force to Islam. So we do have a clear misconception here regarding the word "jihad" in Islam because jihad is not fighting against non-Muslims with the object of forcing them to become Muslims.

And also the explanation of jihad among the jurists confused the people further, because their explanation of jihad has lost its original wider significance and is limited to the narrower sense of fighting (*qital*). The books of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) classified in detail the subjects of fighting (*qital*) But the subjects of da'wah or invitation of Islam, though a primary meaning of the word jihad, are very hard to find in these books. So the jurists who had to deal with fighting (*qital*), therefore, used the word jihad as synonymous with *qital*; the meaning of the word jihad in jurisprudence is only applied to and not turned away from fighting. Thus, the true meaning of jihad is lost.

The da'wah is no doubt very important in Islam, to strive hard in da'wah is to be creative, to show

initiative, to be able to present Islam in its true form, so people can choose between right and wrong, truth and falsehood. The da'wah is a religious duty of every Muslim, but "the spread of Islam by force" is rejected by the Qur'an. But the Qur'an had given protection to the idolators who asked for it; "And if anyone of the idolaters seek protection by you, protect him till he hears the word of Allah, then convey him to his place of safety. This is because they are a people who know not".<sup>103</sup>

On the other hand, peace is recommended, even in the middle of a war if the enemy wanted it. "And if they incline to peace incline you also to it and trust in Allah; surely He is the Hearer, the Knower. And if they intend to deceive you then surely Allah is sufficient for you".<sup>104</sup>

Thus, the order contained in these verses to make peace with the idolaters, if they desired, combined with the practice of the Prophet are clear proof that the theory of preaching Islam by sword is pure myth so far as the Qur'an is concerned because Islam looks upon life as sacred. Its preservation is a priority. Islam hates the desecration of anything even animals and plants. But Islam also treasures justice. Unjust deeds are distasteful.<sup>105</sup>

B. AMR MA'RUF AND NAHY MUNKAR (ENJOINING THE RIGHT AND FORBIDDING THE WRONG)

Generally, enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong (*amr ma'ruf* and *nahy munkar*) is a methodology of da'wah among Muslim. This sort of da'wah is based on the saying of the Prophet. "He who sees indecency and has power to change it with the force of his hand, he must change it. But if he has not the power, he must do it with his tongue, and if he has not the power, he must deprive it in his heart and this is the lowest stage of religious belief".<sup>106</sup> Here the Prophet has used the word (*taghyir*) which means to change disobedience into submission and goodness as an obligation.

It is an accepted fact that the word da'wah includes "*amr ma'ruf* and "*nahy munkar*" because *amr ma'ruf* is a call or invitation to good deed and to stick with it, while *nahy munkar* is a call or invitation to keep away from the evil, mischief, calamity and so on. Both of these are a call or invitation to good deeds by doing (affirmative) and abandoning (passive). Thus "*amr ma'ruf* and "*nahy munkar*" are very often use interchangeably, but here we would like to include *amr ma'ruf* and *nahy munkar* in the term "da'wah" as a matter of methodology of da'wah and to apply among Muslims only. So we can define *amr ma'ruf* and *nahy munkar* as "The activity of adaptation to or application of Islam among the Muslims and the encouragement of Muslims to obey the

Islamic teachings without deviation and crookedness".<sup>107</sup>



#### 4. FOUNDATIONS OF DA'WAH

##### A. DA'I (ISLAMIC MISSIONARY)

Now I will discuss the term "da'i". But before taking up this point, there is a need to find an answer to these important questions: (I) What is man in the universe?. (II) How can he give meaning to his life or what role has he to play?. (III) Lastly, what are the characteristics of the da'is?. The best way to answer these questions lies in studying various theories about the creation, the origin of mankind and the universe, but because of the limitations of space, it is not possible to go into detail, therefore, let me concentrate on only the Islamic point of view.

##### (I) WHAT IS MAN IN THE UNIVERSE?

Man according to the Islamic point of view is a dualistic creature. Man is not born by coincidence, but is created by Allah. He is a being composed of soul and body. His body is a physical being and made of matter or clay. Allah says: "We created man from sounding clay, from mud moulded into shape".<sup>108</sup> There are three Qur'anic references which refer to the source of man's creation. They are as follows:

Firstly, "dried clay" (*salsal kal fakhar*) the Qur'an

says: "He created man from dry, rotten clay like the potter's".<sup>109</sup> Secondly, "black mud" or "odorous earth" (*hama' in masnun*). The Qur'an says: "We created man from dried clay of black mud or odorous earth".<sup>110</sup> And lastly, from "simple earth" (*teen*). The Qur'an says: "We created man from an essence of simple clay".<sup>111</sup>

His soul belongs to the spiritual order partaking as it were, of the Divine spirit. Allah says: "when I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit".<sup>112</sup> As a result, the soul belongs to a higher order than that of body which depends upon it for its life and motion. In other words, man at one pole follows meanness, sunk in mud. But other dimension of man wants to grow and reach the highest possible level, that is the spirit of God.<sup>113</sup>

Man in Islam is born pure, potentially perfect and "in the best structure".<sup>114</sup> He possesses intelligence, will, speech, morality, faith and animal instinct. In other words, man is born with the will of Allah. It is said in the Qur'an: "Behold, your Lord said to the angel, I will create a vicegerent on earth",<sup>115</sup> "And He taught Adam the nature of all things",<sup>116</sup> "And behold, We said to the angels: "Bow down to Adam, and they bowed down, not so *Iblis*".<sup>117</sup>

In summing up the discussion one comes to the

conclusion that man is a superior creature of Allah. He is appointed his "vicegerent" in this world. He is given the delegated power to work in this world for the progress and welfare of humanity.

## (II) WHAT ROLE HAS HE TO PLAY

In spite of the perfection of mankind, his greatest weakness is forgetfulness (*nisyan*) or negligence (*ghaflah*). Allah says: "We had already beforehand taken the covenant of Adam, but he forgot and We found on his part no firm resolve".<sup>118</sup> Because of this weakness of mankind, God had sent His message through His Prophets to guide people to the righteous path, And Prophet Muhammad was the last and seal of the prophethood. Allah says: "Today I have perfected your faith (religion) for you and have completed My bounty upon you".<sup>119</sup>

After the death of Prophet Muhammad, the responsibility of da'wah is to be shouldered by Muslims till the Day of Judgement. Allah says: "Say, this is my way, I do invite unto God, I and whoever follow me".<sup>120</sup>

Thus, a da'i is one who invites others to Islam. In other words, the individual undertaking the responsibility of da'wah is called a da'i. So the word da'i includes every person who is involved in striving to build man's relationship with God on the principles of

God's sovereignty, and acknowledgement of the authority of the Prophet as the source of guidance.<sup>121</sup>

From the above explanation of the word "da'i", we know that a da'i's duty is to invite people to come to Allah; towards worshipping and serving Him alone. It could be translated into English as Islamic missionary or da'wah worker; caller; preacher and so on. Allah says: "You are the best community, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong and believing in God".<sup>122</sup> In this verse, the followers of the Prophet are being reminded that they have been appointed to the leadership of the world. Muslims have been appointed to that office because they possess those moral qualities and believe that there is no God other than Allah, and to put into practice the implication of this belief. They should, therefore, understand the responsibilities of the work which has been entrusted to them.<sup>123</sup>

### (III) WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF DA' I?

The person who has the responsibility of da'wah is first a human being. Being an Islamic missionary does not change that human nature. The Prophet himself, the model of da'i, declared he was a human being. But he excelled by controlling his human desires.



The charge of da'wah does not by itself make the da'i a better person. What makes a da'i better is his possession of noble qualities. We find these noble qualities in its perfection in the personality of Prophet Muhammad, and at its best in his companions.

According to Abu al-A'la Maududi,<sup>124</sup> Islamic morals are based on basic human morals. The basic human morals include all those qualities that form the basis of man's existence as a moral being. These contain all the qualities necessary for man's success in this world whether he works for good or evil, whether or not a man believes in God, revelation, prophethood or the Day of Judgement; whether or not he has purity of soul and good intentions does not come into this question. That is to say, if a man is able to be effective, he should possess the attributes of strength of will, power of decision, ambition and determination, courage, preparedness and diligence, a love for his goal, and readiness to make sacrifices for it, whatever be the demands in time, money or even his own life. Similarly, other essential attributes are caution and vigilance, far-sightedness and prudence, insight and capacity to adopt and make creative responses to the different situations, discipline and restraint, the ability to attract, plan, organise and maintain support and co-operation from others, etc.. The most desirable qualities are: self-control, generosity, sympathy, a sense of justice, breadth of vision,

truthfulness, trustworthiness, integrity, respect for pledges and commitments, fair-mindedness, moderation, courtesy, purity and discipline.

The work of da'wah is not easy, so there needs to be among Muslims a group which is gifted with an ability for such work. Allah says: "There should be among you a group of people calling (people) to good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is hateful. They are the ones to attain success".<sup>125</sup>

As is clearly enough from the verse this is another group of the Islamic missionaries among the Muslims who have the virtues of both scholarship and godliness. They might be either wholly or part time Islamic missionaries devoted to this task of conveying the message of Islam to mankind and they must possess special characteristics in order to fulfill their duties in Islamic da'wah.

#### a. Understanding of Islamic Teaching

The missionaries must understand the Islamic teaching to include the pure understanding of Islam as a comprehensive system of life. Islam is not only a system of beliefs and worship, but it is a comprehensive guide covering all aspects of life. As well the missionaries must themselves seek guidance from the Qur'an and the

Sunnah. One must understand the principles of the Arabic Language, in order to gain a clear picture of Islam, its law, objective and so on. If they understand it well then they can communicate it to the people. They should give time to memorizing the Qur'an and in particular the most important chapters (*surahs*) or verses (*ayahs*) of the Qur'an such as *surah al-Fatihah*. Moreover, they should have the ability to understand the detailed commandments of *shari'ah*, as well as being able to avoid every innovation in the religion (*bid'ah*) which is introduced in Islam due to people's personal desire with no basis in *shari'ah*.<sup>126</sup> This level of understanding of missionaries requires that there exist well-planned programmes and institutions to prepare them.

#### **b. Correct Motivation and Sincerity**

The correct motivation (*niyyah*) is very important to Islamic missionaries, because it gives courage, determination and patience. Without motivation no good deed can reach its conclusion. The missionaries should strongly feel that they must take the message of propagating of Islam to all mankind who do not know it or have lost the way. They will not be shaken by the difficulties which might come in the path. Meanwhile sincerity is particularly important in the work of *da'wah*. It means that the sole purpose of the sayings, actions and indeed all activities is in achieving the

pleasure of God.

Abu al-A'la Maududi<sup>127</sup> uses the term "*ta'alluq bi Allah*" (Attachment to Allah) rather than correct motivation and sincerity. Its meaning according to the Qur'an is that a person should live and die for Allah, and his worship and sacrifices should also be meant for Him alone. The Qur'an says: "say O Muhammad! surely my prayer and my sacrifice, my life and my death are all for Allah, the Cherisher of the worlds".<sup>128</sup>

### c. Good Actions and Deeds

Along with calling people to Islam, the Islamic missionaries themselves act according to the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, and they are embodiments of the true faith for others. The Qur'an says about them; "And the believers, men and women, are protectors one of another. They enjoin the right and forbidding the wrong, and they observe regular prayers, practise regular charity and obey Allah and His messenger".<sup>129</sup>

The Islamic missionaries must build ideal personalities. They should have healthy bodies, impeccable manners, mature and balanced thinking, good and lawful (*halal*) means of earning. They should be energetic and progressive. Their daily lives must be well organised. they should build good Muslim families and



should be respected by their family members. They should persuade them to practise Islam in all aspects of family life. They should choose pious wives and they should provide the best Islamic education for their children and other relatives. Moreover, in society, they should struggle to spread their message of good and fight against evil. But at the same time, they are polite to their opponents and merciful to people. Their hearts are free from the sentiments of hatred and enmity. On the other hand, they extend forgiveness towards the behaviour of their opponents, Allah says: "Tell those who believe to forgive those who hope not for the days of Allah".<sup>130</sup>

Thus, to put these ideals into practice, every Muslim should develop his or her personality in accordance with the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Allah says: "and say: Work (righteousness): soon will Allah observe your work, and His Prophet, and the believers".<sup>131</sup>

#### d. Struggle and Sacrifice.

The Islamic missionaries should be ready to sacrifice their belongings, time and everything they have for the way of da'wah because any struggle in this world requires sacrifice. The Qur'an says: "Say, "If it be that your fathers, yours sons, your wives or your kindred, the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you fear decline or the dwellings in which you delight are

dearer to you than Allah or His Prophet or the striving in His cause, then wait until Allah brings about His decision; and Allah does not guide the rebellious".<sup>132</sup>

This verse of the Qur'an teaches Islamic missionaries to consider no sacrifice too great in the way of da'wah. They should devote time, spend money, in short everything, for the way of da'wah, especially, being prepared to forsake the love of their parents and relatives and consider their belief and its demands as greater than everything; the hardships in the way of da'wah do not worry them, but they continue their struggle with complete sacrifice of everything; they must be continuously active and march forward toward his objectives. No matter how many months or years the struggle may continue.

#### B. THOSE CALLED TO ISLAM (*MAD'U*)

In this section, I shall attempt to highlight those called to Islam (*mad'u*). My discussion of this subject will be based on the two basic sources: the Qur'an and *Sunnah*.

But before I go any further, let me raise a simple question; who are those called to Islam?. To answer this question, it is better to refer to the Qur'an: "O

mankind, I am a Messenger to all of you",<sup>133</sup> and another verses of the Qur'an: "And (O Prophet) We have sent you to all mankind as a bearer of good news and a warner, but most people do not know it".<sup>134</sup> From the two verse of the Qur'an we know that the word mankind refers to all human beings in general without any exception: all mature and intelligent persons are called to accept Islam regardless of their nationalities, races, tribes, several groups, sexes (male or female), classes and so on. We know that among those who believed in the Prophet's da'wah were Arabs like Abu Bakar, Abyssinians like Bilal, Byzantines/Greeks like Suhayb, Persians like Salman; women like Khadijah, children like Ali, the rich like Uthman ibn Affan, the poor like Ammar.<sup>135</sup>

Thus, the call to Allah in general includes everyone, as the Qur'an states: "O Mankind, submit to your Lord, who created you and those who were before you; in this way only you may expect to save yourselves".<sup>136</sup> Since, the word "mankind" (*al-nas*) refers to everyone, it is therefore clear that the call to Islam is directed to all human beings.

#### THE TYPES OF THOSE CALLED TO ISLAM

In any traditional society, people are normally divided into two main categories; the ruler and the ruled. The rulers are those people with authority and

influence who control society. This is the first group of people, that is called to Islam. The Qur'an refers to them as "al-mala'" (chief). The ruled are the common people who normally makes up the majority. This is the second group of people that is called to Islam. If these two groups are responsive to the da'wah and accept Islam, they will form a majority of believers and the society will become an Islamic society. There is another group of people who outwardly give the impression that they accept Islam, but in actual fact they do not. These hypocrites are the third group of people called to Islam. On the other hand, there are those who have accepted Islam as their religion, and believe in the Islamic teachings but their faith is weak which can easily lead them to being disobedient. They are known as the disobedient ('asin plural 'usah) who are the fourth kind of people called to Islam.

It is better now to look more closely into the characteristics of these four types of those called to Islam, as each of them has their own characteristics. Thus a cautious da'i will have to deal with each of them in their own particular way. The success of his message will depend to a large extent on this consideration. If a da'i fails to distinguish these different types of people, it will be difficult for him to make the other accept Islam.



In view of the importance of this problem, in the following pages, I will further highlight the various characteristics of each group.

(I) NOBLE PEOPLE (AL-MALA')

The Qur'an employs the word "al-mala'" in the narratives of the Prophets and their people. According to the commentators of the Qur'an, the word "al-mala'" means noble people, leaders, chieftains and lords.<sup>137</sup> They, therefore are the people with influence and authority in society, and are respected by the people as their leaders and chiefs.

The Qur'an describes the mala' generally as opponents of the Prophets because they opposed the da'wah of the Prophets. The Qur'an gives many examples of their opposition which took many forms, e.g., the following:

The narrative of the prophets' da'wah in general: "It has never happened that we sent a warner to a habitation and its people of means did not say: we disbelieve the message you have brought. They always said: We have more wealth and children than you, and we shall never be punished".<sup>138</sup>

The narrative of Prophet Noah and his people: "We sent Noah to his people, he said: O my people, worship

Allah, you have no deity other than He. I fear lest the chastisement befall you on a dreadful day. The chiefs of his people answered, We clearly see that you are in obvious deviation".<sup>139</sup>

The narrative of the leaders of Quraish: "These people wondered that a warner from among themselves had come to them. The disbelievers began to say, He is a sorcerer, liar. And their chiefs went away, saying, Go and stand firm in the service of your gods; for this thing is being said with a purpose".<sup>140</sup>

Ibn Kathir said that *al-Mala'* in this verse were the leaders of Quraysh who said to their people: "continue with your religion and do not respond to the oneness of God (*tawhid*) which Muhammad was inviting you to".<sup>141</sup>

In the story of the Prophet Muhammad numerous events are narrated about the opposition of the Quraysh's leaders and other Arab tribes to the da'wah of the Prophet. For example, it is narrated that once, the Prophet went to meet the many Arab tribes around Mecca calling them to believe in the oneness of God. But his uncle, Abu Lahab who was one of Quraysh's leader followed him and said to the people: ".....Do not obey him and do not listen to him".<sup>142</sup> Likewise, when the Prophet went to Ta'if and met its leaders,<sup>143</sup> they rejected the da'wah in the most uncompromising manner and then they instructed

their men and slaves to insult the Prophet and to create scandal to further embarrassed him.<sup>144</sup>

It is worthwhile to assess here the reasons why these people rejected the da'wah of the Prophets in general and the da'wah of the Prophet Muhammad in particular. If we study the story of the Prophets and their people in the Qur'an, we see quite clearly the reason for the opposition by the chiefs to the da'wah. There are various reasons behind their opposition, but three are considered major; arrogance, desire to rule, and ignorance, These three reasons in their confrontation with Islam are very similar, but in their spirit are totally different from one another.

Firstly, the Qur'an tells us about arrogance: "They rejected those signs out of sheer injustice and vanity, whereas in their heart of hearts they were convinced".<sup>145</sup> In this verse of the Qur'an, is revealed how Pharaoh and his people rejected the prophethood of Moses, although in their hearts, they believed in him; for arrogance clearly made them oppose him .

Another example of the arrogance of the leaders is narrated, thus in the story of Prophet Noah and his people already mentioned above,<sup>146</sup> and in the narrative of Prophet Hud and the leaders of 'Ad: "The chief of this (Hud) people who rejected his message, answered, "We

clearly see that you are of unsound mind and we think that you are a liar".<sup>147</sup>

The second reason is the desire to rule and glory. It is a well-known fact that leaders are generally very keen to remain in power or to hold on to their leadership and glory and to maintain their supremacy over the people; it is for this reason that they opposed the da'wah to God because they believe that if they were to accept this da'wah their leadership and the glory will be taken away, so they reject and oppose it. The Qur'an highlights these as follows: in the narrative of Noah and the leaders of his people, "Those of the chiefs of his people, who had rejected his message, said, This person is no more than a human being like yourselves. By this, he merely intends to obtain superiority over you".<sup>148</sup> And in the narrative of Pharaoh and the noble men, "Then after them, We sent Moses and Aaron with our messages unto Pharaoh and his chiefs. But they showed arrogance, for they were criminal. So, when the truth came to them from Us, they said, this is clearly nothing but sorcery".<sup>149</sup>

The third reason is ignorance. The chiefs (*al-mala'*) lived in a state of ignorance, meaning by this ignorance of the knowledge of God and His teachings through His prophet. Thus, they blasphemed God and rejected the da'wah to God.



The Qur'an describes these groups as follows; in the narrative of Prophet Noah and the leaders of his people, " Those chiefs of his people, who had rejected his message, said, we see that you are no more than a mere man like ourselves, and we also see that only the meanest from from among us have become you followers without due consideration, and we find nothing in you that might give you superiority over us. Nay, we consider you to be liar".<sup>150</sup> And in the narrative of the people of Thamud and Prophet Saleh, "The chiefs of his tribe, who were full of pride, said to those who believed from among the oppressed people, Do you know it if for certain that Saleh is a messenger from his Lord?. They replied, Indeed, we believe in the message with which he has been sent. But those who had the arrogant assumption of superiority, said, We deny that thing which you believe".<sup>151</sup> And in the narrative of the noble men of Pharaoh, "The chiefs of Pharaoh's nation said to him, will you leave Moses and his people free to spread disorder in the land, and let them discard your service and that of your deity?. Pharaoh answered, I will leave their sons slain and let their women live, we have a strong hold over them ".<sup>152</sup>

Thus, the leader (*al-mala'*) characterised in this way in the Qur'an can be found at any time in any society; generally they oppose the da'wah because of

ignorance and the desire to remain in power and have the glory.<sup>153</sup>

The main reason their belief in the established order of ignorance (*jahiliyyah*). When these people found that a new faith is coming, which is likely to demolish the order they belief and uphold and replace it with an entirely different order . They became enraged. They see it as the downfall of their people. They realize that the new faith is creating disunity and their organization is being destroyed. All these fears created a feeling to the da'wah and the da'i.

## (II) COMMON PEOPLE

What I mean by common people in this context is the majority of people in the society, excluding the chiefs and the ruling powers (*al-mala'*). They are generally poor and weak, and performed all sort of work for the society.

The common people are more inclined than other groups to accept the da'wah of Prophets. It was narrated that Heraculius when he heard that Abu Sufyan has come from Mecca, he came to meet him to ask him about Prophet Muhammad, Heraculius asked: "Whether the noble men followed him or the weak among the people?. Abu Sufyan said: "Only the common people". and then Heraculius said: "They are the followers of the prophets".<sup>154</sup> It is a fact

that the followers of the prophets generally came from the common people as we have already noted above under the topic of the noble men.

If we want to know the reason why the common people are more inclined to accept the da'wah, it is because they have no reason to reject the da'wah; they were not like the noble people who had other intentions like desire for power and glory, self-interest, personal benefit and so on.

Although they can be willing to accept the da'wah, nevertheless there are times when due to the influence of these chiefs (*al-mala'*) the opposite happens, e.g., what happened to Pharaoh's people who followed and supported him in his false teachings, the Qur'an said: "He took his people from the light, and they obeyed him, they were indeed a sinful people "<sup>155</sup>

Now we come to the question why the common people are influenced by the chiefs (*al-mala'*). There are many reasons for this. Firstly, without doubt the chiefs (*al-mala'*) who reject the da'wah, have the power and capability to punish their people. The Qur'an gives us examples of this e.g., the narrative of Pharaoh and his noblemen, "(Then behold that) none but a few youths from his own people believed in Moses because of the fear of Pharaoh and their own chiefs; for they apprehended that

Pharaoh would afflict them with a torment. And the fact that Pharaoh was mighty in the land, indeed, he was one of those who do not hesitate to transgress any limit";<sup>156</sup> and the narrative of 'Ad, "These are 'Ad!. they rejected the revelations of their Lord and disobeyed His messengers and followed every tyrannous enemy of the Truth".<sup>157</sup>

Secondly, people are misled by the possessions and wealth of this class, becoming clients of the rulers. The chiefs (*al-mala'*) have the means to cover their falsehood and offer these to their people as an attraction. the Qur'an narrates the story of Noah as follows: "Noah said, O my Lord, they have disobeyed me and followed those (chiefs) whose wealth and children have increased them only in loss".<sup>158</sup> And the narrative of Pharaoh and his people, "One day Pharaoh proclaimed among his people, O my people!. Is not the kingdom of Egypt mine?".<sup>159</sup>

Lastly, the rulers use slander and confusion. The chief (*al-mala'*), not satisfied with merely using their powers to threaten the people to stop following the *da'wah*, create suspicion towards the *da'i* by imputing madness, stupidity or even suggesting that they stray from the right path.

### (III) HYPOCRITES (MUNAFIQS)



The hypocrite in Islamic terms is a person who follows Islam outwardly but in whose heart is hidden falsehood. If in his heart he does not believe the fundamentals of the faith, he is really a hypocrite.<sup>160</sup> In the matter of judgement in the hereafter, he is not only branded a unbeliever (*kafir*), but worse than that he cheats the believers with his false display of faith to them. The Qur'an says, "Note it well that the hypocrite shall go to the lowest abyss of Hell".<sup>161</sup> If in his heart he believes the fundamental of the faith, but is somewhat recalcitrant in his intentions and deeds, he is one of the disobedient only, not a real hypocrite.<sup>162</sup> I will discuss here the real hypocrite only, whereas the disobedient will be discussed in the next section.

I want to raise a question here where are the hypocrites to be found?. Generally, when a non-Islamic society is defeated, the majority of the people accept Islam as their religion. At that time probably the hypocrites will be appear because they were afraid of the new situation in the society: they only accept Islam externally. Likewise, it happened in Islamic history during the time of the Prophet in Medina. We have never heard of hypocrite in the Meccan period because the Muslims there were weak, they were powerless and were threatened everywhere, but during the Medina period when the Prophet and Muslims had power, then hypocrites appeared in society.

When talking about hypocrisy and the hypocrite, it is worth noting that there are distinct characteristics of hypocrisy. The Qur'an mentions many.

The first characteristic is "illness of the heart" as the Qur'an says: "In their hearts is a disease which Allah has increased all the more and a painful doom is in store for them for the lie they utter".<sup>163</sup>

Second, undermining or sabotaging the world order. The Qur'an says: "Whenever it is said to them, Spread not disorder on the earth. Their reply is, We only seek to put things right. Beware! they do spread disorder, but they realized it not".<sup>164</sup>

Third, branding the Muslims with stupidity. The Qur'an says: "And when it is said to them, Believe sincerely as the other people have believed, they reply, Should we believe as the fools believed! Beware! they themselves are fools, but they know it not".<sup>165</sup>

Forth, deception and laziness in worship. The Qur'an said, "The hypocrites seek to deceive Allah, whereas, in fact, Allah has involved them in deception. When they rise up for prayer (*salah*), they go reluctantly to it, merely to be seen by the people and they remember Allah but little".<sup>166</sup>

Fifth, causing dissent among Muslims, the Qur'an says: "Had they gone forth with you, they would have added nothing but mischiefs to you and they would have made strenuous efforts to sow discord among your ranks, yet there are among you some who listen to them, but Allah knows these mischiefmakers full well".<sup>167</sup>

Sixth, enjoining the wrong and forbidding the right. The Qur'an says, "The hypocrites, both men and women, are all of a kind: they enjoin what is evil and forbid what is right and withhold their hands from doing good. they forgot Allah, then Allah also forgot them; indeed the hypocrites are the evil-doers".<sup>168</sup>

Seventh, betrayal (*al-ghadr*) and not keeping promises. the Qur'an says, "There are some among them, who made this covenant with Allah. If He give us of His bounty, we will disburse charity and lead a righteous life. But when Allah enriched them by His bounty, they grew greedy and went back on their covenant, and paid no heed to it".<sup>169</sup>

Thus, from the above exposition we can conclude that this group of people is the worst enemy of da'wah. No group from among the open enemies of the da'wah is as dangerous as these who hide in the garb of sympathisers of Islam. They create innumerable misunderstandings about



the Islamic missionary and da'wah. And since they are regarded as part of the Muslim society, whatever they say, they make it appear with sincerity and sympathy only externally.

#### (IV) DISOBEDIENT ('ASIN)

What we mean by the disobedient are those people who believe in the fundamental doctrine, that is, the witness that there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. But they do not perform the rite of witness, they go against some commandments of God and do what is forbidden, some disobey a lot of the commandments while others just a few.

It is well known that Muslims are not protected from disobedience as the Prophet said, "Every son of Adam is a sinner and the best among the sinners are repentents".<sup>170</sup> This is so because mankind was created capable of both obedience and disobedience. It is incumbent upon all Muslims to obey God's commandments. As the Qur'an says, "And by the human self and Him who balanced it, then inspired it with its wickedness and its piety. Truly successful was he who purified himself and a failure he who suppressed it".<sup>171</sup> If he disobeys God, he must quickly repent.

Why do Muslims disobey the commandments of God, when



in truth they believe in God and His messengers and the hereafter and also know that, if they disobey God, then they will endure this wrath and His punishment in the day of Judgement?

In answering this question, we should know that despite a person's faith, sometimes due to the weakness, can be easily overcome by evil desire and submit to the tricks of Satan, thus becoming a disobedient. This happens because all punishment for sins committed is promised for the hereafter, whereas the joy of the forbidden is tangible and present. Mankind is naturally disposed to enjoy the present rather than hold to the uncertain and distant; as mentioned in the Qur'an, "But you (O men) prefer the life of this world".<sup>172</sup>

But some of the disobedient repent and regret their own wrong doing and are ashamed of themselves. They try to make amends through repentance and by seeking refuge in God's forgiveness. This group of people has been mentioned in the Qur'an, "Others (there are who) have acknowledged their faults, they have mixed an act that was good with another that was evil. It may be that God will turn to them (in mercy), for God is Relenting, Most Merciful".<sup>173</sup> This group certainly benefits from teaching and training even if their progress is slow.

From the above exposition, it is clear that the da'i

of Islam comes across different types of people (*mad'i*). Some of these people are obstinate, haughty and fanatic, while others are proud of their knowledge and wealth; on the other hand, there are some people who are liberal and good-natured.

As it is not possible to seek out the good men among the multitude, especially among the chiefs (*al-mala'*) because of their rejection of and opposition to *da'wah*, the *da'i* must nevertheless not lose hope, but continue his search for something really worthwhile. It is possible that his effort will be rewarded with success.

The Islamic missionary should not waste his time in persuading and educating people who cannot either go or think beyond the interests of this world and its advantages. Such people are unlikely to listen to the *da'wah* to Islam. How can they accept to the *da'wah* which entails the loss and sacrifice of their material benefits?. That is why, the Islamic missionary has been instructed by the Qur'an, "Then withdraw (O Muhammad) from him who turns away from our remembrance and desires nothing but the life of the world. Such is their sum of knowledge".<sup>174</sup>

### C. DA'WAH CONTENT (*MAWDU' AL-DA'WAH*)

According to the Islamic point of view Islam as

brought by Prophet Muhammad is not a new religion, but it is the eternal message of God. The fundamental message that was given to the first prophet, Adam, who was also the first man, was the same as that given to the last prophet, Muhammad.<sup>175</sup>

The Islamic missionaries do not invite people to a "new" religion, but invite them to the oldest religion; the religion of total surrender to the Creator, Allah. All prophets from Adam to Muhammad brought the same religion. This does not mean that all religions, as they are, are equally true. One will still be invited to follow Prophet Muhammad because he is the last prophet, and to accept the Qur'an as the last revelation from God.

Thus, the da'wah content or the real object of the invitation to Islam is to proclaim it as the religion of God which was brought by Prophet Muhammad, and the Qur'an is the book of God which is for all mankind and forever. The second thing which Islamic missionary should keep in mind is that Islam is not a religion of mere belief and ritual. It is as we must reiterate a complete way of life. The Qur'an says: "So do you believe in part of the Book and deny the other? So nothing but humiliation in this world life and most painful punishment in the life hereafter will be the reward of those who behave like that".<sup>176</sup> And another verse of the Qur'an says: "O you who believe, enter into Islam completely and follow not



in the footsteps of the devil. He is your enemy".<sup>177</sup>

In order to enter into Islam completely Islamic missionaries must acquire the right concept of Islam. To limit Islam to belief or worship alone is very narrow. Those who are to do the work of da'wah among the Muslims must bring that thorough knowledge to the Muslims.

The above explanation makes it amply clear that the da'wah is that people should worship Allah alone. Only His commands should be followed and they should submit to Him both in their individual and collective life. When they acknowledge Him as their Supreme Ruler, they must settle their affairs in all spheres of life according to the instruction given by Him through His last book, the Qur'an. Because Islam indeed lays down rules not only for individual progress, but also for the advancement of nation, and even of humanity as a whole. From the very beginning, Islam put forward a unique ideology of moral, cultural, economic and political principles.

Let me discuss further the most important part of the da'wah content; the *tawhid*,<sup>178</sup> because this is basic to the fundamental of Islamic ideology.

What is meant by *tawhid*? It is not just the conviction that Allah exist or that He is one, but that He alone is the Creator, Master, Ruler and Controller



(Lord) of all that exists. According to the Qur'an, God is the one "Say: He is Allah, the One",<sup>179</sup> he is the Creator "He is the Creator of everything so worship Him alone",<sup>180</sup> the Lord "The same Allah (Who has done all this for you) is your Lord, the creator of everythings",<sup>181</sup> the Mercy Giving "Seek forgiveness from your Lord, then turn towards Him: My Lord is Merciful, Affectionate",<sup>182</sup> the Guide: "But your Lord suffices for you as your Guide and Helper",<sup>183</sup> the Law Giver "He has appointed for you the way of life which He had ordained for Noah and which (O Muhammad). We have now revealed to you, and which we had already enjoined on Abraham and Moses and Jesus, stressing this: Establish this way and be not divided in it",<sup>184</sup> the Judge "Is not Allah the greatest of all judges?",<sup>185</sup> and the Sovereign "Say: O God, Holder of Sovereignty (or control or dominion)".<sup>186</sup>

God and man represent two categories and man's success and salvation lies in accepting Allah as his God, as *Ma'bud* (the object of worship, reverence, loyalty and obedience).<sup>187</sup> The universe exist because Allah wills it to exist, it functions because Allah wills it is to function; all the attributes of sovereignty reside in Allah alone and no one else shares them in the slightest degree. He alone possesses all the attributes of Divinity, and no other than Allah possesses any of those attributes. He views the whole universe, and all that it contains. He has a direct knowledge of the universe, and

all that there is in the universe. He knows not only its present, but its past as well as its future. With Him there is no "before" and no "after".

#### D. DA'WAH METHODOLOGY (*MINHAJ AL-DA'WAH*)

I must now address myself to the questions: What in what form should Muslims practise da'wah?. And what should the guiding principles of the invitation to Islam be along with its propagation?. All these questions I will discuss briefly under the da'wah methodology.

According to English dictionaries, method means a particular way of doing something.<sup>188</sup> Samih Atef El-Zein in his book takes the term "method" to mean a technique or process of or for doing something.<sup>189</sup> Further on the author distinguishes between "method" and "way": "Method indicates the way of shaping the operation, or the way of usage and application of an action. But method may fail when it is used to perform an action; it may change and it needs a creative mind to use it. As a result, thinking of method is far loftier than thinking of a way, because a way may be derived by a creative mind, and yet may be used by an ordinary mind. But to construct a method a mind of genius is needed, although its application may be carried out by an ordinary mind".<sup>190</sup> Likewise, he adds "thinking of means is similar to thinking of methods. The means consists of the material devices and instruments

which are used to perform an action. All methods fail if the wrong means are used".<sup>191</sup>

Although this tells us how to distinguish method, way and means, what I mean by da'wah methodology in this context is in wider meaning including method, means, plan, etc., anything connected with the systematic propagation of the da'wah.

Three fundamental concepts should be enough to help us formulate most of the general principles of methodology applying in any situation and condition. These three fundamental concepts are as follows.

#### (I) THE INVITATION WITH WISDOM (HIKMAH)

The Qur'an is quite clear that the invitation of Islam should be with wisdom (*hikmah*). Allah says: "Invite (all) to the way of your Lord with wisdom".<sup>192</sup> This instruction is very important for Islamic missionaries who should always keep it in mind.

"Wisdom" by definition is "a right thing which should be put at the right moment at the right place".<sup>193</sup> Wisdom demands that one should keep in view the mental calibre, capability, and circumstances of the addressee and convey the message in accordance with the requirements of the occasion. Moreover, one should



refrain from applying one and the same method to each and every person or group, but should first diagnose the real disease of the addressee and then cure it by appealing to his head and heart.<sup>194</sup>

Thus, the Islamic missionary in his invitation to others is aware of never becoming bitter, harsh, jeering and so on. His invitation, his words, his explanation and his manners, must always be attractive, never boring or tiring. He will stop himself from conveying the message at the moment he realizes that the addressees are losing interest in his speech. In short he will never forget the use of wisdom in the course of his work of da'wah.

The wisdom in da'wah is not compulsion, in the Qur'an, Allah has commanded Muslims to invite all mankind to the way of Allah.<sup>195</sup> "invitation" is certainly not compulsion in religion.<sup>196</sup> It is an invitation whose object can be fulfilled only with the free consent of the person. A forced conversion is not accepted. Humanistic ethic regards coerced da'wah as a grave violation of the human person.<sup>197</sup> That is why the Qur'an specifies that persuasion be used.<sup>198</sup>

Certainly, the Islamic missionary is to try and try again and never give up so that God may guide addressees to the truth. But if they are still not



convinced, the missionary is to leave it to God. The Prophet himself allowed those Christians who were not convinced by his own presentation of Islam to keep their faith.<sup>199</sup> Islam puts its trust in man's rational power to choose between true and false. Allah says: "Truth is now manifest from error".<sup>200</sup> Islamic da'wah is therefore, an invitation to think, to debate, and argue. Islamic da'wah operates only under these principles.<sup>201</sup> The principle that Islamic da'wah is non-compulsion is based upon many verses in the Qur'an.<sup>202</sup> Thus, the Islamic missionary must do the work without exercising any pressure or coercion because da'wah is the invitation to the ideals of peace, non-aggression, respect of the dignity of man and his basic rights. Islam does not ask its followers to fight opponents of da'wah just because they reject Islam. The Islamic missionaries are not supposed to fight to conquer, expand, oppress and exploit. They must not discriminate against any group of people. They must be tolerant and avoid anger or hate even towards those who reject the da'wah.

In another verse of the Qur'an, Allah teaches Muslims to adopt goodness against the evil: "The good deed and evil deed are not alike. Repel the evil deed with what is better: then will be, between whom and you there was enmity (will become) as though he was a bosom friend".<sup>203</sup>

In this verse it is said that "you do not return good for evil, for there is no equality or comparison between the two, you should combat hatred with love, you repel ignorance with knowledge. The man who was in the bondage of sin, you not only liberate from sin, but make your greatest friend and helper in the cause of God".<sup>204</sup>

*(II) GOODLY COUNSEL (MAW' IZAH HASANAH)*

Allah says: "Invite (all) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly counsel".<sup>205</sup> Abu al-A'la Maududi<sup>206</sup> gives an explanation of the words "goodly counsel" in this verse, making two points: First, one should adopt a comprehensive method to convince the addressee which includes: arguments and appeal to his feeling; condemnation of evils and deviations as well as repugnance to all that lies embedded in the human nature, warning of the consequences of evil; soundness of argument, excellence of guidance and righteous deed. Secondly, admonition should be administered in such a manner as to show sincere concern for the welfare of the addressee.

Thus, Islamic missionaries have been enjoined to say only the best things even in their discussion with unbelievers and other opponents of their faith. They should neither use harsh words nor make exaggerated statement. They should be soft in their conversation and

say only what is true and dignified in spite of the provocative behaviour of the opponents. Allah says: "Say to My servants that they should (only) say those things that are best".<sup>207</sup> In another verse of the Qur'an Allah says: "But speak to him a gentle word; perchance he may take warning or fear (God)".<sup>208</sup> In this verse Allah gives the instruction to Islamic missionaries to present Islamic teaching in the best way even to the last moment in a sober way, because there are two ways of bringing a man to the right path. They are to convince him by persuasion and explanation and by warning him of the consequences attendant upon his deviation.

The Islamic missionary must not get tired of repeating his invitation to Islam. They must emphasize the fact that Allah forgives sins and overlooks the past, and on the other hand they must warn of the terrible consequences of a continual rejection of Islam giving hope to people that they will be forgiven by giving them confidence in Allah's mercy.

The Islamic missionary should be kind and compassionate, just and fair to everyone, irrespective of one's faith, race, colour or social status, and in all situations. Allah has commanded them to be just and kind. They are ambassadors of the Last Prophet, who has been described by the Qur'an as "the merciful, the compassionate" (ra'uf and rahim)<sup>209</sup> and "mercy for all



the worlds" (*rahmah li al-'alamin*).<sup>210</sup> Deep involvement in human welfare and service to mankind is basic to Islam and of prime importance to da'wah.<sup>211</sup>

Thus, they should convey their message in a polite and effective manner. It is extremely harmful to explain ancillary and derivative matters. This is the principle of invitation to Islam.

Language and theme are extremely important for da'wah. The message remains the same, but it should be conveyed through a medium that is understood by its addressees. All the messengers of God employed a language and took up the themes that were suited to their people. For example, the promotion of an "Islamic state" may not be a suitable theme for a western society. Indeed, Islam should be concerned with all matters of public interest and morality. Prophet Noah's message dealt with caste and class differences, that of Prophet Hud with imperialism, wastage of public resources and domination by tyrant rulers, that of Prophet Lot with permissiveness, that of Prophet Shu'ayb with injustice and economic maladies, that of Prophet Moses with the tyranny and oppression perpetrated by Pharaoh. In the same way the Islamic da'wah must deal with the same problems of today. The Islamic missionaries should make their basic da'wah; the message of *tawhid* (Oneness of God), *risalah* (prophethood or messengerhood), and *akhirah* (hereafter) relevant to



the concerns and experience of average addressees as well as of their contemporary societies.<sup>212</sup>

In order to start the propagation of Islam anywhere, it is essential that first priority should be given to its basic concept namely *tawhid*. The people should be persuaded to worship Allah and submit to Him alone. The conception of Sovereignty and Unity of God should be explained and instilled in their hearts and minds. They should know what is the significance of worship and submission to God and what are their demands. As for the born Muslims or Muslims in name, the invitation to them is not towards the differences of opinion in jurisprudence (*ikhtilaf fi al-fiqh*). The Islamic missionary must give the positive da'wah of Islam and its fundamental message and avoid creating splits among them.

During propagation to the general public, the Islamic missionary should be on the look out for persons who are inclined to listen to the speech. If however, his experience shows that the majority of the addressees are not inclined to listen to the speech, he should not waste his time over them, and he should counsel the religion so long as he feels that it is beneficial and there exists some hope for its reception. For this purpose, he must gauge the situation fully. It is not proper to speak when the people are not ready to listen to the speech. Allah

says: "Instruct when instruction is profitable".<sup>213</sup>

An Islamic missionary should tell of plain and obvious virtues and his mode of propagation should be simple and intelligible. The standard of his conversation should be according to the knowledge and intellectual capacity of the addressee. In short he should know the points on which preaching can impress him. He should diagnose exactly the nature of the disease; whether it is chronic or simple, so that simple weakness can be removed first. At the same time, an appeal to the sentiments of people should also be made and a feeling of hatred towards evil, which every man despises should be awakened in them.<sup>214</sup>

*(III) ARGUMENT IN A GRACIOUS MANNER (MUJADALAH  
BI ALLATI HIYA AHSAN)*

Allah says in the Qur'an: "And argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious".<sup>215</sup> Ibn Khathir explains this verse by saying: "When there are those who need to be dealt with and argued with, it should be done in the best manner of gentleness, Kindness and good speech".<sup>216</sup> The verse emphasize the advantages of gentleness and kindness in gaining supporters and consequently in advancing da'wah.

Abu al-A'la Maududi denotes that the verse implies

that one should have a sweet tongue, show noble character and reasonable and appealing arguments and refrain from indulging in polemics, sophistry and controversy. The one who discusses things with people in the best manner, does not resort to accusations, crooked arguments, taunts, nor makes fun of the opponent in order to defeat him and to win applause for his own superiority in arguments. On the contrary, he will try to convince the others in a simple and humble way, and when he feels that the other person has come down to crooked arguments, he will leave him alone.<sup>217</sup>

They must keep in view the psychology of the addressee and in da'wah adopt a "diplomatic manner" (without fear and compromise). Allah says: "(Pharaoh) said: what then is the condition of the previous generation. He Moses) replied: The knowledge of that is with my Lord duly recorded, my Lord never errs, nor forgets".<sup>218</sup>

Abu al-A'la Maududi explains that these two verse are pregnant with direction for the Islamic missionary on how to tackle the arrogant man. The question posed by Pharaoh was subtle. He meant to say "If there is no other Lord than one who has given a distinctive form to everyone, then what will be the position of our forefathers who had been worshipping other deities for centuries?. Did they all lack common sense?". Thus



Pharaoh perhaps wanted to give vent to his anger against Prophet Moses for showing disrespect to his forefathers. But at the same time he also wanted to incite his countrymen and the common people of Egypt against the message of Prophet Moses. The answer is full of wisdom: "Well, those people have now gone before their Lord and I have no means of judging their deeds and intentions. However their whole record is safe and secure with Allah, and nothing can escape Him. Allah alone knows how to deal with them. What concerns you and me is our own position and attitude to life. We should be more concerned about our own end than of those who have already returned to Allah".

This is one of the best ways of presenting the Islamic message and it serves also a standard for Islamic diplomacy. To use this method, a missionary must possess such a noble and spotless moral character that none could find fault with Islam or with its missionary. His character should be so noble and sublime that no persuasion or temptation should deter him from going along the right path and no fear should make him falter on the path.

By dint of his noble character he must have the courage to speak the truth fearlessly in every meeting and in every society. He must not suffer from an



inferiority complex that might restrain him from saying the right thing. But in all circumstances, an Islamic missionary should remain polite, self-composed and unirritated. He should be liberal and big-hearted. Controversy is extremely harmful, but if a need arises for discussion and argumentation, the missionary attitude should be noble, polite and cultured, he must accept criticism with open-mindedness. He is required to accept criticism from others and must respond to them politely with strong and convincing arguments and point out to them the truth and the soundness of his message. His intention should not be to suppress the voice of others but to bring them nearer to the Islamic message.

An Islamic missionary must take care not to address people who are not willing to accept the invitation in a decent manner. If opposition increases and discussion gets out of hand, the best thing to do is not to fight but to cut it short and leave, because the missionary will gain nothing out of it, his energy will be wasted in futile discussion with him. Allah says: "And turn away from the ignorant".<sup>219</sup> On the other hand, his talk should reflect his prestige and dignity and he should under no circumstances transgress the limits of morality and good conduct. The objective of discussion is not to win an argument, to score a victory, to silence an opponent; it is to win and activate the heart, a mind, indeed, a life for the cause of Allah.

Lastly, let me give a few suggestions about the da'wah methodology: there is indeed a need to know and learn about da'wah in general and da'wah methodology in particular. Study and experience will teach one to know the subject well. Nevertheless a few suggestions might be helpful.

Before an Islamic missionary starts thinking about approaches and methods, skill and techniques, ways and means, he must examine his conduct and behaviour as to whether it is a true example of Islam or not. Each Islamic missionary should examine his faith (*iman*); how much does his faith represent the true faith of Islam?; how about his behaviour?; and what are his relationship with his family, neighbours, at his work place, and in the community?.

The Islamic missionary tends to forget that leading by example is still the most powerful resource needed on the path of da'wah. By word and deed, the Islamic missionary should be the upholder and champion of justice, human welfare and man's dignity and freedom.

To be a good Islamic missionary, it is better to start the da'wah within his own family because he knows its members better and he is respected by them, and it will give him some practice how to tackle others. Allah

says: "save yourself and your family from fire".<sup>220</sup> The Prophet was told: "give warnings to your near relatives".<sup>221</sup> So, start with near relatives by meeting with them regularly.

If he gets a few people among his kin to respond to his message, he can form a group (*halaqah*) or unit which is the circle formed to learn about the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* under supervision of the Islamic missionary. Those who are active among them should be trained to work as Islamic missionaries. It is better that a circle is organized as a da'wah movement which has its office, library, reading room, besides a hall for prayer, preaching and gethering.

However, here is not the place to dwell upon these matters of technique and detail for our object is not to present a programme for Islamic mission nor to make normative recommendations. Rather it has been the intention to offer a more accurate description of how da'wah is conceived and of what would go into a training for a specific "career" as a da'i. It may be of interest to those who are involved in parallel forms of Christian mission to compare the respective methods of their callings.

More important, it is hoped that this discussion can counter Western images of jihad as mere aggression or



unwarranted assertiveness.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER I

1. See word "da'a" in al-fayruz Abadi, *al-Qamus al-Muhit*.
2. *The Qur'an*, Baqarah II: 186
3. *Ibid.*, Hud XI: 13
4. *Ibid.*, Lukman XXXI: 32; see also the same meaning in the Qur'an, Ankabut XXIX: 65.
5. Al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, book 67: chapter 71-74; see also Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, book 16, hadith 96-105 and 110.
6. M. Canard, "da'wah" in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: E.J.Brill-London: Luzac & Co 1965), Vol. II, pp 168-170.
7. Al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Tabari*, Vol.VII, pp.353-363.
8. *The Qur'an*, Yusuf XII: 106.
9. *Ibid.*, Al Imran III: 19
10. Abd al-Karim Zaydan, *Usul al-Da'wah* (Alexandria: Dar Umar ibn al-Khattab, 1976), p.5
11. Some authors define "da'wah" as the religion of Islam, or the message, see Husni Muhammad Ghaytas *al-Da'wah al-Islamiyyah fi Ahdi Amir al-Mu'minin Umar ibn al-Khattab* (Beirut-Demascus: al-Maktab al-Islami, 1985), p.18.
12. *The Qur'an*, Haj XXII: 78; see also Tawbah IX: 24
13. *Ibid.*, Al Imran III: 104; see also A'raf VII: 157
14. *Ibid.*, Shu'ara' XXVI: 214; see also Muddaththir LXXIV: 2; Baqarah II: 25
15. *Ibid.*, Baqarah II: 143; see also Hajj XXII: 78
16. *Ibid.*, Nisa' IV: 114; see also Baqarah II: 220
17. *Ibid.*, Hud XI: 34; see also A'raf VII: 79
18. *Ibid.*, Zariyat LI: 55; see also Ghashiyah LXXXVIII: 21.
19. *Ibid.*, A'raf VII: 62; see also Ma'idah V: 67
20. *Ibid.*, Tawbah IX: 33; see also Fath XLVIII: 28
21. *Ibid.*, Shura XLII: 13; see also Rum XXX: 30
22. *Ibid.*, Tawbah IX: 40
23. *Ibid.*, Asr CIII: 3
24. *Ibid.*, Ma'idah V: 2
25. Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab* (Beirut: Dar Sadir Dar Bairut, 1956, pp.289, 293-295.
26. Muhammad Fu'ad Abd al-Baqi, *Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfaz al-Qur'an* (Cairo: Dar al-Hadith, 1986) p.357.
27. *The Qur'an*, An'am VI: 125
28. *Ibid.*, Saff LXI: 7
29. *Ibid.*, Zumar XXXIX: 22
30. *Ibid.*, Ma'idah V: 4



31. *Ibid.*, Al Imran III: 19
32. *Ibid.*, Al Imran III: 85
33. *Ibid.*, Tawbah IX: 74
34. *Ibid.*, Hujurat XLIX: 17
35. *Ibid.*, 14
36. Al-Bukhari, *op.cit.*, book 2, chapter 34; book 3, chapter 6; book 9, chapter 3.; see also similar text in Muslim, *op.cit.*, book 1, hadith 8, 10, 29-31.
37. Ibn Hanbal Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Vol.III, pp.143, 168, 193.
38. *The Qur'an*, Ma'idah V: 44
39. L. Gardet, "Islam: Definition and Theories of Meaning" in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leidan: E.J.Brill, 1978), Vol.IV, p.173.
40. Muhammad Abduh, *Risalah al-Tawhid* p.152.
41. *Ibid.*, pp.152-206.
42. Muhammad al-Ghazali, *al-Janib al-'Atifi min al-Islam*, (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Hadithah, [n.d.]), pp.15-96.
43. See above under the explanation of the term "da'wah"
44. Khurshid Ahmad, "A background paper" in *International Review of Mission*, (1976), p.400.
45. Khurram Murad, *Da'wah Among non-Muslim in the West* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1986), p.13
46. *The Qur'an*, Ma'dah V: 6
47. Khurshid Ahmad, *op.cit.*, p.401
48. Syed Asad Gilani, *Islam: A Mission, a Movement* (Lahore: Islamic Publications Ltd, 1982), p.10.
49. *The Qur'an*, Al-Imran III: 19
50. Khurshid Ahmad, *op.cit.*, p.401
51. *Ibid.*, p.401
52. Syed Asad Gilani, *op.cit.*, p.12
53. To be discussed further detail below under the topic "da'wah content".
54. *The Qur'an*, Fatihah I: 6
55. *Umah* means in this context Muslim community.
56. See Khurshid Ahmad, *op.cit.*, p.402
57. *The Qur'an*, Al Imran II: 104
58. *Ibid.*, Al Imran III: 110
59. Al-Sayyid Jalal al-Din al-Umri, *al-Amr bi al-Ma'ruf wa al-Nahy 'an al-Munkar* (Kuwait: Sharikah al-Shu'a' li al-Nashr, 1980), pp. 5,6.
60. *The Qur'an*, Shura XIII: 13
61. *Ibid.*, Hadid LVII: 26
62. See al-Nawawi, *Riyad al-Salihin*, hadith 189; see also Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Quran al-Azim*. Vol.I, p.391.
63. See below under the section the da'i
64. See below under the section "da'wah methodology".
65. A. J. Wensinck, *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1960), p.59
66. E. Tyan, "Djihad", in *"The Encyclopaedia of Islam"* *op.cit.*, Vol. ii, p.538.
67. See definition of "jihad" in Abu al-Qasim al-Husayn al-Raghib, *al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran*
68. Lane, *Arabic English Lexicon* (London-Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1865), Vol.II, p.473
69. *The Qur'an*, Ankabut XXIX: 69; see also the same *surah*: 6,8.

70. *Ibid.*, Ankabut XXIX: 110
71. *Ibid.*, Hajj XXII: 78
72. *Ibid.*, Furgan XXV: 52
73. Al-Bukhari, *op.cit.*, book 28, chapter 26: see also book 56, chapter I, 62.
74. *Ibid.*, book 56, chapter 100
75. *Ibid.*, book 56 chapter 102
76. See Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zad al-Ma'd*
77. Ibn Hajr al-Asqalani, *Fath al-Bar*, Vol.VI, p.3
78. See Al-Raghib, *op.cit.*,
79. Ibn Hajr al-Asqalani, *op.cit.*, Vol.VI, p.2
80. *The Qur'an*. Yusuf XII: 53
81. Ibn Hajr al-Asqalani, *op.cit.*, Vol.VI, p.2
82. *Ibid.*
83. See Ibn al-Qayyim, *op.cit.*
84. *The Qur'an*, Hajj XXII: 78
85. *Ibid.*, Ankabut XXIX: 69
86. *Ibid.*, Fatir XXXV: 6
87. *Ibid.*, Sad XXXVIII: 82,83
88. *Ibid.*, Hijr XV: 39,40
89. *Ibid.*, Nur XXIV: 21
90. *Ibid.*, Mu'minun XXIII: 97,98
91. Al-Shawkani, *Nail al-Awtar* Vol.VII, p.236.
92. See footnote no.63
93. Ibn Hajr al-Aqalani, *op.cit.*, Vol.VI, p.2
94. *The Qur'an*, Anfal VIII: 60
95. *Ibid.*, Tawbah IX: 41; see also another verse of the *Qur'an* about jihad against disbelievers, Tawbah IX: 20; Anfal VIII: 72.
96. Al-San'ani, *Subul al-Salam*, Vol. IV, p.41
97. *The Qur'an*, Baqarah II: 194
98. *The Qur'an*, Hajj XXII: 39,40
99. *Ibid.*, Baqarah II: 190
100. *The Qur'an*, Ikhlas CXII: 1
101. *Ibid.*, Fatihah I: 6,7
102. *Ibid.*, Baqarah II: 256
103. *Ibid.*, Tawbad IX: 6
104. *Ibid.*, Anfal VIII: 61,62
105. For a detailed discussion, see Muhammad Ali, *The Religion of Islam* pp.450-73
106. See footnote no.63.
107. Muhammad Husayn Fadhl Allah, *Uslub al-Da'wah fi al-Qur'an*, p.18
108. *The Qur'an*, Hijr XV: 26; see also another verse of the *Qur'an*, Mu'minun XXIII: 12
109. *Ibid.*, Rahman LV: 14
110. *Ibid.*, Hijr XV: 26
111. *Ibid.*, Mu'minun XXIII: 12-14
112. *Ibid.*, Hijr XV: 29
113. Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an*, pp.385-386.
114. *The Qur'an*, Tin XCV: 4
115. *Ibid.*, Baqarah II: 30
116. *Ibid.*, Baqarah II: 31
117. *Ibid.*, Baqarah II: 34
118. *Ibid.*, Taha XX: 115
119. *Ibid.*, Ma'idah V: 3
120. *Ibid.*, Yusuf XII: 108



121. See M. Manzoor Alam, *The Message of Islam & Approaches of Da'i*, p.40; see also Syed Asad Gilani, *op.cit.*, p.121.
122. *The Qur'an*, Al Imran III: 110
123. Abu al-A'la Mawdudi, *The Meaning of Qur'an*, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.54.
124. ———, *The Islamic Movement*, p.95
125. *The Qur'an*, Al Imran III: 104
126. Abd al-Karim al-Khatib, *al-Da'wah ila al-Islam: Madaminuha wa Mayadinuha*, p.50.
127. Abu al-A'la Mawdudi, *Guideline for Worker*, pp.1-15
128. *The Qur'an*, An'am VI: 163
129. *Ibid.*, Tawbah IX: 71
130. *Ibid.*, Al Imran III: 147
131. *Ibid.*, Tawbah IX: 85
132. *Ibid.*, Tawbah IX: 24
133. *Ibid.*, A'raf VII: 58
134. *Ibid.*, Saba' XXXIV: 28
135. Abd al-Karim Zaydan, *op.cit.* p.358
136. *The Qur'an*, Baqarah II: 21
137. See al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir al-Qurtubi*, Vol.II, pp.223-234, Vol.XII p.121; see also Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*, Vol.II, p.223
138. *The Qur'an*, Saba' XXXIV: 34-35
139. *Ibid.*, A'raf VII: 59-60
140. *Ibid.*, Sad XXXVIII: 4-7
141. Ibn Kathir, *op.cit.*, Vol.IV, p.27
142. Ibn Hisham, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.32.
143. Taif's leaders at that time were from *Bani Thaqif*.
144. Ibn Hisham, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, pp.27,28
145. *The Qur'an*, Naml XXVII: 14
146. *Ibid.*, A'raf VII: 60
147. *Ibid.*, A'raf VII: 66
148. *Ibid.*, Mu'minun XXIII: 24
149. *Ibid.*, Yunus X: 75-76
150. *Ibid.*, Hud XI: 27
151. *Ibid.*, A'raf VII: 75-76.
152. *Ibid.*, A'raf VII: 127
153. For a detailed discussion, see Ibn Kathir, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, pp.440-441; al-Qurtubi, *op.cit.*, Vol.XV, p.150.
154. See for a detailed story in the Traditions narrated by al-Bukhari in his book, *op.cit.*, book 1, chapter 6, also book 2 chapter 38; see Muslim, *op.cit.*, book 32, hadith 78.
155. *The Qur'an*, Zukhruf XLIII: 54
156. *Ibid.*, Yunus X: 83
157. *Ibid.*, Hud XI: 59.
158. *Ibid.*, Nuh LXXI: 21
159. *Ibid.*, Zukhruf XLIII: 51
160. Abd al-Karim Zaydan, *op.cit.* p.382
161. *The Qur'an*, Nisa' IV: 145
162. Abd al-Karim Zaydan, *op.cit.*, p.382
163. *The Qur'an*, Baqarah II: 10
164. *Ibid.*, Baqarah II: 11
165. *Ibid.*, Baqarah II: 13
166. *Ibid.*, Nisa' IV: 142



167. *Ibid.*, Tawbah IX: 47
168. *Ibid.*, Tawbah IX: 67
169. *Ibid.*, Tawbah IX: 75-77
170. Al-Tirmizi, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, book 45, chapter 98
171. *The Qur'an*, Shams XCI: 7-10
172. *Ibid.*, A'la LXXXVII: 16
173. *Ibid.*, Tawbah IX: 102
174. *Ibid.*, Najm LIII: 29
175. *Ibid.*, Shura XLII: 13
176. *The Qur'an*, Baqarah II: 85
177. *Ibid.*, Baqarah II: 208
178. Literally meaning unification or union. However, in this context, tawhid means belief in the unity of God; monotheism.
179. *The Qur'an*, Ikhlas CXII: 1
180. *Ibid.*, An'am VI: 101
181. *Ibid.*, Mu'min XL: 62
182. *Ibid.*, Hud XI: 90
183. *Ibid.*, Furgan XXV: 31
184. *Ibid.*, Shura XLII: 13
185. *Ibid.*, Tin XCV: 8
186. *Ibid.*, Al Imran III: 26
187. See *the Qur'an*; for the love of God, Baqarah II: 165; thankfulness, Baqarah II: 172; heedfulness, Nahl XVI: 1-2; service and worship, Ankabut XXIX: 17; remembrance, Taha XX: 13-15; obedience, Hajj XXII: 34-35, A'raf VII: 3, Tawbah IX: 31; seeking His help, Fatimah I: 4, Al Imran III: 160-191, Yunus X: 84-87; total dedication, An'am VI: 162-163.
188. John Sinclair Patrick Hanks and Gwyneth Fox, *Essential English Dictionary* (London and Glasgow: Collins Publishers, 1988), p.490.
189. Samith Atef El-Zein, *The Qualities of a Thinker Missionary*, p.86.
190. *Ibid.*, p.88
191. *Ibid.*, p.89
192. *The Qur'an*, Nahl XVI: 125
193. Muhammad Husayn Fadhl Allah, *op.cit.*, p.45
194. Abu al-A'la Mawdudi, *The Meaning of Qur'an, op.cit.*, Vol.I, p.106.
195. See *the Qur'an*, Nahl XVI: 125
196. *Ibid.*, Baqarah II: 256.
197. Isma'il al-Faruqi, "On the Nature of Islamic da'wah" in *International Review of Mission*, (1976), Vol.LXV No.260 p.391
198. See *the Qur'an*, Ma'idah V: 108; Al Imran III: 176-177.
199. Isma'il al-Faruqi, *op.cit.*, p.391
200. *The Qur'an*, Baqarah II: 256
201. Thomas W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam* (Ladore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1979), pp.34-36
202. See above for a detailed explanation under the section "Jihad"
203. *The Qur'an*, Fussilat XLI: 34
204. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an, op.cit.*, p.1296.
205. *The Qur'an*, Nahl XVI: 125
206. Abu al-A'la Mawdudi, *The Meaning of Quran, Vol.I,*

- p.106.
207. *The Qur'an*, Isra' XVII: 53
  208. *Ibid.*, Taha XX: 44
  209. *Ibid.*, Tawbah IX: 128
  210. *Ibid.*, Anbia XXI: 107
  211. Khurram Murad, *op.cit.*, p.23
  212. *Ibid.*, p.23
  213. *The Qur'an*, A'la LXXXVII: 9
  214. Abd al-Badi' Saqar, *Kayfa nad'u al-Nas* pp.49-72.
  215. *The Qur'an*, Nahl XVI: 125; see also Ankabut XXIX: 46;  
Fussilat XLI: 34
  216. Muhammad Asad, *op.cit.*, p.416
  217. Abu A'la Mawdudi, *The meaning of Qur'an*, *op.cit.*,  
Vol.VI, pp.106-107.
  218. *The Qur'an*, Taha XX: 51-52.
  219. *Ibid.*, A'raf VII: 199; see also Furqan XXV: 63.
  220. *Ibid.*, Tahrim LXVI: 6
  221. *Ibid.*, Shu'ara XXVI: 214.
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## CHAPTER II

### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF AL-JILANI'S PERIOD (5TH-6TH CENTURY A.H. / 11TH-12TH CENTURY A.D.)

#### INTRODUCTION

If one studies the life of an outstanding man and tries to account for his achievements, he will have to study the period in which he lived and familiarise himself with his environment; trying to understand the political incidents and events which influence the life of common people, and record something of the social phenomena of his time. He should capture the intellectual and religious conditions where this is necessary.

The works of al-Jilani represent a major presentation of the spiritual dimension of Islam and at the same time a critique of the anti-Islamic elements during his time. Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani lived at a time when sufism had spread rapidly during a century full of conflict. In Baghdad at that time there were many religious sects fighting each other and making extravagant claims regarding the truth and salvation.

A knowledge of the spirit of his age will, therefore, help us towards a true and proper understanding of the ideas and tendencies of al-Jilani who must have assimilated something from this context.



The intellectual and religious systems were closely associated with political, economic and social conditions. We shall trace the origin and development of these movements from the beginning of the Abbasid period to the time of al-Jilani.

Al-Jilani lived in the 5th-6th century A.H. (11th-12th century A.D.). This period was a very critical time for the Abbasid empire in terms of political conditions as well as social and cultural phenomena. Thus, in the following pages we are going to discuss these three main conditions in brief.

# 1. THE POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONS IN THE ABBASID PERIOD (750-1258 A.D.)

## A. THE POLITICAL CONDITIONS OF THE ABBASID PERIOD

The Abbasids took power over the Muslim state from the Umayyads and held the caliphate after the last Umayyad caliph, Marwan ibn Muhammad was murdered in 132A.H./750A.D. They ruled the Muslim empire for more than five centuries, a period which is regarded as one of the golden ages in science and civilization.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless during this period as well, there were considerable changes in political situation.

In particular, there are two important factors to emphasize: First, in Syria in general and Jerusalem in particular there was a conflict between Muslims and Crusaders which extended for nearly two centuries and resulted in the crusaders being defeated by Sultan Salah al-Din "Saladin" (born 1138A.D.).<sup>2</sup> The second was that Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid caliphate was attacked and conquered by the Mongolians. They killed the last Abbasid caliph and in a sense destroyed Muslim civilization.<sup>3</sup>

Besides, these two factors, there were many other significant events which occurred in the empire and some

of them will be discussed in the following pages. Historians have divided the Abbasid period into four eras. Each era had its own character which distinguished it from the other and each represents a clear stage of Islamic civilization.

#### *I. FIRST ERA (750-847A.D.)*

This era was from their accession (132A.H./750 A.D.), and extended a century up to the death of al-Wathiq in 232A.H./847A.D.. The era begin with Abu al-Abbas al-Saffah who took over power from Umayyads in 132A.H./750A.D.. This era is regarded as the golden period of the Abbasid caliphate. The Muslims in this period achieved their greatest expansion. They ruled from the Atlantic to the Indus, and from the Caspian to the Nile. There were many claimants, mostly in the name of Ali who claimed their right to the leadership in the state. As a result of these claimants, the whole empire had soon become a battle field.<sup>4</sup>

Disintegration set in, the petty dynasties proclaiming their right to rule certain provinces, so province after province was lost by the central caliphate. The Umayyad caliphate had ruled over the entire empire of Islam. But under the Abbasids, independent and semi independent states appeared in Spain, Persia, North Africa and so on.<sup>5</sup>



Five years after the foundation of the Abbasid caliphate, Abd al-Rahman who came from the Umayyad family, reached Cordova in Spain and established there a independent state in 756A.D..<sup>6</sup> Others were soon to follow such as Idris ibn Abd Allah, the grandson of al-Hasan ibn Ali, he founded a kingdom bearing his name that lasted for almost two centuries (788-974A.D.). The Idrisids got their strength from the Berbers,<sup>7</sup> while in Persia the first to establish a semi-independent was the Tahirid dynasty. Tahir was rewarded in 820A.D. by al-Ma'mun with the governorship of all lands east of Baghdad with the centre of his power in Khurasan.<sup>8</sup>

## II. THE SECOND ERA (847-932A.D.)

This era was from the death of al-Wathiq to the rise of Buwayhids in Persia (847-932A.D.). This era began in 232A.H./847A.D. the year when al-Mutawakkil took over the caliphate and extended to 334A.H./945A.D.. This era is distinguished by Turkish influence: Turks became the holders of high office in state. These Turks were brought in by Caliph al-Mu'tasim and were made to settled in Baghdad. But the people of Baghdad disliked them, so al-Mu'tasim had settled them in a new town which was built especially for them. This town was known as Samarra.<sup>9</sup>

There are detailed reports, rich with information about the rapid developments, especially in the heart of the empire during 232-256 A.H./847-870A.D. This period is characterized by a long and complicated fight between the military forces of Baghdad and Samarra and even among the forces in each of these centres.<sup>10</sup> In a matter of weeks after al-Mutawakkil took over the caliphate, he proceeded to make sweeping changes in his administrative personnel. In an attempt to win support for his plans, especially among conservative circles of Baghdad, he decided to drop the whole controversial issue about the creation of the Qur'an, and declare an official return to orthodoxy.<sup>11</sup> When orthodox reaction set in, the Mu'tazilites were prosecuted and excluded from the court favours. To emphasize his point, he had also created some anti-Shi'ite feeling.<sup>12</sup>

After al-Mutawakkil's death, the Turkish generals (amirs) controlled the caliphs, so that four of them; al-Muntasir (861-862A.D.), al-Musta'in (862-866A.D.), al-Mu'tazz (866-869A.D.), and al-Muhtadi, (869-870 A.D.) followed in quick succession (861-870 A.D.). It is worth mentioning here that the governors and military leaders in the provinces ruled without reference to the caliphs. The assumption of autonomous powers, if not full independence by provincial governors was a growing trend of the later ninth century. The problem of holding together such disparate and scattered regions as those

making up Muslim empire had long been a problem for the strongest monarchs.<sup>13</sup>

In general, what was happening in the provinces was closely connected with what happened at the centre. Weakness at the centre led to greater autonomy in the provinces; the many disorders in the central government; the deposition of caliphs and viziers, the abuse of unlimited power by the Turks; the quarrels between the different sects and theological schools; all prepared the way for new political changes in the eastern part of the Abbasid empire.<sup>14</sup> The first family in the east to gain some measure of autonomy were the Tahirids who ruled in Khurasan with Nishapur for their base, followed by the Saffarids and then the Samanids. In the Caspian provinces at the end of the eighth century, the first Zaydi state was established independent from Baghdad's central government.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the central caliphate disintegrated and many independent and semi-independent states were established in the eastern Abbasid empire.

### *III. THE THIRD ERA (932-1055A.D.)*

This era was from the rise of the Buwayhids to the Seljuqs (334-447A.H./932-1055A.D.). This era is called the Buwayhid era because Baghdad at that time was under domination of this dynasty. Buwayhids' power extended only to Iraq and Western Persia. Eastern Persia,



Transoxiana and Afghanistan were at first under the Samanids and then under the Ghaznavids. From 969A.D. the Fatimids were securely based in Egypt and usually in control of much of Syria as well, while everything west of Egypt was either under the Fatimids or under independent dynasties. Nevertheless the Buwayhids deserve special consideration in that Baghdad was still the centre of the Islamic world and the residence of the Abbasid caliph.

The caliphate of Baghdad had fallen under the complete dominance of their Turkish guard. To escape from their tyranny the Buwayhids called for help.<sup>16</sup> In December 945A.D., when caliph al-Mustakfi (944-946A.D.) received in Baghdad the victorious Ahmad ibn Buwayhid, he had made his *amir al-umara'* (commander of the commanders) with the honorific title of *mu'izz al-dawlah* (he who renders the state mighty).<sup>17</sup>

Ahmad's father, Abu Shuja' Buwayh, claimed descent from a Sasanid king.<sup>18</sup> He was the chief of a nomadic tribe consisting mainly of Daylamite highlanders, from the mountainous region on the southern shore of the Caspian sea who had been for some time in the service of the Samanids.<sup>19</sup> At the advance of Ahmad into Baghdad in 945 A.D., the Turkish guard fled. In January, 946 A.D., Caliph al-Mustakfi was blinded and deposed by Mu'izz al-Dawlah, who was chosen as the new caliph al-Muti'

(946-974A.D.). The Buwayhids were Shi'ites, so Shi'ah festivals were then established, particularly for the public mourning on the anniversary of al-Husayn's death (tenth of *Muharram*).<sup>20</sup>

Henceforth the caliphs were puppets in the hands of the Buwayhids. The Buwayhids treated the Sunni caliphs with little respect. Throughout the Buwayhids, century or so of supremacy (945-1055A.D.), Iraq was governed as a province from the Buwayhids capital, Shiraz in Faris.<sup>21</sup> By the end of the tenth century, the authority of caliphs had become so much less that it hardly extended beyond the boundry of Baghdad. At this time the most powerful independent states which had divided the Muslim empire between themselves were the Buwayhids (932-1055 A.D.),<sup>22</sup> the Samanids in Khurasan (874-965 A.D.), the Hamdanids in Syria (924-1003 A.D.),<sup>23</sup> the Umayyads in Spain (756-1030 A.D.),<sup>24</sup> the Fatimids in Egypt (969-1171A.D.),<sup>25</sup> and the Ghaznawids in Afghanistan (962-1187 A.D.).<sup>26</sup>

#### IV. THE FOURTH ERA (1055-1258A.D.)

This era was called the Seljuq period and began in 447A.H./1055 A.D., when the Seljuqs took over the state and started to build their control of the Abbasid caliphate, and ended in 656A.H./1256A.D. when the Mongolians attacked and conquered Baghdad and almost all the Muslim countries especially in the eastern part of

the Muslim world. It is worth mentioning here that the Seljuqs did not dominate for the whole period, because the later Abbasid caliphs proclaimed their independence from Seljuq control. So we could limit the Seljuq era to a period less than that recorded by historians. We might put year the 590 A.H./1193A.D. as a separating time between Seljuq period and the independent caliphate period. We will discuss this subject in more detail shortly. This fourth era was very important compared to the other eras, because this is the period al-Jilani lived in (470-561A.H./1077-1166A.D.).

Seljuq is the name of the ruling family of the Oghuz (Ghuzz) Turkmen tribes. They came from the Kirghiz steppes of Turkestan, and belonged to the Oghuz Turks. Towards the end of the second century A.H. or eighth century A.D.. The Oghuz moved westwards through the Siberian steppes to the Arab sea and to the Volga and southern Russia. With their attacks on Ushrusana in the reign of Caliph al-Ma'mun (198-218A.H./813-833A.D.) some Oghuz had also moved into the Dihistan Steppes, north of the Atrak river, and others took over the existing settlements at the mouth of the Syr Darya.<sup>27</sup>

The Seljuqs were the decendents of Seljuq ibn Yakak, a Turkman chieftain in the service of one of the Khans of Turkistan. Seljuq migrated from the Kirghis steppes with all his clan to Jand in the province of Bukhara





where he and his people embraced Islam.<sup>28</sup> Over the next decades the Seljuqs (now led by the three sons of Seljuq who had reached manhood; Musa, Mika'il, and Arslan Isra'il, as well as by Mika'il's two sons; Toghril-Beg Muhammad and Chaghri-Beg Dawud) hired out their services in war for fighting in Transoxiana and Khurasan. Lastly they took power in Baghdad and they exercised the authority of the caliph with the exception of external religious affairs.<sup>29</sup>

Toghril-Beg was a son of Mika'il and grandson of Seljuq. He is acknowledged as the paramount Seljuq ruler. With the east secured by the success in the battle of Dandanqan, Sultan Mas'ud of Ghazna was defeated. So the lands farther west now lay open to Seljuq attack. In 1055A.D., after Toghril-Beg had made himself master of Iraq and Persia. He entered Baghdad and freed Caliph al-Qa'im from the Tyranny of the Buwayhids. The Caliph conferred on him two honorific title; pillar of the state (*rukhn al-dawlah*), and king of the east and the west (*malik al-mashriq wa al-maghrib*).<sup>30</sup>

He checked the power of the Fatimids from whom he recovered Aleppo and the holy city of Mecca and Medina.<sup>31</sup> After his death (1063A.D.), his nephew Alp-Arslan succeeded him. Palestine, Syria and Asia Minor were conquered by him. In the second year of his reign Alp-arslan captured Ani, the capital of Christian Armenia

and a Byzantine province.<sup>32</sup> And above all his victory at Malaxgird (Mantzikert) established Alp-Arslan in the eyes of posterity as a Muslim hero. In this battle, the Byzantine emperor Romanus Diogenes was defeated and made prisoner.<sup>33</sup>

After Alp-Arslan's death (1072A.D.) his son, Malik Shah succeeded him. Malik Shah's empire extended from Transoxiana to the farthest boundries of Syria. The reign of Malik Shah is considered one of the most glorious known in Islamic history.<sup>34</sup>

The relationship between the caliphs and the Seljuq sultans was much better than under the Buwayhids who took every oportunity to disgrace the caliphs and showed no respect. But the Seljuqs respected the Abbasid caliphs because of the religious teaching which asked Muslims to obey their rulers.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the glory of Baghdad as a capital of the caliphs came back and the caliphs regained at least the power as the religious leaders of the state.

If we want to investigate the relationship between Abbasid caliphs and Seljuq Sultans in this period, it is necessary for us to turn to the period before Seljuqs, examining some of the relationship between the Abbasid caliphs and Buwayhid sultans. The caliphs were worthless to the latter, because at that time they had control the Muslim world, and they did not need to pay any attention

to the caliph in spite of the latter's title "the Commander of the believers" (*Amir al-Mu'minin*). The caliphs became puppets whom the Buwayhids could put them up on the throne and then remove according to their will.<sup>36</sup>

Thus, the caliphs in the Buwayhid period were powerless in state affairs except in some of the religious ceremonies where they were respected by Buwayhids. In this case, the Buwayhids did regard the caliphs as the leaders of Muslims. In the festivals and religious ceremonies, the caliph received poets, he wore the *burdah*<sup>37</sup> of Prophet Muhammad and the *mushaf* of Uthman was put in front of him to confirm that he had authority in religion.

During the Seljuq period, the caliph's condition was totally different, much better than the period before; the Seljuqs respected the caliphs particularly because they shared assumptions deriving from their common Sunni background and subscription to the same *madhhab*. The Seljuqs had embraced the latter which was the same *madhhab* as that of the caliphs and the *madhhab* of the state as well. This was one of the reasons for the consolidation of the relationship between the two groups. On the other hand, the Seljuqs were a group of nomad people. They embraced Islam and were notably fanatic in their adherence to the *Sunni madhhab*. Al-Rawandi<sup>38</sup>



described the Seljuqs succession to the Abbasid caliphs by saying: "The nomadic life affected the Seljuqs' characters. After their conversion to Islam through *Sunni madhhab*, they were very fanatic followers of Islam and *Sunni mazhab*. For this reason, their behaviour to the caliphs were loyalty, obedience and respect".

Thomas Arnold<sup>39</sup> agreed with al-Rawandi in this characterisation of the good relationship between the Seljuqs and the caliphs. But he added the further point that the Seljuqs' respect for the Abbasid caliphs had nothing to do with their political posts, but only because they were the caliphs of the Prophet.

The most important factor which strengthened the relationship between the Abbasid caliphs and the Seljuq sultans was the connection of lineage and relationship by marriage. This had never happened in the Buwayhid period and other periods before. The relationship by marriage occurred when Sultan Tughril-Beg married the daughter of Caliph al-Qa'im, and Caliph al-Qa'im's son, Caliph al-Muqtadi married the daughter of Sultan Alp-Arslan in 464A.H./1071A.D.; Caliph al-Mustazhir (487-512A.H./1094-1118A.D.) married the daughter of Sultan Malik Shah in 502A.H./1108A.D., and Caliph al-Muqtafi (530-555A.H./1136-1160A.D.) married Fatimah, the sister of Sultan Mahmud.<sup>40</sup>

In spite of the good relationship between them, it was not without any conflict. There were many fights and disagreements, especially if one of the caliphs tried to interfere in the "secular" affairs of the ruling powers. Hasan Ibrahim Hasan<sup>41</sup> has described the situation as follows: "the Seljuqs had taken for themselves the title of the "shadow of God" (*zil Allah*) which the Abbasid caliphs preserved for themselves, and the Seljuqs took the *burdah* of the Prophet from Caliph al-Mustarshid which the caliphs wore in religious festivals or in the ceremony of taking over the caliphate post. Likewise Sultan Malik Shah called himself the title "the commander of believers" (*amir al-Mu'minin*) a title special to the Abbasid caliphs only".

The control of the Seljuqs over the Abbasid Caliphate did not last long because the conflict and fighting among them spread every where in the state as they pursued further territorial gain. The caliphs in Baghdad used the opportunity of chaos and disorder to take over the "secular" power again from the Seljuqs in Baghdad and neighbouring areas.

With the death of Malik Shah in 1092A.D. the period of glory ended and civil war among his sons had weakened the central Seljuq authority, leading to the break-up of the house. The Seljuq empire built on a tribal basis by nomadic people with their characteristic form of

organization, could be held together only by some dominant personality. The death of Malik Shah, however, led to a renewed struggle for supreme power. The matter was complicated by the fact that when the prince was a minor, he was put under the charge of an older and more experienced man known as the atabeg or "father-chief". This name or title was given to Nizam al-Mulk in 1072A.D. when Malik Shah was a minor. In the twelfth century several atabegs of the Seljuq princes managed to create little states for their own families.<sup>42</sup>

In 547A.H./1152A.D. Sultan Mahmud died and with his death, the Seljuq period ended. From then on the empire was divided into petty states under atabeg rule.<sup>43</sup> The in-fighting among the Seljuqs was a determining factor in the move by the Baghdad caliphate to proclaim its independence. Dissension in the Seljuq family allowed the Abbasid caliphs to increase their political power during the twelfth century. This process started under the caliphs al-Mustarshid (512-529A.H./1118-1135A.D.), al-Muqtafi (530-555A.H./1136-1160A.D.), and it became particularly marked in the long and successful reign of al-Nasir (575-622A.H./1180-1225A.D.).<sup>44</sup>

It is worth describing here in greater detail the situation in Baghdad and its neighbouring territories at the time of conflict between Seljuq sultans and Abbasid caliphs on one hand, and fighting among Seljuq families



on the other hand, because this is the time during which Abd al-Qadir witnessed the conditions of Muslims in Baghdad and during which his da'wah began.

In the early months of Mas'ud's sultanate (512-529A.H./1118-1135A.D.), his relations with caliph al-Mustarshid deteriorated rapidly. The Caliph prepared for war, helped by some Turkish amirs who had left Mas'ud. After much fighting between them, the Caliph was finally defeated by Mas'ud and then captured and assassinated by a *Batini* in 529A.H./1135 A.D.. Thus, ended a reign full of military and political activity and at the close of the year, Mas'ud was acknowledged sultan. Al-Mustarshid's son, al-Rashid reigned only for one year (529-530A.H./1135-1136A.D.) because Mas'ud wanted to install another as caliph. This power marks the high tide of Seljuqs influence in Baghdad at that time.<sup>45</sup>

The new caliph, al-Muqtafi ibn al-Mustazhir (530-555 A.H./1136-1160 A.D.), proved to be a capable and energetic warrior as well as a religious figure. He began to build up a personal army of Armenian and Greek *ghulams* (slaves), excluding Turks whom he considered untrustworthy.<sup>46</sup> He strengthened the wall which al-Mustarshid and his vizier Abu Nasr Ahmad ibn Nizam al-Mulk had built round Baghdad in 517A.H./1123A.D., and he also dug a trench around the city.<sup>47</sup> He was, thus able on several occasions to defy the sultans, and when Mas'ud

died and a period of even greater disunity within the Seljuq dynasty developed, he extended the caliph's authority over the whole of lower and central Iraq to a degree unknown since the fourth century A.H. or tenth century A.D.. His reign was nevertheless characterized by brigandage and mob violence, in the capital throughout this time.<sup>48</sup>

In general, the later Seljuq period, especially in Iraq and western Iran was characterized by three main trends, each of which succeeded the other as a development. First, the political and military influence of the Abbasid caliphate continued to rise. Secondly, the Turkish *amirs* and *atabegs* in the various provinces of the western Seljuq empire consolidated their power, in some cases forming hereditary lines. And finally, the real power of the Seljuq sultans became dependent on the military support of the Turkish *amirs* and *atabegs*. The Seljuq dynasty was now deeply disunited and continued to decline.

The independence of Baghdad and its neighbours, marks the beginning of later period of the Abbasid caliphate in 590A.H./1193A.D. in the time of Caliph al-Nasir ibn al-Mustadi' (575-622A.H./1179-1225A.D.).

While this was happening in the eastern part of the Muslim world, there were other significant developments

in the western part of the Muslim world as well. In Spain for example, after the decline of Umayyad dynasty in Spain in 1031A.D., the state was divided into small emirates, after a period of sustained civil wars. The Christians tried to combine their efforts in preparing for war and in 1087A.D. Alfonso The Fourth of Castile and Leon had made encroachments on the Muslim territories;<sup>49</sup> Yusof ibn Tashifin, a powerful king of the Murabit dynasty in Morocco<sup>50</sup> was asked by the people and the princes to aid of Muslims in Spain.<sup>51</sup> He came in 1086A.D. to help and defeated the Christian forces in the battle of Zallaka.<sup>52</sup> After some time, he came again under the same banner, but this time he made himself master of Spain. He regained all the territories from the Christians and his authority was recognised by the caliph of Baghdad. The Murabits were eventually overthrown by the Muwahid dynasty (1130-1232A.D.), founded by Ibn Tumart (1128 A.D.) who had been a pupil of al-Ghazali in Baghdad.<sup>53</sup>

Another important event in the west was the decline of the Fatimid state in 567A.H./1171A.D, and the rise of the Ayyubid state with the emergence of Sultan Salah al-Din "Saladin " who defeated Crusaders in the battle of Hittin (573A.H./1177A.D.).<sup>54</sup>

It was the attack on the Abbasid empire by the Mongols under their leader Jingis Khan who sent his



expedition to attack Muslim territories in the early part of seventh century A.H. or thirteenth century A.D. that proved calamitous. They destroyed the cities, towns, and villages wreaking considerable havoc, thus, the eastern part of the Abbasid empire was conquered. From Jingsis Khan's descendents appeared Hulagu, who in turn came and conquered Baghdad killing the caliph in 656 A.H./1258A.D.<sup>55</sup>

#### B. THE ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONS IN THE ABBASID PERIOD

In the earlier Abbasid period of the eighth, ninth, and early tenth centuries C.E., the caliph was the head of the empire commanding the respect of the people. Below the caliph stood the high officials of the court, the caliph could and did delegate the exercise of his civil authority to a vizier (*wazir*), his judicial power to a judge (*qadi*), and the military function to a general (*amir*), but the caliph himself remained as the final arbiter in government affairs.<sup>56</sup> The Abbasids made their office as if it was an imamate.

From the eighth caliph, al-Mu'tasim bi Allah (833-842A.D.) to the end of the dynasty, they assumed honorific titles compounded with the name of Allah. In the period of decline, their subjects started to shower on them such extravagant title as *khalifah Allah* (God's caliph) and later *zill Allah 'ala al-ard* (God's shadow on

earth). These were given as titles first to al-Mutawakkil (847-861A.D.)<sup>57</sup> The period of Abbasid glory ended with al-Mu'tasim and his son al-Wathiq (d.847A.D.).

Next to the caliph stood the vizier whose office was influenced by Persian tradition.<sup>58</sup> The vizier was often powerful, appointing and deposing governors and judges, theoretically, of course, with the consent of the caliph.<sup>59</sup> In the day of the Caliph al-Mu'tadid (892-902 A.D.) the vizier received a monthly salary of a thousand *dinars*.

Al-Mawardi<sup>60</sup> and other jurists distinguish between two varieties of vizierate: a *tafwid* (with full authority, unlimited) and a *tanfidh* (with limited executive power only). The unlimited vizier exercised all the powers of sovereignty with the exception of the appointment of his successor, the limited vizier took no initiative but confined his duties to the execution of the caliph's orders and the following of his instructions.

After the time of al-Muqtadir (908-932 A.D) the vizier was supplanted by the *amir al-umara'* (commander of the commanders), an office which was subsequently held by the Buwayhids.<sup>61</sup>

The vizier or grand vizier, presided over the

council, whose membership included the various heads of the departments of empire. Sometimes those heads were also designated viziers, but their rank was always subordinate to that of the real grand vizier.<sup>62</sup>

Under the Abbasids the governmental machinery became much more complicated than before, though greater order was brought into state affairs, especially in the system of taxation and the administration of justice. Since finances constituted the main concern of the government the bureau of taxes (*diwan al-kharaj*) or department of finance (*bayt al-mal*), remained the most important unit. Its chiefs, often referred to as "master of taxes", being central figures in the caliphal government.<sup>63</sup>

Besides the bureau of taxes the Abbasid government had an audit or accounts office (*diwan al-zimam*) introduced by al-Mahdi (775-785A.D.), a board of correspondence or chancery office (*diwan al-tawqi'*) which handled all official letters, political documents and imperial mandates and diplomas, a board for the inspection of grievances; a police department and a postal department.<sup>64</sup>

The board for the inspection of grievances (*diwan al-nazar fi al-mazalim*) was a kind of court of appeal or supreme court intended to set right cases of miscarriage of justice in the administrative and political



departments. Al-Mahdi's successors al-Hadi, Harun al-Rashid, al-Ma'mun, and those who followed received such complaints in public audience. Al-Muhtadi (869-870 A.D.) was the last to keep up with the custom.<sup>65</sup>

The police department (*diwan al-shurtah*) was headed by a high official designated *sahib al-shurtah* who acted as chief of police incharge of the caliph's bodyguard; in later times he occasionally held the rank of vizier. The chief of municipal police was called *muhtasib*, for he acted as overseer of the markets and public morality: it was his duty to see that proper weights and measures were used in trade, that legitimate debts were paid (though he had no right of adjudication), that approved behaviour was maintained and that acts forbidden by law, such as gambling, usury and public sale of wine, were not committed.<sup>66</sup>

A significant feature of the Abbasid government was the postal department<sup>67</sup> of which the chief was called *sahib al-barid*. Historians credit Harun al-Rashid with having organized the service on a new basis through his Barmakid counsellor Yahya.<sup>68</sup> Each provincial capital was provided with a post office. In Persia the relays consisted of mules and horses; in Syria and Arabia camels were used.<sup>69</sup> The public could make use of it on the payment of a substantial sum.

The dispensing of justice, always considered in the Muslim communities as a religious duty was entrusted by the Abbasid caliph or his vizier to a member of the *faqih* (jurist) class who thus became a *qadi*, or if in Baghdad a *qadi al-qudah* (chief judge). The first to receive the title of *qadi al-qudah* was the famous Abu Yusuf (d.798A.D.), who served under al-Mahdi and his two sons, al-Hadi and Harun al-Rashid.<sup>70</sup> The judge, according to the theory of Islamic law, had to be male, adult, in full possession of his mental faculties, a free citizen, Muslim in faith, irreproachable in character, sound of sight and hearing and well versed in the prescriptions of law, all of which was of course canon law.<sup>71</sup>

Al-Mawardi<sup>72</sup> distinguishes between two types of judgeship: one in which the authority is general and absolute (*ammah mutlaqah*) and the other in which the authority is special and limited (*khassah*). The chief duties of the first class *qadi* consisted of deciding cases, acting as guardian for orphans, lunatics and minors, administering pious foundations, imposing punishments on violators of the religious law, appointing judicial deputies (singular *na'ib*) in the various provinces and presiding under certain conditions at the Friday congregational prayers.

The caliph's bodyguard (*haras*) were almost the only regular troops and formed the nucleus around which bands

with their own chiefs were organised; the regulars (*jund*) who were permanently on active service were referred to as *murtaziqah* (regular paid). Others were designated *mutatawwi'ah*<sup>73</sup> (volunteers) and received rations only while on duty. The volunteer ranks were recruited from among the Bedouin as well as from the peasants and townspeople. Members of the bodyguard received higher pay and were equipped with better armour and uniforms.

The regulars under the early Abbasids were composed of infantry (*harbiyah*)<sup>74</sup> armed with spears, swords and shields, of archers (*ramiyah*) and of cavalry (*fursan*) wearing helmets and breast plate and equipped with long lances and battle axes.<sup>75</sup> Under the first caliph the bodyguard, was largely composed of Khurasani troops. Al-Mu'tasin added a new division made up of Turks.

Every ten men of the army under al-Ma'mun, al-Musta'in and other Abbasid caliphs were commanded by an *'arif* (corresponding to the corporal), every fifty by a *Khalifah*, and every hundred by *qa'id* (corresponding to the centurion). At the head of a corps of 10,000, comprising ten battalions, stood the *amir* (general). A body of a hundred men formed a company or squadron and several such companies constituted a cohort (*kurdus*). The decline of the Abbasid military power began with the introduction by al-Mutawakkil of foreign units. Later on al-Muqtadir (908-932A.D.) initiated the policy of farming



out provinces to governors or military commanders who were to pay their troops from local state funds and not from the depleted imperial treasury.<sup>76</sup>

Under the Buwayhid regime soldiers received grants in the form of land instead of pay in cash. This showed the seeds of feudal military system which was further developed under the Seljuqs. It then became customary for governors and generals to receive as grant towns or districts over which they ruled with absolute power, paying the Seljuq sultan a yearly tribute and, in time of war marching under his banner with fixed number of troops equipped and supported by themselves.

The Abbasid empire was partitioned into provinces under governors (singular *amir* or '*amil*'). The number of these provinces varied from time to time; but the following seem to have been the chief provinces under the early caliphs of Baghdad: (i) Africa, west of Libyan Desert together with Sicily; (ii) Egypt; (iii) Syria and Palestine which were sometimes separated; (iv) Hijaz and Yamamah (central Arabia); (v) Yemen or Southern Arabia;<sup>77</sup> (vi) Bahrayn and Uman, with Basrah in Iraq for its capital; (vii) al-Sawad, or Iraq (Lower Mesopotamia), whose leading cities after Baghdad were Kufah and Wasit; (viii) Jazirah (i.e. the island, rather than the peninsula, ancient Assyria), whose capital was Mawsil (Mosul); (ix) Adharbayjan, of which Ardabil, Tibriz and

Maraghah were the leading towns; (x) Jibal (the mountains, ancient Media), later called Iraq Ajami (the persian Iraq),<sup>78</sup> of which the principal cities were Hamadhan (ancient Ecbatana), Rayy and Isbahan (Isfahan, Ispaham); (xi) Khuzistan, with Ahwaz and Tustar<sup>79</sup> as chief towns; (xii) Faris, of which shiraz was the capital; (xiii) Karman, whose present capital bears the same name; (xiv) Mukran, which included modern Baluchistan and extended to the highlands overlooking the Indus valley; (xv) Sijistan or Sistan, whose capital was Zaranj; (xvi-xx) Quhistan, Qumis, Tabaristan, Jurgan and Armenia; (xxi) Khurasan, which included what has now become the north western part of Afghanistan and whose leading cities were Naysabur, Marv, Harat (Herat) and Balkh; (xxii) Khwarizm, whose early capital was kath; (xxiii) al-Sughd (ancient Sogdiana) between the oxas and Jaxartes, having two famous cities, Bukhara and Samarqand; (xxiv, etc) Farghanah, Shash (modern Tashkand) and other Turkish lands.<sup>80</sup>

In spite of all efforts on the part of the imperial capital, decentralization was the unavoidable and characteristic consequence of such a farflung domain with difficult means of intercommunication. In all local affairs the governor's authority tended to become supreme and his office hereditary. In theory he held his position at the pleasure of vizier, who recommended his appointment to caliph, and went out of office when that

vizier was removed, but this was usually a theoretical possibility only.

## 2. THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN THE ABBASID PERIOD

### A. THE SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The lifestyle and character of a person is a reflection of the life of the society in which he belongs, and so we will now dwell upon the social conditions of the time.

As we have already noted many provinces were either independent or partially independent from the central Caliphate in Baghdad. These new-born states in Spain, Persia, North Africa, etc. were distinguished from each other by their often very different cultures and social milieus.

It is therefore impossible to give a detailed account of the variety of social conditions in the empire. Nevertheless, certain broad characteristics can be discerned. In the following section we will outline the nature of the social groups which constituted the society of the empire, and their relative conditions.

### II. SOCIAL GROUPS



Muslim society in the time of Abbasid caliphate generally, and in the Seljuq period particularly, was divided roughly into the following categories.

**a. The Elite Class**

At the top was the caliph and his family, followed by outstanding statesmen like viziers, amirs (commanders of armies), secretaries and judges. Included in this class were also outstanding scholars, authors and poets, as well as the scions of the Hashimite clan and their followers. This was a kind of aristocracy.

**b. The Commoner Class ('ammah)**

This class included businessmen, farmers, soldiers and laymen. This group of people, especially in Baghdad, the capital of caliphate, came from many different races, including Arabs, Persians, Turks, Armenians, Nabateans, Circassians, Kurds, Georgians and Berbers.<sup>81</sup>

These ethnic groups lived together under Islam and became related by marriage, they all became known as Arabs in society for two reasons; first, Arabs were the majority in Muslim society at that time, secondly, the sovereignty of the Arabic language among those races because of the language of the religion, as well as the

official language of the state. from our point of view it is the combination of a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society with a unifying and overarching religious structure which interests us.

### c. Zimmis

The *Zimmis* are the free non-Muslim subjects living in an Islamic state. They are, according to *shari'ah*, Christians and Jews who continue to practise their religions while having citizenship in the Islamic state. They were called *Zimmi* or *ahl al-zimmah* (the people of protection) because they were the free subjects living in Muslim countries who in return for paying the capital tax, enjoyed protection and safety.<sup>82</sup> The civil laws applied to Muslims and *Zimmis* alike but they could practise their religion freely in their churches monasteries, and synagogues.<sup>83</sup> The Muslims were allowed by law to marry *Zimmi* women and to eat animals slaughtered by *Zimmis*. The Magians (*Majusi*, Zoroastrians) were also classified as *Zimmis*. But Muslims could not marry the women of this group and their meat was not permitted to Muslims.

The *Zimmis* who lived under Abbasid caliphate in general and Seljug period in particular enjoyed a high degree of safety and tolerance under Islam. In general they had a good relationship with Muslims. The Muslims

respected *Zimmis* and it is narrated that many caliphs took part in *Zimmis'* festivals and presented them with gifts.<sup>84</sup>

There were *Zimmis* throughout the Islamic provinces. Their monasteries, churches, synagogues and temples were built up every where in the Muslim world. It was narrated as well however, that Muslim-*Zimmi* marriages were rare.<sup>85</sup> The *Zimmi* communities; Christians Jews and Magians, normally subsisted in peace and obeyed the official heads their communities, who were confirmed in office by the Muslim ruler. Furthermore, Christians and Jews continued to fill high financial and secretarial offices in the bureaucracy of the Abbasids and under such dynasties as the Fatimids. They were thus by no means marginal nor treated as either inferior or as potential enemies.

#### d. Slaves

Slaves constituted another important sector of society. They were usually captives from wars between Muslims and non-Muslims. The servants and maidens (*jawari*) were almost all slaves. The slaves in the Muslim world came from many countries like Sicily, Greece, Turkey and Africa. But the majority was from central Asia - Armenia and Georgia. The slave trade was an important part of the market in the Abbasid period. There were many



slave traders in this time, and also traders in eunuchs (*khisyan*). This sort of trade was widespread in Baghdad at the Seljuq period. The *khisyan* were attached in the service of the women. Another kind of slave was called a *ghulam* (plural *ghilman*) who might be a eunuch and who was the recipient of special favours from their masters; they wore rich and attractive uniforms and were known to beautify and perfumed their bodies in an effeminate fashion.<sup>86</sup>

The maidens (*Jawari*) among slaves were also used as singers, dancers and concubines, and some of them exerted appreciable influence over their caliph masters. Al-Rashid's wife Zubaydah presented her husband with ten maidens one of whom became the mother of al-Ma'mun and another of al-Mu'tasim.<sup>87</sup> The caliphs did not see slavery as a degradation and the mothers of the majority of the caliphs were non-Arab slaves who were known and favoured for their beauty.<sup>88</sup>

## II. THE POSITION OF WOMEN

It is unfortunately the case that Muslim historians have focussed their attention too much upon the caliph's affairs and political occurrences to leave us an adequate picture of the social and economic life of the common people in those days. But from scattered incidental passages in their works, from literary sources and

ordinary life in the traditional Muslim societies today, it is not impossible to reconstruct a picture in outline at least.

In general, women in the Seljuq period did not have a good position in society unlike women in the early Abbasid period who often did rise to power. Examples of those who were very powerful in early Abbasid period are al-Hadi's mother, Khayzran who had a great personality and was very powerful in the country; Zubaidah, Amin's mother and Harun al-Rashid's wife, who was very active in welfare and charity; al-Abbasa, Harun al-Rashid's sister, who was distinguished with genius and culture. She often attended Harun al-Rashid's meetings and gave her opinions many of which were accepted by her brother.<sup>89</sup>

Thus, at least at the elite level during the early Abbasid period, women enjoyed a measure of liberty similar to their Umayyad sisters. But toward the end of the tenth century, under the Buwayhids, the system of strict seclusion and absolute segregation of sexes had become general.<sup>90</sup> Marriage has regarded almost universally in Islam as a positive duty. A wife's first duty consisted in the service of her husband, the care of the children and the management of household affairs.

Although they did not have good position and influence in the society, there were many women who

exercised influences over caliphs and sultans. But this influence was not clear enough because Seljuqs ruled the state and reduced the power of the caliphs. On the other hand, in the Seljuq period women were not allowed to mix with men in public<sup>91</sup> except during the sermon session which was delivered in the mosques.<sup>92</sup> In Spain there was a great deal of marriage between Muslim men and Christian women, and some of them actually preferred to marry Christian women slave whom they possessed. These slaves were from northern Spain.<sup>93</sup>

### III. LIVING STANDARD

As we might expect the standards of living experienced by these distinct groups were very different. The elite enjoyed considerable wealth. The commoners and the other on contrary were poor.

Normally, lands were given to the *amirs* of armies and outstanding figures in the state instead of salaries. The first to introduce this system was Nizam al-Mulk. Imad al-Din al-Isfahani tells us: "The normal procedure was to collect money and wealth from the countries which were conquered to pay the soldiers and nobody before this received land, so Nizam al-Mulk finding that the money and wealth could not be collected from those countries, divided the lands among the *amirs* of the armies and gave the lands with their surpluses and products".<sup>94</sup>



As a result of this policy disorder, chaos and disintegration began to spread every where in the state without proper control from the central government. These lands were well-known later as the emirates of *Atabegs*. It is true that in the beginning they posed no threat, but once central government became so weak, these *atabegs* began to declare independence from the central government. Among these *atabegs* were *Atabeg* Demascus, *Atabeg* Mosel and *Atabeg* Jazirah .<sup>95</sup>

Normally, this situation affected common people; poverty spread every where and famines were frequent in Baghdad. But this did not always happen, because under some of the caliphs like al-Mustadi' and al-Nasir, the people especially in Baghdad and its neighbouring districts lived in peace and the caliphs controlled the state well.<sup>96</sup>

One can mention briefly aspects of the material culture of people. As we should expect in this kind of society there was a "haute cuisine" of rich and varied food eaten by the elite consisting of "classical" dishes. While the less well-off had a less varied diet, at least in times of plenty it was not inadequate. Rice and bread was supplemented with meal, fish, vegetables and fruit.<sup>97</sup>

Clothing was equally differentiated among social

groups. The Sufis wore the rough clothes or old and ill-repaired clothes; bath workers were famous for their clothes called *tubban*;<sup>98</sup> farmers had heavy clothes made from cottons but lastly, the rich had silk and wore socks, stockings and shoes.<sup>99</sup> The common head-gear was the black high-peaked hat (*qalanswah*) made of felt or wool, and introduced by al-Mansur.<sup>100</sup> Wide trousers (*sarawil*) of persian origin,<sup>101</sup> shirt, vest and jacket (*quftan*) with outer mantle ('*aba*' or *jubbah*), completed the wardrobe of a gentleman.<sup>102</sup> The religious scholars, jurists and theologians, following the instruction of Abu Yusuf, Harun al-Rashid's distinguished judge wore distinctive black turbans and mentals (*taylasan*).<sup>103</sup>

Abbasid pastimes were well-known and popular. Certain games were particularly popular, e.g. chess, back-gammon and dice. Harun al-Rashid is credited with being the first Abbasid caliph to have played and encouraged chess.<sup>104</sup> Chess is from Sanskrit and was originally an Indian game.<sup>105</sup> It became the favourite indoor pastime of the aristocracy, displacing dice. Among board-games was backgammon (*nard*; trick-track) also of Indian origin.<sup>106</sup> Notable in the list of outdoor sports were archery, polo (*jukan*) ball and mallets (*sawlajan*) a sort of croquet or hockey, fencing, javelin-throwing (*jarad*), horse-racing and above all hunting, In the Abbasid period, as in the earlier one, hunting was the favourite outdoor pastime of caliphs and princes. Al-Amin

was particularly fond of hunting lions.<sup>107</sup>

Al-Musta'sim used the circuit (*halqah*) technique in his chase, as did the Seljuqs. Among other late caliphs, al-Mustanjid (1160-1170A.D.) organized a number of regular hunting-parties. Certain caliphs and rulers kept wild beasts such as lions and tigers which put awe into the hearts of their subjects and visitors;<sup>108</sup> other had dogs and monkeys for pets.

All of this is characteristic of the "conspicuous consumption" of such a class living on surplus production. It is to be emphasized that we are dealing with an urban culture. It came to be assumed that the good life could be properly lived only in a town. The villager lived in a very closed world, at little above subsistence level and hence at the mercy of many natural catastrophes. Rural prosperity depended on a strong government for maintaining irrigation and other essential services.

The town dwellers were some what more secure; hence, urban populations were always being swollen by runaway peasants. In the town there resided the ruling class of soldiers and officials and the religious classes of scholars. Below these were the merchants and then artisans and workers.



#### IV. LEISURE, ENTERTAINMENT AND CEREMONIES

One of the social phenomena which spread widely in the Abbasid period was singing and music in general. At that time the song had its own firm rules. Many authors wrote books on music and song. The most famous of them was "The book of Songs" (*kitab al-Aghani*) written by Abi al-Faraj al-Isfahani who collected in this book the names of the singers up to his time .

Although singing and music made their appearance in society, the public in general did not respond to them favourably except for a very small group. Some authors give us the reason of rejection: the Hanbalite jurists in Iraq generally opposed such forms of entertainment and amusement; further, a group approved listening to music but not the visual performance of singing and dancing.<sup>109</sup> This puritanism is very important in the context of our discussion of al-Jilani.

Another important phenomenon which emerged in the Abbasid period in general and in the Seljuqs in particular was that of ceremonies and festivals. These sometimes reached a level of extraordinary splendor and arrogance. On Fridays and during festivals, the people walked with the caliph's parade and held the flags; the princes of the Abbasid royal family rode beautiful horses and the caliph wore special dress in all these festivals;

he wore the black *qaba'*<sup>110</sup> and a turban with a *qalanswah*<sup>111</sup> which was set with special jewels. The caliph was surrounded or encircled by outstanding statesmen.<sup>112</sup> One of the greatest caliphs' parade was the parade of pilgrimage when people came from different Muslim cities, gathering to join the caliph's parade. The caliph in the pilgrimage season met with governors, amirs and other statesmen who walked to and from pilgrimage.

Many historians narrated that when Caliph al-Amir (524-544A.H./1129-1149A.D.) went out for Friday prayer the elephants and lions were decorated and that glorious clothes were worn and colourful weapons held. The Caliph himself handed over gold and silver money to the public who stood on both sides of the road; presentations made to the public all along the road.<sup>113</sup>

Besides these ceremonies and festivals there were wedding ceremonies which were given attention. This fashion of luxury, pride and hypocrisy in wedding ceremonies spread widely. In 502A.H./1108A.D. Caliph al-Mustazhir (487-512A.H./1094-1118A.D.) married the sister of Sultan Muhammad ibn Malik Shah and he gave her as a *sadaq*<sup>114</sup> amount 100,000 dinar. This marriage ceremony was supervised by Judge Abu al-A'la Sa'id al-Naysaburi and vizier Ahmad bin Nizam al-Mulk as a representative on behalf of the Caliph. In the ceremony, dinars and jewels were handed over to those attending.<sup>115</sup>

In 531A.H./1136A.D., Caliph al-Muqtafi (530-555A.H./1135-1160A.D.) proposed to engage Fatimah, daughter of Muhammad ibn Malik Shah: as his representative in marriage contract, he chose vizier Abu al-Qasim al-Zainabi. Her brother, Sultan Mas'ud attended this ceremony of marriage contract as well. But the actual wedding ceremony was in 534A.H./1139A.D. and was of course a grand one.<sup>116</sup>



## B. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

### I. COMMERCE AND TRADE

Islam had begun in the mercantile centre of Mecca, and the merchant was an honoured figure in Islamic society. In addition there were routes from Baghdad to the pagan lands of Siberia, northern India, and sub-Saharan Africa. If available, sea transport was in many ways less hazardous than land travel, where brigandage, tolls, and other vexations were frequent.

Eastward, Muslim traders ventured as far as China which according to Arab tradition was reached from Basrah as early as the days of the second Abbasid caliph, al-Mansur.<sup>117</sup> The earliest Arabic source treating of the subject of Arab and Persian maritime communication with India and China is a report of voyages by Sulayman al-Tajir (the merchant) and other Muslim traders in the third century M.E.. This trade was based on silk, the earliest of China's magnificent gifts to the West, and usually followed what has been styled "the great silk way"<sup>118</sup> going through Samarqand and Chinese Turkestan.

The products of the Far East were tapped by Arab and Persian sailors in the earliest Islamic period, for in the 8th century there was a flourishing Muslim colony in Canton, although, thereafter, the Malay Archipelago

tended to be the limit of Muslim navigation. Westward, Muslim merchants reached Morocco and Spain. Arab Mediterranean trade however, never rose to great prominence. The Black sea was likewise inhospitable to it. Muslim merchants carried with them dates, sugar, cotton and woollen fabrics, steel tools and glassware; they imported among other commodities, spices, camphor and silk from farther Asia and ivory, ebony and negro slaves from Africa. Commerce in the Mediterranean came to be shared with Christians, especially the traders of Venice and Amalfi. The Fatimid and following period showed much trade between Egypt and Tunisia in the hands of Jewish merchants. Jews were at this time acting as something like central bankers to certain Islamic rulers.<sup>119</sup>

## II. INDUSTRY AND MANUFACTURE

Hand industries flourished in various parts of the empire. In Western Asia it centred chiefly on the manufacture of rugs, tapestry, silk, cotton and woollen fabrics, satin, and brocade (*dibaj*), articles of furniture and kitchen utensils. The many looms of Persia and Iraq turned out carpets and textiles maintained at high standard with distinctive marks. Al-Musta'in's mother had a rug specially ordered for her at a cost of 130,000,000 dirhams, bearing figures of all sorts of birds in gold which had rubies and other precious stones

for eyes.<sup>120</sup>

The glass of Sidon, Tyre and other Syrian towns, a survival of the ancient Pheonician industry which after the Egyptian was the oldest glass industry in history was proverbial for its clarity and thinness.<sup>121</sup>

Worthy of special note is the manufacture of writing paper, introduced in the middle of the eighth century into Samarqand from China. Before the close of that century Baghdad saw its first paper-mill. Gradually others for making paper followed; Egypt had its factory about 900A.D. earliar, Morocco about 1100A.D., Spain about 1150A.D.; and various kinds of paper, white and coloured were produced. The oldest Arabic paper manuscript that has come down to us is one on Tradition entitted *Gharib al-Hadith*, by Abn Ubayd al-Qasin ibn Sallam (d.837A.D.) dated Dhu al-Qa'dah, 252A.H. and preserved in the leiden University Library.<sup>122</sup>

### III. AGRICULTURE

Agriculture recieved great impetus under the early Abbasids because their capital itself lay in a most favoured spot, the alluvial plain commonly known under the name of *al-Sawad*;<sup>123</sup> because they realized that farming was the chief souce of the state income. The *Sawad* for a long time gave the caliphate a firm financial



base and supplied the populous capital, Baghdad, with its produce. Here, as everywhere in the Muslim world, the availability of water was the key to life, and the highly complex system of irrigation, canals and hydraulic machinery underlay the prosperity of the sawad. Thus it was a classical "hydraulic" society in many ways.

A traditional duty of caliphs and governors was to "bringing land to life": something not uncommon in Southeast Asia also. But unfortunately, from the 10th century A.D. onward, the fertile crescent suffered from the incursions of nomads (Bedouins and, later, Turkmen) who cared nothing for agriculture or irrigation systems; and the political decline of the caliphate with drying up of its financial resources, must have adversely affected agriculture in Iraq. The lower region of the Tigris-Euphrates valley, the richest in the whole empire after Egypt and the traditional site of the garden of Eden, was the object of special attention on the part of central government before the coming of Turkmen.<sup>124</sup>

Khurasan vied with Iraq and Egypt as a rich agricultural country.<sup>125</sup> Between Samarkand and Bukhara, lay the valley of Sogdiana (Wadi al-Sughd) one of the "four earthly paradises", the other three being the gap of Bavvan (Shi'b Bawwan), the gardens of the Ubullah Canal, extending from Basrah to the south east,<sup>126</sup> and the orchards (ghutah) of Damascus.<sup>127</sup> In these gardens

flourished several varieties of fruits, vegetables and flowers, such as dates, apples, apricots, peaches, plums, lemons, oranges, figs, grapes, olives, almonds, pomegranates, egg-plants, radishes, cucumbers, roses and basil (*rayhan*).<sup>128</sup>

Egypt had the advantage of reliable harvests from the Nile floods, a centralized bureaucratic tradition to direct agricultural operations and excellent river and sea transport. Hence, the Egyptian farmer produced the surplus necessary for the dynastic wars such as those of the Tulunids and Fatimids, together with a normal surplus for export.<sup>129</sup>

The picture we gain thus is of a complex mercantile economy which could flourish under three conditions. First, there had to be surplus agricultural production; this entailed a high degree of effective central government to ensure the maintenance of irrigation systems. Second, also requiring strong centralised government, was the existence of extensive trading net-works. Third, the regulation of trade was obviously facilitated by the development of Muslim commercial law.

It is now appropriate to examine the kind of intellectual and religious culture which could flourish under these circumstances.

### 3. THE INTELLECTUAL AND RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS IN THE ABBASID PERIOD

#### A. FACTORS OF THE PROGRESS OF INTELLECTUAL AND RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

The flourishing of intellectual and religious thought in the Abbasid period in general and Seljuq period in particular can be referred to the immigration of non-Arabs especially, Persians and Turks to the Muslim state. Those people who immigrated made considerable contributions to the development of intellectual and religious thought, because the majority of them, especially among the Persians, were already civilized and learned people. On this ground, Ibn Khaldun said that it was a very notable fact that the majority of the scholars and learned men were non-Arabs, not in *shari'ah* sciences only, but in rational (*aqli*) sciences as well. These were Arab in their lineage, but not in language and their teachers were non-Arabs.<sup>130</sup>

Paper production was an important material factor in the development of intellectual and religious thought. Paper factories spread widely in the state. This gave considerable impetus to the movement of composition, compilation and copying.<sup>131</sup> There was competition in the purchasing and selling of books. Making collections of books to be placed in personal or public libraries was



the trend of this time, so libraries spread widely and every where, especially in the palaces of caliphs and houses of viziers, scholars, and even common people.

Another influential factor was encouragement given by caliphs, viziers, amirs and other statesmen to the sciences; they invited scholars and learned men to come to their courts and gave them good salaries and other benefits. Although the Abbasid empire was divided into small petty dynasties and provinces many of them independent or semi-independent from the central government, the rulers competed with each other to invite scholars and learned men to come to their courts. As a result of this competition, the developement of sciences was truly zealous.<sup>132</sup>

The phenomenon of intellectual and religious thought in the Abbasid period in general appeared in many contexts and in different centres. The greatest one was the mosque. The function of the mosque in that time was not only for prayer and other religious rituals, but much more than that. It was used to spread science and knowledge, so lectures and courses were given and delivered in the mosque. The full range of science and scholarship was taught; Islamic jurisprudence, Arabic, *tafsir*, *hadith*, poetry and so on.<sup>133</sup> It is worth mentioning here that every scholar had his own mosque as a centre of his teaching and education, something we

shall see when we discuss the career of al-Jilani.

Of particular interest were the debating sessions which were considered an important institution of knowledge. These sessions were organized in the mosque, palace, house and the market among the scholars on such subjects as Islamic jurisprudence, linguistics, Tafsir, Hadith and so on. These debates were narrated and recorded in the books of history, jurisprudence, biography and language.<sup>134</sup>

Another phenomenon was the academic trip and journey. The students in this time without any doubt were very brave to travel from one country to another searching for knowledge, as well as those scholars who sought new experience and further knowledge.

Lastly, but of great importance, was the establishment of schools. Seljuq rulers paid devoted attention and encouragement to founding schools and chose outstanding teachers to run them. These schools were very important in the spread of knowledge, besides the mosques and other institutions.

The person who laid down the idea of building schools was Nizam al-Mulk; the vizier of Alp-Arslan and Malik Shah. He was himself a learned man and an author as well. He established the Nizamiyyah colleges in Baghdad

and other leading cities which were called after him. Many outstanding scholars were invited by Nizam al-Mulk to teach in his colleges, including al-Ghazali, al-Tibrizi, Ibn al-Anbari and others. Taj al-Din al-Subki says: "In every city in Iraq and Khurasan, Nizam al-Mulk had a college".<sup>135</sup> So his colleges were established in Baghdad, Balkh, Naysabur, Harat (Herat), Isfahan, Basrah, Merw, Amal and Mosul.<sup>136</sup>

In the western part of Muslim world like Syria and Egypt in this time, the Fatimids were very active as well in establishing higher learning. They built al-Azhar for the purpose of spreading the doctrines of the Shi'ite sect.<sup>137</sup> But after Sultan Salah al-Din (saladin) took over Egypt from the Fatimids he changed the al-Azhar to teach Sunniite doctrine.

## B. THE INTELLECTUAL AND RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

The intellectual and religious movements under the Abbasids achieved their full flowering and the process came to maturity. In the following pages, we are going to divide the intellectual and religious movements into five main areas:

- I. Mu'tazilism
- II. Philosophy
- III. Scholastic Theology (Kalam)



#### IV. Jurisprudence and Traditionalism

#### V. Sufism

### I. MU'TAZILISM

The founder of Mu'tazilism was Wasil ibn 'Ata' (d.748A.D.), a pupil of Hasan of Basrah. One day he said before his teacher that some persons were neither "believer" nor "unbeliever" Because "believer" is a term of praise. Yet they cannot be called "unbeliever", because they still believe in the Unity of God and sometimes do good deeds as well.<sup>138</sup> Thus a theological intermediary category of Muslim sinners was proposed.

On hearing this, Hasan of Basrah became angry. Then he left Hasan's circle and went with 'Amr ibn Ubayd<sup>139</sup> (d.761A.D.), a fellow student to the other corner of the mosque and began to develop his own views. Hasan, seeing wasil preaching in the other corner of the mosque said: "*i'tazala 'anna*", means "he has seceded from us". Hence the name Mu'tazilah of which movement Wasil and Ubayd were the legendary founders.<sup>140</sup>

Wasil sent his pupils to all Islamic countries to teach the doctrine of the Mu'tazilah.<sup>141</sup> The doctrine of the Qadarites that man was free to act was accepted by Wasil's school, and because of this the Mu'tazilites are sometimes called Qadarites.<sup>142</sup> He added further doctrines

to the school such as that of the creation of the Qur'an.

Perhaps, this movement got its chances to flower quickly when Mansur directed his attention to the development of arts, sciences, learning and so on. At this time, works of philosophy were translated from other languages into Arabic under the auspices of state. This helped the Mu'tazilah, because they represented the rational interpretation of faith and spiritual truth.<sup>143</sup>

The caliphs of the period from Ma'mun to Wathiq (813-847A.D.) all helped the Mu'tazilah movement. The traditionists and the jurists at that time were powerless to counteract the arguments advanced by philosophers and followers of other religions against Islam. The Mu'tazilites however, come forward and met their arguments with better arguments. On finding the Mu'tazilah successful in defending Islam against foreign attacks all learned people turned towards it.<sup>144</sup>

Al-Ma'mun made Mu'tazilah a state religion.<sup>145</sup> But his action and prejudices against those who were not Mu'tazilites brought about the downfall of the movement.<sup>146</sup> Al-Ma'mun issued a decree that all the Muslims must believe in the doctrine of the creation of the Qur'an. This brought a reaction from the orthodox, and this reaction was symbolized by Ahmad ibn Hanbal's stand in defense of the orthodox doctrine of the

uncreated Qur'an. Ahmad ibn Hanbal and other pious people ultimately gave a death blow to Mu'tazilah.<sup>147</sup> Mutawakkil restored the decree of orthodoxy, and the Mu'tazilah henceforth played no significant role in practical affairs.

From Nazzam (d.845A.D.) onward Mu'tazilah tended to become more and more of a philosophy.<sup>148</sup> with strong leanings towards the Greeks and thus was less distinguishable as a theological and religious movement.

## II. PHILOSOPHY

Thus, the later Mu'tazilites such as Nazzam developed a tendency towards philosophical speculation. From amongst these thinkers arose a series of philosophers<sup>149</sup> who were the students of wisdom of the Greeks.<sup>150</sup> Their studies included physics, mathematics, chemistry, astronomy and music, besides metaphysics. In metaphysics they followed Plato and Aristotle, whom they regarded as the expounders of the truth. Many of them limited their studies only to the Aristotelian school,<sup>151</sup> although the two schools were not clearly distinguished.

Plato and Aristotle were rationalists, who regarded reason as only source of true knowledge. But there was in their respective philosophies, especially that of Plato, a mystical-religious flavour and it was this which made



them acceptable to Muslims. In this way however, they caused a good deal of misunderstanding in the Muslim mind.

Plato came to the Muslims in the form of neo-platonism. Al-Kindi (d.873A.D.) was the first to take up a systematic study of Greek philosophy.<sup>152</sup> He started as a Mu'tazilite but turned to philosophy, he translated philosophical books from Greek into Arabic.<sup>153</sup> He corrected the translation which were already in existence.

Indeed already al-Farabi (d.950A.D.) a contemporary of al-Ash'ari and al-Maturidi, had committed himself to the philosophical system of Neoplatonism and given an original presentation of it in Arabic in a semi-Islamic form. Al-Farabi was regarded as the greatest philosopher of Islam and a neo-platonist,<sup>154</sup> because he strove to reconcile the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle with that of the Qur'an.<sup>155</sup> Al-Farabi was one of the associates of the literary circle of Sayf al-Dawlah, the great Hamdanid at Aleppo.<sup>156</sup>

Other philosophers are Ibn Sina (d.1036A.D.) and Ibn Miskawayh (d.1030A.D.), Ibn Sina was encyclopaedic in learning, an accomplished physician, and a great philosopher.<sup>157</sup> Ibn Miskawayh a contemporary of Ibn Sina has left us among others, a well known book, *al-Fawz*

*al-Asrar*.<sup>158</sup> Other thinkers are al-Biruni, Ibn Haytham and so on. It is also we hear in this age that we here the names of great sceptics like Abu al-A'la al-Ma'ari and Umar Khayyam.

With the spread of the knowledge of Greek philosophy and sciences, Greek culture had a renaissance. The philosopher al-Kindi and his followers who founded a school of Greek philosophy in the heart of Islam began to exalt Hellenism over Arabism. As noted before, the Mu'tazilite school was defeated, and the orthodox scholars then turned to combat the heretical theories of Greek philosophy.

### III. SCHOLASTIC THEOLOGY (KALAM)

During the reign of Mutawakkil, the most creative thinkers among the Mutazilites were dead, and the group was on the point of losing its special position at court as a result of "the change of policy". Especially free thought was suppressed and the Mu'tazilites were punished. This in turn helped the spread of orthodoxy. In both Basrah and Baghdad, however, the Mu'tazilites continued to exist as a group and they were still the masters of science and argumentation<sup>159</sup> and tried to defend and explain religion on rationalistic lines. But rationalism made people sceptical towards religion. Heresies and unbelief were widesspread.

Some personalities, like Ibn Hazm (d.1064A.D.), the Zahirite (formalist) in Spain, Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari in Mesopotamia (d.932A.D.), Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (d.934A.D.) in Samargand emerged in this period, besides Hanbalite theologians to defend the faith against the attacks of the Mu'tazilites.<sup>160</sup>

Al-Ash'ari was the only person who could silence the Mu'tazilites as well as the other heretical sects by his mastery of the science of disputation.<sup>161</sup> He was born in Basrah about 873A.D., and studied among others under al-Jubba'i (d.915A.D.), the head of the Mu'tazilites of Basrah at the time. Al-Ash'ari was one of his best pupils. Al-Ash'ari was a Mu'tazilite till his 40th year. In a dream the Prophet is said to have told him to follow the Qur'an and the *hadith*.<sup>162</sup>

He met his teacher al-Jubba'i in public discussion and had challenged him with the problem of three brothers of whom one was good, one wicked and one died as a child. The usual Mu'tazilite view was that the first was in Heaven, the second in Hell, and the third in a kind of limbo, since he had had no opportunity to perform good works. Some Mu'tazilites tried to say that God caused the third to die as a child because he knew that, if he had grown up, he would have become wicked and gone to Hell; but this lays them open to the question, "why did not God



cause the second to die before he became wicked?", so his question defeated his teacher.<sup>163</sup>

Al-Ash'ari wrote more than a hundred books in refutation of Mu'tazilah.<sup>164</sup> He did not recognize any knowledge of Divine things that was independent of revelation. He maintained that theology could not be built on a purely rational basis. Faith in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet was necessary, and with regard to the freedom of the will, he held that man could not create anything, God was the only Creator. God created in man the faculties of choice and power. Initiation belonged only to God.<sup>165</sup> This teaching, while complex, became the orthodox "philosophical" viewpoint.

At about the same time in distant Samargand a theological school of the Hanafite were moving toward a somewhat similar result. The leading figure here was al-Maturidi (d.944A.D.), who was almost an exact contemporary of al-Ash'ari. The two men are often spoken of as the joint founders of Sunnite rational theology.<sup>166</sup>

The orthodox theologians accepted al-Ash'ari's teachings as a great blessing from God. His book were circulated throughout the Muslim countries. By the beginning of the eleventh century the Ash'arite theology was perfected by Abu Bakr al-Baqillani (d.1012A.D.),<sup>167</sup> who extended the scope of theological discussions at

various points. With al-Baqillani, Ash'arite rational theology became an important part of the intellectual life of Baghdad in the early eleventh century and it also spread to some of the provinces, notably to Nishapur.

After al-Baqillani, there arose a number of great theologians like al-Juwayni (d.1085A.D.), and al-Ghazali (d.1111A.D.) who contributed to the development of Ash'arite theology.<sup>168</sup> At this time the Seljuq ruled in Baghdad. They were orthodox Muslims. Because of the condemnation the leading Ash'arite of Nishapur, al-Juwayni spent several years in Mecca and Medina, and in consequence came to be known as *Imam al-Haramayn* (the *imam* of the two sanctuaries).<sup>169</sup>

The death of Tughril Beg and the accession of Alp-Arslan led to the replacement of al-Kunduri by Nizam al-Mulk as vizier. The latter was a Shafi'ite and Ash'arite, and was further convinced that Ash'arism was best suited to be the basis of Seljuq rule in its struggle against Fatimid propaganda. He therefore gradually founded about a dozen colleges, each known as the Nizamiyyah. Staff and students were well provided for by endowments, and the aim was to provide teaching of a high quality in Shafi'ite jurisprudence, and in some cases, in Asharite theology. Al-Juwayni (*Imam al-Haramayn*) became first head of the Nizamiyyah in Nishapur.<sup>170</sup>

About 1077A.D., a young scholar of nineteen went to Nishapur from neighbouring Tus to study under al-Jawayni. This was al-Ghazali (Abu Hamid, Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad), one of the greatest of Muslim thinkers. To fill out our understanding of the Islamic world up to 1100 A.D., it is well worth looking more closely at al-Ghazali. He was born at Tus (near modern Meshhad) in 1058A.D., and was educated there, at Jurjan, and finally at Nishapur. Jurisprudence was the core of his education, and under al-Juwayni added Ash'arite theology. On the death of al-Juwayni in 1085 A.D., he was invited to join the other scholars at the mobile camp and court of Nizam al-Mulk. In 1091A.D., he was appointed chief professor in the Nizamiyyah college in Baghdad, at the age of thirty-three. His primary duty was to lecture on jurisprudence; and he told us that three hundred students attended his lectures.<sup>171</sup>

Although, al-Ghazzali lectured on jurisprudence, he was also expert in rational theology, philosophy and sufism. It was however, mainly through al-Ghazali that the Ash'arite theology became the most popular system in the Islamic countries at that time, Al-Ghazali crushed all opposition completely and the Ash'arite doctrines as modified by him were established finally in the whole Islamic world. In Syria and Egypt, Sultan Salah al-Din (d.1089 A.D.) and in North Africa and Spain, al-Ghazali's



student, Ibn Tumart,<sup>172</sup> helped Ash'arites to gain complete victory. It would be worth conducting a detailed study of the success of Ash'arite theology as a cornerstone of orthodoxy.

#### IV. JURISPRUDENCE AND TRADITIONALISM

The founders of the four great divisions of Islamic law, which arise in Abbasid times, all flourished in the later 8th and 9th centuries; Abu Hanifah (d.767A.D.), founder of the Hanafi rite; Malik ibn Anas (d.795A.D.), founder of the Maliki rite; Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i (d.820A.D.), founder of the Shafi'i rite; and Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d.855A.D.), founder of the Hanbali rite.<sup>173</sup>

Generally speaking, the Maliki and Hanbali rites represented a more conservative interpretation of the bases of Islamic law; the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. But the differences among the rites were at the outset geographical rather than ideological. Thus, the Maliki rite represented the custom of Medina and the rugged simplicity of life in Arabian peninsula; the Hanafi rite represented the more flexible practice of Iraq, where society and institutions were more complex than those of Hijaz.

Besides these four rites in jurisprudence, there were other rites like the Jaririyyah and Zahiriyah. The Jaririyyah was founded by Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari, and he was born in 839A.D. in the province of Tabaristan at the southern edge of Caspian sea. He was said to have heard lectures by Ahmad ibn Hanbal, but in law he first belonged to the school of Shafi'i. After a time, however, he diverged from that school and founded his own school, known as the Jaririyyah, but it lasted for only one or two generations. The Zahiriyah school was founded by Dawud ibn Ali (d.884A.D.). It was so called because it claimed that particular rules should be based only on the *zahir* (the literal and evident) meaning of Qur'an and Traditions. Latterly it was chiefly in Spain that we hear of the Zahirite school.<sup>174</sup>

In the study of Traditions also the period from 850 to 945 A.D. was one of consolidation. By the year 850 A.D. many thousands of anecdotes about the Prophet were in circulation, and scholars like Ibn Hanbal were well aware of the need for a critique of those anecdotes to distinguish those which were sound and authentic from the false. By about 850A.D. there was a wide consensus of scholars that this type of critique was satisfactory, and some men therefore set about making collection of "Sound Traditions". Among the early collections were two of the greatest, those of al-Bukhari (d.870A.D.) and Muslim (d.875A.D.). Each is called "*al-Jami' al-Sahih*".<sup>175</sup>

During the next half century four other collections were made, which came to be regarded as canonical, along with the first. There were *al-Jami'al-Sahih* of Tirmidhi (d.892 A.D.), and three by Ibn Majah (d.886A.D.), Abu Dawud (d.888 A.D.), and Nassa'i (d.915A.D.), each called *Sunan*, that is, the *Sunan* (practices) of the prophet.<sup>176</sup> These were by no means the only collections that were made about this time, but those called "The six books" came to be highly regarded by large numbers of scholars.

During the Buwayhid period, the Hanbalites were in the forefront of the reaffirmation of Sunnism. One of the main objects of attack for the Hanbalites was Mu'tazilism, nevertheless, they attacked every heretical doctrines from their viewpoint. It is worth mentioning here that a man known as Ibn al-Qushayri, the son of a famous Shafi'ite jurist and mystic, and himself also a jurist and a mystic as well as an Ash'arite theologian, came to preach in the Nizamiyyah college at Baghdad with the permission of Nizam al-Mulk. As well as expounding Ash'arite views on the Qur'an (which differed somewhat from the Hanbalite), he would unjustly accuse Hanbalites. Often this led to some rioting.<sup>177</sup> The Hanbalites had the support of Caliph al-Muqtadi, but other Shafi'ite scholars took the side of Ibn al-Qushayri. It is clear that the Hanbalites had come to have plenty of supporters in Baghdad,<sup>178</sup> but both the Sultan Malik Shah and the

vizier Nizam al-Mulk both were Shafi'ites and had a counter balancing influence.

The Hanbalites tried to base all individual social and political life on the Qur'an and Traditions and to exclude all use of reason. On the side opposing the Hanbalites were those who in varying degrees advocated the use of reason on the Greek model. The extreme representatives of the Greek outlook were the philosophers. The Ash'arites were opposed by the Hanbalites because they allowed some use of reason. But between these two sides there was a further option which was becoming more influential than ever.

#### V. SUFISM

Having reviewed in brief Mu'tazilism, philosophy, scholastic theology, jurisprudence and traditionalism, we are going to discuss Sufism. From the very beginning asceticism had a strong attraction for some Muslims. Sufism started as a reaction against the formalism of the theologians and the masses, the intellectualism of the rationalists and the philosophers, the ungodly ways of the ruling classes.

The theologians, jurists and traditionalists adhered to the letter of the law which reduced Islam to a set of rituals and ceremonies. The rationalists adhered to the



reason and regarded it as the source of truth. The philosophers followed the rationalists and believed in the infallibility of Plato and Aristotle. The Abbasid dynasty had pushed Arab culture into the back-ground and adopted Persian ways and manners which encouraged laxity in morals.<sup>179</sup>

Before al-Jilani sufism passed through three main stages of development. during the first stage, the sufis were ascetics and quietists. They avoided every form of luxury and ostentation. Hasan of Basrah (d.728A.D.), Ibrahim ibn Adham (d.777 A.D.), Rabi'a (d.776 A. D.) belonged to this quietist stage. The most distinguished ascetic during the first Islamic century was Hasan of Basrah, who was a great friend of Caliph Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz.<sup>180</sup>

The second stage of development is often known as the theosophical stage. The doctrines of Sufism began to take a definite shape. Ma'ruf of Karkh (d.815A.D.) introduced the doctrines of total forgetfulness and many of the emotional elements associated with the path. Muhasibi (d.857A.D.) laid emphasis on self-examination and had such profound experience of the love of God that he could speak of Him as "the beloved". Sari Saqati (d.870A.D.) initiated the doctrine of *tawhid*, which became the central idea of later sufi-philosophy. Tawwab ibn Ibrahim Dhu al-Nun al-Masri (d.859A.D.), who was the

first to found a sufi sect in Egypt formulated the doctrines of *hal* (state) and *maqam* (stage) and ecstasy. A little later Abu Yazid of Bistam (d.876A.D.) forms a link between the theosophical stage and the pantheistic stage. He possibly knew something of Indian mysticism. He was so carried away by ecstatic experiences that he burst into "intoxicated" utterances (indentifying himself with God) such as "Glory be to Me!", "How great is my Majesty".<sup>181</sup>

The third stage of development is known as the pantheistic. Abu Yazid is well known for his extreme utterances. He elaborated the doctrine of self-effacement and self-annihilation doctrines which anticipated the later full-blown pantheistic systems. Mansur al-Hallaj (d.921A.D.) also betrayed pantheistic tendencies and was renowned, of course, for saying: "I am Truth".<sup>182</sup> He travelled widely and had great success as a popular preacher. It seems that the authorities became alarmed and had him arrested. He was eventually condemned and executed by crucifixion.<sup>183</sup>

According to the sufis his utterance was due to a state of exaltation in which al-Hallaj was lost in rapture at the Beatific vision and had lost touch with phenomenal reality. The early historians regarded him as an imposter. He introduced apparently un-Islamic doctrines into Sufism, such as *hulul* (fusion), *ittihad* (union), *tanasukh* (transmigration), etc.

The break between sufism and orthodox Islam took place gradually. At its first stage of development, sufism was not very different from pious Islam. In their doctrines the sufis emphasized some truths of Islam at the cost of others. In their conduct they cut themselves off from society and devoted themselves exclusively to religious exercises.<sup>184</sup>

At the second stage, novel methods of purification of the heart were devised and at the third stage, this pantheistic tendency became evident. A distinction between sufism and Islam as a whole began to appear. The external side of Islam was lost sight of. Prayers, fasts, etc. were given up, and *dhikr* and other innovations were adopted for the purification of the heart. The authority of the shaykh was added to the authority of the Qur'an and the Prophet. Now the break between the orthodox Islam and sufism had become complete. The jurists and theologians adhered to the letter of the law and the sufis sought the spirit,<sup>185</sup> but in a way which seemed highly dubious.

Eventually a group of thinkers tried to reconcile the views of the jurists and theologians with those of the sufis, in other words, *shari'ah* and *tariqah*. They pointed out that both the form and the spirit were necessary.

Junayd of Baghdad (d.900A.D.) was the first celebrated sufi to advocate that the external path (*shari'ah*) and the internal meaning (*haqiqah*) were the two aspects of religion which supplemented each other. He was followed by al-Qushayri (d.1074A.D.) who tried to bridge the gulf in his treatise, "*al-Risalah al-Qushayriyyah*". Abu Talib al-Makki continued the task. Al-Muhasibi (d.859 A.D.) is the most typical representative of the school. But the gulf between sufism and orthodox Islam continued to remain wide till al-Ghazali and al-Jilani reconciled the two.<sup>186</sup> Al-Ghazali and al-Jilani were responsible for weaving sufi doctrines into the texture of Islamic thought and literature, and in addition al-Jilani preached the doctrines to his students and to the public, a crucial aspect which we will be returning to in more detail below.



C. FURTHER NOTES ON THE INTELLECTUAL AND  
RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS IN THE SELJUQ PERIOD

To make al-Jilani's environment clear, some further information concerning the intellectual and religious conditions in the Seljuq period is necessary.

The stronghold of Sunnism was mostly eastern Iran, whereas Shi'i centres were typical of Persian Iraq and Tabaristan (especially Qum, Ray and Aveh), Iranian Sunnism was chiefly Hanafi and Shafi'i, and these two schools were not often on good terms.<sup>187</sup> The Seljuq period in Iran is not only the period of al-Ghazali there existed other tendencies that were still alive and influential like the Mu'tazilah school and the Hanbali school. The Mu'tazilah school existed in Iraq, Khwarazm and Transoxiana, whereas the Hanbali school was widespread among people in Baghdad and the neighbouring areas.<sup>188</sup>

There were many other figures contemporary with al-Jilani who achieved fame.<sup>189</sup> Juwayni (d.1085A.D.), the master of Ghazali, well known as *Imam al-Haramayn*. He was the greatest Shafi'i Ashari theologian of Khurasan and author of many important books on theology and jurisprudence. He had many famous pupils besides al-Ghazali. Another Shafi'i Ash'ari scholar of Seljuq Iran was al-Shahrastani (d.1153A.D.), who served Sultan

Sanjar and is chiefly famous as the author of the great heresiographical manual, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal*. He lived in Khurasan and Khwarazm. Amongst other works, he wrote a commentary on the Qur'an. His *Musari'ah* is a polemical work against Ibn Sina (Avicenna) who is a favourite target of Ash'ari attacks. Ibn Aqil, the master of al-Jilani, was the author of many important books and was himself a Hanbali scholar living in Baghdad. Ibn al-Jawzi (d.1201 A.D.) the author of the famous "*Talbis Iblis*" (the Tricks of Satan) another treatise on heresy and again was a Hanbali. Al-Zamakhshari (d.1144 A.D.), is famous for his book "*al-Kashshaf*", a great Mu'tazilah commentary on the Qur'an. Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d.1210A.D.) was the author of a famous *tafsir* of the Qur'an, a true encyclopaedia. He also wrote the *Muhassil Afkar al-Mutaqaddimin*.

The importance of the Seljuq period lies especially in the fact that religious learning was organized in great teaching institutions, which might be considered to be amongst the first universities of the civilized world.

The teaching in all these universities (*madrasahs*) was conducted by the *mudarrisin* (professors) and their *mu'ids* (assistants). The professor used to teach seated on a *kursi* (a sort of chair) and wore a special gown called a *tarhah* and a turban; two *mu'ids* were seated at his side, repeating his words to the students and

explaining difficult points. The curriculum consisted of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *hadith* (traditions of the Prophet), *tafsir* (exegesis of the Qur'an), literary theory, mathematics and medicine. Every student had his own *hujrah* (a small room), and a monthly stipend. In these *madrasahs*, and also elsewhere, there were rich libraries. To take only an example given by Yaqut in his *Mu'jam*: In Marv there were ten *waqf* (public endowment) libraries, some of them containing 12,000 volumes. Books could be borrowed without any restrictions (Yaqut himself had two hundred in his house at one time!).<sup>190</sup> This style of education remains in practice in traditional centres of learning to this day.

The second half of the eleventh century, all of the twelfth, and the beginnings of the thirteenth may be considered one of the most important periods in the history of sufism, not only in Iraq and Iran but everywhere. In the second half of the eleventh century in Transoxiana, Khurasan and Iraq, great sufi saints lived, each one in small convents (*Khanqah*), praying, performing *zikr* and teaching new pupils. It is in the Seljuq period that sufism, after years of distrust, found its way in a modified form into *Sunni* orthodoxy itself. Qushayri and then al-Ghazali, both Ash'arite, gave to sufism full rights of citizenship in *Sunnism*, whereas Shi'ism generally, at least in older periods, opposed sufism, sometimes in a very violent manner.<sup>191</sup>

It is in the twelfth century that the oldest organized *tariqahs* of sufism were founded and some important parts of the *tariqah* ritual were introduced. Further, the document of initiation (*ijazah*) with its *silsilah*, a sort of spiritual chain of the names of all the masters of the brotherhood, seems to have been used for the first time towards the end of the Seljuq period in 1227A.D.,<sup>192</sup>

The first organized sufi brotherhood in Iraq and Iran was the *Kazaruniyyah* at Shiraz in 1034A.D., in its beginnings a mystical school rather than a real "order"; but most important were the three branches of an originally common school (*Junaydiyyah*): i.e. the *Khwajagan*, founded by Yusuf Hamadani (d.1140A.D.) which spread especially in Turkestan through its branch the *Yasawiyyah*; secondly, the *Kubrawiyyah*, founded in Khurasan by Najm al-Din Kubra (d.1221A.D.); and thirdly, the famous *Qadiriyyah*, organized in Baghdad some decades after the death of its spiritual originator Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (d.1166A.D.).<sup>193</sup>

To these first *tariqahs* we may add the *Rifa'iyyah*, with its centre in Basrah, founded by al-Rifa'i (d.1183A.D.); the *Suhrawardiyyah* of Baghdad, founded by Abd al-Qahir Suhrawaradi (d.1167A.D.) and Umar Suhrawardi (d.1234A.D.); and later the *Chistiyyah*, which spread



through the eastern zones of Iran, Afghanistan, and India in the thirteenth century; its centre was Ajmir, India where the tomb of its founder Mu'in al-Din Chishti (d.1236A.D.) is situated.<sup>194</sup>

As is clear from all these data that the development of Sufism in this epoch took place especially in the eastern, more strictly *Sunni* zones of the Iranian cultural world. In the western part of this world, with its spiritual centre in Baghdad, sufism was spread above all by the *Suhrawardiyyah* brotherhood founded, as we saw, by Abu Hafs Umar Suhrawardi, the real founder of the *tariqah* of this name, though its *silsilah* goes back to his uncle Abd al-Qahir, a pupil of Ahmad al-Ghazali. Abu Hafs Umar is the author of many influential books (*kitab Awarif al-Ma'arif, kashf al-Nasa'ih, I'lam al-Taqi, I'lam al-Huda, etc.*)

In spite of the sufis deep penetration into orthodox sunni circles, an anti-sufi attitude is of course still present in some orthodox sunni writers. *Talbis Iblis*, by the Hanbalite jurist, Ibn al-Jawzi, contains strong attacks on the sufis, though the author makes a clear distinction between an older purer sufism, and the "modern" one, for which he shows distrust.

In spite of all such opposition, sufis in this epoch were fairly free to teach their doctrines and carry out

their practices. They easily found protectors in princes and powerful personalities. One of the greatest of their protectors in the Seljuq era was the great vizier Nizam al-Mulk himself. The importance of the Seljuq period in the religious history of Iraq and Iran lies in its formative richness, expressed in various directions of thought. First, Ash'ari Sunnism reached its final systematization in the great synthesis of al-Ghazali. Secondly, sufism was first organized into great brotherhood, and important schools were created.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1. See W. Montgomery Watt, *the Majesty that was Islam* (London: Sidywick & Jackson, 1984), pp.30-31
2. Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arab* (London: Macmillan, 1985), pp. 647-648.
3. *Ibid.*, pp.486-487.
4. See D.S. Margoliouth. *Early Development of Muhammadanism*, p.51
5. See Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Mohammanan Dynasties* pp.6, 20, 7, 128; see also Dozy, *Spanish Islam*, pp.159-211
6. See Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, p.506
7. Stanley Lane-Poole, *op.cit.*, p.35
8. See Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, p.461
9. *Ibid.*, p.466
10. *Ibid.*
11. Tabari, *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*, Vol.III, pp.412-413
12. *Ibid.*, pp.1307, 1324, 1326, 1403-4
13. See W. Montgomery Watt, *The Majesty that was Islam*, pp.149-155
14. See Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, pp.461-470.
15. *Ibid.*
16. T.W. Arnold, *The Caliphate*, p.139
17. See Stanley Lane-Poole, *op.cit.*, pp.140-149
18. Ibn Khallikan, Vol.I, p.98; see also Ibn al-Athir, Vol.VIII, p.197.
19. Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, p.470.
20. Ibn Sa'd, Vol.V, p.235; Mas'udi, *Tanbih*, pp.255-6
21. Stanley Lane-Poole, *op.cit.*, p.51
22. See W. Montgomery, *op.cit.*, pp.193-202
23. *Ibid.*, pp.203,204, 206-208
24. See Philip. K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, pp.506-511
25. See M.A. Shaban, *Islamic History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp.188-211.
26. Philip. K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, pp.463-465
27. Bosworth, *Ghaznavids*, pp.210-211
28. *Ibid.*, pp.211-218
29. Ibn al-Athir, Vol.IX, p.322
30. E.G. Browne, *A literary History of Persia*, pp.169-173.
31. Husayni, *Akhbar al-Dawlah al-Saljuqiyyah*, pp.20-21
32. Ibn al-Athir, Vol.X, pp.25 seq.
33. *Ibid.*, Vol.X, pp.44 seq.
34. E.G. Browne, *op.cit.*, pp.171-181
35. See Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, p.474
36. T.W. Arnold, *The Caliphate*, p.68
37. The Prophet's outer garment.
38. Al-Rawandi, *Rahah al-Sudur*, p.21
39. T.W. Arnold, *The Caliphate*, p.80
40. Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, Vol.X, pp.8, 29, 199.
41. Hasan Ibrahim Hasan, *Tarikh al-Islam al-Siyasi*, Vol.III, p.307
42. See Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, p.478

43. Hasan Ibrahim Hasan, *op.cit.*, p.62
44. *Ibid.*, p.62
45. C.E. Bosworth, "The Political and Dynastic History of the Iranian World" in J.A. Boyle. (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Iran*, (1968) vol.v, pp.121,122,127.
46. Ibn al-Athir, Vol.XI, p.28
47. Ibn al-Jawzi, Vol.IX, pp.233-4
48. C.E. Bosworth, *op.cit.*, pp.127-128
49. Dozy, *op.cit.*, p.690
50. *Ibid.*, p.649; see also Stanley Lane-Poole, *op.cit.*, p.42
51. Dozy, *op.cit.*, p.701; see also Stanley Lane-Poole, *op.cit.*, p.42
52. Dozy, *op.cit.*, p.692; see also Stanley Lane-Poole, *op.cit.*, p.27
53. Dozy, *op.cit.*, p.725; see also Stanley Lane-Poole, *op.cit.*, 40-45.
54. Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, pp.623, 624, 647.
55. *Ibid.*, pp.486-487.
56. *Ibid.*, p.317
57. Al-Mas'udi, Vol.VII, p.278
58. Ibn al-Abbas, *Athar al-Uwal fi Tartib al-Duwal*, p.62
59. Al-Sabi' Hilal, *Tuhfah al-Umara fi Ta'rikh al-Wuzara'* p.306.
60. Al-Mawardi, *al-Ahkam al-Sultamiyyah*, pp.33-47
61. Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, p.319
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.*
64. *Ibid.*, p.321
65. *Ibid.*, p.322
66. *Ibid.*, pp.417-431, 431
67. *Diwan al-barid* (bureau of post).
68. Al-Mus'udi, Vol.VI, p.93,
69. Ibn al-Athir, Vol.VI, p.49.
70. Ibn Khallikan, Vol.III, p.334
71. Al-Mawardi, pp.107-111
72. *Ibid.*, pp.117-125.
73. or *muttawwi'ah*, Tabari, Vol.III, pp.1008 seq; Ibn Khaldun, Vol.III, p.260.
74. Mentioned by Tabari, Vol.III, pp.998 seq: Ibn Khaldun, Vol.III p.238
75. *Ibid.*, p.275
76. *Ibid.*, p.299; Mas'udi, Vol.VI, p.452
77. These five provinces were often referred to as *aqalim al-maghrif*, the occidental provinces, whilst to the rest were referred to as *aqalim al-mashriq*, the oriental provinces.
78. In contrast to *al-Iraq al-Arabi* (the Arabian Iraq), i.e. Lower Mesopotimia.
79. Called Shustar or Shushitar by the persians.
80. For a comparison of the list of provinces, see Le Strange, *Eastern caliphate*, pp.1-9; Zaydan, *Tamddaun*, Vol.II, pp.37-44
81. Ibn al-Jawzi, *al-Muntazam*, vol.i, p.228



82. Abd Rahman I. Doi, *Non-Muslims under Shari'ah* (London: Ta Ha Publishers Ltd., 1983), p.22
83. *Ibid.*, pp.73-74
84. Hasan Ibrahim Hasan, *op.cit.*, Vol.IV, p.627
85. *Ibid.*, Vol.II, p.306
86. Al-Tabari, Vol.III, p.669; same in Ibn al-Athir, vol.vi, p.120
87. Al-Isfahani, *Al-Aghani*, vol. xvi, p.132
88. Ali Ibrahim Hasan, *al-Tarikh al-Islami al-Am*, p.580
89. Bashir Ahmad Siddiqi, *al-Imam ibn al-Jawzi wa Kitabuhu al-mawdu'at*, pp.24-25.
90. Al-Isfahani, *al-Aghani*, Vol.XIX, pp.134-137
91. Al-Mawardi, *op.cit.*, p.257
92. Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Vol.II, p.76
93. Bashir Ahmad Siddiqi, *op.cit.*, p.25
94. Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, *Tarikh Al Saljuq*, p.187
95. *Ibid.*,
96. Ibn Shamah, *Kitab al-Rawdatayn*, Vol.I, p.58
97. For a detailed discussion, see Bashir Ahmad Siddiqi, *op.cit.*, pp.26-27
98. "Tubbans" are a knee-length shorts
99. Bashir Ahmad Siddiqi, *op.cit.*, p.27.
100. The red fez "tarbush", still worn in Muslim countries like Egypt, Syria and Iraq, is a modern article.
101. Jahiz, *Bayan*, Vol.III, p.9
102. This fashion of dress is still followed by the older generation in some countries like Syria, Palestine, Jordan and Lebanon.
103. Ibn Khallikan, Vol.III, p.334
104. Mas'udi, Vol.VIII, p.296
105. *Ibid.*, Vol.I, pp.159-161
106. *Ibid.*, pp.157-158
107. *Ibid.*, Vol.VI, pp.432-433
108. Fakhri, *op.cit.*, p.30
109. For a detailed discussion, see Bashir Ahmad Siddiqi, *op.cit.*, p.27
110. An outer garment with full length sleeves.
111. Tall headgear or cap.
112. Sayyid Amir Ali *Mukhtasar Tariah al-Arab wa al-Tamaddun al-Islami*, pp.386-387.
113. Hasan Ibrahim Hasan, *Tarikh al-Islam al-Siyasi*, Vol.IV, p.647.
114. Bride's dowry payable under the marriage contract.
115. Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, Vol.X, pp.178,179
116. Ibn Khallikan, Vol.IV, p.165
117. Marshall Broomhall, *Islam in China*, pp.5-36
118. Thomas F. Carter *The Invention of Printing in China and its Spreads Westward*, pp.85 seq.
119. Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, p.344
120. Mentioned in Maqdisi, p.323; Yaqut, *Buldan*, Vol.I, p.822.
121. Tha'alibi, *Lata'if*, p.95
122. Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, p.347
123. Black region (of dark-coloured vegetation, contrasted with the dazzling whiteness of the desert).

124. Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, p.349  
 125. Ya'qubi, Vol.II, p.555  
 126. Istakhri, p.81  
 127. Yaqut, Vol.I, p.751  
 128. Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, p.350  
 129. *Ibid.*  
 130. Ibn Khaldun, *al-Mukaddimah*, p.543  
 131. Ahmad Amin, *Duha al-Islam*, Vol.II, p.24  
 132. Bashir Ahmad Siddiqi, *op.cit.*, pp.30-31  
 133. *Ibid.*  
 134. *Ibid.*  
 135. Al-Subki, *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyah al-Kubra*, Vol.III, p.137
136. Ahmad Shalabi, *al-Tarikh al-Islami*, Vol.IV, p.69  
 137. Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, p.619  
 138. D.B.Macdonald, *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and constitution Theory*, p.21; Muhammad Zarif, *Islam and Aqliyat*, pp.29-31  
 139. D.B.Macdonald, *op.cit.*, p.130; Browne, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, pp.281-82; Muhammad Zarif, *op.cit.* p.32  
 140. Shahrastani, *al-Milal wa al-Nihl*, V.I, p.50  
 141. *Ibid.*, Vol.I, pp.53 seq  
 142. *Ibid.*, 50  
 143. Muhammad Zarif, *op.cit.*, p.55  
 144. Hitti, *op.cit.*, p.  
 145. Browne E.G., *A Literary History of persia*, pp.286-289.  
 146. Muhammad Zarif, *op.cit.*, pp.67  
 147. *Ibid.*, pp.67-92  
 148. Browne, *op.cit.*, pp.286-89  
 149. They were called in Arabic *falasifah* (plural of *failasuf*) or *hukama'* (plural of *hakim*), see Shahrastani, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.123.  
 150. Macdonold, *op.cit.*, p.161.  
 151. Qifti, *Tarikh al-Hukama*, (ed. Cairo 1298) pp.29-116.  
 152. Qifti, *op.cit.*, pp.366 seq  
 153. O'Leary, *Arabic Thought and its Place in History*, p.33.  
 154. Qifti, *op.cit.*, pp.227 seq  
 155. T.W. Arnold, *Legacy of Islam*, p.256.; Macdonald, *op.cit.*, p.162; O'Leary, *op.cit.*, p.146  
 156. T.W. Arnold, *op.cit.*, p.256  
 157. Qufti, *op.cit.*, pp.410-26  
 158. Ibn Miskawayh, *al-Fauz al-Asrar*, pp.7, 37  
 159. Macdonald, *op.cit.*, p.136  
 160. *Ibid.*, p.187  
 161. *Ibid.*  
 162. Browne, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, p.291  
 163. Al-Shahrastani, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal*; see also W. Montgomery Watt *op.cit.*, pp.187-188  
 164. Browne, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, p.291  
 165. See Macdonald, *Aspects of Islam*, pp.115-144  
 166. W. Montgomery Watt, *op.cit.*, p.188  
 167. Macdonald, *op.cit.*, pp.201-202  
 168. *Ibid.*, p.245.



169. Al-Juwayni, the teacher of al-Ghazali incurred the wrath of Tughril Beg whose grand Vizier was a Ma'tazilite. He fled to Mecca and Medina and remained there till the death of Tughril Beg.
170. See C.E. Bosworth, "The Political and Dynastic History of the Iranian World (A.D. 400-1217)" in J.A. Boyle (ed), *The Cambridge history of Iram*, Vol.V, p.71.
171. W. Montgomery Watt, *op.cit.*, pp.251-254
172. Macdonald, *op.cit.*, p.245
173. Muhammad Umaruddin, *The Ethical Philosophy of al-Ghazzali*, p.10.
174. W. Montgomery Watt, *op.cit.*, pp.178-180
175. *Ibid.*, p.178
176. *Ibid.*, p.179
177. *Ibid.*, p.250
178. *Ibid.*, pp.250-251
179. Muhammad Umaruddin, *op.cit.*, p.45
180. *Ibid.*, p.47
181. *Ibid.*, p.48
182. "Ana al-Haq" means I am the Truth or the Ultimate Reality.
183. Muhammad Umaruddin, *op.cit.*, p.48
184. *Ibid.*, pp.48-49
185. *Ibid.*
186. *Ibid.*, p.49
187. A Bausani, "Religion in the Saljuq Period" in J.A. Boyle, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol.V, p.283; see also Nizam al-Mulk al-Tusi, *Siyasat Namah*, p.120
188. A. Bausani, *op.cit.*, pp.286-287
189. *Ibid.*
190. *Ibid.*, pp.289-290
191. *Ibid.*, p.296
192. See Massignon, "Tarika" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*,.
193. *Ibid.*, pp.298-299
194. *Ibid.*, p.299

## CHAPTER III

### AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF AL-JILANI'S BIOGRAPHY

#### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the life of al-Jilani will be outlined. At points it will be necessary to make critical comments on the kind of biographical writing involved in it. All of the sources consider al-Jilani to be extremely important and a great Muslim; in the eyes of many he is a saint of the highest order. Thus, biography becomes hagiography. The presentation of details of his life and the attitude taken towards his background and origins is established by this framework of veneration, the perceived aura of sanctity.

For the most part we follow this direction for what it reveals to us of a world-view. We will rely on the traditional biographers themselves and allow their own piety to speak. At times, however, it will be necessary to sound a note of scepticism and step back from the more incredible aspects of this saintly biography when we deal with the issue of his miraculous power: an issue concerning sainthood which is controversial within Muslim thought.



## (1) PARENTAGE OF AL-JILANI

The history and details related of the parentage, forefathers, race etc. are regarded as of great importance in this kind of study. These factors, especially the parentage, are taken to generate much of importance in the make-up of the subject. These will be discussed in detail in the following section.

His name is 'Abd al-Qadir, and he is commonly known as 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani or al-Jili.<sup>1</sup> Abd al-Qadir, whose laqabs are Shaykh al-Islam Taj al-'Arifin,<sup>2</sup> al-Shaykh Muhyi al-Din,<sup>3</sup> also bore the kunyah Abu Muhammad, the name by which he was called commonly by relatives and neighbours.

The Shaykh's father was Abu Salih Musa Jinki Dust (*Jengi Dost*);<sup>4</sup> some add a series of ancestors bringing him into the line of al-Hasan, son of 'Ali, son of Abu Talib, as follows: son of 'Abd Allah,<sup>5</sup> son of Yahya al-Zahid (the ascetic), son of Muhammad, son of Dawud, son of Musa, son of 'Abd Allah, son of Musa al-Jawn,<sup>6</sup> son of 'Abd Allah al-Mahd all-Mujall,<sup>7</sup> son of al-Hasan Abi Muhammad al-Muthanna (the second),<sup>8</sup> son of al-Hasan al-Sibt (the grandson), son of Ali, son of Abu Talib.

He is better-known among his followers as grandson of Abu Abd Allah al-Sawma'i al-Zahid.<sup>9</sup> The Shaykh is also called al-Hashimi, al-Qurashi, al-'Alawi, al-Hanbali, al-Sayyed, al-Sharif, al-Salih, al-Mashhur,<sup>10</sup> Sahib al-Maqamat wa Al Karamah, Shaykh al-Hanabilah<sup>11</sup> and al-Ghawth al-A'zam.<sup>12</sup> In the Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam the Shaykh is called *Mushahid Allah, Amr Allah, Fadl Allah, Aman Allah, Nur Allah, Qutub Allah, Sayf Allah, Firman Allah, Burhan Allah, Ayat Allah, Ghawth Allah and al-Ghawth al-A'zam.*<sup>13</sup>

Al-Jilani's father, Musa is described as being a *Janki Dust*. This epithet is applied to him by the Shaykh.<sup>14</sup> It is also applied to him by al Shattanawfi in his "*Bahjah*".<sup>15</sup> The term in the dialect of the people of that quarter of Persia means "mighty in power".or "mighty and powerful".<sup>16</sup>

Abd Allah, the son of Musa al-Jawn whose kunyah is Abu al-Kiran, also bore the *laqab* al-Rida. It was he whom the Abbasid Caliph, al-Ma'mun, the son of Harun al-Rashid, wished to put in place of his cousin Ali ibn Musa al-Husayn, who was also called al-Rida, on the death of the latter, whom al-Ma'mun had designated for the caliphate; but Abd Allah declined and would not have it.

His father Musa bore the *laqab* al-Jawn, because he was of a ruddy colour, although he was not the son of a slave-girl, but of a free woman of the Asad tribe of the Quraysh. Her name was Hind, daughter of Abu Ubaydah, son of the famous *Sahabi* Abd Allah ibn Zam'ah al-Asadi.<sup>17</sup>

Ibn al-wardi states that the *laqab* al-Mahd for Abd Allah, the father of Musa al-Jawn, means *al-khalis* (pure or unmixed) because his father is al-Hasan, son of al-Hasan, son of Ali, and his mother is Fatimah, daughter of al-Husayn, son of Ali, so Abd Allah's lineage or descent came from good or pure parentage because they are not slaves and trace their descent direct to Ali ibn Abi Talib.<sup>18</sup> Thus Abd Allah's parents are two first cousins, their two fathers being brothers. Besides this *laqab*, Abd Allah is also called *al-Kamil* (the perfect) and *al-Mujall* (the exalted, the honored).

The epithet "*al-Muthanna*" attached to the name of al-Hasan is a *laqab* given to him by the genealogists for the sake of distinction. He was not called by it in his lifetime. The same remark applies to the "*al-Muthallath*" attached to the name of his son.<sup>19</sup>

Al-Jilani's mother was Fatimah, daughter of Abd Allah al-Sawma'i, she was also called *Umm al-Khayr* and



*Umm al-Jabbar*.<sup>20</sup> Fatimah was a pious lady who is said to have walked far in the path of Sufism. Her father was a saint and prominent man of Jilan.<sup>21</sup> He was a direct descendant of Husayn, the youngest son of Ali and Fatimah<sup>22</sup> and on account of his piety, asceticism and performance of extra religious observances is said to have acquired miraculous power.

According to the *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, the numerous biographies of this personage teem with fiction, out of which some historical fact may be gleaned. Thus his pedigree is traced on the father's side to al-Hasan, grandson of the Prophet, in the direct line. But this is contradicted by the foreign name of his father, and the fact that the Shaykh was called 'Ajami (foreigner, non-Arab) in Baghdad, and indeed the pedigree was shown to be a fabrication of his grandson, the Qadi Abu Salih Nasr, to whom other fictions may also be traced.<sup>23</sup>

Some of the historians mentioned that al-Jilani was a Persian, and when he visited the Bata'ih during his wanderings he was known as al-'Ajami (non-Arab). Al-Wasiti says that none of the genealogists support his claim to a "*Hasani nasab*".<sup>24</sup>

It is clear from what has been stated above that



Shaykh Abd al-Qadir was taken to be a descendent of Hasan on his father's side. But this is denied by some of the historians. According to most historians that one of his ancestors was Abd Allah al-Mahd. He was called *al-Mahd*, that is, pure in descent, because he was son of Hasan *al-Muthanna*, who was a son of Hasan ibn Ali. On his mother's side he descended from Ali Zayn al-Abidin, son of Husayn ibn Ali. Thus al-Jilani was both Hasani and Husayni, although the name of his father (*Jengi Dost*) was non Arabic and al-Jilani was called 'Ajami (foreigner, non-Arab) in Baghdad.<sup>25</sup> But many historians have supported the claim that al-Jilani's lineage is direct to both Hasan and Husayn. On this basis, he could be considered as an Arab by descent and belonged to Iran by means of migration of his ancestors.<sup>26</sup> This is not impossible and certainly many members of the Iranian religious establishment claim to be Sayyids.

The Shaykh was born in 470/1077-8A.H.<sup>27</sup> or in 471/1078A.D.<sup>28</sup> in Jilan. Jilan is a district in Persia, Arabized "Kilan". Others identify it with various localities beyond Tabaristan. He was born in one of its villages called Nayf (Nif).<sup>29</sup>

Historians, such as Abu al-Mahasin in his book "*al-Nujum al-Zahirah*"<sup>30</sup> tell us that his national name (al-Jilani, the Jilanate) come to him not from the

persian province "Jilan", but from "Jil" and thus the author names as the birth place of Abd al-Qadir "Jil", a village between Baghdad and Wasit. But all other authorities are unanimous in stating that he was a Persian from Nayf (Nif) in Jilan, South of the Caspian sea.<sup>31</sup> The Persian name of his father supports the claim that al-Jilani came from Jilan.

Al-Jilani died in 561A.H./1166A.D. at the age of ninety one.<sup>32</sup> The day was Saturday night 8th of *Rabi' al-Thani*<sup>33</sup> after *Maghrib* time. He was buried at his *madrasah* in Baghdad. His funeral was attended by a countless multitude. The tomb of the Shaykh is very famous place.<sup>34</sup> Today, there is a mosque named after him in Baghdad.

## (2) THE BIRTH PLACE OF AL-JILANI

As we have seen the name al-Jilani following "Abd al-Qadir", gives us his place of origin. We will now discuss the location and character of Jilan.

Yaqut al-Hamawi<sup>35</sup> states that "Jilan" or "Jaylan", "Jilan" is the name of a province near the state of Tabaristan. Mainwhile "Jaylan" designates a Persian clan, who came from the province of Istakhr and who

inhabited the shores of the Caspian sea.

Jilan as al-Istakhri says<sup>36</sup> included a part of al-Daylam. Its border on the south was with Qazwin, a part of Adharbayjan, and al-Rayy; on the east it borders a small part of al-Rayy and Tabaristan, and on the north lies the Caspian sea. Meanwhile to the west lies a small area of Adharbayjan and the provinces of al-Ran. Included in the territory are the provinces of the mountain range surrounding this region. In general al-Daylam includes low ground and mountainous territory. The first part is called Jilan, territory situated along the sea-shore of Caspian Sea, side by side with the mountain range of al-Daylam; and the later part (the provinces of mountain range) is the centre of al-Daylam.

According to al-Bustani in his "*Encyclopeadia*", he stated that Jilan or Kilan is also called the state of al-Daylam, it was a territory of the north-west of Persia. Its border on the north was Talis (Russia now), on the south was the west of mountain range of al-Barz, that separated Jilan, Adharbayjan and Persian Iraq; on the south lay the Qazwin sea. This province is one of the most lovely and fantastic territories in Persia.<sup>37</sup>

Beside being called Jilan, this province was



well-known also as "Kilan", as denoted by Yaqut al-Hamawi and others.<sup>38</sup> Other names of Jilan are Gilan,<sup>39</sup> Jil,<sup>40</sup> and Kil.<sup>41</sup> From these names derive the words al-Jilani,<sup>42</sup> al-Jaylani, al-Jili and al-Kilani as a *laqab* of the people who came from Jilan. From the words Kilan or Kil, the *laqab* according to Yaqut are Jilani or Jili also, but others say that the *laqab* is Kilani and not Kili.<sup>43</sup>

According to al-Istakhri,<sup>44</sup> in the period of Buwayhid dynasty, the name of al-Daylam included Jilan, Tabaristan, Jurjan and Qumiz, but later on these states had separated from al-Daylam and got their independence; Those territories of the mountain area were al-Daylam and sea-shore territories were Jilan, as in the period before the Buwayhid dynasty. Al-Istakhri adds that al-Daylam was a state of unbelievers, until the period of al-Hasan ibn Zayd, who captured al-Daylam and put it under the influence of al-'Alawi, and as a result many of them converted to Islam.

Al-Qazwini<sup>45</sup> gives us a description of life in Jilan at this time. The living standard was moderate; houses were built from wood; people were involved in agriculture producing high quality rice. From the agriculture products, they paid *zakah* (alms giving). Moreover they were famous for silk because they had silk

worm farms. They exported these silk products abroad.

We can see that Jilan is a large and quite important territory<sup>46</sup> which was clearly able to support something of a religious culture.

### (3) HIS EDUCATION AND TEACHERS

Education at home and guidance from parents are both crucial for children; as it is said "home is the first school for children"; parents are by example the first teachers for their children. children who have lived happily and received religious education and guidance at home, will grow to become good persons. They will believe in God and respect his teaching. Children are always influenced by the example good or bad, of their parents.<sup>47</sup>

The environment of al-Jilani's early life in Jilan; his family and surroundings, no doubt contributed to his piety. His father was a pious person, as well as his mother and his maternal grand father, Abd Allah Sawma'i, They naturally gave him a training that was suitable for

a pious man. It may thus be said that al-Jilani was brought up in the cradle of sufism, the mental powers which were exhibited by him in his infancy naturally developed as he grew up and were visible in all the stages of his holy life.<sup>48</sup>

From this very early learning, so many pious and godly persons were around him and this situation and condition motivated his leaning to the sufi life. In his early childhood, al-Jilani was quiet and sober, with good manners and behaviour. As a result of his first education recieved from his parents, he did not like to play with other children. It is told that whenever he thought of playing he could not do it, because he would hear a voice questioning him, asking him where he was going. At this he would be frightened and run back to take shelter in his mother's lap.<sup>49</sup>

According to Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani and other biographers,<sup>50</sup> by the age of ten, al-Jilani was so special that whenever he attended school, the teacher would ask the other students to make room for him to sit. Al-Jilani lived in Jilan up to the age of about 18 years. During this period he must have learnt well the subjects which would then be taught to a boy of a noble family in Jilan. In one day al-Jilani would learn by heart as much



as others would take a week to master. When al-Jilani was about eighteen years old his thirst for knowledge and eagerness for the company of good men took him to the distant city of Baghdad, at that time the centre of learning of all kinds of knowledge and where students from all Muslim countries used to come to learn. Once on the day of 'Arafah,<sup>51</sup> he requested his mother to dedicate him to God and to allow him to proceed to Baghdad. Al-Jilani was so intensely burning with a desire to acquire knowledge and advance spiritually in association with saints and holy men. When the widowed mother heard the proposal, she shed silent tears, as she perceived that, on account of her old age. But the good lady would not stand in the way of his devotion to God. She sewed 40 *dinars*<sup>52</sup> inside his coat just below his armpits, so that they might not be easily stolen or lost as a provision against hard times. It was his half share of the money left by his father. The other half was kept for his brother. He soon joined a small caravan which was going to Baghdad.

From the above story, by the numerous biographers and historians, we take it that al-Jilani journeyed to Baghdad in pursuit of knowledge and in order to meet there the masters of the Path. That was in the year 488A.H./1095A.D., when he was about 18 years of age.

At the time of al-Jilani, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali was already renowned as a jurist, philosopher and theologian. He was a Shafi'ite and Ash'arite. He was a professor at Nizamiyyah in Baghdad before he left and started travelling to various places within Arabia and Syria in search of Divine knowledge as a sufi.

Al-Jilani came from a village where Hanbalism was strong. He came to Baghdad and pursued a legalistic course of Hanbali training, refusing to study at the Nizamiyyah, where the Sufi, Ahmad al-Ghazali, had succeeded his brother Abu Hamid al-Ghazali. In Baghdad he studied the ordinary curriculum; Arabic language, law, Tradition etc., under a great number of the big scholars of that time.

Apart from numerous other teachers, he studied Islamic law under the Judge (Qadi) Abu Sa'id al-Mukharrimi,<sup>53</sup> and under Abu al-Wafa' ibn 'Aqil,<sup>54</sup> who had come over from the Mu'tazilah to the Hanbalite madhhab; under Abu al-khattab,<sup>55</sup> and under a number of Hanbalite scholars; according to some authorities, he also studied Shafi'ite law.<sup>56</sup> Al-Jilani had mastered the "Roots, Branches and Differences" in Islamic jurisprudence.

Al-Jilani heard Tradition from Abu Ghalib al-Baqillani,<sup>57</sup> Abu al-Qasim ibn Bayan al-Razzaz,<sup>58</sup> Abu Muhammad Ja'far al-Sarraj,<sup>59</sup> Abu Sa'd ibn Hashish,<sup>60</sup> Abu Talib ibn Yusof<sup>61</sup> and others. He read literature with Abu Zakarriyya al-Tabari,<sup>62</sup> but there is no indication that he received any sufi training until he attended the school of Abu al-Khayr Hammad ibn Muslim al-Dabbas (d.525A.H./1131A.D.)<sup>63</sup> who introduced him to practical sufism. Hammad al-Dabbas<sup>64</sup> apparently never wrote any book but seem to have been in his time a highly appreciated master of sufism, whose ascetic piety and the strict discipline he exercised over his novices.<sup>65</sup>

Training by al-Dabbas involved considerable hardship, and it would seem that the other sufi aspirants resented the intrusion of a jurist amongst them. After a time, al-Jilani was considered worthy to receive the sufi livery called *khirqah*, as the sign of the end of of his noviciate. This *khirqah* was given him by the Judge (qadi) Abu Sa'id Mubarak al-Mukharrimi, the head of a school of Hanbalite law near the Gate of Azadj (*Bab al-Azadj*) in Baghdad, which Abd al-Qadir appears to have attended.<sup>66</sup>

Truthful and charitable to the extreme, al-Jilani had to endure great hardships during the period of his



study in Baghdad. By dint of his natural talents and devotion, 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 one of the greatest jurists of his time. But his deeper spiritual yearnings were restless to manifest themselves.

When he reached Baghdad he had with him 40 dinars. On account of his simple habits and cheapness of food at the time, the money should have lasted him for a considerable time. But owing to his kind, sympathetic and compassionate nature, which would not allow him to see others in distress without rendering help, the money did not last long. Thus al-Jilani had to prosecute his studies under extreme hardship. After taking his lesson, he would often go out of Baghdad and prepare for them in woods and in solitary places on the banks of the Tigris or in the desert, amid ruins. During this period, he used to live upon the leaves of plants and other vegetables which he could find on the banks of the Tigris and canals. It was with great difficulty that he subsisted quite apart from the demands of his arduous study.<sup>67</sup>

In spite of the aforesaid hardship, al-Jilani by dint of his labour, and natural talents and devotion became master of the Qur'an, Islamic jurisprudence

(*fiqh*), *hadith* and Arabic literature and all the branches of these subjects. Muhib al-Din Muhammad ibn al-Najjar in his history book describes al-Jilani as the *imam* of his time who acquired an encyclopaedic knowledge of *fiqh* and its branches, and mastered *hadith* also.<sup>68</sup>

Ascetic life (*mujahadah*) to conquer one's animal self (*al-nafs*) or to rise above his *nafs* is one of the methods of spiritual advancement. Even during the period of his studies, al-Jilani used to practise asceticism. As has been stated before, in this stage, he often resorted to fasting and would not ask for food from anyone, even if he had to go without any meal for days on end. He used to visit holy man and saints, because the association with such person is said to lead to spirituality. It was in the course of this search that he came across Shaykh Hammad al-Dabbas. Gradually this *sufi* became a sort of a spiritual tutor to him. Shaykh Hammad, however, was a very dry and harsh kind of person and his treatment of him extremely severe. But al-Jilani bore all this as a kind of corrective for his own spiritual defects.<sup>69</sup>

After the completion of his studies, he became more severe towards himself. He began to deny himself all the needs and comforts of life excepting the barest minimum that would sustain life. He lived for years on vegetables

only in the fields of Karkh. Once a year someone would give him a woollen garment to wear. People who met him took him to be dumb and insane. He lived for a long time in the ruins of Mada'in.<sup>70</sup>

For about twenty-five years al-Jilani travelled alone in the deserts and ruins of Iraq. The time and energy he would thus save he would employ in prolonged prayers and in the reading of the Qur'an. So engrossed did he become in his prayers that he could be seen saying his morning (*fajr*) prayer 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 contact with people and would not meet or talk to anyone. If he went out he would roam about in the desert. Eventually he left Baghdad and came to stay at Shustar.<sup>71</sup> For years he thus shut himself out from the world; he lived in a tower, which on account of his long stay there, came to be known as *Burj 'Ajami*.<sup>72</sup> 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 now vacated his soul in favour of higher being. He was now established in "God consciousness".

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 of practically all religious figures known to history. It was 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 Jesus, how the devil took him to the hill top 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 an event just in the inner struggle of the master at a delicate point of his life, a part, so to speak, of spiritual psychology.<sup>73</sup> An incident of this nature also took place in the life of the prophet Muhammad. When he persisted in his da'wah against the idolatrous practices of his countrymen, his opponents, the leader of the Quraysh, tempted him with their offers of beauty, wealth and power.<sup>74</sup>

A story is narrated about the Shaykh which has two versions. One version is that one day Satan appeared before him, introduced himself as Gabriel and said that he had bought from Allah the *Burraq*<sup>75</sup> as he had been invited by Him to be in His August Presence in the highest heaven. To this the Shaykh promptly replied that the speaker of the words before him could be no other

that the devil, because neither Gabriel nor the *Burraq* could come to the world for any person other than the Prophet Muhammad. Satan, however, had still another missile to throw. He said: "Well, Abd al-Qadir, you have saved yourself by dint of your knowledge". "Be of Satan", the shaykh 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".<sup>76</sup>

The other version of the story is that once the Shaykh was in the wilderness and was without food and drink for a long time; after a few days he felt extremely thirsty. Then a cloud appeared overhead and showered rain. The Shaykh satisfied his thirst with it. Presently a luminous figure appeared on the horizon and said: "I am your God, I now make all unlawful things lawful for you". At this the Shaykh recited the formula. "I seek the protection of God from the damned Satan". At this the figure changed into a cloud and it was heard saying "By your knowledge and by the grace of God you have been saved from your deception though I have led astray by this trick seventy persons following the path". Then Satan asked the Shaykh how he could recognize him so quickly. The Shaykh replied that his announcement making unlawful things lawful revealed him, because such an announcement could not have been from God.<sup>77</sup>

As for the two versions of the story under discussion I am inclined to think that both of them may be correct, presenting two different incidents in an allegorical language. One incident might relate to his struggle with the economic difficulties which sidetrack a man in his spiritual journey. Consciousness of power and anxiety for comforts are the last weaknesses to leave the mind of a spiritual pilgrim. And it is only after one has overcome these two eternal enemies of the spiritual that one becomes qualified to be a genuine leader of men. In general, the narrative, involving as it does a cosmic battle between good and evil, and an act of transcendence on the part of the individual, marks a *rite de passage* from an old impure to a new pure and charismatic status. The biographies of al-Jilani make him a paradigm in Islam of this kind of saint.

#### (4) HIS DOMESTIC LIFE AND CHILDREN

No doubt in the prime of his manhood, the Shaykh had a mind to marry, but fearing that the tie of marriage would be an obstacle to his life of devotion, he did not act according to his desire. But about 521A.H./1127A.D., when the shaykh settled in Baghdad at the age of



fifty-one , and came to establish contact with people, then in obedience to the commandment of the Prophet and in respect of his example, he married four wives, all of whom were exemplars of highly religious life. little is known of his wives, but we know more details of the lives of the sons of al-Jilani. He had forty-nine children:<sup>78</sup> twenty-seven sons and twenty-two daughters.

The Shaykh used to be engaged throughout the day in rendering services to the public and throughout the night in prayers and devotions. But in spite of these activities he used to perform properly his duties to the members of his family. He used to love his wives and children and used to pass time with them. The Shaykh used to "talk and smile with them". If necessary, he used to go to the market to buy the things required by them. He himself used to observe fasts almost throughout the year, but in the evening he would usually eat two pieces of bread, though the members of his family ate normally and moderately well. The co-wives were not jealous of one another, but all of them were eager to please him by their obedience. If any wife happened to be ill, and there were none to attend her, the Shaykh himself used to do all household work. He used to sweep, fetch water and cook pieces of bread. Though the Shaykh was apparently attached to his wives and children, his heart was

actually with God at all times, just as the Prophet found real pleasure in prayers, in spite of his love of his wives and children. Whenever a child was born to him, the Shaykh used to take it in his hands and say, it was a dead thing, meaning thereby that none should set his heart on a transient thing like it. If a child happened to die, it would not in any way interfere with his routine.<sup>79</sup> he would perform his customary duties in the usual manner. When the dead body was washed and wrapped with cloth and brought before him, the Shaykh, without lamentations and shedding tears, would simply lead the funeral prayers.<sup>80</sup>

This attitude of al-Jilani is not considered strange because he was well-trained in the spirituality which led to it. Moreover, he had spent a considerably long time (about twenty-five years) in the desert and ruins around Baghdad. His belief in *taqdir* was extremely high, something we will discuss below.

The Shaykh took care to educate his sons properly. He himself taught most of them *fiqh* and *hadith*, and also arranged for their education under savants of the time. Thus most of them became well educated and pious, and when they grew up some of them resided in Baghdad while others went to different places in the Muslim world. But

wherever they resided, they used to give free education to the students who flocked round them and also benefited the public through their pious living and public sermons.<sup>81</sup> Thus the Muslim world became further indebted to the Shaykh for giving it a number of pious and highly educated children for its regeneration.

Historians mention the following among his sons. Isa (d.573A.H./1177-8A.D.in Egypt), Abd Allah (d.589A.H./1193A.D.in Baghdad), Ibrahim (d.592A.H./1196A.D.in Wasit), Abd al-Wahhab (d.593A.H./1197A.D.in Baghdad), Yahya and Muhammad (d.600A.H./1204A.D.in Baghdad), Musa (d.618A.H./1221A.D.in Damascus), Abd al-Aziz (migrated to Jiyal, a village of Sinjar (d.602A.H./1205-6A.D.)), Abd al-Rahman(d.587A.H./1191A.D.), Abd al-Jabbar (d.575A.H./1179-80A.D.), Abd al-Salam (d.611A.H./1215A.D.).<sup>82</sup> Some authorities add a few others. Of these Abd al-Ghaffar, Abd al-Ghani and Salah or salih<sup>83</sup> are most commonly mentioned.

According to the *Bahjah al-Asrar* of al-Shattanawfi, the eldest son, Abd al-Rahmam, was born in 508A.H./1114A.D. and died in 587A.H./1191A.D..<sup>84</sup> But this contradicts the majority of historians who agree that the Shaykh first married late, after his public appearance in 521 A.H./1127A.D. The youngest son, Yahya, was born



550A.H./1155A.D. and died 600 A.H./1203A.D.. Their births therefore covered a long period, and there may have been some twins.<sup>85</sup>

Further details of some of his children are given in these accounts.

A. Abd al-Wahhab, was born in 522A.H./1128A.D. in Baghdad, according to Abu Shamah, some of his teachers were Ibn Husayn, Ibn al-Samarqandi, Ibn al-Zaghuni, Ibn Ghalib, his father, Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani and others. He learnt *fiqh* and *hadith* from his father and was skillful in these disciplines. In 543A.H./1148A.D. al-Jilani put him in charge of his *madrakah*, and after his father's death he was the heir to the Shaykh's mission.<sup>86</sup>

From his childhood, Abd al-Wahhab learnt from Abu Mansur al-Qazaz, Abu al-Fadl al-Armawi, Abu al-Hasan ibn Sarma, Sa'id ibn al-Bina, Abu al-Waqt and others. Thus he became a learned man. According to Ibn al-Qadisi, he was expert on Islamic jurisprudence. Abd al-Wahhab is the most famous son of the Shaykh, because of his knowledge, intelligence and piety. He was also ascetic. Caliph al-Nasir appointed him in 583A.H. to hold an office under the state, to redress the grievances of the oppressed and to help them. He was well-known as a teacher, narrator of

Traditions, preacher (deliverer of sermons) and as one who gave opinions on questions of Islamic law. He wrote many books, Among them *Jawahir al-Asrar*, and *Lata'if al-Anwar*, both books were on sufism. Abd al-Wahhab travelled in many countries, like Egypt and Syria to spread his teachings.<sup>87</sup>

Caliph al-Nasir had built a *ribat* for him, called *Ribat al-khalatiyyah*.<sup>88</sup> which he ran as well as his father's *madrasah*. After his death, the *madrasah* was given charge to his son, Abd al-Salam, and then, his neiphew, Abu salih Nasr ibn Abd al-Razzaq (564-633A.H./1168-1236A.D.).<sup>89</sup>

B. Abd al-Razzaq, another son of the Shaykh was born in 528A.H./1133A.D.. Like most of his brothers, he learnt *fiqh* and *hadith* from his father. Subsequently he learnt *hadith* from Abu al-Hasan ibn Darma and others. He also searched for parts of *hadith* from different quarters and became a *hafiz*<sup>90</sup> 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.

In spite of his limited means, he was charitable and kind to the students. His civility and virtues were known

to all. He frequently used to take part in debates and teach *hadith*, *fiqh* and other subjects. In spite of these occupations, he liked solitude and would not come out of his closet, except out of religious necessity.<sup>91</sup>

Abd al-Razzaq's soul departed from this world in 603 A.H./1206A.D. and he was buried in the graveyard of Ahmad ibn Hanbal at Baghdad. On account of his piety and virtues a large crowd took part in his funeral prayers.<sup>92</sup>

A. Another son, Isa, was a teacher of *hadith* and a great jurist. He learnt *fiqh* and *hadith* from his father. He also learnt *hadith* from learned scholars of the time. He used to teach *hadith* and coach students, deliver sermons and give opinion on questions of Islamic law. He was also a poet and expert in composition. He was a good preacher and also wrote book on sufism, one of which is named *Jawahir al-Asr*. After the death of his father, he went to Damascus and thence to Egypt, where he settled. Here he used to teach *hadith* and deliver sermons. He became very popular among the Egyptians. He breathed his last in Egypt in 573 A.H./1177A.D.. Isa is the person through whom the seventy-eight discourses of the Shaykh in *Futuh al-Ghayb* have been handed down to us.<sup>93</sup>

D. Another son, Musa, was born in 539A.H./1144A.D.. He



too learnt *fiqh* and *hadith* from his father, he also studied the latter subject from Abu Sa'id ibn Naba, Ibn al-Bina and others. He proceeded to Damascus and settled there. People of the place benefited from his efforts. He was one of the pious and exalted men of the town. He died there in 618A.H./1221A.D. and was also buried there. He was the last to die among the Shaykh's children. Umar ibn al-Hajib reported that he was of the Hanbali sect, expert on Tradition and an ecstatic and is accorded much praise by him.<sup>94</sup>

E. Another son, Abu Bakar Abd al-Aziz, was born in 532 A.H./1137A.D.. Like most of his brothers, he learnt *fiqh* from his father. Subsequently, he learnt *hadith* from his father and many other scholars such as Ibn Mansur Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad al-Qazzaz. He was expert in *hadith* and used to preach sermons and teach; he had many disciples and many of them in turn were well-known. He emigrated to Jibal in 580A.H./1184A.D.. His descendents will be found up to this time. He was sometime in Jerusalem (*Al-Quds*) and died at Jibal in 602A.H./1205-6A.D.<sup>95</sup>

F. Another son, Abd al-Jabbar, likewise learnt *fiqh* and *hadith* from his father, also studying the latter subject from Abu Mansur al-Qazzaz. Well-known as a sufi, he used

to visit pious men and always sought the company of the poor. He died 28 years before Abd al-Razzaq in 575A.H./1179-80A.D., and was buried at his father ribat in al-Halabah.<sup>96</sup>

G. Ibrahim, another son, emigrated to Wasit. He learnt *fiqh* from his father, and studied *hadith* from his father and also Sa'id ibn al-Bina and others. He died at wasit in 592A.H./1196 A.D..<sup>97</sup>

H. Muhammad studied *hadith* and *fiqh* with his father, Sa'id ibn al-Bina, Abu al-Waqt and others. He was also narrator of *hadith*.<sup>98</sup>

I. Abd Allah likewise studied *hadith* from his father and Ibn al-Bina . He was born in 508A.H./1114A.D. and died in 589 A.H./1193 A.D..<sup>99</sup>

J. Another son, Yahya studied *hadith* from his father, and from Muhammad ibn Abd al-Baqi and others. He narrated *hadith* to the public. Yahya was the last son of the Shaykh. He was born in 550A.H./1155A.D., approximately eleven years before the death of the Shaykh. His mother was from Abyssinia. He lives in Egypt and had a son from there, called Abd al-Qadir, whom he then brought to Baghdad. Yahya died in 600A.H./ 1204A.D. at Baghdad. A

crowd took part in funeral prayers in his father's *madrasah* and he was buried at Halabah beside his brother Abd al-Wahhab.<sup>100</sup>

It is clear that many of the Shaykh's sons learnt *fiqh* and *hadith* from him and established a kind of dynasty of the learned in law as much as in sufism.

Abu al-Faraj Abd al-Rahman in his book gave a brief biography of Muhammad, son of Nasr, son of Abd al-Razzaq, son of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani,<sup>101</sup> and Muhammad, son of Abd al-Aziz, son of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani.<sup>102</sup>

Among the descendants of the Shaykh, we hear of one grandson, perhaps the most interesting figure. He is Abd al-Salam, son of Abd al-Wahhab, son of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (although many of them were well-known and famous in their career). Abd al-Salam held several important posts, but after Ibn Yunus became the vizier, and his books were burned at Bab al-Ammah, and some of his family was exiled to Wasit. The Shaykh's *madrasah* was taken over and given to Ibn al-Jawzi to oversee.<sup>103</sup> But he was himself released presently by his father's intercession. One of the reasons, why these punishments were taken is - according to the historians - that he was



suspected of being a philosopher and as a result he is called *zindiq*<sup>104</sup> or *fasiq*,<sup>105</sup> because he wrote on philosophical issues in his books, but he denied that the philosophical materials in his writings were described by him as an incitement to apostasy.<sup>106</sup>

## (5) HIS "MANNERS AND MIRACLES"

### A. HIS "MANNERS"

All of the authorities agree that he had a noble character and the best of manners, having far-reaching aims and high-mindedness, humility and lowliness before God, generosity and deference toward others. One of his contemporaries, Haradah, who lived a long life and accompanied many of these great teachers describes his manners thus:<sup>107</sup> "I never saw other scholars better than him in good manners, open-mindedness, generosity with others, kind-heartedness, fidelity in keeping promises, love and friendship. Although he had high position and great knowledge, he stood with children and respected adults greeting them appropriately (*salam*). The Shaykh used to sit down with the weak and the poor, he never stood to glorify any out standing rulers<sup>108</sup> and he never stayed at the gate of sultan and vizier".<sup>109</sup>

The author of the *Mir'ah al-Zaman* (Mirror of Time) says that the silence of the Shaykh was more lengthy than his discourse.<sup>110</sup> Abu Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Barzali al-Ishbili says: "The Shaykh was open to pleas, easily moved to compassion, continually in *dhikr* and meditation, gentle hearted, always humbly grateful, noble, openhanded in his generosity, replete with knowledge, courteous and good-natured, as well as firm in his *ibadah* (worship) and *ijtihad*".<sup>111</sup>

The *mufti* of Iraq, Muhy al-Din Abu Abd Allah ibn Hamid al-Baghdadi says: "The Shaykh was far beyond the absurd and very close to the truth. He was a courageous person if the law-abiding had been attacked; he did not get angry on his own behalf and worked only for God".<sup>112</sup> He was devoted to feeding and caring for the needy and disabled. It is reported that the Shaykh says: "I had examined all actions, but I found none better in giving sustenance and none more noble in generous behaviour; if all the world had been put under my control I would have fed the hungry".<sup>113</sup>

According to the author of *Qala'd al-Jawahir*:<sup>114</sup> "The Shaykh would every night order carpets to be layed out and guests to be fed; he used to sit down with the weak and needy, and devote his patient attention to

students who came. He used to check among his friends, who were absent and ask about them".

As an example of his generosity, it was stated that once when the Shaykh was living in Baghdad, there was a famine in the the city. Many people went to see relatives in the country and he went to his native village, where his kinsmen gave him a loaf of bread. He did not eat it, but took it back to the city, where he broke off pieces and gave them to the hungry citizens. When all the people had eaten enough, there was nothing left and the next day the Shaykh had nothing to eat.

He never took money from anyone, and if, as often happened, a pious admirer arrived to offer money, the Shaykh would ask one of his followers in attendance to accept it on his behalf and then hand out coins to passing beggars.

The small religious community that had sprung up around the Shaykh provided its livelihood by growing fruit and vegetables on the land surrounding their dwelling near the river. One day a poor student arrived complaining about a ferryman who had refused to take him across the river for free. Just at that moment a rich man arrived with a bag full of silver, which he offered to



the Shaykh, so that the latter might pray to God on his behalf for a safe journey. The Shaykh asked the student and the merchant to follow him to the riverside where the ferryman was waiting for paying passengers. The Shaykh lectured the ferryman about his miserly conduct. "Students are travellers on the path of God, we must all help them to arrive at their destination, so that they may gather knowledge and become teachers of Islam. Here is a bag of money which will pay you for all the poor students who will want to cross the river in the future as son of the road (*ibn al-sabil*)". To the rich man he said: "God may convert your silver into a white horse which will carry you across the *sirat*."<sup>115</sup>

All of this adds more and more weight, greater force to the representation of the Shaykh as a saint of sublime degree.

#### B. HIS "MIRACLES"

Many Muslim historians, especially the biographers have written at length on the Shaykh's life and in particular his miracles. According to them the miracles of the Shaykh are innumerable. As a matter of fact in Islamic theology the miracles occur and are a blessing bestowed upon saints by God as a support for them. Thus

scepticism is not an altogether appropriate response even though it is more congenial to a modernist.

The *Bahjah al-Asrar* by al-Shatanawfi,<sup>116</sup> an author who died in 713A.H/1314A.D. contains the narrative of many miracles performed by the Shaykh along with authenticated by chains of witnesses; whence Ibn Taymiyyah<sup>117</sup> (d. 728 A.H./1328A.D.) declared that they satisfied the requirements of credibility, though others were less credulous; the book is, e.g. condemned by al-Dhahabi<sup>118</sup> as containing frivolous tales, whereas Ibn al-Wardi<sup>119</sup> copies it.<sup>120</sup>

Much more offence has been given by the arrogant claims put in the Shaykh's mouth: thus the *Bahjah al-Asrar* begins with a list of persons who heard him say: "My foot is on the neck of every saint", and he similarly made out to have claimed the possession of seventy gates of knowledge, each one of them broader than the distance between heaven and earth, etc.<sup>121</sup>

Late followers of the Shaykh such as the author of the Persian treatise, while endeavouring to restrict the universality of the first of these sayings tried to show that the Shaykh was justified in uttering it. And other writers such as Damiri only find in it evidence of the

Shaykh's dignity. Sayings of this sort do not seem to be found in the genuine works of the Shaykh (though there are parallels to them in the poems ascribed to him); and are probably due to the enthusiasm of his followers.<sup>122</sup>

To the writer's knowledge, this book (*Bahjah al-Asrar*) is the most complete that has been written on the Shaykh virtues and the events of his life. It contains everything that is curious or remarkable about him. I came across an answer by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, when he was questioned on the subject of this book, in which he took a course of fairness and justice in regard to it. And so he relies upon it and uses freely all that it relates, in the "*Ghibtah al-Nazir fi Tarjamah al-Shaykh Abd al-Qadir*" as do many another respected scholars besides him.

Shaykh Izz al-Din ibn Abd al-Salam, says: "No man's miracles have come down to us on such unimpeachable evidence as those of the Shaykh Abd al-Qadir". This remark is attributed to him by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani in an answer which he gave. He says: "We have given the words in their proper sense, on sound evidence, derived from Hafiz Sharaf al-Din Ali ibn Muhammad al-Yunini, who heard Ibn Abd al-Salam say it".<sup>123</sup>



The corresponding passage in the "Bahjah" is to the same effect in the account of those among the Shaykh who bowed their heads when he said it, as also the passage giving an account of those who were present at the *majlis* in which he said it. It runs as follows:

Shaykh Abu Yusuf, Ya'qub, son of Badran al-Maqqari al-Qahiri, informed us of it in the year 669A.H. He said: I entered Baghdad in the year 621A.H., and went to visit the chief judge (*qadi*) Abu Salih Nasr in his grandfather's *madrasah* beside the Azaj gate, and I found with him a company of men, one of whom said to him: "What did you hear about the saying of the Shaykh Abd al-Qadir (may God accept him) "This my foot is upon the neck of every saint of God?" He replied: "I heard my father, Abu Bakr Abd al-Razzaq, and my uncles Abu Abd al-Rahman Abd Allah, Abu Abd Allah Abd al-Wahhab and Abu Ishaq Ibrahim (may God Whose name be exalted have mercy upon them) say at different times: "We were present at the session (*majlis*) of our father in which he said that saying, and there were present along with us over fifty Shaykhs of Iraq, who bowed their heads. Afterwards, we were informed that other shaykhs in the chief cities, who were not present on that occasion, had bowed their heads and had stated what he had said. And we never heard of any of them who rejected his claim".<sup>124</sup> Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani

has related it in the "Ghibtah" with some brevity.<sup>125</sup>

It has been replied to the saying of the Shaykh "This my foot is upon the neck of every saint", that it means in his time, because he combined in himself high descent and the nobility which comes from worship and knowledge, such as no other of the people of his time possessed.<sup>126</sup> What one sees here is that a legendary statement like this can be in its turn interpreted in many ways according to the "ideological" tendency of the commentator.

Al-Dhahabi condemned al-Shattanawfi's work on the Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani. According to him, al-Shattanawfi has produced milk with the curd equally, and has mixed with truth statements that are groundless and false, being told on the authority of persons of no worth. In spite of this critic, Al-Dhahabi, however, accepted in general, the narration of Shaykh's miracles, considering that his miracles are recorded by a sound chain, and that he left no-one after him like himself.<sup>127</sup> Sibte ibn al-Jawzi in Mir'ah al-Zaman records some of miracles attributed to the Shaykh.<sup>128</sup> And in the work of Ibn Arabi (born 560A.H./1165A.D.) Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani is mentioned as a just man, the qutub of his time.<sup>129</sup> (The qutub would be expected to have miraculous

powers).

Of the innumerable miracles of the Shaykh, a few have been recorded. These are a few of them.

I. It is reported that the Shaykh was born in the month of *Ramadan* (Fasting). From his earliest childhood, as a baby, Abd al-Qadir refused his mother's breast during the days of *Ramadan*, so his mother had to feed him at night. Once the new moon of the month of *Ramadan* was not visible in the evening on account of clouds, so in the morning people came to his mother to inquire whether the day was the first of *Ramadan*. She replied that her child did not suck milk in the day. Subsequently it transpired that the day was actually the first of *Ramadan*. Thus he marked the beginning of the fast by refusing the breast of his mother.<sup>130</sup>

II. It is reported when he was about 18 years old, once on the day of 'Arafah (the day previous to the 'Id of sacrifice), he was going to the fields for an excursion, when an ox passed, pulling a heavy plough. The ox turned to him and said that he was not born for the purpose and asked to go and study the Quran. Deeply impressed, young Abd al-Qadir went to his mother, and he then requested her to dedicate him to God and to allow him to proceed to



Baghdad.<sup>131</sup>

III. It has been said that one night the Caliph al-Mustanjid bi Allah came to the *madrasah* of the Shaykh with the intention of seeing him and sat down respectfully. His purpose was to receive some wise advice from the Shaykh. He brought with him ten bags filled with gold and silver coins and presented them to the Shaykh for his acceptance. But the Shaykh refused to take them. When the Caliph solicited very much for their acceptance, the Shaykh took two of the best bags with his hand and pressed them. Blood came out of the bags. The Shaykh then said to the Caliph: "You have raised the money by oppressing the people and brought it to me for my acceptance. It really represents the blood of the people and hence I refuse it". Hearing this the Caliph fainted.<sup>132</sup>

IV. A relative of the Caliph al-Mustanjid bi Allah was once taken to the Shaykh. He was suffering from dropsy and as a consequence of it, his stomach swelled enormously. The Shaykh passed his hand over the stomach which contracted to its natural size, as if he had not been ill at any time.<sup>133</sup>

V. It is related on the authority of Shaykh 'Adi ibn

Musafir that once Shaykh Abd al-Qadir was conversing with some persons who had come to hear his sermon, when it began to rain. The Shaykh looked up to the sky and said: "I call together men for your God's sake, but you disperse them". As soon as he said this, the clouds dispersed and rain ceased to fall on the *madrasah* of the Shaykh, though it was raining in the places surrounding the *madrasah* and adjacent to it.<sup>134</sup>

VI. It has been narrated that one year the river Tigris rose to an extraordinarily high level on account of an unprecedented flood in the river and the inhabitants of Baghdad, feared their city would be flooded and they might be drowned by the flood. They came to the shaykh and solicited his help. The Shaykh advanced to the bank of the river, planted his stick in the ground saying: "Remain within this limit". From that moment the waters decreased.<sup>135</sup>

VII. It is reported that one day, as the Shaykh was teaching in the open air, a harrier flew over the students' head shrieking loudly. When it did not fly away, but wheeled around, it completely disrupted the lecture since the superstitious students believed that a harrier's cry spelt misfortune. The Shaykh, realising that the students were being prevented from acquiring

knowledge by a bird of prey, suddenly asked the wind to cut off the head of the bird. At once, the bird's head was severed from its body; head and trunk fell separately to earth. The shaykh rose, walked over to where the head and body had fallen, picked them up, put them together and spoke: "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate". Under God's command the bird's head and body grew together again and the bird straightened itself, perching on the Shaykh's hand. The latter addressed it with admonishing words, as one would address a naughty child: "Now go, fly away, and leave us in peace. We are studying the book of God". The bird bowed its head humbly, then flew away.<sup>136</sup>

VIII. Shaykh Shihab al-Din Omar al-Suhrawardi stated: "In my youth, I had a great liking for the subject of *kalam* (scholastic theology). I got by heart several books on the subject, though my uncle used to forbid me to study it. But in spite of his instruction I could not give up my liking for the subject and continued to study it till I became an expert in it. One day my uncle took me to the Shaykh and said to him: This young man is my nephew. He devotes most of his time to the study of *kalam* against my directions to the contrary". In reply to the question of the Shaykh, I stated what books I had got by heart on the subject. Hearing this the Shaykh passed his hand over my



chest. As soon as he raised his hand, I forgot every thing I knew of the subject of kalam and in lieu of it my mind was filled up with wisdom and Divine knowledge were on my lips. The Shaykh informed me, that I would be the last famous man in Iraq".<sup>137</sup>

IX. It has been stated that Shaykh Ali Arabi of Spain had no child. At the instance of a *majzub* saint,<sup>138</sup> he approached the Shaykh Abd al-Qadir who replied that he was not destined to have a son. Shaykh Ali Arabi submitted that if he were destined to have one, he would not have approached his holiness. the Shaykh then said: "Very well, I have one more son in my destiny. I give it to you. Rub your back against mine. Name the son when born Muhammad Muhi al-Din. He will be the qutub of his time and will attain worldwide fame". When the child was born he was given the name mentioned by the Shaykh. In time he became a great philosopher and also attained high spiritual advancement. He gained the title of "*Shaykh al-Akbar*". He is commonly known as "Ibn Arabi".<sup>139</sup> (This is an astonishing example of the construction of spiritual genealogies and networks to link key figures and moreover bring together opposing doctrines).

X. One day, as he was expounding on *qada'* and *qadr*<sup>140</sup> in the Nizamiyyah college, a huge snake fell from the

ceiling and crept up the Shaykh's legs, inside his robe, coming out at the neck. Shaykh Abd al-Qadir quietly finished his exposition though all the men had fled from the college. The Shaykh conversed with the snake in the snake's language for a long time. Then it vanished. When the people came back they asked the Shaykh what the snake had said. It had said: "I tried all the saints, but you are the only intrepid one".<sup>141</sup>

Now, It is thought by most Islamic theologians that miracles are not a part of sainthood, nor its condition; they are only a condition of prophecy. According to the consensus (*ijma'*) of the *ummah*, even the greatest of saints are not equal to the most modest of the Companions. Nevertheless, many saints are considered to be able to perform a "hundred times more miracles than the Companions can". But, the greatness of a saint is not chiefly measured by the miracles he performs but the doctrines he works out and the truths he receives in *Kashf*. And if he has performed a miracle, that is an honour from his God.

This latter point is important. Many Muslim thinkers are opposed to any cult of saints whatsoever and seek to discredit any claims of this kind. Modernists go further in considering such beliefs to be irrational as well as

heterodox; they take on this issue a view like that of the secular-minded. It is stressed by those who believed in these miracles that they are a blessing from God to assist the saint. They are not a result of his own power. Sufis have also stressed that someone on the path must avoid using the power for magic or for "showing off".

We can see also that some of these tales are sufi stories anyway because they have a spiritual meaning and they teach through the narrative, so whether we believe in them or not it can be agreed that they express spiritual reality. This is just as with the "temptation" story discussed above.

It is finally worth noting that the stories concerning al-Jilani may have provided the model for the lives and spiritual reputation of other saints, including many of the great saints of Southeast Asia. This topic is at this time under-researched.

#### **(6) HIS WRITINGS AND HERITAGE.**

It has been seen in the preceding pages that the Shaykh permanently settled in Baghdad in 521A.H./1127A.D. and from that time he entirely devoted himself to the



service of humanity. He used to deliver sermons three days in a week. Every day he taught *tafsir*, *hadith*, and other subjects.

It will appear from what has been stated above that the Shaykh worked for the benefit of mankind day and night with little rest and sleep. He had no time for literary work, yet with extraordinary spiritual energy, the Shaykh undertook to write books both in prose and poetry with the same object of serving humanity by making them godly.

The Shaykh's works are all religious in character and largely consist of reports of his sermons or addresses.<sup>142</sup> Below are given the names of his works with in some cases a note on the contents.

A. *AL-GHUNYAH LI TALIBI TARIQ AL-HAQQ FI AL-AKHLAQ WA AL-TASAWWUF WA AL-ADAB AL-ISLAMIYYAH*. (Sufficiency for the seeker of the way of truth on ethics, sufism and Islamic morals).

A treatise on legalistic ethics, theology, ritual, sufism and morals. It is a large work on religious duties. According to the third edition, printed in Cairo, at 16th Rabi' al-Thani, 1376A.H./19th November, 1956A.D.,

this book was in two volumes in one book; the first volume had 192 pages and the second one contained 200 pages.<sup>143</sup>

These two volumes constitute a religious treatise which follows the Sunni Laws of Hanbalite school. This work discusses theological matters , treats at great length of the properties of the single months and days of the week, and of prayer and concludes with rules of asceticism.<sup>144</sup> A manuscript is in existence in the India Office library in London.<sup>145</sup> It is plainly written. Completed on Saturday 17th *Dhu al-Qa'dah*, 1169A.H, at Muhammahpur-Arkat.<sup>146</sup>

#### B. *FUTUH AL-GHAYB* ( The revelations of the Unseen)

This book contains the Shaykh's mystical teaching including seventy-eight discourse on various subjects compiled by his son Abd al-Razzaq. The book concentrates on gnosis. It was printed in Persian at Lucknow in 1880 A.D.; in Arabic at Cairo in 1303 A.H..<sup>147</sup> The Arabic text of this book was printed later on many times in various places, such as in the margin of al-Shattanawfi's *Bahjah al-Asrar*, Cairo, 1304A.H.<sup>148</sup> and in the margin of al-Tadhifi al-Halabi (d. 963 A.H), *Qala'id al-Jawahir fi Manaqib 'Abd al-Qadir*, 3rd. edition, 1375 A.H/1956A.H.

(144 pages).<sup>149</sup> A manuscript is existence in India office Library in London.<sup>150</sup>

After the preface the first discourse considers the obligations of a believer (*mu'min*). The last discourse (the seventy eighth) examines about *ahl al-mujahadah wa al-muhasabah wa ulu al-azm*, the "men of spiritual struggle and self inspection and the men of determination" with their characteristics. In addition, this book in a later edition is followed by Abd al-Razzaq's dying injunctions, his genealogy on his father's and mother's side, proof of his connection with Abu Bakr and Umar, his creed, and some of his poems.

We do not discuss here in detail the content of this book because we will mention it separately in the next chapter on the mystical teaching of the Shaykh, using this text as a special point of reference.

### C. *AL-FATH AL-RABBANI WA AL-FAYD AL-RAHMANI*

The latest edition of this book is in 1380A.H./1960A.D. Cairo, Egypt. It includes 307 pages. This book begins with a preface and sixty-two sermons preached by the Shaykh in the years 545-546A.H./1150-1152A.D. These sermons were compiled from his lectures called *al-majlis*.



The first lecture was delivered on Sunday morning, 3rd *Shawwal*, 545A.H. at his *ribat*, discussing the totality of Divine Decree.<sup>151</sup> The Last, sixty second is on *tawhid* (the unity of God).<sup>152</sup> This last lecture was preached at the Shaykh's *madrasah* in Friday morning, end of the month of *Rajab*, in the year 546A.H.<sup>153</sup>

The content of this book is a collection of his sermons and lectures delivered on the three days of a week (occasionally two times a week, according to the notes for each sermons). He used to preach on Sunday, Tuesday and Friday at his *madrasah* and his *ribat*, it was compiled from Sunday 3rd *Shawwal*, 546A.H. to Friday last *Rejab*, 546A.H..

This book is very important and useful for da'wah as well as sufism. It includes the content and the methodology of Da'wah, and also the mystical teachings of al-Jilani. In these lectures, he uses a large number of verses of the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet to support what he has preached.<sup>154</sup> This book sometimes bears the title *Sittin Majalis*.<sup>155</sup>

D. JALA' AL-KHATIR

This book is mentioned by Haji Khalifah; it is a

collection of sermons of which the first bears the same date as the 59th and the last the same as the 57th of *al-Fath al-Rabbani* above; perhaps it is another title for the same work.<sup>156</sup>

A manuscript is in existence in the India office Library in London. It is another collection of sermons. These sermons were given by the Shaykh in the years 545 A.H. and 546 A.H., partly in the Academy (*madrasah*), and partly in the dwelling house of the sufis (*ribat*), at Baghdad. They are followed here by other sayings of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir, which conclude with an account of his death. As appears from the latter, this collection was made by a person who was acquainted with the sons of the Shaykh. It is called *Malfuz*.<sup>157</sup> It seems to be identical with the *Jala' al-Khatir* mentioned in Haji Khalifah;<sup>158</sup> though the two dates do not agree. The sermons are here not in the chronological order. But in recent times, this book was printed with the title *Jala' al-Khawahir*, published by Maktabah Nabawiyyah, Lahore, (n.d.).

E. SERMONS INCLUDED IN THE *BAHJAH AL-ASRAR* AND OTHER  
BIOGRAPHICAL WORKS

A manuscript in the India Office Library and

Records, is an imperfect copy of this work, which is 46 pages only. It is a collection of various short essays on sufism, by Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, concluding with a biographical note. The name of compiler is not mentioned. It is well copied, but imperfect both at the beginning and end.<sup>159</sup>

F. *AL-FUYUDAT AL-RABBANIYYAH FI AL-MA'ATHIR WA AL-AWRAD AL-QADIRIYYAH*<sup>160</sup>

This is a collection of prayers and other works of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, compiled by al-Sayyid Muhammad sa'id al-Qadiri. This book is very important and useful as a reference for the prayers and awrad of Qadiri order. Many of al-Jilani's small works are included in this book such as:

- I. *Aqidah al-Ghawth al-A'zam*
- II. *Qasidah al-Asma' al-Husna*
- III. *Takhmis Qasidah*
- IV. *Al-Qasidah al-Ghawthiyyah*
- V. *Awrad al-Qadiriyyah*
- VI. *Al-Salah al-Kubra*
- VII. *Al-Kibrit al-Ahmar*



G. HIZB BASHA' IR AL-KHAYRAT

A mystical prayer, it was printed at Alexandria, Egypt, in 1304A.H.<sup>161</sup>

H. AL-MAWAHIB AL-RAHMANIYYAH WA AL-FUTUH AL-RABBANIYYAH  
FI MARATIB AL-AKHLAQ AL-SANIYYAH WA AL-MAQAMAT  
AL-IRFANIYYAH

This book is quoted in *Rawdah al-Jannah*, p.441, and is possibly identical with *al-Fath al-Rabbani* or *Futuh al-Ghayb*.<sup>162</sup>

I. YAWAQIT AL-HIKAM

This book is mentioned by Haji Khalifah.<sup>163</sup>

There is an important issue at stake here, however, Bon Carra De Vaux stated that many works, mystical treatises, collections of prayers and sermons, are simply ascribed to him.<sup>164</sup> Brockalman mentions twenty-four titles of his books still existing in the libraries of Europe.<sup>165</sup> But as far as I know many of these were printed later on. The most useful texts are those which contain a lot of al-Jilani's prayers and mystical treatises as noted before e.g., *Al-Fuyudat al-Rabbaniyyah*

*fi al-ma'athir wa al-Awrad al-Qadiriyyah*,<sup>166</sup> compiled by al-Sayyid al-Haj Isma'il ibn al-Sayyid Muhammad sa'id al-Qadiri.

Among those manuscripts which are listed by Carl Brockelmann and others are the following:

- I. *Khawas al-Fatihah*
- II. *Futuh al-Arif al-Rabbani*
- III. *Futuh al-Rabbani li al-Iman al-Samadani*
- IV. *Malfuz al-Shaykh al-Rabbani.*
- V. *Malfuz al-Qadiriyyah*
- VI. *Kalimah Qudsiyyah Ilhamat Ghawthiyyah*
- VII. *Al-Asma' al-Azimah*
- VIII. *Fath al-Basa'ir*
- IX. *Hisb*
- X. *Al-Kibrit al-Ahmar*<sup>167</sup>
- XI. *Jawharah al-Kamal*
- XII. *Mukhtasar fi Ilm al-Din*
- XIII. *Jawahir al-Rahman*
- XIV. *Sirr al-Asrar wa Mazhar al-Anwar*
- XV. *Durar al-Ma'ani*
- XVI. *Risalah fi Tariq Allah al-Wadud*
- XVII. *Risalah al-Ghawth*
- XVIII. *Usbu' Sharif hadrah al-Ghawth al-A'zam .*
- XIX. *Fi al-Khayrat fi Fada'il al-Nabi*

- XX. Salawat
- XXI. Kawkab al-Mabani wa Mawkib al-Ma'ani fi Sharh  
Salawat al-Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Kilani
- XXII. Al-Salah al-Sughra
- XXIII. Al-Salah al-Kubra<sup>168</sup>
- XXIV. Hizb al-Najah wa al-Ibtihaj wa al-Iltija'
- XXV. Dala'il al-Qadiriyyah
- XXVI. Al-Wird al-Suryani<sup>169</sup>
- XXVII. Awrad al-Qadiriyyah<sup>170</sup>
- XXVIII. 10 Wasaya
- XXIX. Al-Qasidah al-ghawthiyyah<sup>171</sup>
- XXX. Qasidah al-Shihab al-Thaqib
- XXXI. Qasidah al-asma' al-Husna<sup>172</sup>
- XXXII. Qasidah Mubadarah al-Ghaybah
- XXXIII. Al-Qasidah al-'Ayniyyah<sup>173</sup>
- XXXIV. Takhmis Qasidah<sup>174</sup>

The problem with the texts, of-course, is that even those attributed most consistently to al-Jilani by tradition and by Western orientalists consist, as we have seen, of lectures and sermons. So it is unclear what if anything the Shaykh actually wrote.

We should not feel however that this is a difficulty any more or less serious than it is with many groups of medieval texts. It is a fact that the text was often the



end-result of a process of recording oral teachings, lectures, disputes, etc. It is also known that new authors would attribute their own writings to more well-known authors who often lived a long time before.

But even if this latter problem does not arise now the former does. there are many cases of lecture series which have turned into key texts, e.g. in philosophy. It is only for a limited number of years that the lecture notes can be "corroborated" by people who heard the lectures.

What we can say is that there is a tradition which consistently attributes to the Shaykh a central set of teachings which are coherent. These are also consistent with what we know of al-Jilani's life and they also make sense in the context of the intellectual debates of the period. E.g. they have a relation to the approach of al-Ghazali towards orthodoxy and sufism. Again, they are characterised by the fact that the Shaykh was a Hanbalite.

It is important to note that these teachings are said to be contained in the three books which are most widely available: *al-Ghunyah*, *Futuh al-Ghayb* and *al-Fath al-Rabbani*.

On the assumption that these are the authentic teachings of al-Jilani we will now proceed to present them.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1. See al-Kutubi, *Fawat al-Wafayat* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Nahdah al-Misriyyah, 1951), Vol.II, p.4; see also al-Qannawji, *al-Taj al-Mukallal* (Bombay: al-Matba'ah al-Hindiyyah al-Arabiyyah, 1963), p.166: W. Braune, "Abd al-Qadir al-Djilani" in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Vol.I, p.69.
2. See Ibn Taghri-Birdi, *al-Nujum al-Zahirah* (Cairo: Matba'ah Dar al-Kutub al-Misriyyah, 1935), Vol.V, p.371.
3. Ali ibn Yusuf al-Shattanawfi, *Bahjah al-Asrar wa Ma'din al-Anwar* (Cairo: al-Matba'ah al-Maymaniyyah, 1304 A.H.) p.127.
4. See Ibn al-Wardi, *Tatimmah al-Mukhtasar fi Akhbar al-Bashar* (Cairo: al-Wahhabiyyah, 1285/1868), Vol.II, p.69: see also Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Ghibtah al-Nazir fi tarjamah al-Shaykh Abd al-Qadir* (Calcutta: The Baptist Mission Press, 1903), p.2; Muhammad al-Dila'i, "Natijah al-Tahqiq", in *JRAS*, (1903), p.156; H.A.R.Gibb and J.H.Kramers, *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leidam: E.J.Brill and London: Luzac & Co, 1961), p.5 mentioned Zengi Dost; but al-Dhahabi, "Biography of Abd Abd al-Kadir of al-Jilani", in *JRAS*, (1907), p.288 stated as follow: Abd al-Kadir, son of Abu Salih Abd Allah, son of Jangi Dost.
5. See Ibn al-Wardi, *op. cit.*, p.69; see also Abd al-Rahman ibn Ahmad al-Hanbali, *Kitab al-Dhayl 'ala Tabaqat al-Hanabilah* (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1952), Vol.I, p.290 recorded "Son of Abi Abd Allah", but another source recorded "Son of Abd Allah" only, without "Abi".
6. The "Introduction" of al-Jilani's *al-Ghunyah* (Egypt: Maktabah wa Matba'ah Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1956), Vol.I, p.3 does not mention Musa, son of Abd Allah, but directly to Musa al-Jawn, as follow: Dawud, son of Musa al-Jawn.
7. Ibn al-Wardi, *op. cit.*, p.69.
8. Ibn al-Imad, *Shadharat al-Dhahab fi Akhbar man Dhahab* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Qudsi, 1350 A.H., Vol.IV, p.198; see also al-Sayyid Mahmud al-Munufi al-Husayni, *Jamharah al-Awliya' wa A'lam Ahl al-Tasawwuf* (Cairo: Mu'assasah al-Halabi wa Shurakahu, 1967), Vol.II, p.201.
9. Ibn al-Imad, *op. cit.*, p.199; see also Ibn Taghri Birdi, *op. cit.*, p.371; Ibn al-Wardi, *op. cit.*, p.69.
10. Ibn al-Taghri Bardi, *op. cit.*, p.371.
11. Al-Kutubi, *op. cit.*, p.4.



12. The literal meaning of al-Ghawth is "aid" or "succour" in the midst of difficulties. So a Ghawth is a kind of intercessor who intercedes at a moment when the sins of nation or humanity are at the point of being punished. The Ghawth is the highest rank among the saints. See for a detailed explanation on this subject, see M.Aftab-ud-Din Ahmad "Introduction", *Futuh al-Ghayb* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammadiyah Ashraf 1982), pp.XIV-XV.
13. H.A.R Gibb and J.H. Kramers, *op. cit.*, p.5.
14. Al-Dila'i, *op. cit.*, p.156
15. Al-Shattanawfi, *op. cit.*, p127
16. Al-Dila'i, *op. cit.*, p.156
17. *Ibid.*, pp.156-157.
18. Ibn al-Wardi, *op. cit.*, p.69
19. Al-Dila'i, *op. cit.*, p.158.
20. Ibn Hajar, *op. cit.*, p.2; see also Ibn al-Wardi, *op. cit.*, p.69; Ibn Taghri Bardi, *op. cit.*, p.371; Ibn al-Imad, *op. cit.*, p.199; H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, p.5.
21. Ibn Hajar, *op. cit.*, p.3; see also Ibn al-Wardi, *op. cit.*, p.69.
22. Al-Kutubi, *op. cit.*, p.4.
23. H.A.B. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, *op. cit.*, p.5.
24. Taqi al-Din al-Wasiti, *Tiryag al-Muhibbia*, p.50.
25. He was a foreigner and this is evident from some of the stories which will be told later on: as when the Shaykh refuses to preach in public, for fear of offending the natives of Baghdad by his foreign Arabic.
26. See al-Dhahabi, *op. cit.*, p.288; see also Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Saviours of Islamic Spirit* (Lucknow: Academy of Islamic Reseach and publications, 1971), Vol.I, p.177; Ibn Taghri Birdi, *op. cit.*, Vol.V, p.371.
27. Ibn al-Jawzi, *al-Muntazam fi Tarikh al-Muluk wa al-Umam* (Hydrabad: Matba'ah Da'irah al-Ma'arif al-Uthmaniyyah, 1358A.H.), Vol.X, p.219; see also Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah fi al-Tarikh* (Cairo Beirut Riyad: Matbaah al-Sa'adah), Vol.XII, p.252; Ibn al-Athir, *Tarikh al-Kamil* (Egypt: al-Matbaah al-Azhariyyah, 1301A.H.), Vol.XI, p.145; Ibn al-Wardi, *op. cit.*, p.69; W.Braune, *op. cit.*, Vol.I, p.69.
28. Al-Dhahabi, *al-Ibar fi Khabar man Ghabar* (1963), Vol.IV, p.175; see also Ibn Taghri, *op. cit.*, p.371; Bon Carra De Vaux "Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani", in James Hastings (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, (Edinburgh: T.& T.Clark, 1908), Vol.I
29. Al-Dila'i, *op. cit.*, p.158; see also Ibn al-Wardi, *op. cit.*, p.69; Nadwi, *op. cit.*, p.177; W.Braune, *op. cit.*, p.69.
30. Ibn Taghri Birdi, *op. cit.*, p.371.

31. W.Braune, *op. cit.*, p.69; see also Nadwi, *op. cit.*, p.177.
32. See al-Qannawji, *op. cit.*, p.170; the majority of authors mentioned that al-Jilani died at the age of ninety or ninety-one. But al-Qannawji mentioned the age of seventy only, because according to him, al-Jilani was born in 490 or 491 A.H.. If we compare with other authorities, it will be clear that al-Qannawji's idea could not be accepted. While Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, *Mir'ah al-Zaman* (Hydrabad: 1951), Vol.VIII, p.266, mentioned that al-Jilani's age was ninety-two and this is a very close to the other ideas.
33. Ibn al-Athir, *op. cit.*, p.145; Ibn al-Wardi, *op. cit.*, p.69; Abd al-Rahman ibn Ahmad al-Hanbali, *op. cit.*, p.299; al-Qannawji, *op. cit.*, p.170. All authorities agree with the year of al-Jilani's death, but they had differences of opinion in the day only; according to al-Dhahabi it was tenth of *Rabi al-Thani*; Aftab-ud-Din said that it was eleventh of *Rabi' al-Thani* and he further said that this date is commemorated by his admirers up to this day and is known as *Giarwin Sharif* in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. See M.Aftab-ud-Din Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p.13.
34. Al-Qannawji, *op. cit.*, p.170 .
35. Yaqut al-Hamawi, *Mujam al-Buldan* (Beirut: Dar Sdir, 1956), Vol.II, p.201.
36. Al-Istakhri, *al-Masalik wa al-Mamalik* (Cairo: 1961); see also Abu al-Fida, *Taqwim al-Buldan* (Paris: 1840), p.426; al-Qazwini, *Athar al-Bilad wa Akhbar al-Ibad* (Beirut: 1960), p.353.
37. Al-Bustani, *Da'irah al-Ma'arif*, see word "Jilan"
38. Kilan, is the original word, and in Arabized form it became "Jilan", see Yaqut al-Hamawi, *op. cit.*, p.201; Abu al-Fida, *op. cit.*, p.426.
39. J.Bartholomew, *The Time Atlas of The World* (London: 1959), Vol.II, plate 32.
40. "Jil", Yaqut says that word is used to refer to the people of Jilan, and also the name of a place in Baghdad. It is called Jil or Kil, see Yaqut al-Hamawi, *op. cit.*, p.201; al-Istakhri, *al-Masalik wa al-Mamalik* (Cairo:1961), p.121; Abu al-Fida', *op. cit.*, p.426;
41. Ibn al-Athir, *al-Lubab* (1357 A.H.), Vol.I, p.264; Abu al-Fida, *op. cit.*, p.426.
42. Yaqat, *op. cit.*, p.201; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Lubab*, Vol.I, p.264.
43. Yaqut, *op. cit.*, p.201; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Lubab*, p.264
44. Al-Istakhri, *op. cit.*, p.121.
45. Al-Qazwini, *op. cit.*, p.353.
46. John Bartholomew, *op. cit.*, plate 32.



47. See for detailed explanation, Muhammad Nur Suwayd, *Manhaj al-Tarbiyah al-Nabawiyah li al-Tifli* (Kuwait: Maktabah al-Manar al-Islamiyyah, 1988), pp.307-326.
48. Aboe Bakar Atjeh, *Tarekat Dalam Tasawwuf* (Kota Bharu: Pustaka Aman Press, 1980), p.51; see also S.A.Salik, *The Saint of Jilan* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1971) p.7.
49. See Aboe Bakar Atjeh, *op. cit.*, p.51; see also S.A.Salik, *op. cit.*, p.8.
50. See Ibn Hajar, *op. cit.*, pp.4-6.
51. The day previous to the 'Id of sacrifice.
52. Gold coins or gold pieces.
53. His name was al-Mubarak ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn (d.513 A.H.), and we shall hear of his school later on. Mukharrim was a place in Baghdad, where the palace of the Buwayhids was situated. see Sibti ibn al-Jawzi, *op. cit.*, p.264.
54. His name was Ali, see al-Shattanawfi in his *Bahjah*, p.106; while Haji Khalifah stated that he died in 513A.H./1121A.D., and enumerates various works of him, among them an encyclopaedia.
55. His name was Mahfuz ibn Ahmad al-Kalwadhini, a Hanbalite jurist, grammarian and poet, of whom Yaqut has a note.
56. Al-Sha'rani, *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*, p.109.
57. From the *Bahjah* we learn that this person's full name was Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn Ahmad ibn al-Hasan. Possibly he was a descendant of the famous judge (*qadi*) Abu Bakr Muhammad. This person, dying in 403 A.H., left a son, al-Hasan, who might have been the great grand-father of Abu Ghalib. He taught in the *Jami' al-Kasr*.
58. He is distinguished from another Razzaz (Sa'id ibn Abi Sa'id) who lived in 501-572A.H., who must have been later than the Razzaz mentioned in here.
59. The famous author of the *Masari' al-Ushshaq*. His erotic tastes may have affected al-Jilani in the direction of Sufism.
60. In the *Bahjah* this name is given as Muhammad ibn Abd al-Karim ibn Khunaysh.
61. His name was Abd al-Qadir ibn Muhammad ibn Yusof.
62. Who was then the principal of the Nazamiyyah college.
63. See Ibn al-Athir, *op. cit.*, Vol.X, p.286; see also al-Kutubi, *Fawat al-Wafayat*, Vol.II, p.3; al-Wasiti, *Tiryag*, p.54; al-Yafi'i, *Mir'ah al-Jinan*, Vol.III, p.242.
64. The word "al-dabbas" derived from "dibs" means syrup, and *al-dabbas* means syrup monger.
65. Ibn al-Athir, *Tarikh al-Kamil*, Vol.X, p.286.
66. Sibti ibn al-Jawzi had stated that al-Jilani received *al-Khirqah* from Abi sa'id al-Mukharrimi, who received from Abi al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad



- al-Qurashi, who received from Abi al-Faraj al-susi, who received from Abi al-Fadl ibn Abd al-Wahid al-Tamimi, who received from his father Abd al-Aziz, who received from Abi Bakr al-Shibli, who received from Abi al-Qasim al-Junayd, who received from his maternal uncle Sara al-Saqti, who received from Ma'ruf al-Kurkhi, who received from Dawud al-Ta'i, who received from Habib al-'Ajami, who received from al-Hasan al-Basri, received from Ali ibn Abi Talib. See his book, *Mirat al-Zaman*, p.266.
67. For detailed story, see Ibn Hajar, *Ghibtah al-Nazir*, pp.3-13.
  68. *Ibid.*, p.15
  69. The story of Hammad's treatment to al-Jilani is given in *Ghibtah*, pp.12-13.
  70. See al-Shattanawfi, *op. cit.*, p.106
  71. A place twelve days journey from Baghdad.
  72. *Burj 'Ajami* means a tower of 'ajami (non-Arab), because an 'ajami or non-Arab lived there.
  73. See St. Matthew, 4: 8-11.
  74. See Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*, Vol.I
  75. The lightning conveyance on which the Prophet rode to the heavens in his spiritual ascension called *Mi'raj*.
  76. See Aftab-Ud-Din Ahmad "A life-Sketch of Ghawth al-A'zam" in (trans.) *Futuh al-Ghayb*, p.6
  77. *Ibid.*, pp.6-7
  78. Al-Kutubi, *op. cit.*, p.6; see also D.S. Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, pp.284,304-305; according to al-Qannawji, *op. cit.*, p.170 al-Jilani had forty-seven children, twenty sons and the rest daughters; but al-Kutubi said, forty nine children including twenty sons.
  79. See S.A.Salik, *op. cit.*, p.81
  80. *Ibid*, pp.81-82
  81. See al-Shattanawfi, *op. cit.*, p.153
  82. Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, *op. cit.*, p.266.
  83. D.S. Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, p.305.
  84. See al-Shattanawfi, *op. cit.*, p.114
  85. See D.S. Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, p.305
  86. Abd al-Rahman ibn Ahmad al-Hanbali, *op. cit.*, Vol.I, pp.388-389
  87. Muhammad ibn Yahya al-Tadhifi, *Qala'id al-Jawahir* (Egypt: Matba'ah Mustafa al-Babial-Halabi, 1956), p.42.
  88. Abd al-Rahim ibn Ahmad al-Hanbali, *op. cit.*, p.389.
  89. D.S. Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, p.305
  90. Hafiz means a person who is an expert on *hadith*.
  91. See al-Tadhifi, *op. cit.*, p.43; see also al-Dhahabi, *Tadhkirah al-Huffaz* (Beirut:1958), Vol.IV, p.40; Abd al-Rahman ibn Ahmad al-Hanbali, *op. cit.*, p.40.
  92. See al-Tadhifi, *op. cit.*, pp.43-44; see also Abd al-Rahman ibn Ahmad al-Hanbali, *op. cit.*, p.41.
  93. See Aftab-Ud-Din Ahmad, *op.cit.*, p.11. But the idea

about Isa who handed down the seventy-eight discourses of al-Jilani, "Futuh al-Ghayb" contradicted with another claim that the *Futuh Ghayb* was compiled by Abd al-Razzaq. See "introduction" in *Futuh al-Ghayb* (Cairo: Matba'ah Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1973), p.3.

94. See al-Tadhifi, *op. cit.*, p.44.
95. *Ibid*, p.43; according to Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, p.305, name of place, al-Jibal is said Jiyal.
96. See al-Tadhifi, *op. cit.*, p.43.
97. *Ibid.*, p.44.
98. *Ibid.*
99. *Ibid.*
100. *Ibid.*
101. Abd al-Rahman ibn Ahmad al-Hanbali, *op. cit.*, Vol.II, pp.266.
102. *Ibid.*, p.472.
103. Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, p.305
104. *Zindiḡ* means unbeliever, free thinkers or atheist.
105. *Fasiḡ* means godless, sinful or sinner.
106. Al-Dhahabi, *Tadhkirah al-Huffaz*, Vol.IV, p.1346; al-Kutubi, *Fawat al-Wafayat*, Vol.II, p.571; al-Qannawji, *op. cit.*, p.223.
107. See al-Sha'rani, *op. cit.*, p.127.
108. *Ibid.*, p.128.
109. Sibḡ ibn al-Jawzi, *op. cit.*, p.264
110. Al-Tadhifi, *op. cit.*, p.9
  
111. *Ibid.*, p.9. *Ijtihad* means independent judgement in a legal or theological question, based on the interpretation and application of the four *usul* as opposed to *taqlid*; individual judgement.
112. See al-Tadhifi, *op. cit.*, p.9
113. *Ibid.*, p.10
114. *Ibid.*, p.9.
115. *Sirat* means the bridge over the fire of hell on the Day of Judgement.
116. For example, in his book *Bahjah*, al-Shattanawfi narrates that Shaykh al-Jilani rose thirteen steps in the air off his pulpit at a meeting, see p.74.
117. See Abu al-Hasan Nadwi, *op. cit.*, p.256
118. Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, p.310
119. Ibn al-Wardi, *op. cit.*, Vol.II, pp.70-71.
120. H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, *op. cit.*, p.6.
121. See al-Shattanawfi, *op. cit.*, p.12
122. H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, *op. cit.*, p.7
123. Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, *op. cit.*, p.36
124. Al-Shattanawfi, *op. cit.*, p.8
125. Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, *op. cit.*, pp.22-24
126. Al-Dila'i, *op. cit.*, p.164
127. Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, p.310.
128. Sibḡ ibn al-Jawzi, *op. cit.*, Vol.VIII, p.265.



129. Ibn Arabi, *al-Futuh al-Makkiyyah*, Vol.I, p.262
130. See al-Sha'rani, *op. cit.*, p.108; see also Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *op. cit.*, p.3
131. *Ibid.*, p.p.3-4
132. S.A. Salik, *op. cit.*, p.90
133. *Ibid.*, p.98
134. *Ibid.*,
135. *Ibid.*, p.p.99-100
136. *Ibid.*, p.p.102-103
137. *Ibid.*, p.p.104-105
138. A "majzub" in spiritual context means a man of distracted mind owing to Divine attraction.
139. See S.A.Salik, *op. cit.*, p.107
140. *Qada' wa qadar* means Divine decree.
141. See Sha'rani, *op. cit.*, p.111
142. H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, *op. cit.*, p.6
143. Al-Jilani, *al-Ghunyyah li Talibi Tariq al-Haqq* (Egypt: Matba'ah Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1956), vols. I&II (combined), third edition.
144. Haji Khalifah, *Kashf al-Zunun* (Istanbul: Matba'ah Wakalah al-Ma'arif, 1941-1943) Vol.II, p.1211.
145. *Al-Ghunyah li Talib Tariq al-Haqq*, MS.617, India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.
146. Otto Loth, *India Office Library: A Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts* (London: Stephen Austin 1877) Vol.I p.168.
147. Bon Carra De Vaux, "Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani", in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1908) Vol.I, p.11
148. Al-Shattanawfi, *Bahjah al-Asrar* (Cairo: al-Batbaah al-Maimaniyyah, 1304).
149. See footnote no 87.
150. *Futuh al-Ghayb*, MS. 616, India Office Library and Records, The British Library.
151. Al-Jilani, *al-Fath al-Rabbani* (Cairo: Matbaah Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, 168 ), pp.3-9
152. *Ibid.*, pp.225-302
153. *Ibid.*, p.225.
154. For a detailed discussion on this book see the fifth chapter of this thesis.
155. *Sittin Majalis*, it was called like that, according to H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, *op. cit.*, p.6, but it was wrong grammatically, according to the Arabic grammar it called *Sittina Majlisan* or *al-Majalis al-Sittin*.
156. H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, *op. cit.*, p.6
157. Otto Loth, *op. cit.*, Vol.I, p.169
158. Haji Khalifah, *op. cit.*, Vol.I, p.592
159. MS.622, India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.



160. Al-Sayyid Muhammad sa'id al-Qadiri, *al-Fuyudat al-Rabbaniyyah* (Egypt: Matba'ah Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1353 A.H.)
161. H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, *op. cit.*, p.6; see also Bon Carra De Vaux, *op. cit.*, Vol.I, p.11.
162. H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, *op. cit.*, p.6
163. Haji Khalifah, *op. cit.*, Vol.II, p.2053.
164. Bon Carra De Vaux, *op.cit.*, p.11
165. Carl Brokelmann, *Geschichte Der Arabischen Litteratur* (Leiden: 1937), *supp. I*, pp.778-779.
166. See fotenote no 160.
167. See al-Sayyid Muhammad sa'id al-Qadiri , *op. cit.*, p.154
168. *Ibid.*, p.137
169. *Ibid*, p.106
170. *Ibid*, p. 87
171. *Ibid.*, p.102
172. *Ibid.*, p.47
173. *Al-Qasidah al-'Ayniyyah* printed with *Futuh al-Ghayb* (Egypt : Matbaah Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1973) pp.193-226.
174. See al-Sayyid Muhammad sa'id al-Qadiri, *op. cit.*, p.54.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE MYSTICAL TEACHING OF AL-JILANI

#### 1. AN OUTLINE OF HIS MYSTICAL TEACHING

We begin by giving an outline of his ideas on sufism. His teachings may be gathered from such works as *Futuh al-Ghayb*, *al-Ghunyah li Talibi Tariq al-Haqq*, and *al-Fath al-Rabbani*; also the book *al-Fuyudat al-Rabbaniyyah*, compiled by al-Haj Isma'il ibn al-Sayyid Muhammad Sa'id al-Qadiri, and from the *Bahjah al-Asrar* of al-Shattanawfi, the *Qala'id al-Jawahir* of al-Tadhifi, the *Lawaqih al-Anwar al-Qudsiyyah* of al-Sha'rani, as well as from other works .

It becomes clear that the Shaykh's mysticism is in conformity with Islamic teachings. His doctrine is strictly orthodox, sound and uniformly sober; there are however, some mystical interpretations of the Qur'an, and the practice of repeating certain formulas is recommended. It is in these two areas that problems do arise, as we shall see.

The Shaykh is compared with others, much stricter in his adherence to *shari'ah*. He avoids musical sessions (*sama'*), and "dervish dances" (*raqs*) [a controversial

matter in his time]. He holds that the goal of sufism is simply to obey the *shari'ah* and to be a faithful servant of God. There is no state higher than that which could be called the gnosis of *tawhid*.<sup>1</sup> He is an orthodox sufi and a Hanbalite. Even in his sufism the Shaykh's opinions do not differ in general from those of the other Hanbalite scholars. Conflicts with jurists such as Ibn al-Jawzi, in his *Talbis Iblis*,<sup>2</sup> which were common among his contemporaries do not seem to have affected al-Jilani.

The unquestioning submission to the message of the Prophet, as it is set forth in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, excludes on the part of the sufi any claim to inspired revelation. Ecstasy, though not forbidden, is allowed but with certain restriction. Ascetism is limited by the other duties in *shari'ah*. The perfect sufi lives in his Divine God, has a knowledge of Him, and yet this saint even if he reaches the highest ranks, that of *badal*,<sup>3</sup> or *watad*,<sup>4</sup> or *qutub*,<sup>5</sup> or *ghawth*<sup>6</sup> can not reach the grade of the prophets, nor speak as if surpassing it, as some sufis were teaching.

This is clear from the text, *al-Ghunyah li Talibi Tariq al-Haqq*.<sup>7</sup> In this book he describes all of the important principles in *shari'ah* briefly. And in the last part of this book, he presents, in one chapter, his views



on sufism. We are led to understand that sufism is the inner dimension of Islam and it that can not be separated from *shari'ah*. A sufi is to be expert in *fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) as al-Sha'rani noted.<sup>8</sup>

To get a feeling for al-Jilani's mystical teaching observe his admonitions to his son, Abd al-Razzaq, upon the latter's request for advice.<sup>9</sup> The content of that admonition, briefly is as follows:

"O my son, I admonish you to fear God and to obey Him, to follow the *shari'ah* and to preserve God's *hudud*.<sup>10</sup> Our *tariqah* (Qadiri Order) is based on the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, on sound heart, generosity, openhandedness lack of harshness, discouragement of hurt and forgiveness.

"I admonish you to practice *faqr*,<sup>11</sup> for it is the preservation of the mashayikh's holiness,<sup>12</sup> keep good companionship with brothers (in Islam); and give advice to children and adults, and give up quarrels except in religious matters.

"As you know, O my son, the reality of *faqr* is that you have no need of people like you (human being) and the reality of *ghina* (literally wealth) is to be free from

people like you, and sufism is a state which is not for the person who accepts *qil wa qal*,<sup>13</sup> but if you saw the right person (the *faqir*), you will not start with communicating the knowledge to him, but try to treat him gently because this knowledge might frighten (untame) him, and the gentleness might tame him.

"As you know, O my son, sufism is based on eight qualities, It consists, first of all, of generosity; secondly, of cheerful submission; thirdly, of patience; fourthly of *isharah*<sup>14</sup> fifthly, of solitude (*ghurbah*); sixthly, of wearing woollen dress; seventhly, of travelling (*rehlah*); and eighthly of *faqr*. Generosity is the quality of Prophet Abraham, cheerful submission is the quality of Prophet Isaac, patience is the quality of Prophet Ayyub, *isharah* is the quality of Prophet Zakariyya, solitude is the quality of Prophet Joseph, wearing woollen dress is the quality of prophet John, travelling "globe-trotting" (*rehlah*) is the quality of Prophet Jesus, and *faqr* is the quality of Prophet Muhammad.

"O my son, it is an obligation to you to be the honourable friend of the rich, but to be the humble friend of the poor; it is an obligation also for you to act with sincerity, it is forgetfulness to see the

creature and not to see always the creator.<sup>15</sup> You cannot charge God with any faults nor have doubts, but you must be at peace with Him in all states. You do not put all your needs to and confidence in someone because of relationship, love and friendship.

"It is an obligation for you to serve the poor in three ways: first humbleness, secondly good deeds and thirdly purity of soul. You have to die yourself in order to live,<sup>16</sup> and the nearest creature to God is the person who has great qualities. And the most excellent deed is the observation of the secret which is to turn to no other than God.

"If you mingle with the poor you will advise them with patience, as well as with trust (*haqq*). And it is enough for you to keep to two things in the world: be friends with the poor and respect saint (*walis*).

"As you know, O my son, the faqir is a person who needs no other than God, and you know also, O my son, that to attack those beneath you is weakness and those above you vanity. The faqir and the sufi live in seriousness, so do not confound them with frivolity.

"This is my advice to you and others who hear it as



*muridin*,<sup>17</sup> God blesses us in the way I have described, and God places us in the rank of people who follow *athar al-salaf*<sup>18</sup> with the honour of our leader, Prophet and mediator Muhammad peace be upon him".

Although in the form of advice to his son, Abd al-Razzaq, this is in outline the teaching of the Qadiri order. It is a very succinct example of a form of literature which has developed in this area of mystical teaching: admonitions, advice to specific disciples. Quite a lot of the Javanese *suluk* literature is like this. It is also related to another form, that of submissions - to rulers, etc.. It seems likely that it does indeed arise out of "oral literature". Teachers gave answers in reply to questions which were passed on from teacher to teacher. It is probable that this form of religious writing has actually influenced the whole way of teaching and thinking about matters as much as it is a reflection of oral tradition.

Sometimes these texts are obscure because they seem to be almost in a "short hand" and to use words with a special esoteric meaning which makes them sometimes very unclear. The meaning of words is given by example - as would be the case in the teaching "circles" - and not by "critical analysis".

We must bear these points in mind as we proceed through the works of the Shaykh. In the extract just presented it is the case, for example, that "poverty" is used ambiguously, sometimes referring to the economically deprived and sometimes to the spiritually poor who are, of course, the true rich. We will come across more examples of this as we go on. Indeed for the most part we will let the extremely "puritan" and "sober" quality of the Shaykh's teachings emerge through his own words.

The Shaykh gives advice to another of his sons, Abd al-Wahhab, just before his death: "It is an obligation for you to fear God and to obey Him, you must not be frightened nor hopeful of any person; all needs are of God only and are directed to none other than Him; and believe in *tawhid* (the Unity of God)".<sup>19</sup>

It is in his book *Futuh al-Ghayb* (Revelations of the Unseen) that these mystical teachings are best expressed and we will discuss those in detail below. Now it is enough to pick out main themes.

The sermons were delivered on different occasions and the contents reflected the unstable situation of the times because of the anarchy and disorder which were

widespread every where in the land. Constant wars among the Seljuq destroyed the peace and security of the empire. He emphasized in almost every sermon that social ruin and instability is the result of a materialistic outlook on life. But as a reaction against this widespread materialism, he reasserts that religious values are to be the most important thing in the world. In one of his sermons, for example, he advises people in general to adopt an attitude of total and complete indifference towards the world, to kill desires and ambitions of all kinds. So when they have perfected this attitude, all grief and sorrow from their hearts and all anxiety from their minds will disappear and there will come to them comforts and a goodly life; as has been said by the Prophet: "Indifference towards the world brings happiness to heart and body".<sup>20</sup>

With regard to the mystical states, the Shaykh noted four stages of spiritual development. The first is the state of piety (*hal al-taqwa*) when man opposes himself, so that he keeps away from the forbidden things and doubtful things and leads a life of obedience to the *shari'ah*, totally reliant on God and without any recourse to the help of other people. The second is the state of reality (*hal al-haqiqah*) which is identical with the state of saintliness (*wilayah*); while in this state, man



obeys the commandment (*amr*) of God fully. This obedience to the commandments is of two kinds. The first is when an individual strives to satisfy his basic needs, but abstains totally from any luxuries in life and protects himself against all open and hidden sins. The second kind relates to the hidden commandment of God; this obedience is to the inner voice, to what is directly revealed to him. This hidden commandment applies to things permissible (*mubah*), for which there is no positive injunction in the *shari'ah*, in the sense that they neither belong to the class of prohibited things, nor to the class of things specified as obligatory, but are rather of an obscure nature wherein he is given complete freedom to act, and these are called *mubah* (permissible). In these he should not take any initiative, but wait for an order concerning them. When he receives an order he obeys it. So all his movements and even his rest become dedicated to God. The third is the state of resignation (*hal al-taslim*) when the individual submits completely to God. The fourth and last is the state of the "truth of truth" (*hal haqq al-haqq*) which is otherwise called the state of effacement (*mahw*) or annihilation (*fana'*); it is the state of the *abdal* who are broken-hearted on account of God, a state belonging to pure "unitarians" and gnostics who have this higher knowledge.<sup>21</sup>

According to the Shaykh, the sufi is defined thus: "The sufi is the *muntahi* who finished the journey and reached the destination of his *tariqah*".<sup>22</sup> Further on he describes the beginning and the end of the sufi in these words: " The beginning is to discard the normal life (*al-ma' hud*), and to follow the Divine Command (*al-mashru'* ), then to see things determined by the Eternal Will (*al-maqdur*), and finally to return to the normal (*al-ma' hud*) with the condition that you observe the limits (*hudud*) of the *shari' ah*"<sup>23</sup>

"With regard to the faith (*i'tiqad*), the Shaykh says: "Our faith is the faith of our pious ancestors and the Companions" (*I'tiqaduna i'tiqad al-Salaf al-Salih wa al-Sahabah*).<sup>24</sup>

In connection with free-will he adopts an attitude of determinism, though sometimes he tries to avoid the extremes of a deterministic position by resort to the concept of acquisition (*al-kasb*) developed by the Ash'arites. He says: "Do not forget the position of human efforts so as not to fall a victim to the creed of the determinists (*Jabariyyah*),<sup>25</sup> and believe that no action attains its fulfilment but in God the Exalted you should not therefore worship them and thus forget Allah nor should you say that actions of man proceed from anything

but from God, because if you do, you will become an unbeliever and belong to the category of people known as the indeterminists (*Qadariyyah*)<sup>26</sup> you should rather say that actions belong to God in point of creation and to man in point of acquisition (*kasb*)".<sup>27</sup> But in later Discourse,<sup>28</sup> he points out that to rely on acquisition (*kasb*) is *shirk*.<sup>29</sup> He can thus be seen to be exploiting an ambiguity and an ambivalence in this matter which became characteristic of sufism.

In spite of all this apparent orthodoxy, Umar Farrukh<sup>30</sup> includes Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani in the group of extremists among sufis, because his mystical teaching allows *al-shath*.<sup>31</sup> The *shath* like "I am God", "Glory to me", "There is nothing in the cloak except God" and so on. These words taken literally are in conflict with *shari'ah*. Besides al-Jilani Umar Farrukh includes also "extremists" such as Dhu al-Nun al-Misri, Abu Mansur al-Hallaj, Abu Sa'id ibn Abi al-khayr al-Khurasani (d.440A.H./1049A.D.), Al-Shuhrawardi, Ibn Arabi and Umar ibn Farid.

Umar Farrukh however classifies these sufis as deviant on the basis of the exoteric reading of *shari'ah*. From the sufi point of view *shath* arises only at certain "stages and stations" (*maqams*) and in the accompanying



states (*hals*), in particular those of *fana'* and *baqa'*.

*Fana'* and *Baqa'* are very important terms in sufism. *Fana'* literally means to die and disappear, and *baqa'* means to live and survive. In the context of sufism however, the terms are usually used with a preposition: *fana' 'an* means unconscious of it; *baqa' bi*, on the other hand, means to be occupied with something live in or by it. In general according to the orthodox sufi that the *fana'* is effacing oneself in carrying out the will of God or in other word: *fana'* is to forget the not Divine to free oneself from the love of the world and to clean the heart from all desire and wishes. And *baqa'* is to fulfil the wishes of the Lord, to make His will one's own will without losing one's self identity.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, with regard to the *shath* of sufis, according to Abd al-Rahman Badawi,<sup>33</sup> Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani holds that if the words of the *shath* come from the sufis in their state of sobriety (*sahw*),<sup>34</sup> then it is from Satan in which case they are not to be condemned because it means nothing. If these words come during their state of "intoxication" (*sukr*), they are equally not to be condemned either because this is a genuine state of gnosis.

Thus, the *shath* is a genuine sufi phenomenon and a fruit of the tree of union (*jama'*) which comes from the overpowering and intoxicating love of God that throws everything out of sight and leaves nothing in the vision of the mystic except his Beloved.

The first sufi to discuss the phenomenon of *shath* in this way was Abu Nasr al-Sarraaj (d.378A.H./988A.D.). He says that the sufis enjoy *shath* under the influence of a powerful ecstatic experience that produces very great excitement and removes control over language. What they say is not without truth, but the language which they use is misleading and shocking.<sup>35</sup> He reviews at length the *shaths*<sup>36</sup> on Abu Yazid, al-Shibli, al-Nuri and Abu Hamzah, and bases his discussion, particularly of Abu Yazid.<sup>37</sup> He quotes with approval Junayd's remark: "In spite of the great experiences he had, and the wonderful words he spoke, Abu Yazid does not seem to have crossed the first stage. I have not heard words that show that he reached the end and attained perfection".<sup>38</sup>

Since by the first stage Junayd means the unitive stage, his statement is confirmation of the fact that *shath* is the result of the unitive experience. Al-Sarraaj reiterates the truth when he says: "Shath is hardly found in the case of perfect men".<sup>39</sup>

Regarding *shath*, Shaykh Abd al-Qadir was asked the meaning of the words of Abu Yazid al-Bistami, "I cross a sea, all prophets stand at the seashore". He replied: "If those words come from him, the meaning is that the prophets stand at the seashore to allow people who have rights to cross it and to prohibit those who have no right to cross it, and to help many of them who would sink. This is similarly like people of excellent standing (*al-afdal*) entering Paradise after the people of lesser standing (*al-mafdul*) because they have acted as mediators".<sup>40</sup> In other words, the statement can be defended sometimes by reinterpreting it and rendering it exoteric again.

In general, the Shaykh sticks rigidly to the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* in his mystical teaching. 'Adi ibn Musafir when he wished to return having visited Ahmad ibn Hanbal's tomb, asked Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani: "Please advise me", the Shaykh replied: "I advise you to stick with the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*".<sup>41</sup> The point in relation to phenomena like those of *shath* and the implications of this is that the Shaykh allows them but hems them in with interpretations which will render them compatible with *shari'ah* (and his "strict" version of *shari'ah* in particular). His attitude towards the Qur'an



and the *Sunnah* will be very clear in next section.

## 2. HIS MYSTICAL TEACHING.

We have already discussed in outline al-Jilani's mystical teaching, we have also briefly surveyed the contents of his books in the third chapter. Now we will examine his mystical teaching in detail with special reference to his book, *Futuh al-Ghayb*,<sup>42</sup> we will also refer to his other books like *Al-Ghunyah*,<sup>43</sup> besides the commentaries of outstanding scholars in sufism.

Al-Jilani's mystical teaching is expounded in his book *Futuh al-Ghayb*. Among the titles of its 78 discourses, the following give an indication of its flavour.

- A. Encouragement to hold fast to *shari'ah*
- B. The believer and his faith
- C. Encouragement to pray to God
- D. Self-annihilation (*fana'*)
- E. Drawing near unto God
- F. This world and the hereafter
- G. The soul and its state
- H. Examination and trial
- I. The saint and saintly way

## J. Noble manners (*makarim al-akhlaq*)

These are actual discourses or sermons which have been recorded and edited. They are notable for the articulation of a particular interpretation of the mystical path. characteristically, they are very repetitive; it is as if certain messages are constantly being "drummed in". This is achieved not only by returning again and again to common themes but also by progressively opening up through examples, our understanding of these matters. It is worth asking who these discourses are "addressed" to. In flavour, they seem to be either for new disciples or else, in some cases, almost notes for other more advanced "travellers" who are likely to teach others.

There is also a polemical quality which makes one wonder about the "political" aspect of sufism at this time. This would fit with our view of the connection between al-Jilani's sufism and his da'wah. It is clear that he is promoting a particular position for spirituality in relation to his "fundamentalist" approach to *shari'ah*. So much of the cautionary flavour of these discourses involves an account not just of what the spiritual path is but also of what it is not.

## A. ENCOURAGEMENT TO HOLD FAST TO SHARI'AH

Scholars in modern times have viewed differently the relation of sufism to *shari'ah* (prophetic Islam). I will specify what is meant by *shari'ah* here. First, there is usual sense of the rules and regulations of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* concerning worship and rites, morality and society, economics and government. But the term is often used in a wider sense which along with rules and laws also includes faith and belief, values and ideals. In other words, *shari'ah* means everything which Allah has prescribed (*shara'a*) directly or through the Prophet, and is identical with the Prophetic religion.

*Shari'ah* in this sense is not only a comprehensive system of faith and practice, it is also self-sufficient. It comprehends all the good of this world and the next, leaving nothing out for which one should have to go beyond the *shari'ah*. The first part of *shari'ah* is faith (*iman*) which means conviction of transcendent realities; God, angels, The hereafter, revelation, prophecy, etc, as defined by the *shari'ah*.

I will now summarise the various views about the relationship between sufism and *shari'ah*. Some scholars think that sufism is an exotic growth and trace its



various elements to one external source or the other. For instance, they trace its ecstatic and monastic practices to Christianity; its exercise in self-annihilation (*fana'*) to Buddhism; its aspiration to know transcendental realities through purification of soul and illumination to gnosticism; its vision of the multiplicity preceeding from an ultimate unity to neo-Platonism; and its monistic theosophy to Indian *Vedanta*.<sup>44</sup>

Other scholars have held a completely opposite view. For them sufism is an essentially Islamic phenomenon, an authentic expression of the Islamic spirit. They point out that the abstinence and poverty which the sufis practise are inspired by the life of the Prophet and his Companions. Even the concept and philosophy of "*Wahdah al-Wujud*" are suggested by different Qur'anic verse and *hadiths*,<sup>45</sup> if these are interpreted in a certain way.

Some scholars,<sup>46</sup> considering the complex nature of the phenomenon, have preferred to distinguish between a sufism of poverty, renunciation and devotion, and a Sufism of love, ecstasy, "*fana'*" and illumination; and attributed the former the Prophetic Islam and the latter to external influence.

Others<sup>47</sup> have differentiated between an orthodox Sufism (*al-tasawwuf al-sunni*) formulated, for instance by al-Ghazali (d.505A.H./1111A.D.) and Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (d.561A.H./1176A.D.), and a philosophical sufism (*al-tasawwuf al-falsafi*) developed by sufis like Ibn Arabi (d.630A.H./1240A.D.) and continued by Hamzah Fansuri, e.g., in Sumatra. This division implies in a sense, the idea that the former belongs to the heart of Islam, whereas the latter is somewhat foreign, or if not foreign in some way a deviation from true Islam.

Some other scholars believe that Ibn Arabi's sufism is true and real sufism; and the sufism of Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi (d.632A.H./1234A.D.) and perhaps al-Ghazali is a religious rather than a mystical enterprise.<sup>48</sup> But this involves a contentious distinction which may in the end not be helpful.

The earliest Sufi writers like al-Sarraj (d.378A.H./988A.D.), al-Kalabadhi (d.390A.H./1000A.D.), Abu Nu'aym (d.430A.H./1038A.H.) and al-Qushayri (d.465A.H./1072A.D.) claimed that sufism was the most authentic expression of the inner dimension of Islam and the most perfect realisation of its spiritual values.<sup>49</sup> They showed that the Sufis had the same beliefs as

formulated by theologians,<sup>50</sup> that they were governed by the same rules as elaborated by the jurists, and that their methods and experiences were in complete agreement with the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*.<sup>51</sup>

Al-Ghazali who appeared in the succeeding generation took a great step forward, Instead of interpreting sufism and reconciling it with the Prophetic Islam, as his predecessors did, he interpreted the Prophetic religion itself in the light of sufi ideas, experiences and practices, and demonstrated that Islam when properly understood was not different from Sufism as represented by its great masters. This is the task which he performed in the "*Ihya Ulum al-Din*".<sup>52</sup> The result was that Islam at its best was identified with sufism.

The work of Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani and Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi confirmed and strengthened this image. They, however, disassociated themselves from the speculative aspect of al-Ghazali's work,<sup>53</sup> though to what extent this was a deliberate disassociation and to what extent it is more that they deal in practice is debatable. Ibn Arabi followed in al-Ghazali's footsteps, but carried much further the task of interpreting Islamic beliefs and practices in the light of sufi experience and intuition.<sup>54</sup>



As we have noted before, in the personality of Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, the sufi is not at variance with *shari'ah*. To know more details about this we will see below his ideas in "*Futuh al-Ghayb*" concerning the Qur'an and *Sunnah*.

The Shaykh forbids breaking the regulation of *shari'ah*, he says clearly: "The regulation of *shari'ah* will not be broken so as to make the unlawful thing permissible and to minimise the gravity of the commandment."<sup>55</sup> Allah says; "Surely We have revealed the reminder and We will most surely be its guardian".<sup>56</sup> Further on, he advises people to observe the limits of law and conform to its injunctions and prohibitions. He says: "So that you will not find anything existing besides Him, so long as you observe the limits of law and conform to the injunctions and prohibitions. Then if anything is amiss in you from the requirements of law you should know that you are being tried and tempted and played with by the devils. So return to the commandment of *shari'ah* and stick to it and keep yourself clear of low desires, because every fact which is not confirmed by the law is unbelief."<sup>57</sup>

Concerning any thought arising in the mind or

feeling that one has received a revelation, al-Jilani says: "Do not be the judge yourself. And your being with them (people) is a decree of God, and this decree of God is in darkness, so enter this in the Book of God and the practice of His Prophet. Do not go beyond these two. But if there arises in your mind any thought or you receive any revelation, submit them to the Book of God and the practice of His Prophet. And if you find in these (authorities) a prohibition against what has occurred to you or been received by you through revelation, such as if it is revealed to you that you should commit fornication or take to usury or something else in the line of sinfulness, keep away from such a course of action and abstain from it and do not accept it and do not act upon it".<sup>58</sup>

The Shaykh furthermore enjoins following the Prophet and avoiding innovation, "Follow faithfully in the footsteps of the Prophet and do not create innovations and remain obedient to (God and His Prophet) and do not transgress".<sup>59</sup>

He explains the stages of the spiritual life as follow: "The beginning of spiritual life (the spiritual journey) is to escape from the urges of the lower self into *shari'ah* (the path of law ) and then accepting the

decree of destiny to the next stage which is a return to natural life under the condition of the preservation of the *shari'ah*. So a person first leaves behind the urges of nature in the matter of food and drink, dress, marital relations, place of residence, and one's tendencies and habits to dwell in the injunctions and prohibitions of *shari'ah*. following the Book of God and the practice of His Prophet (blessings and peace of God be upon him)<sup>60</sup> as Allah says: "And accept what the Prophet has brought to you and refrain from what he forbids you to do".<sup>61</sup> He also says: "If you love God and follow me then God will love you".<sup>62</sup>

Regarding the decree of God and His Procedure one do not entertain doubt about His promise; he says: "In this matter let there be an example for virtuous conduct in the Prophet of God".<sup>63</sup> The criterion for judging one's love or hatred towards a person is to submit one's feelings to the guidance of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*; the Shaykh says: "When you find in your heart any hatred or love for a person, examine his actions in the light of the Book of God and the practice of the Prophet. Then if they are hateful in the eyes of these two authorities, be happy to be in accord with God and His Prophet. And if his actions happen to be pleasing to them and you are inimical to him, then know that surely you are a follower



of your low desire. You hate him on account of your lower desire. And you should act in the same way in the case of one whom you love. That is to say, you should examine his actions in the light of the Book of God and the practice of His Prophet".<sup>64</sup> Surely you are commanded to oppose your lower desire. God says: "And do not follow the low desire, so that it may not lead you astray from the path of God".<sup>65</sup>

Al-Jilani exhorts us to stick with the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* in faith and deeds. He says: "And make the Book of God and the *Sunnah* your guide and look at these two authorities with contemplation and meditation and act on them, do not be deceived by mere talk and by greed. God says: "What the Prophet has brought to you accept it and what he has forbidden you refrain from it and be careful of your duty to God".<sup>66</sup> Do not make innovation of your own either with regard to deeds or with regard to service. Accordingly, God purified His Prophet and kept him away from falsehood. Thus He says: "Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught, but revelation, which is revealed",<sup>67</sup> God further says: "If you love God then follow me, God will love you".<sup>68</sup> So it is clear that the path of love is to follow him (the Prophet) in word and deed. And the Prophet says: "Whoever does a deed on which there is no commandment of ours is rejected". Safety lies

in the Book of God and the practice of the Prophet and destruction in what is beside them, and with the help of these two the servant of God rises towards the state of *badal* and *ghawth*.<sup>69</sup>

So, a mystical path with stages and states is delineated. But it becomes clear that the spiritual traveller's experience is construed very much as the intensification of the moral life according to the *shari'ah*; a purification of motives and a realisation of the truth of *shari'ah*. There is no hint of going beyond its limits.

#### B. THE BELIEVER AND HIS FAITH

With regard to the faith of a believer, al-Jilani urges us towards the three foundations of faith, saying: "Three things are indispensable for a believer in all conditions of life: he should keep the commandment of God: he should abstain from the forbidden things, and he should be pleased with the decree of Providence".<sup>70</sup>

Al-Jilani makes it quite clear what the duties of the believer are in his daily life; "it is appropriate for a believer that he should first attend to the obligatory duties. And when he has accomplished then, he

should attend to the Sunnah or the practice of the Prophet. And it is only when he has finished with these, that he should take to the optional and extra duties. So when a man has not performed his obligatory duties, if he attends to the Sunnah it will be foolishness and stupidity, and if he attends to the Sunnah and nafal or supererogatory duties before he has performed his obligatory duties it will not be accepted of him and he will be rejected. So, his example is like the example of a man who is asked by the king to serve him, but he does not come to him (king) and stays to serve the chief who is the slave of the king and his servant and is under his power and sovereignty.<sup>71</sup>

The faith of a believer is like a tree, it will bear fruit and will be growing and spreading out branches and so on, as well as the faith, it will be growing and spreading in the matter of good deeds and noble manners, al-Jilam says: "The mercy of God is to come to you incessantly in the form of patience and cheerful surrender, certainty and reconciliation and knowledge. And the light of faith and of monotheism is to be heaped on you. Then the tree of your faith and its root and seed will be established and it will become firm and full of foliage and will bear fruit and will keep growing and spreading out branches and causing shade and shooting



forth twigs. Thus every day it will be on the increase and will grow and will not need any manure to help its growth and development<sup>72</sup> God has said: "No soul knows what is in store for it of that which will refresh the eyes, a reward for what they did".<sup>73</sup>

Regarding the Divine promise, al-Jilani says: "While you are weak in faith, certainly, if a promise is made to you it is fulfilled and it is not broken lest your faith should be diminished thereby or your certainty vanish. But when this faith and certainty is strengthened and established in your heart you are addressed by His word: "Verily to-day you are in Our presence on honourable, a faithful one".<sup>74</sup> And this address is repeated for you, many times then you become among the selected ones, rather the select among the selected ones".<sup>75</sup>

Al-Jilani forbids asking anything from men which is a sign of weakness of the faith; he says: "Whoever asks anything from men does so only through his ignorance of God and weakness of faith and lack of knowledge of reality, and of certainty and of patience; and whoever refrains from asking does so only through an abundance of this knowledge of God, the mighty, the Glorious and though the strength of his faith and of certainty"<sup>76</sup>

Moreover, al-Jilani remind us that a believing servant will be tried by God according to his faith, he says: "It is a practice of God to try His believing servant in proportion to his faith. Thus if a person's faith is great and immense, his trial is also great. Thus the trial of a messenger (*rasul*) is greater than that of a prophet (*nabi*), because his faith is greater than that of the latter. And the trial of a *nabi* is greater than that of a *badal*. And the trial of a *badal* is greater than that of a *wali*. Everyone tried according to his faith and certainty. And the authority for this lies in a saying of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him): "Verily we the community of prophets are most tried of all people".<sup>77</sup>

Thus, people are divided into four groups, each having its own characteristics and manners: "There are four kinds of men. One there is who has no tongue and no heart and he is a man of ordinary position, dull and lowly, who has no contact with Allah and has nothing good in him. He and people like him are like chaff which has no weight, unless God covers them with His mercy and guides their heart towards faith in Himself and moves the organs of their body in obedience to Himself. Beware that we do not become of them. The next kind of person has got a tongue, but no heart; he speaks on wisdom, but does not act according to it. He calls people to God but himself

flees from Him. He is a person against whom the Prophet has warned. He has said: "The thing to be most afraid of and which I am afraid of in respect of my followers is evil learned men".

"There is a third kind of man who has a heart but no tongue and he is a believer. God has screened him away from His creation and hung round him His curtains and given him an insight into the blemishes of his own self and enlightened his heart and made him aware of the evil of talking and speaking and who has become sure that safety is in silence and withdrawal to a corner; as the Prophet has said: "Whoever kept silent attained salvation". And further: "Surely the service of God consists of ten parts, nine of which are in silence". Thus, this man is a friend of God in His secrets. If you do these things God will love you and choose you and include you in the company of His friends and pious servants together with His blessings".

"The fourth kind of man is one who is invited to the invisible world, clothed in dignity; as it is related in the tradition; "Whoever learns and acts upon his learning and imparts it to others is invited to the world invisible and made great". Such a man is possessed of the knowledge of God and His sign and his heart is made the



repository of rare things of His knowledge and he is made a worker in His cause and an inviter of God's servants to the path of virtue. So this man is the end and culminating point of mankind and there is no station above this, excepting that of prophethood".<sup>78</sup>

There, a number of themes are emerging. First of all, developing the exhortations of the previous section, there is no point to all of the extra activities of the sufi (i.e. the spiritual exercises, dhikr, fasting, etc.) if the basic demands of shari'ah are not followed: it is like the castle built on sand. Second, the theme of accepting the Divine Decree is introduced as one of the most central tasks of the sufi and this theme will recur constantly. Third, connected with this, is the importance of the notion of examination and trial (see below) which is part and parcel of the path towards spiritual realisation. Finally, we have an example here of the idea of grades of people, the idea of a spiritual hierarchy. The framework, it should be noted, is always derived from the Qur'an and *Sunnah*.

### C. ENCOURAGEMENT TO PRAY TO GOD

God has commanded us to ask from Him, and concerning this commandment al-Jilani says:<sup>79</sup> "Do not say: "I will

not pray to God for anything because if the prayed for object has been allotted to me it will surely come to me whether I ask for it or not. Whereas if is not in my lot, He will not give it to me by my asking for it". No, you should ask from Him all that you want and need of good things of this world and of the hereafter because God has commanded us to ask from Him and urged to that end. He says: "Call on Me; I will accept your prayers",<sup>80</sup> He also says: "Ask from His favour".<sup>81</sup> And the Prophet says: "Ask from God while you are fully confident of the acceptance of your prayer". And he says: "pray to God with the palms of your hands".

Answering the question, how to ask and pray to God, al-Jilani says: "You are remembering Him and acknowledging His unity and keeping a thing in its proper place and giving a person his due and discarding the ascription of might and power to yourself and renouncing pride and vanity and boastfulness. The Prophet says: "The believer will see in the record of his deeds on the Day of Judgement some act of merit which he had not performed nor was aware of".<sup>82</sup>

There is an example of the extension of the concept of prayer to include the sufi idea of "remembering" having consciousness of God's decree at all times and

being in a state of accordance with it.

Further on, al-Jilani gives us a reason as to why the prayer of the arif (the gnostic, he who knows by God)<sup>83</sup> is not granted: "Surely every prayer of the arif to God, the Mighty, the Glorious is not granted and every promise made to him is not redeemed, so that he may not meet with destruction through over-optimism. Because there is no spiritual state nor any spiritual station, but has fear and hope attached to it. These two are like wings of a bird, but for which no flight can be perfect. Thus, the arif enjoys the nearness of God and his state and station is that he does not wish for anything, but God, so the asking on the part of the devotee for the acceptance of his prayer and the fulfilment of the promise made to him, is opposed to his path and not in accordance with his state, and there is no one in the world absolutely free from sin, excepting the Prophets. It is for this reason that He does not always grant the prayers and fulfil the promises made to the devotee".<sup>84</sup>

It is forbidden to be angry with God on account of delay in the acceptance of your prayer and to discuss the problem, he has said: "I should ask you, are you finding fault with your master on account of delay in the acceptance of your prayer and entertaining doubt in His



wisdom and His mercy, or are you not finding fault with Him?. So, a person should refuse to blame Him and acknowledge His wisdom and purpose and sense of practical necessity in his case in delaying the acceptance of prayer; it is incumbent rather on him to be thankful to Him because He has adopted the best procedure for the individual. And if the individual blames Him in this matter he is an unbeliever on account of this finding fault with Him, because thereby he is ascribing to Him injustice whereas He is not unjust to His servants in fact . So the term " injustice " is not applicable to Him because for sooth an unjust person is he who interferes in the possession of another person with out the latter's permission.<sup>85</sup> Read the word of God: "why should God chastise you, if you are grateful and a believer".<sup>86</sup> Also be reminded of these words of God: "surely God does not do any injustice to people, but people are unjust to His servants".<sup>87</sup>

Al-Jilani expounds the meaning of these words of God "every moment He is in a new state", and its connection with the prayer: "When God grants the prayer of a servant of His and gives him what he asks for, His own purpose does not thereby become frustrated, that which has already occured to the Divine Knowledge. On the contrary, such a prayer is in conformity with the object of the

Lord and its occurrence is timely. And in the same manner no one will enter Paradise in the life hereafter through his good deeds alone, but by the mercy of God. And He did this to indicate that no one has any right as against God nor is He under any obligation to fulfil any promise. He rather does what He wills. .... He has absolute power to do whatever He likes".<sup>88</sup> God has said: "Is there any creator besides God?".<sup>89</sup> And He has also said: "And do you know anyone who is equal to Him?".<sup>90</sup> And He has also said: "Is there any God with God?".<sup>91</sup>

Al-Jilani discusses the saying of the Prophet, "Discard what raises doubt in your mind and adopt what does not raise any" and its connection with the prayer. Explaining hadith, he had said: "when a doubtful thing becomes mixed up with a non-doubtful thing, adopt the course in which there is no tinge of any doubt and suspicion and discard what causes any doubt". Another interpretation is also offered "That you should leave what is in the hands of people and not set your heart on it and not expect anything from people nor fear them and should receive from the favour of God and this is what will not cause you any doubt".<sup>92</sup>

To support his interpretation and explanation, al-Jilani refers to many verses of the Qur'an. He says:

God the Mighty says: "Ask from God His favour",<sup>93</sup> He also says: "Surely those whom you serve besides God do not control for you any sustenance; therefore seek the sustenance from God and serve Him and be grateful to Him".<sup>94</sup> He also has said: "When My servants ask you concerning Me, surely I am very near; I accept the prayer of a praying one when he prays to Me".<sup>95</sup> He also says: "Call upon Me and I will answer you".<sup>96</sup> He also says: "surely God is the Bestower of sustenance the Lord of power, the strong".<sup>97</sup> Still further, He says: "Surely God provides sustenance to whom He pleases without measure".<sup>98</sup>

In this discourse a central tension in religion emerges, which is exploited by the sufi tradition. It is that between a determinism which, we have already seen, is part of Ash'arite orthodoxy, and the demand of shari'ah to be active in one's pursuit of righteousness. Here, there is the specific case of prayer. What is the point of petitionary prayer in particular?. From a rational point of view, it seems contradictory to fulfil this command to pray while believing in Divine Decree. Al-Jilani seems to be saying that it is all part of one's destiny, including the appropriateness of prayer, the experience of trial and that of reward. He is also of-course, reiterating his orthodoxy.



#### D. SELF-ANNIHILATION (FANA' ).

We have mentioned above the concept and the purpose of "fana'" and "baqa" in sufism in general, but here we will discuss the concept of fana' from the viewpoint of al-Jilani. He was among those sufis to look at the whole tradition of sufism in the light of Prophetic Islam.

The most fundamental difference between the Prophet's way to God, and the sufi way is the experience of fana' and baqa'. That experience is essential to the sufi way. Al-Jilani describes fana' as a vanishing from creation and desire; this is in contrast with the meaning of fana' according to some sufis. On account of this interpretation, Ibn Taymiyyah admired him very much and called his *tariqah* is *al-Tariqah al-Shar'iyyah al-Sahihah* (the true *shari'ah* order).<sup>99</sup> This endorsement is extremely interesting coming as it does, from the "father" of fundamentalism. Let us look at this in more detail.

Al-Jilani puts it thus: "When the servant of God has vanished from creation and desire and from his own self and purpose and wishes of this world and of the hereafter, he does not want anything except God the

Mighty, the Glorious, and everything goes out from his heart. It is then that he attains God who selects him and choose him and loves him".<sup>100</sup>

And he further says: "Vanish from the people by the command of God, and from your desire by His order, and from your will by His action, so that you may become fit to be the vessel of the knowledge of God. Now the sign of your vanishing from the people is that you should be completely cut off from them and from all social contacts with them and make your mind free from all expectations for what is in their control. And the sign of your vanishing from your desires is that you should discard all efforts for and contact with worldly means in acquiring any benefit and avoiding any harm ....., but leave the whole thing entirely to God because He has charge of it in the beginning and so will He have it till end, just as the charge rested on Him when you were hidden in the womb (of your mother) as also when you were being suckled as a baby in the cradle. And the sign of your vanishing from your will by the action of God is that you should never entertain any resolve and that you should have no objective, nor should any feeling of need be left in you nor any purpose, because you will not have any object other than the one of God. Instead, the action of God will be manifested in you".

"Thus, you will be admitted to the company of those whose hearts have been vanquished, animal passions have vanished, where upon they are inspired with Divine will and new desires in their daily existence. It is in reference to this stage that the Holy Prophet says: "three things out of your world have been made dear to me perfume, women and prayer, wherein has been reposed the coolness of my eyes". God says: "I am with those who are broken-hearted on account of Me". So God the Exalted will not be with you unless all your desires and your will are smashed, And when they are smashed and nothing is left in your and you are fit for nothing but Him, God will create you afresh and will give you a new will-power wherewith to will, and this is the meaning of the Divine words "I am with those who are broken-hearted on account of Me".

"God says in one of His unofficial revelations to the Holy Prophet (called *Hadith Qudsi*) "My faithful servant constantly seeks My nearness through optional prayers till I make him my friend and when I make him my friend, I become his ear with which he hears, and his eyes with which he sees and his hands with which he holds (things), and his legs with which he walks". In another place: "He hears through Me sees through Me, holds through Me and understands through Me".<sup>101</sup>



This is undoubtedly according to al-Jilani the state of *fana'* or self-annihilation. So *fana'* is the aim and object and the final end of the journey of the saints. All the previous saints in their different stages of development have made persistent efforts to change their own will to will of God.

Al-Jilani gives us further elucidation of *fana'* when he says: " You will be made to vanish from your desires and your self and your disobedience both outwardly and inwardly; then there will remain nothing in your inside excepting the Unity of God and nothing in your outside excepting obedience and servitude to God in what He has enjoined and forbidden. So this will remain in your manner and way, during your nights and your days and in your journey and when you are at home and in your difficulties and in your ease and when you are in good health and when you are suffering from bad health and in all your conditions".<sup>102</sup>

Al-Jilani also equates *fana'* with spiritual death (*mawt ma'nawi*), he says: "When you are dead to creation, it will be said to you: "May God have mercy on you", and God will make of the desire of the flesh die in you. And when the desire of the flesh dies in you it will be said

to you: "May God have mercy you". Then He will give you death in your will and desires; and when you are dead in your will and desires it will be said to you: "May God have mercy on you", and He will restore you to (a new) life. Now you will be given a life after which there is no death, and you will be enriched with a wealth after which there is no poverty; and you will be awarded a gift after which there will be obstruction. .... You will then become the successor of every messenger and prophet of God and every truthful man (*siddiq*). You will become the finishing point of all saintliness (*wilayah*).<sup>103</sup>

Further on, al-Jilani exhorts us to withdraw from all directions of creation and search for the direction of God, he says: "Be blind to all sides and do not open your eyes to anything of them. And so long as you look at any one of them, the side of the favour of God, the Mighty, the Glorious, and of His nearness will not be opened to you. So close all sides with your realisation of the Unity of God and with effacement of your self. Then will be opened the eye of your heart to the side of God, the Mighty, the Great and you will see it with the two eyes of your head when it comes with the rays of the light of your heart and your faith and your settled conviction."<sup>104</sup>

The Shaykh differentiates between the characteristics of sufis who vanish from creation and the non-Sufis who are slaves of their passions, he says: "O you slave of your passion! do not claim for yourself the position of the people of God. You serve your passions and they are worshippers of the Lord. Your desire is the world and the desire of these people is hereafter. You see this world and they see the Lord of the earth and the Heaven. Your comfort lies in creation and the comfort of these people lies in God. You are the victim of whoever you see and they do not see what you see, but they see the Creator of the things, who cannot be seen (by these eyes). These people achieve the object of their life and secure salvation for themselves, whereas you remain pawned to your desires of this world. These people vanish from creation and from their desire of the world and their wishes and thus they secure an access to the Great Master who gives them strength to achieve the end of their existence such as obedience and praise of the Lord.<sup>105</sup>

Al-Jilani incites us to be with God and to cultivate an "unconsciousness" of created things; he says: "Be with God, the Mighty, the Glorious as if no creation exists. And be with the creation as if there is no self in you. And when you are with God, the Mighty, the Glorious,



without the creation you will get Him and vanish from every other thing, and when you are with the creation without your self you will do justice and help the path of virtue and remain safe from the hardships of life. And leave everything in your solitude and enter there in alone. So if you have adopted the Creator, then say to the rest: "Surely they are my enemies, but the Lord of the worlds is my friend."<sup>106</sup> Whoever has tasted it, has come to know it. O you man! *fana'* is to deny all creatures and transform your nature into nature of the angels; then vanishing from the nature of the angels and then getting back to the first way; and then your Lord will water you as much as He likes..... If you want this stage you should adopt Islam and then submission to the Decree of God, and then acquire the Knowledge of God and then realise Him and then exist in Him, and when you get such an existence you will wholly belong to Him.<sup>107</sup>

So, *fana'*, this extremely controversial notion in sufi thought and practice, receives an interpretation from al-Jilani which retains the sense of a quite startling "ego-loss" but does not amount to a pantheistic unity of being. The emphasis is more on being remade as an instrument of God's will. The individual will enjoy the intense love and support of God once he has undergone this dramatic spiritual death.

## E. DRAWING NEAR UNTO GOD

Al-Jilani exhorts the disciples to observe good manners with God, and he puts it thus:<sup>108</sup> "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". God said to His Prophet, His chosen one: "And do not stretch your eyes after that with which We have provided to others by way of splendour in this world's life, that We may thereby try them; the sustenance (given) by your Lord is better and more abiding".<sup>109</sup> Thus by His words: "the sustenance (given) by your Lord is better and more abiding".<sup>110</sup>

Once in a dream, al-Jilani was asked by an old man, "What makes a servant of God near to God?". Answering this question, he says: "This process has a beginning and an end, so the beginning of it is piety and Godliness, and its end is to be pleased with God and to surrender oneself to His way and to rely on Him entirely".<sup>111</sup>

To explain the meaning of union with God, he says: "You are united with God and you attain nearness to Him

by His attraction and help; and the meaning of union with God is your leaving behind creation and desire and purpose, and becoming established in His action and His purpose without there being any movement in you or through you in His creation unless it be with His order and action and command. So this is the state of *fana'* (annihilation) by which is meant union with God. But union with anything in His creation, in an understandable and appointed manner: "Nothing is like unto a likeness to Him and He is the Hearing, the Seeing".<sup>112</sup>

Further on, al-Jilani says: "Thus, when you unite with God, you will feel safe for ever from whatever is other than Him. You will certainly see no existence at all besides His, you will only find Him, the Mighty, the Glorious. .... Thus the Holy Prophet has said: "There is no life excepting the life of the hereafter". This is particularly true in the case of a believer. Accordingly the Prophet has said: "The world is a prison for the believer and a heaven for the unbeliever". How can a comfortable life in this world be possible and desired in the face of this?. This real comfort lies in a complete and exclusive contact with God, the Mighty and Glorious, and in being in harmony with Him and in throwing oneself in absolute surrender before Him. When you do this you will be free from this world."<sup>113</sup>



Answering the question how to draw near God, al-Jilani says: "The state of your affairs can be either the one or the other of the following two: Either you are not to God, the Mighty, the Glorious, or you are close to Him. Now if you are away from Him, how is it that you are sitting idle and are remiss in obtaining your large share and instead lavish care on this world and the hereafter. So get up and hasten in your flight towards Him with your two wings. One of these wings is renunciation of enjoyments and of unlawful desires for them and of permissible things and all comforts; the other is bearing of pain and unpleasant things and embarking on difficult adventures, getting away from people and desire and wishes in this world and hereafter so as to be successful in union with God and nearness to Him; then you will get all that a man may desire and obtain. You will then have great exaltation and honour. And if you are among those who have been honoured with His kindness and whom His love has absorbed and who have received His mercy and compassion, then show the best of manners and do not be puffed up with the thought of the state you are in. There is a word of God in this connection :<sup>114</sup> "And man bore it, surely he is unjust and ignorant".<sup>115</sup> Again: "And man is ever hasty".<sup>116</sup>

Further on, al-Jilani tell us to cling to the Door of God; he says: "Keep away from disobedience to God the Exalted the Glorious with utmost effort, and cling to His door with truth. And apply all your power and effort in obeying Him with humility, look not looking to people, nor following your animal desires, nor seeking any recompense whether of this world or of the hereafter, nor yet any promotion to higher position or honourable station. And know it for certain that you are His servant, and that the servant and all that he possesses belongs to his master, so that he cannot claim any thing as against Him. Observe good manners and do not blame your master".<sup>117</sup>

It can be seen throughout this discourse that al-Jilani has a concept of *fana'* and of nearness to God which is elaborated very much in the context of the Qur'an and Sunnah and which takes the piety of the Companions as the paradigm of this service.

But on the other hand, Bon Carra De Vaux in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* claims to trace and recognize a certain Christian influence in al-Jilani's mystical teaching. To make this matter quiet clear, let us quote this passage: "One cannot fail to recognize a certain Christian influence in it, especially in the

importance given to the virtues of charity, humility, meekness, in his percept of obedience to the spiritual director, and in the aim held before an ascetic, which is spiritual death and the entire self-surrender of the soul to God. Al-Jilani's respect for Jesus was very great".<sup>118</sup> Moreover, according to Bon Carra De Vaux, the book (*Futuh al-Ghayb*) contains expressions that are altogether Christian. Commending the excellence of becoming dead to created things and to one's own will, the author says: "The sign that you have died to your lusts is that you are like a child in the arms of its mother; the sign that you have died to your own will is that you wish nothing but the will of God". A little further on, he appropriates the famous comparison of the corps: " Be in the hands of God like a dead body in the hand of the washer". The effect of this self-surrender of the soul is spiritual clear mindedness and joy.<sup>119</sup>

But these statements are typically sufi. They are part of the sufi tradition now. It may be that they bear comparison with similar notions of spirituality and the spiritual path to be found in Christianity. When we are talking of religious experience, however, it does not imply that there has been an influence or a borrowing. It may be a matter of features of mystical experience as such. Even if al-Jilani and other sufi masters were



influenced by Christian teachings and practices this does not mean that they had introduced un-Islamic innovations. Any idea or concept was reworked into the Islamic context. Indeed al-Jilani succeeds in deriving his views from his interpretation of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*.

This is so even in the highest station of the journey that of *fana'* where the *salik*<sup>120</sup> should be the servant of the Divine commandment and free of the desires of the flesh and like a baby in the care of a mother and a dead body at the time of funeral wash in the hands of the washer and an unconscious patient lying before the physician.<sup>121</sup>

This statement has not been quoted in full. The point is that al-Jilani always says this in conjunction with the exhortation to follow the injunctions and prohibitions of *shari'ah*.<sup>122</sup> In the *Futuh al-Ghayb* what he goes on to say is that the servant should be a servant of the Divine commandment, not a slave to passion and then he seals this sentence with: "in all matters that are outside the range of injunction and prohibition".<sup>123</sup> It is as if, having lost his own will, the servant's every act is one which spontaneously is in conformity with *shari'ah*.

Elsewhere in the text al-Jilani describes those people who have had *fana'* leaving behind creation, desire, purpose and achieving union with God. But how is the servant to implement the commandments, and to avoid the forbidden, when he is in the state of *fana'* in which his will has vanished and he is in a state of unconsciousness?

Ibn Taymiyyah, commenting on it, put it thus. The ordinary will must have knowledge of *shari'ah* and through the exercise of reason be in conformity with it.<sup>124</sup> The transformed, true will of the servant conforms to the knowledge of God Himself. Just as to follow the central command of *shari'ah* and worship none but God is *tawhid*; so *fana'* is the realisation of *tawhid* and is the *fana'* of the prophets and their followers. It is the state of worship, obedience, fear, hope and love of God alone.<sup>125</sup>

Thus, in fact al-Jilani makes *fana'* to include worship, obedience, prayer, fear and hope, and love but to God only. The *salik* has no ideas or thought about it: he just obeys the commandment of *shari'ah*, unlike those people who have mistaken the way. They want to meet God, but they do not follow the commandments of *shari'ah* according to His will".<sup>126</sup> Thus, al-Jilani sketches a sound path to reach the state of *fana'* in which the

*salik* is commanded to vanquish his own will and passion, put himself under the Will of God.<sup>127</sup>

Ibn Taymiyyah understood that it was a question of a total surrender to God which involved letting go one's own sense of will and desire.<sup>128</sup> The clearest sign of success in this is precisely the absolute adherence to the "injunctions and prohibitions".



## F. THIS WORLD AND THE HEREAFTER

Al-Jilani teaches that we must desire the hereafter more than this world; he says:<sup>129</sup> "Make your life after death your capital money, and your worldly life its profit. Spend your time first of all in acquiring your life after death. Then if any surplus time is left, spend it in acquiring worldly life, in seeking your livelihood. And do not make your worldly life your capital money and your life after death your profits. On the other hand, if you have traversed this world along the path of the hereafter and used that as your capital money, you will have gained in your worldly life as well as in the hereafter. Thus the Prophet has said: "Surely God gives felicity in this world's life on the intention pertaining to the hereafter, whereas the felicity of the hereafter is not given on the intention pertaining to this world's life". How can it be otherwise?. And the right intention towards the hereafter is obedience to God because that intention is the very soul of service and its very being. In another Tradition of the Prophet, he says: "The worldly and the hereafter are two co-wives; if you please one of the two the other he comes angry with you. God, the Mighty, the Glorious, says: "Surely there are among you who desire this world's life and some other are among you who desire the hereafter",<sup>130</sup> which of the two tribes

do you want to belong to while you are in this world?".

The Shaykh describes the situation of this world with its decorations and vanities, and warns us not to pay any attention to it. He says: "When you see the world in the hands of those who are of it, with its decorations and vanities, when you see all this, be like one who sees a man answering the call of nature, exposing his private parts and emitting a bad smell thereby. You would refrain from looking towards exposure and shut your nose to the bad odour. Similarly you should act towards the world; when you see it, turn away your sight from its tinsels and close your nose against the foul smell of its sensualities and gross enjoyments, so that you may remain safe from it and its trials.<sup>131</sup> God said to His chosen Prophet: "And do not cast your look of greed on what We have given certain classes of them to enjoy 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".<sup>132</sup>

The Shaykh argues that good and evil are in equal balance as two fruits coming out from two branches yielding sweet and bitter: "Regard good and evil as two fruits coming out from two branches of one single tree. One of the two branches yields, sweet fruit and the other

bitter. So you leave cities and countries and anywhere where the fruits plucked from this tree are sent, and keep away from them and their people. And approach the tree itself and become its guard and attendant servant and acquire knowledge of these two branches and of the two fruits and their neighbourhoods and remain near the branch which yields sweet fruit; then it will be your food and your source of strength and beware lest you should approach the other branch and eat the fruit there of and thus its bitterness should kill you. Thus it is no good to be far from the tree and to be ignorant of its fruit; and safety lies in being near to it and in standing by it. So good and evil are both acts of God the Mighty, the Glorious.<sup>133</sup> "God has created you in proportion to what you do."<sup>134</sup>

Like many in the mystical tradition, we detect in al-Jilani's way the theme of a total renunciation, not only of the bad but of the good also. It is the ideosyncratic logic of the mystic. The more that is renounced, the more is gained. But what is gained is of a different kind to earthly delights and even the delights of the hereafter. Moreover it is particularly to be noted that the very renunciation of concerns with this world will in fact bring benefits in this world. "Less", as they say, "is more".



## G. THE SOUL AND ITS STATE

On this matter the Shaykh says:<sup>135</sup> "Verily there is nothing excepting God and your self. You are addressed, that the self of man is opposed to God and inimical to Him and all things are subordinate to God and the self of man really belongs to God as a creation and as a possession yet the self of man entertains presumptions wherefrom arise false hopes and passions and sensual pleasure. So if you ally yourself with truth by opposing yourself and become hostile to it you will belong to God and become inimical to yourself. Thus all servitude consists in opposing yourself and your carnal desire. God says: "Do not follow your low desire because they will lead you astray from the path of God".<sup>136</sup> And there is related an incident concerning Abu Yazid Bistami; when he saw God, the Almighty in his dream, he asked Him: "How is one to get to You?". God said: "Discard yourself and come to Me". Then continues the saint, "I got out of my self as a snake gets out its slough".

Further on, the Shaykh tells us how to fight one's own self, the most important struggle in human life: "Whenever you have fought with your own self and overcome it and killed it by the sword of opposition, God will revive it and it will contend with you and ask from you

satisfaction of desires and relishing of enjoyments from among sinful things as well as things permissible, with the result that you return once more to a struggle with your own self and attempt to overcome it, so that a reward may be written for you every time afresh. And this is the meaning of the saying of Prophet: "We have returned from a minor Jihad (*jihad asghar*)<sup>137</sup> to major Jihad (*Jihad akbar*).<sup>138</sup> He meant to say that (the return is) towards a struggle with one's own self in its perpetuity and a recurrence of struggle against desire and enjoyments and against the self being engrossed in sinful things. And this is the meaning of the word of God: "And serve your Lord till the certainty (death) comes to you."<sup>139</sup> God has commanded His Prophet to serve Him and this implies opposition to man's own self because all service is declined by the self which resists certainty (death). It will be said that He addresses His Prophet in these words just to make an affirmation with regard to this subject, so it becomes applicable to the general condition of his followers up to the moment of the advent of the Hour. So when a believer persists in a spiritual struggle like this, God has guaranteed him Paradise; in His words: "And as for him who fears to stand before his Lord and forbids his soul's low desire, then surely the garden will be his abode".<sup>140</sup> But as for the unbeliever and the hypocrite and the sinner when they

have given up the struggle with their own selves and their desires in this world and followed and made alliance with the devil and become mixed with various kinds of sins of unbelief and polytheism and such like things till death comes to them without their having adopted Islam and repented, God will make them enter the fire which is prepared for the unbeliever as is indicated in His words: "Then be on your guard against the fire of which men and stones are the fuel; it is prepared for the unbeliever".<sup>141</sup> And this will be as a result of their struggle with their own selves in order to make them accord (with the Will of God) in this world's life, and this is what is meant in the saying of the Prophet: "This world is the culture ground for the hereafter"<sup>142</sup>.

Life thus is to be seen a constant spiritual struggle, the greater jihad, in which the higher self battles with the lower; the spiritual drama is the recapitulation of the reality behind creation.

#### H. EXAMINATION AND TRIAL

Here the Shaykh returns to the theme of examination and trial imposed upon us by God.

The Shaykh divides people into two kinds, he



says:<sup>143</sup> "Know that people are of two kinds. One kind of people is those that are blessed with the good things of the world, whereas the other kind are tried with what their Lord has decreed for them. As for those who receive the good things, they are not free from the blemishes of sin and darkness in the enjoyment of what they are given. Such a person indulges in luxury on account of these things, when all of a sudden the Decree of God comes, which darkens his surroundings through various kinds of miseries and sufferings and troubles on his own life and property and on the members of his family and on his offspring so that life becomes unbearable and it appears as if he had never enjoyed anything. He forgets the comforts of life and their sweetness. Thus, if he had known that his Master is absolutely free to do whatever He likes and changes and transforms it; if he had known all this he could not have felt secure in the midst of happy worldly circumstances and could not have felt proud on account of them. The Holy Prophet has said: "Happy worldly circumstances are a savage thing, so restrain it by thankfulness". Thus thankfulness for the blessing of wealth is to acknowledge the Giver of it who is bountiful, that is God, to mention it to one's ownself in all conditions of life and to recognise His favour and generosity. And as for the trial of man, sometimes it comes as a punishment for any violation of law and any

sin which has been committed; at other times it comes with the object of removing the defects and refining the nature of man; and at still others it comes to raise a man in spiritual rank and to take him to higher stages where he may join the people of spiritual knowledge who have experience of different states and positions. Now, the indication of trial by way of punishment is want of patience on the arrival of these trials and bewailing and complaints before people. And the indication of trial by way of purification and removal of weakness is the presence of graceful patience without any complaint and expression of grief before friends and neighbours and without any irritation with the performance of the commandments and acts of obedience. And the indication of trial for the exaltation of rank is the presence of pleasure and amity and composure of mind and peacefulness with regard to the act of God".

The Shaykh claims that there are only two conditions: there is no third one between the state of happiness and the state of trouble. So when there is a state of trouble there is anxiety and complaint and displeasure and criticism and finding fault with God, a lack of patience and cheerful submission; and a relapse into bad behaviour; sin of associating creation and worldly means with the Creator and finally unbelief.

"When there is a state of comfort the soul is a victim of greed and insolence and the predominance of low desire and enjoyments. Whenever it satisfies its desire it wants more and belittles what it already possesses of blessings. Thus when it is in trouble it does not desire anything except its removal and forgets all pleasures and desire and does not ask anything out of these. Then when he is blessed with an easy and comfortable life, he returns to arrogance and greediness and disobedience, turning away from obedience to his Lord. So had he observed good manners when the calamity was removal from him and held fast to obedience and thankfulness. .... It would have been better for him in this world and hereafter. Then you would have obtained an increase in the comforts of life and pleasure. So whoever desires safety in this world's life and in the hereafter should cultivate patience and cheerful submission and avoid complaining against people and obtain all that he needs from his Lord".<sup>144</sup>

Al-Jilani advises people in trouble as follows:<sup>145</sup>  
"when the servant of God is in a trial he first tries to escape from it with his own efforts, and when he fails in this he seeks the help of others from among men such as kings and men of authority, people of the world, men of wealth, and in the case of illness and physical



suffering, from physicians and doctors, but if the escape is not secured by these, he then turns towards his Creator and Lord and applies to Him with prayer and humility and praise. So long as he finds the resources in his own self he does not turn towards other people, and so long as he finds resources in people he does not turn towards the Creator".

Elsewhere, al-Jilani gives us the reasons why the group of the believers live in trial, he says: "Certainly God tries a party from the believers who are his friends and who hold friendly relations with Him and spiritual knowledge in their possession, in order that they may be turned through the trial towards prayer to Him and He loves to receive prayers from them. Then when they pray He loves to accept their prayer so that He gives with generosity and munificence in their due measure. So the servant of God should show good behaviour when a calamity befalls and investigate into his own sins of commission and omission".

AL-Jilani gives us guidance on how to deal with the state of calamity and of blessing:<sup>146</sup> "Your condition must be either of the following two: it will either be a state of calamity or of blessing. So if it is a state of calamity you should ask first for a patience which

requires effort: this however is a lesser form than, that of patience proper which is a state higher than the other. Then you should ask to be able to take pleasure in the decree of God and to be in accordance with it, and finally to be merged in it; this last is the state befitting the "Abdal" and men of spiritual knowledge in general". And if you are in a state of blessing you should be thankful for it. And thankfulness can be through the tongue and through the heart and through the organs of the body (i.e. thankfulness in turn is a series of evermore intense and enduring states). Thankfulness of the tongue consists of acknowledging that the blessings are from God and avoiding ascribing it to people or to your own self, to your might or to your power, or to your movement or to your effort, or to any thing or anybody else besides you, because you yourself and they are only the means and instrument for it. The real allotter and executor and Creator .... is God. For example one does not look towards the slave who carries presents but towards the master, the sender of the gift. Thankfulness of the heart consists in believing with the firmest standing conviction that all you possess of blessings, benefits and enjoyments is from God alone. And thankfulness of the tongue will express what is in your heart; as He has said: "And whatever favour is bestowed on you is by God".<sup>147</sup> He further says: "And (He) make



complete to you. His favours outwardly and inwardly ".<sup>148</sup>  
Again He says: "And if you count Allah's favours, you  
will not be able to number them".<sup>149</sup> The thankfulness of  
the organs of the body consists in exercising and using  
them in obeying His commandments to the exclusion of all  
others in the creation. So you should not respond to  
anyone among the creatures for anything in which there is  
any opposition to God, and creation in this connection  
includes your own self and your desires and purposes and  
your wishes and everything else. Make obedience to God".

The Shaykh comments on the saying of the Prophet:  
"Poverty may well nigh lead to unbelief". and its  
connection with examination and trial. He says: "The  
servant believes in God and surrenders all his affairs to  
God. God says: "Whoever is dutiful toward God, He makes a  
way out for him and gives him sustenance from where he  
did not expect it to come and whoever relies on God, He  
is sufficient for him".<sup>150</sup> This is easy to say in a state  
of comfort; then God tries him with calamity and poverty,  
so he takes to humble entreaty, but He does not remove  
these things from him. It is then that the truth of the  
Prophet's saying: "Poverty may well nigh lead to  
unbelief" becomes established. Then Allah will deal  
gently with him. He removes from him what afflicts him and  
gives him comfort and affluence and gives him the power



to be thankful and to give praise to God.<sup>151</sup>

What we see here very clearly is that ordinary states, patience, enjoyment, suffering, thankfulness, etc. receive an "esoteric" and spiritual meaning. This involves an intensification to an almost "pathological" degree of these attitudes and states. They acquire a new "metaphysical" dimension and involve a way of "deciphering" the events of ordinary life according to their cosmic significance.

#### I. THE SAINT AND THE SAINTLY WAY

Al-Jilani had gives the meaning of the term "*Murid*", "*Murad*" and "*iradah*" as follows:<sup>152</sup> "You must be either the one or the other of two things: you are either a seeker or the object sought for. If you are a seeker or a disciple you must be burdened and be a carrier of burdens carrying everything difficult and heavy. This is because you are a seeker and a seeker has to toil and is reproved until he attains his object and succeeds in obtaining his beloved and attains his goal. But if you are the thing sought for, then do not blame God if He made a calamity befall you in the same way and you should by no means entertain doubt with regard to your position and rank with Him, because He has put you on trial in order to

make you attain the status of a high personage and He wants to raise your position to the position of *Awliya* and *Abdal*".

In another work of al-Jilani, *al-Ghunyah*,<sup>153</sup> he puts it thus: "*Iradah* is to avoid what is in accordance with habit, the realization of *iradah* is raising of the heart in the search for *Haqq*<sup>154</sup> and to avoid all other than God. If the servant avoids the habit of pursuing good fortune in this world and the next, then his *iradah* is sound. Thus *iradah* is the determined pursuit of the spiritual goal in all deeds. *Iradah* is the starting point of a *salik* in his spirirtual journey and the name of the first rank of a *qasid*.<sup>155</sup> God has said: "Send not away those who call on their Lord, morning and evening, seeking His Face".<sup>156</sup> Thus, it is clear that the reality of *iradah* is for the sake of God only".

Elsewhere, the Shaykh says: "The *murid* is a person who has these qualities, he is always coming to God and obeying Him, he turns his back on all other than God and does not respond to it; he hears from his God and then he acts according to the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, and he closes off from all else. The *murid* is a person who is sincere to God and unites with Him and he is placed among group of the beloved of God". Al-Jilani also had said

that the *murid* is the beginner and the "*murad*" is the "finisher" at the end of the path. he distinguishes between the term "*mutasawwif*" and the term "*sufi*": "The *mutasawwif* is a person who commits himself to being a "*sufi*", and he will become the latter through his efforts. Thus the *mutasawwif* is a beginner whereas the *sufi* is advanced along the path".<sup>157</sup>

Al-Jilani says of the *murid*: "So you wish for comfort and joy and happiness and safety and peace while you are still in the crucible and in the course of killing your animal self and in the midst of a struggle with your desires and that of removing their source still hoping for returns in this world and in the hereafter; remnants of these longings still remain with you. The door remains closed while this state continues. And surely some remnants of these things are still on you and some small particles of it are still in you. You are still at the door of self-annihilation. You stop here until you acquire the annihilation completely and perfectly and then you are taken out of the crucible. Then you will be provided with comforts and shown gentleness and fed with His favour and also given drink and will be made near and will be enlightened in secrets, which will not be hidden from you. "O believer!, if you show patience at the enforcement of the allotment of



Providence and cheerfully submit to His decree in every condition of life, you will draw near to your Lord in this world and you will be blessed with knowledge of Him as well as with other kinds of knowledge and secrets and will be given residence in the hereafter in the abode of peace with the Prophet and the siddiqs and shahids and the salih<sup>s</sup>".<sup>158</sup>

It is relevant at this point to discuss "*kashf*" (spiritual revelation) and "*mushahadah*" (spiritual vision) because these are controversial topics in sufism. It is quite clear for the orthodox sufis that the only way to know the realities of faith is through the revelation (*wahy*) of the Prophet. Neither reason nor the mystical state of *kashf* is capable of revealing them. Reason working by itself cannot establish these realities. This is the established, orthodox position of the theologians (see above, Chapter II). On the position of *kashf*, however, I summarize below some of the ideas of the outstanding sufis.

Some sufis deny that *kashf* is an independent source of knowledge parrallel to revelation. It can only act as an interpreter of the prophetic revelation (*wahy*) concerning matters of faith. Inspiration (*ilham*) only brings out the non-apparent truths of religion; it does

not add to its truths. As *ijtihad* reveals rules that are implied (in the *shari'ah*), similarly, *ilham* reveals the hidden truths (of faith) which ordinary people are not able to see. Even in this role of interpreter, *kashf* is not infallible; like the *ijtihad* of a *mujtahid* the *Kashf* of a *sufi* may be right or it may be wrong. Inspiration is uncertain (*dhanni*). And the revelations of *kashf* do not generate truth. If the ideas of a mystic in the light of his *Kashf* contradicts the views of the theologians of the *Ahl al-Sunnah* they should be treated as the product of intoxication (*sukr*) of the *sufi* and rejected as untrue. Now the truth is with the *ulama'* of *Ahl al-Sunnah*, the criterion of the validity of mystical ideas (*ulum laduniyyah*) is derived from the disciplines (*ulum*) of the *shari'ah*. All else is blasphemy (*zandaqah*), heresy (*ilhad*) and the result of intoxication (*sukr*) and ecstasy (*ghalbah al-hal*). In other words, the *kashf* of a *sufi* is subject to the authority not just of the text of the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah*, but also of their interpretation by theological reasoning.

Al-Ghazali's views on this subject however are quite different. In his opinion, the prophetic revelation does not speak clearly about transcendental realities of faith and uses the language of symbols and metaphors. One has to interpret this language and decipher what it really

means. Theological reasoning is not quite qualified to perform that job, and the only thing on which one can rely is mystical *Kashf*. Hence for al-Ghazali, *kashf* is in fact the most reliable instrument of interpretation.<sup>159</sup> Ibn Arabi agrees essentially with al-Ghazali, but would not, however, go to the extent of al-Ghazali in disparaging reason. He considers it (*kashf*) as a source of knowledge of reality, but of a lower status than that of *kashf*.<sup>160</sup>

The views of the founders of the four great sufi orders do not disagree with the view that denies *kashf* as an independent source of knowledge parallel to revelation of the Prophet. Shaykh Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi (632A.H./1234A.D.) defines in the "*Awarif al-Ma'arif*" the scope of the "privileged" knowledge of the Sufis which he calls knowledge by inheritance (*ilm al-wirathah*); in his word: "It is the knowledge of the states and stations; knowledge of ideas that enter the heart; knowledge of faith and sincerity; knowledge of the soul (*al-nafs*) its nature and dispositions which is the best knowledge of the different kinds of worldly life, desires, particularly the subtle ones, whether good or evil; knowledge of what is indispensable and how to make the soul content with the minimum in speech and action, food and drink, clothing and sleep; knowledge of repentance,



true or sincere, of sins that are subtle and lapses that are small for the ordinary man, but serious for the pious; knowledge of how to force the soul to give up what is useless, and guard against things that are not needed; knowledge of contemplation (*muraqabah*) and of things which obstruct it; knowledge of self-examination and protection, trust (*tawakkal*), satisfaction (*rida*) ..... , renunciation (*zuhd*)..... , seeking God (*inabah*), praying (*du'a*)..... , and love..... ; knowledge of states such as awe (*haybah*), fellowship (*uns*), contraction (*qabd*), expansion (*bast*)..... ; knowledge of *fana'* and *baqa'* and their various degrees; knowledge of disappearance (*istitar*), and appearance (*tajalli*), union (*jam'*) and separation (*farq*) flashes (*lawami'*), glimmers (*tawali*) and glimpses (*bawadi'*); knowledge of sobriety and intoxication, etc."<sup>161</sup>

It is clear from this exposition that al-Suhrawardi's "*ilm al-wirathah*" is the knowledge of the *sufi tariqah* and *suluk*, of virtues and vices, of practice and exercises, of possible experiences and the attainment of the states and stations, There is no mention here of metaphysical truths. Al-Suhrawardi is in fact very sceptical regarding the efficacy of *kashf* in revealing transcendental realities.

The same is the position of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani. In his book *Futuh al-Ghayb*, he puts his view of *kashf* and *mushahadah* thus: "Such acts of God are manifested to the *awliya* and the *abdal* in the course of *kashf* (spiritual revelation) and *mushahadah* (spiritual vision). This manifestation is of two kinds; one of them is called *Jalal* (Majesty and Glory), and the other *Jamal* (Gracefulness or Beauty). *Jalal* produces a disquieting fear and creates a disturbing apprehension overpowering the heart in such an awful manner that its symptoms become visible in the physical body. Thus, it is narrated of the Prophet that during prayer a simmer very much like that of a boiling cauldron could be heard coming from his heart and this on account of the intensity of fear caused by his observing the Majesty of God, an experience which also revealed to him His glory. The experience of God's graceful manifestation, however, is His reflection in the heart of man producing light, joy, elegance and sweet words and loving conversation and glad-tiding with regard to great gifts and a high position and closeness to Himself. This is a favour from Him, a mercy and a confirmation meant for those in this world. So it is related of the Prophet that he used to say to Bilal when the latter heard the call for prayers: "Cheer our heart, O Bilal". What he meant was that he should sound the call of prayer so that the Prophet might enter the state of

prayer to experience those graceful manifestations of God which we have already discussed. This is why the Prophet said: "And the coolness of my eyes has been reposed in prayer".<sup>162</sup>

The Shaykh tells of a group of *walis* who had been informed of the faults and dishonesty of another person; he says: "Sometimes God informs His *walis* about the faults and dishonesty of another person and his false claims concerning his actions and words and thoughts and intentions. So the *wali* of God is made to feel jealous in respect of his Lord and His Prophet and His religion. So an inner anger and then also an outer anger become intensified in this knowledge."<sup>163</sup> Thus they are imbued with the force of al-Jilani.

*Kashf* is the source of an essentially moral vision which increases the rigour of the sufi's commitment to his religion and in particular the commands and injunctions of *shari'ah*.

#### J. NOBLE MANNERS

Al-Jilani urges us to have "noble manners"; he says: "I admonish you to fear God, to obey Him and to adopt the outer manifestations of law as well as purity of heart



and self-control, cheerful appearance and the habit of making gifts of useful things; the removal of suffering and poverty and the guarding of the sanctity of spiritual people; good dealings with fellow members of society and good counsel for the youngsters; to discard enmity towards your companions and to refrain from hoarding and to discard the companionship of those who do not belong to the class of the spiritual pilgrims and to render help in matters religious and worldly".<sup>164</sup>

This is further elaborated in his *ahl al-mujahadah wa al-muhasabah wa ulu al-'azm* (The men of spiritual struggle and self-inspection and the men of determination). He says as follows:<sup>165</sup> "There should be ten characteristics of those engaged in the spiritual struggle and in self-inspection and determined to attain their spiritual goal. The first characteristic is that the servant should not swear by Him whether truthfully or falsely, intentionally or by mistake, because when he consolidates this practice in himself and makes his tongue thus habituated, this discipline will raise him to a position where he will be able to give up swearing either intentionally or by mistake. So when he becomes practised in this, God will open for him the door of His lights. He will recognise the benefit of this in his heart".

"The second characteristic is that he should avoid (speaking of) untruth seriously or out of joke, because if he practices this and makes it firm in him self and makes his tongue habituated to it, God will open with it His heart and will clarify his knowledge. The third characteristic is that he should beware that when he promises anything to anyone he should not break his promise or he should not make any promise at all. For, surely this will be a (source of) great strength in his pursuits, a balanced course for him to follow. So if he does, the door of magnificence will be opened to him and the rank of modesty will be allotted to him". Note here that once again we are stopping through stations and states.

"The fourth is that he should refrain from cursing anything in creation nor should he cause any harm to anything, not even to an atom or anything less than that; this quality is among the virtues of the good and the truthful, and acting on this principle a person gets to the end of life under the protection of God. The fifth is that he should refrain from praying for any harm to anyone among people, even if he has been treated unjustly, he should not take revenge either by word or by action. So surely this trait raises its possessor to high ranks. The sixth characteristic is that he should not

affirm his faith beside the polytheism, unbelief and hypocrisy of those who follow the same *Qiblah* (turning point in prayer). And this trait constitutes the perfection in the following of *Sunnah* and is very far from any meddling in the knowledge of God".

"The seventh characteristic is that he should refrain from looking at anything of a sinful nature both outwardly and inwardly and should restrain the organs of the body from it; this is an action that is the quickest in bringing reward to the heart and the other organs in the immediate worldly life together with what God has kept in store by way of good things in the hereafter. The eighth characteristic is that one should avoid putting any burden on anyone whether it is small or big. On the contrary, he should lift the burden from all people whether asked to or not. So surely this constitutes the highest honour for the servants of God, and also provides the strength to struggle in admonishing people to do good or forbid them to do evil. And this constitutes the whole honour and dignity of God's servants and of pious men. The ninth characteristic is that, he should be free from all expectations from men, nor should he feel tempted in his heart by what is with them. So, surely it is a great honour and pure needlessness and great kingdom and glorious pride". This lack of dependence is, as we have



seen, essential to the sufi path.

"The tenth characteristic is humility, because it is with this trait that the station of the servant is raised high and his position made lofty and his honour and eminence made perfect in the sight of God as also in the sight of people, and he is given power over what he desires from among the affairs of the world and the hereafter. And this is a trait which forms the whole root and branch and the perfection of obedience and with its help the servant of God is made to attain the position of the righteous people who are pleased with God (note: this important but odd sounding expression). And humility consists in that the servant of God does not see anyone from among the people, but sees in him superiority over himself and he says: "perhaps this person is better than myself in the sight of God and higher in position". Thus, when the servant of God has become like this, God will keep him safe from all calamities and will make him attain the position of the companionship of God".

So here again, in this account of good behaviour, is a series of ethical recommendations, transformed, as it were, into a representation of an ascending path towards the highest stations

## CONCLUSION

From this brief selection of al-Jilani's discourses the character of his teachings emerges very clearly. He fits with the "sober" variety of sufism but in a sense this is a misleading category. For the path is one of extraordinary spiritual intensity. Roughly speaking, there are two overall stages, although as we have seen there is a worked out plan of stations and states; the scheme of the latter does vary and it seems often to have a "rhetorical" force.

In the first stage of the path, conformity to the "injunctions and prohibitions" of *shari'ah* is to be made more and more rigorous. Eventually, the whole of life is to be experienced through certain states or emotions: suffering through patience, enjoyment through gratitude, etc.. Moreover, these states are extraordinary and spiritualised versions of their ordinary counterparts. What gives them their character is that they are all part of becoming more conscious of living according to the Divine Decree but without abandoning the injunctions of *shari'ah*.

The second stage however goes beyond this into the condition of *fana'*. Here we have seen that al-Jilani does

hold that this area of experience can be reached and that it is legitimate to do so. Even this most devout of sufis thus puts himself beyond what would be regarded as the limits of the law for many. Nevertheless this "reward" stage of the path is characterised by al-Jilani by terms which display his affiliation and enthusiasm for the rigorous approach of the Hanbali that he is. His approach to *kashf* illustrates this.

We witness the preoccupations typical of this mode of sufism: total and happy acceptance of the Divine Decree, "to be pleased with God", complete submission to His Will and the corresponding loss of his own will. The theme of poverty as the absence of dependence on this world or even the hereafter is very strong. The unswerving love of God and awareness of Him is its own reward.

At the same time, the sufi follows his path by showing good behaviour to his fellows. It is important to note that while there is, as we have seen, a spiritual hierarchy among men, according to al-Jilani and others, the advanced sufi must nevertheless be humble and respectful and avoid arrogance and hypocrisy.

The spiritual discipline of the path is essentially



ascetic and we have seen how in the hagiography of al-Jilani he is said to have undertaken astonishing self-denials.

Finally, it should be noted that his teachings are not original as such. They are well within the framework of classical sufism prior to the metaphysical speculations of Ibn Arabi. It seems rather to have been as a great teacher and charismatic leader with saintly qualities that he became such a renowned shaykh. It is in this light that we will now present him as a proponent of da'wah.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1. Al-Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 17, p.36.
2. Ibn al-Jawzi, *Talbis Iblis* (Beirut: Dar al-Ra'id al-Arabi [n.d.]).
3. *Badal* plural *abdal* means "a substitute" or "a successor".
4. *Watad* plural *awtad* means "a peg"
5. *Qutub* plural *aqtab* means "a pole" or "an axis."
6. *Ghawth* means "a help" or "an aid"
7. Al-Jilani, *al-Ghunyat li Talibi Tariq al-Haqq*. Vols.I&II
8. Al-Sha'rani, *Lawaqih al-Anwar al-Qudsiyyah fi Ma'rifah Qawa'id al-Sufiyyah*, Vol.I, p.63
9. Isma'il ibn al-Sayyid Muhammad Sa'id al-Qadiri, *al-Fuyudat al-Rabbaniyyah*, pp.35-38.
10. Al-Qadiri, *op.cit.*, p.35; see also al-Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 75, p.137; al-Jilani *al-Fath al-Rabbani*, (Egypt, 1960), (complement) p.302. The meaning of "to preserve God's hudud" is to avoid or keep away all His prohibitions, even a small one.
11. *Fagr* means spiritual need in this context, but the usual and literal meaning is poor or poverty or material need.
12. *Mashayikh* or *masha'ikh* are plural, singular is *shaykh*, in this context *mashayikh* means masters of sufi orders.
13. *Qil wa qal* means literally idle talk or gossip, but in this context, the person who accepts gossip or idle talk is not serious in his attitude or stand. Meanwhile, sufism is serious in its perspective
14. *Isharah* literal meaning is sign, but in the spiritual context it means constant communion with God through prayer.
15. It is very important to understand that God has created every thing (creature). Thus, in communication with rich or poor, it is observed that this not to be affected by their situation and condition; give advise to the rich without any benefits, for it is all for God, as well as to succour to the poor in the cause of God.
16. To die from yourself as *al-Nafs al-Ammarah* to live again with *al-Nafs al-Mutma'innah*. It is the way of realizing the ideal life and dwelling in a state of spiritual happiness and wealth.
17. The *muridin* is plural, came from singular *murid*. In sufism, *murid* means a person who wants to follow the way of sufi; disciple.
18. To preserve and follow all deeds of the Companion of the Prophet and a generation afterward as a model.

19. Al-Jilani, *al-Fath al-Rabbani wa al-Fayd al-Rahmani*, p.302
20. Al-Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 54, pp.123-124.
21. Al-Jilani, Abd al-Qadir, *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 10, pp.25-28.
22. Al-Jilani, *al-Ghunyat li Talibi Tariq al-Haqq*, Vol.II, p.160.
23. Al-Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 60, p.138.
24. Margoliouth, "Contributions to the Biography of Abd al-Kadir of Jilan" in *JRAS* (London, 1907), p.278.
25. *Jabariyyah* is an Islamic school of thought teaching the inescapability of fate; fatalism; determinism.
26. *Qadariyyah* is a theological school of early Islam asserting man's free will.
27. Al-Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 10, pp.25-26.
28. *Ibid.*, Discourse 16, p.38
29. *Shirk* means association of partners with God.
30. Umar Farrukh, *Tarikh al-Fikri al-Arabi* (Beirut, 1962), p.417.
31. *Al-shath* means words uttered in ecstatic state in which the sufi boasts of superhuman power or status ("theopathic utterances").
32. See al-Qushayri, *al-Risalah*, pp.225, pp.229-30, 260
33. Abd al-Rahman Badawi, *Shatahat al-Sufiyyah*, (Cairo, 1949), Vol.I, p.10
34. *Sahw* means sobriety; *sa'hi* means sober. The sufi who has overcome his spiritual intoxication (*sukr*).
35. Al-Sarraji, *al-Luma*, pp.453-4, 422-3
36. *Shaths* plural by adding s, but the real plural in Arabic is *shatahat*.
37. Al-Sarraji, *op.cit.*, pp.461-423. For his discussion of the *shatahat* of Abu Yasid, al-Shibli, al-Nuri, and Abu Hamzah, see his *al-Luma'*, pp.459-77, 478-91, 492-4 and 495-6.
38. *Ibid.*, p.479
39. *Ibid.*, p.458
40. Abd al-Rahman al-Badawi, *op.cit.*, pp.22-23
41. Ibn al-Wardi, *Tatimmat al-Mukhtasar fi Akhbar al-Bashar*, Vol,II, p.66.
42. Our reference in this study is based on Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani's book *Futuh al-Ghayb* (Egypt: Matba'ah Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi wa Awladihi, 1392/1973), including 176 pages.
43. Our reference in this study is based on Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani's book, *al-Ghunyah li Ta'libi Tariq al-Haqq*. (Egypt: Matba'ah Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi wa Awladihi, 1956) 2Vols. in one book.
44. Christian influence has been pointed out by Margaret Smith, *Rabi'a, The Mystic* (Amsterdam, Philo Press, 1928); Bon Carra De Vaux, "Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani" in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*; The Iranian influence has been emphasised by E.H.Palmer, *Oriental Mysticism*, (1867, reprinted London, 1969).



- The Neo-Platonic influence has been brought out by R.A. Nicholson, *The Mystic of Islam*. (1914, reprint, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, (1966); he has also pointed out the Buddhist influence; The vedanta influence has been underlined by W. Jones, *Asiatic Researches* (London, 1803); R.C. Zaehner, *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism* (1960, New York, Schocken, 1969)
45. A. Schimmel subscribes to the view, *Mystical Dimension of Islam* (University of North Carolina, 1975). Most Muslim scholars take the same line: M. Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* (Lahore, Bazm-i-Iqbal); Husain Nasr in his various books; Valiuddin even derives *wah'dat al-Wujud* from the *Qur'an*, see his *Quranic Sufism* (Hyderabad, Academy of Islamic Studies, 1959).
  46. R.A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, *op.cit.*, and "A Historical Enquiry Concerning the Origin and Development of Sufism", in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (1906) pp.203-48, differentiate between the two aspects of Sufism.
  47. The distinction between *al-tasawwuf al-Sunni* and *al-tasawwuf al-falsafi* is made by Abd al-Qadir Mahmud, *al-Falsafah al-Sufiyyah fi al-Islam* (Cairo, Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, 1967); Abu al-Wafa al-Ghanimi al-Taftazani, *al-Madkhal ila al-Tasawwuf al-Islami* (Cairo, 1976); and Ibrahim Madkur Bayumi, *Fi al-Falsafah al-Islamiyyah, Manhajuhu wa Tatbiquhu* (Cairo, n.d.).
  48. Titus Burckhardt, *An Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*, Eng. tr. D.M. Matheson (Lahore 1959; Lahore, Ashraf 1968); Frithjof Schuon, *The Transcendental Unity of Religions*, Eng. tr. Peter Townsend (London, Faber & Faber, 1953).
  49. These two passages from Abu Nasr al-Sarraj's *al-Luma'*, *op.cit.*, are typical. "The Sufi's are God's trustees on earth, the guardian of His secrets and Knowledge, and the cream of His creation. They are the chosen ones of God, noblest friends, and the most loved ones; the *muttaqun*, the *sabiqun*, the *abrar*, the *muqarrabun*, the *abdal* and the *siddiqun* all come from them" (p.19). "The sufis do not choose one branch of knowledge and leave the others (as people devoted to *hadith*, *fiqh* and *zuhd* do); nor do they limit themselves to the attainment of some states and stations (*ahwal wa maqamat*) leaving out the others. They are the mines of all kinds of knowledge, the models for all noble states (*al-ahwa al-Mahmudah*) and the embodiments of all sublime virtues (*akhlaq al-shari'ah*), old as well as new" (p.40); see also al-Qushayri, *al-Risalah*, *op.cit.*, pp.20-21; Abu Nu'aym *Hilyat al-Awliya*, (Beirut:, n.d.), Vol.I, pp.21-28.
  50. Al-Kalabadhi particularly tries to show that the

beliefs which the sufis hold are not different from the beliefs of the *Ahl al-Sunnah*, see his book *al-Ta'arruf li Madhab Ahl al-Tasawwuf*, *op.cit.*, Ch.V, pp.33-82.

51. *Ibid.*, pp.84-86; al-Sarraḡ, *al-Lumb'*, pp.105-146.
52. To justify this remark on the *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, we would need a whole volume. Al-Ghazali attempt in the *Ihya'* to present the whole system of Islamic faith and beliefs, worship and rites (Vol.I); social life and economic pursuits (Vol.II); morality and purification of the soul (Vol.III); and the virtues of religion and spirit (Vol.IV). In working out his book he draws upon everything the *Qur'an*, *hadith*, *fiqh*, the words of elders and saying and practices of the sufis. The whole book shapes the discussion and determines the conclusions, is formed by his ideas on three fundamental issues: knowledge, happiness (*Sa'adah*) and reality. In order to appreciate this point one may refer to al-Ghazali autobiography: *Munqidh min al-Dalal*, [Eng. tr. M. Watt, *The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazali*, *op.cit.*; M. Umaruddin, *The Ethical Philosophy of Imam Ghazali* (Aligarh, 1962); Dr Ali Isa Uthman, *al-Insan ind al-Ghazali*, Arabic trans. Khayri Hammad (Cairo, Anglo, n.d.); M.Abdul Haq Ansari, "The Doctrine of Divine Command: A study in the Development of Ghazali's view of Reality" in *Islamic Studies*. Vol.XXI, No.3, Autumn 1982, pp.1-47.
53. See Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi, *Awarif al-Ma'arif*.
54. Ibn Arabi has performed this function on a large scale in his lengthy work *al-Futuhāt al-Makkiyyah*. He interprets here the whole gamut of Islamic beliefs and practices in the light of his philosophy of *wahdat al-Wujud*. The most fundamental issues is pound in his *Fusus al Hikam* which contains the essence of his philosophy.
55. *Futuh al-Ghayb*. Discover 60, p.139
56. *The Qur'an*: XV: 96
57. *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 40, p.97
58. *Ibid.*, Discourse 10, p.26
59. *Ibid.*, p.7
60. *Ibid.*, Discourse 60, p.138
61. *The Qur'an*, LIX: 7
62. *Ibid.*, III: 30
63. *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 7, p.18
64. *Ibid.*, Discourse 31, p.75
65. *The Qur'an*, XXXVIII: 26
66. *The Quran*, LIX: 7
67. *Ibid.*, III: 34
68. *Ibid.*, III: 30
69. *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 36, pp.90-91.
70. *Ibid.*, Discourse 1, p.6

71. *Ibid.*, Discourse 48, p.113
72. *Ibid.*, Discourse 25, p.59
73. *The Qur'an*, XXXII: 17
74. *Ibid.*, XII: 54
75. *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 19, p.47
76. *Ibid.*, Discourse 43, p.104
77. *Ibid.*, Discourse 22, p.52
78. *Ibid.*, Discourse 78, pp.77-80
79. *Ibid.*, Discourse 66, p.148
80. *The Qur'an*, XL. 60
81. *Ibid.*, IV: 32
82. *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 66, p.149
83. See Seyyed Hossein Nasr (edited), *Islamic spirituality*, p.411
84. *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 44, pp.104-105
85. *Ibid.*, Discourse 65, pp.146-147
86. *The Qur'an*, IV: 147
87. *Ibid.*, X: 44
88. *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 68, pp.152-154
89. *The Qur'an*, XXXV: 3
90. *Ibid.*, XIX: 65
91. *Ibid.*, XXVII: 63
92. *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse, p.59, pp.49-50
93. *The Qur'an*, IV: 32
94. *Ibid.*, XXIX: 17
95. *Ibid.*, II: 146
96. *Ibid.*, XL: 60
97. *Ibid.*, LI: 58
98. *Ibid.*, III: 37.
99. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Qawa'id al-Suluk*, p.489
100. *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 56, p.129
101. *Ibid.*, Discourse 6, pp.12-15
102. *Ibid.*, Discourse 60, pp.138-139
103. *Ibid.*, Discourse 4, p.10
104. *Ibid.*, Discourse 58, p.133
105. *Ibid.*, Discourse 14, pp.35-36
106. *The Quran*, XXVI: 77
107. *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 77, pp.169-171
108. *Ibid.*, Discourse 8, pp.20-21
109. *The Qur'an*, XX: 131
110. *Ibid.*
111. *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 47, p.113
112. *Ibid.*, Discourse 17, p.40; see also the *Qur'an*, XLII: 11
113. *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 17, pp.40-43
114. *Ibid.*, Discourse 50, pp.116-117
115. *The Qur'an*, XXXIII: 72
116. *Ibid.*, XVII: 11
117. *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 24, pp.56-57
118. Bon Carra De Vaux, "Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani" in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, (1908), Vol.I
119. *Ibid.*
120. Salik means the traveller of the mystical path; his



- travelling is suluk.
121. Al-Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 10, p.28
  122. *Ibid.*, Discourse 10, p.28
  123. *Ibid.* Discourse 17, p.40
  124. Ibn Taymiyya, *Qawaid al-Saluk*, p.486
  125. *Ibid.*, p.488
  126. *Ibid.*, p.488
  127. *Ibid.*, p.489
  128. *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 7, p.16
  129. *Ibid.*, Discourse 36, pp.87-89.
  130. *The Qur'an*, III: 152
  131. *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 5, pp.11-12
  132. *The Qur'an*, XX: 131
  133. *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 27, pp.65-67
  134. *The Quran*, XXXVI: 96
  135. *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 10, pp.24-25
  136. *The Qur'an* XXXVIII: 26
  137. meaning warfare with the unbelievers
  138. meaning struggle against low self
  139. *The Qur'an*, XV: 99
  140. *Ibid.*, XXIX: 41
  141. *The Qur'an*, II:24
  142. *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 67, pp.150-152
  143. *Ibid.*, Discourse 45, pp.106-111.
  144. *Ibid.*, Discourse 42, pp.101-103
  145. *Ibid.*, Discourse 52, p.120
  146. *Ibid.*, Discourse 59, pp.134-136
  147. *The Qur'an*, XVI: 53
  148. *Ibid.*, XXXI: 20
  149. *Ibid.*, XIV: 34
  150. *The Quran*: LXV: 2,3.
  151. *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 29, p.72
  152. *Ibid.*, Discourse 71, pp.158-159
  153. *Al-Ghunyah*, Vol.II, pp.158-9
  154. The Truth or God.
  155. Qasid literally a person who has a goal or purpose. In this context, it means a person who has second stage after the stage of iradah.
  156. *The Qur'an*, VI: 52
  157. *Al-Ghunyah*, Vol.II, p.160
  158. *Futuh al-Ghayb* Discourse 28, pp.70-71
  159. Al-Ghazali, *Munqidh min al-Dhalal*, ed. Dr.Abd Halim Mahmud (Cairo, Maktabat al-Anglo, 1964) p.13; and *al-Maqsad al-Asna fi sharh Asma Allah al-Usha* (Cairo, al-Jundi) p.151; see also Muhammad Abdul Haq Ansari, "The Doctrine of Divine Command: A study in the Development of Ghazali's view of Reality" in *Islamic Studies*, vol.xxi, No.3, Autumn, 1982, pp.22-24
  160. Ibn Arabi, *al-Futuh al-Makkiyah*, (Beirut, Dar Sadir, [n.d.]), Vol.I, Ch.65, pp.319-20
  161. Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi, *Awarif al-Ma'arif*, op.cit., p.34

162. *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 9, pp.22-23
  163. *Ibid.*, Discourse 73 p.163
  164. *Ibid.*, Discourse 75 p.166
  165. *Ibid.*, Discourse 78 pp.171-175
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## CHAPTER V

### A STUDY OF AL-JILANI'S ACTIVITIES IN DA'WAH.

#### 1. SUFISM AND DA'WAH

We can now turn our attention to da'wah and in particular the relationship between sufism and da'wah. The connection between the two is made best by entering the realm of spirituality and asking a basic question of the kind confronted by sufis, theologians and reflective Muslims in general: what is the ultimate goal of man - knowledge of God (*ma'rifah*), union with Him (*jama'*) or fulfillment of His Will (*ubudiyyah*)?. These issues arise directly from the spiritual path which we have just examined, and this is the framework, once again, which we must use if we are to understand the thought world of our Shaykh.

To answer this question, those concerned look to the life of the Prophet in its two aspects: One, his contact with God, his reception of revelation (*wahy*); his *dhikr* and contemplation, prayer and supplication; his turning to God for mercy and assistance; his love and fear; his faith and love of truth; his experience of God's blessings, help and honour; his thanksgiving and submission. The other is his contact with people, his recitation of the revelation (*wahy*), his preaching and call; his instruction to his followers in



self-purification and piety; his jihad against his opponents, and his effort to establish the commandments of God on earth. These two aspects of the Prophet's life formed one whole, one intertwined with the other. Nobody in the days of the Companions nor even their successors thought to distinguish between them, and asked the question, which aspect was higher and which was lower.

Of-course much of this is a matter of tradition; here the discussion will be confined to the understanding of the prophetic and saintly way held by the Shaykh. According to this view, the Prophet did not experience any opposition between "attention to God" and "attention to people". In attending to the people, the Prophet was in fact attending to God, because he did not attend to them of his own will. He attended to them because God commanded him to do so. Therefore, in attending to them he attended to God. Finally, to attend to people on the command of God, in order that they might believe, obey and come close to Him, is "a hundred times" better than to occupy oneself with God and concentrate on Him.

Al-Jilani takes a broad view of a Prophet's mission. The task begins with da'wah or preaching of the *shari'ah*.<sup>1</sup> For those who believe in Islam, the Prophet shows them how to act upon his teachings; how to worship God and remember Him; how to avoid sin and purify oneself; how to cultivate virtue and piety. he tells them

that the purpose of man's life is to serve God, and shows them how to attain God's pleasure. He preaches Islamic teaching as well as demonstrates how to practice and live with it. The Prophet's responsibility is to implement the laws of the *shari'ah*, to establish its institutions and to defend them against attacks from within and without. He tries to fight the powers that oppose him till they are subdued or wiped out.

According to the Islamic points of view the prophets are the best of the people, Muhammad is the best of the prophets, and his Companions are the best of mankind next only to the prophets. Of his companions those who embraced Islam before the conquest of Mecca bearing every hardship, are better than those who joined the fold of Islam later. They were not of equal standing; some were of high and some of low merit, but the lowest of the Companions is superior to the greatest saint (*wali*) of later times. Even Wahshi, the killer of Hamzah, who joined the fold of the Companions later, is better than Uways al-Qarani, the great *tabi'i*<sup>2</sup> famous for his devotions. (Here, incidentally, is in outline, the origin of spiritual hierarchy which we have talked about already).

The reason for their greatness is not their devotion or other meritorious acts; many saints of succeeding ages have a greater record of devotion, prayers, fasting and

*dhikr*. Their greatness is due primarily to two things; one is their faith, which because of their direct contact with the Prophet and his revelations was more than faith, a living experience. The second reason is that they were the first to respond to the invitation of Islam (da'wah), spend money and energy for its propagation, bore all kinds of hardships in its way, fought its enemies, and sacrificed everything for its cause.

The greatness of the Companions does not lie in any "new" knowledge over and above the simple faith in the Prophet's revelation (*wahy*). They did not have any extraordinary experience; did not know *fana'* and *baqa'*, union or separation. Al-Jilani makes it very clear in his *Futuh al-Ghayb*, that in the eyes of the Prophet, the criterion of greatness lies in things related to the mission of a prophet such as the propagation of faith, and persuasion of the people to follow religion.<sup>3</sup>

There are saints who are occupied exclusively with God and are lost in Him; they attend only to the most essential duties of religion such as prayer (*salah*), and care little for themselves or for others. These are those who are inferior to those who attend both to the duties towards God as well as the duties towards men. The latter are superior because they live as the prophets lived, and work as they worked.



The sufis who are absorbed in God (*majdhub*) have travelled only half the way: they have completed their journey to God (*al-sayr ila Allah*) and journey in God (*al-say fi Allah*) having attained union (*jama'*); they continue to live in a state of intoxication (*sukr*) which union produces. The other group has advanced beyond that stage and moved away again from God with God (*al-sayr 'an Allah bi Allah*), attained separation after union (*al-farq ba'd al-jam'*), come out from the state of intoxication, and occupied themselves with people. They are the saints who have been returned (*marju'*) to the world to engage themselves in the tasks which the prophets were commanded to do. The first step on this way is invitation (*da'wah*) of the people to God; the next is to purify them and make them true servants of God, and the last step is to establish the rule of His *shari'ah*. The saint who follows the Prophet more and serves his mission better, is a greater saint and a closer friend of God.

In outline these are the characteristics of a sufism working within and for *shari'ah*. We can sum up this discussion to get a better idea of the relationship between sufism and *shari'ah* in general, and sufism and *da'wah* in particular.

Mystical experience is not an independent source of knowing reality. It is not self-validating; its revelations have to be validated with reference to the

prophetic revelation. moreover the unitive experience is only the first stage of the mystical experience; there are two further stages: difference in union, and absolute difference.

It is accepted among sufis that the only way to know whether an act is lawful or not, and what is right or wrong is by consulting the Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Prophet, the *ijtihād* of qualified jurists (*mujtahids*), and their consensus (*ijma'*). These are also the means of knowing the degrees of obligation, whether a thing is obligatory (*fard/wajib*) or forbidden (*haram*), commendable (*mandub*), undesirable (*makruh*) or permissible (*mubah*). The inspiration (*ilham*) or *kashf* of the sufi has no role in this regard. Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani states the common view in the clearest terms on this matter as we have seen.

Sufism is to help man realise the very purpose of his existence. Revelation (*wahy*) says that man is the servant of God, and the purpose of his very existence is to serve God. sufism is to help man realise deeply and intensely the truth that he is nothing other than a servant of God. sufism also helps man to be a true and perfect servant of God. This is the end and the goal of sufism; as servanthood (*ubudiyyah*) is the last stage of the sufi *suluk*.<sup>4</sup> Sufism is not an attempt to lead a kind of life different from the life of the Prophet, for a

sufi, as for an ordinary Muslim the ideal is the prophet's life. That is the standard of excellence and perfection: he should engage himself in preaching and instructing, in purifying life and promoting piety, and serving the religion of God as the Prophet did. The greatness of the sufi depends upon his faith and conviction; his *dhikr* and worship, his fear and love, patience and trust, sincerity and honesty; and his observance of the *shari'ah*, service to Islam, jihad and sacrifice.

Thus sufism as defined and practiced by Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani can without reservation be called "Islamic sufism" precisely because it has this very close relation with *shari'ah* and *da'wah*. Al-Jilani has the correct attitude towards sufism, accepting what is in agreement with the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, he gives in turn a new interpretation and explanation of those sufi teachings which seem to contradict the *shari'ah* and if they do contradict it they are rejected.

Al-Jilani was deeply involved in *da'wah* activities from the age of fifty. He first appeared in 521A.H./1127A.D. in public as a preacher and teacher; his fame as a preacher and teacher seems to have spread quickly. Six years after his first appearance, the school (*madrasah*) of his old teacher Abu sa'id al-Mukharrimi was put under his charge and it grew bigger with the financial aid from the rich and free labour from the poor. Here he was



active as mufti and teacher of Qur'an-exegesis, hadith, *fiqh* and other subjects as well as in the role of preacher.

His reputation attracted numerous pupils from all parts of the Muslim world and his persuasive sermons are said to have converted many Jews and Christians to Islam. The financial support which he received from his admirers enabled him to be independent, enabling him to criticize the court of the caliph and to help the poor. His school (*madrasah*) continued with the help of pious endowments, under Abd al-Wahhab, one of his numerous sons, and his descendents. We will now present and discuss different aspects of his da'wah.

## 2. AL-JILANI'S PUBLIC SERMONS AND PREACHING

Following al-Jilani's isolation of twenty-five years from the public, he came to meet a man from Hamadhan called Yusuf al-Hamadhani<sup>5</sup> who was known as the *qutb* (pole). The latter had taken up his abode in a monastery (*ribat*). When al-Jilani heard about him, he went to visit him not seeing him, al-Jilani asked for him and was told that he was in the celler (*sirdab*).<sup>6</sup> So al-Jilani descended and met him. He then described to al-Jilani all the experiences which al-Jilani had undergone, and solved all of his difficulties. Al-Hamadhani had then asked him to speak in public. The tradition has it that al-Jilani

replied thus.

"Sir, I am a non-Arab ('ajami) without fluency in Arabic;<sup>7</sup> how am I to speak before the orators of Baghdad?". Al-Hamadhani said, "You have committed to memory the Laws, its Roots, the Differences, the vocabulary and the interpretation of the Qur'an; surely you are qualified to speak. Mount the pulpit and address the people. You are like rain that showers on the palm trees".<sup>8</sup>

According to *Bahjah al-Asrar* in the year 521A.H./1127A.D., one day before the midday prayers, al-Jilani met the Prophet in a dream. The Prophet questioned the Shaykh as to why he did not preach and offer advice to the public. The Shaykh replied that as he was a non-Arab ('ajami) he dare not speak in the presence of the orators of Baghdad. The Prophet then asked him to come forward to preach and give wise advice and call the people to promote good values through actual practice.<sup>9</sup>

After the prayers when al-Jilani sat down, a crowd assembled around him and he felt nervous. But possessing the miraculous qualities of a saint (*wali*), precious and valuable thoughts relating to gnosis and the truth (*haqiqah*) began to rise in the mind of al-Jilani and eloquent and sonorous words and phrases began to gush out of his mouth giving expression to his thoughts.<sup>10</sup> Thus,

at any rate, is the tradition concerning his calling.

Al-Jilani tells us of these early efforts: "I used to receive order and prohibitions both in sleep and waking hours, and the things to be said used to crowd upon my heart and overwhelm me; if I did not utter them I would have been choked, and could not be silenced. At first two or three men sat with me and listened, then people heard about me, and great numbers crowded to hear, till about 70,000 used to gather at a single meeting"<sup>11</sup>

These two accounts, in the mystical framework, balance each other. One the advice of the Sufi Yusuf al-Hamadhani represents outward (*zahir*) dimension and the other, the call of the Prophet, the inner (*batin*) dimension. In the "spiritual biography" both are true. The stories are important in that they are very good examples of a kind of initiation and call which is often the mythical beginning of a *tariqah*. In the hagiography, al-Jilani receives a special call and has bestowed upon him special powers which legitimate his new status.

According to some authors in 521A.H./1127A.D. Abu Sa'id Mubarak al-Mukharrimi, the *qadi* (judge) handed over his school (*madrash*) situated in the quarters known as *Bab al-Azaj* (al-Azaj Gate)<sup>12</sup> to al-Jilani. He began to use the school to preach the public, at first to a small audience, which gradually increased till he took a chair



in the oratory at the *Bab al-Halba* (al-Halba Gate) of Baghdad; due to the constant increase in the size of his audience he found it necessary to go outside the gate.<sup>13</sup>

On account of his charismatic personality and profound knowledge his fame soon spread throughout the different quarters of Baghdad and the Muslim world in general. Crowds flocked to hear his sermons. As the school could not accommodate the ever increasing audience, some had to sit outside the school (*madrasah*) on the road up to the entrance to the rest house (*musafir-thanah*). This later necessitated the acquiring of the houses adjacent to the school. The school was further extended in 528 A.H/1133-4 A.D., by acquiring the neighbouring land. He was later formally installed as the head of *madrasah*.

Ibn al-Jawzi,<sup>14</sup> a historian and al-Jilani's contemporary says: "Abu Sa'id al-Mukharrimi<sup>15</sup> had a fine school at the Azaj Gate. This came into the possession of Abd al-Qadir who preached there. He acquired a reputation for asceticism. The school presently became too small for the audience, and he took to sitting at the wall of Baghdad with his back leaning against his cell. Great crowds used to be converted at a single meeting. Then the school was repaired and enlarged, the common people making great efforts. There he remained preaching and teaching till he died".

Ibn al-Najjar, another well-known historian says: "When the school (*madrasah*) became too crowded (because of the large number of students), it was enlarged by taking in the space occupied by the neighbouring building. The rich sponsored this with their money and the poor with their free labour. That was in 528A.H.. The shaykh used to give fatwas, lectures and sermons in this school (*madrasah*)".<sup>16</sup>

As he gained popularity, a monastery (*ribat*) was built there for him. It was known as *musafir-khanah*. The audience included a large number of savants, jurists, saints, high officials, amirs, sultans and caliphs. It is said that they attended his session or gathering (*majlis*) together with 400 *mihbarah*<sup>17</sup> who wrote down the speeches of al-Jilani. He used also to recite the Qur'an in his session or make use of two *qaris* (Qur'an readers).<sup>18</sup> At times it is said that about 70,000 persons assembled to hear the sermons. People from neighbouring villages came at night to select and fix their place in the assembly for the morning. Others would come on mules and camels and would remain seated on their animals at the edge of the assembly.<sup>19</sup>

The point about the *mihbarah* is interesting. It seems to serve the function of establishing the tradition concerning al-Jilani's teachings: i.e. that the sermons

and discourses were recorded accurately and that those texts are his authentic teachings. The number seems unlikely but it reinforces the claim made not only about the Shaykh's greatness but also that this is his work.

According to Bahjah *al-Asrar*,<sup>20</sup> al-Jilani preached without fear of the high officials, the viziers, the sultans and even the caliphs. Many of his sessions were attended by the deputy minister Izz al-Din Abu Abd Allah Muhammad and other high officials of the state. So al-Jilani took the opportunity to exhort them to be of good manners and behaviour and moreover told them, by his *kashf*, of the sins and evils which for they were responsible. So moved were they by the sermons, it is said, that they shed tears. After the sermon al-Jilani stepped down from the pulpit and paid no attention to the high ranking officials of the state. So one of his followers asked him: "O my master! Are there not any gentler expositions than that. I am sure you have killed them?". Al-Jilani said: "O my son! Protect our values, when an exposition is not harsh, the dirt does not come out. Today I "kill" them, but it is for the sake of their tomorrow".

Without any fear, al-Jilani publicly denounced the unjust acts of the caliphs. He would speak the truth boldly from the pulpit, and reproach those who were put in authority over the people. When Caliph al-Muqtafi li



Amr Allah (530A.H./556A.H.) appointed as judge (*qadi*) the wicked, notorious tyrant and dishonest person, Yahya ibn al-Murakkim, al-Jilani from the pulpit said: "You have appointed over the Muslims the most wicked of the wicked, how will you answer in the near future before the Lord of the worlds?".<sup>21</sup> When the Caliph heard of the admonition, he trembled with fear and dismissed the tyrant. At last the Caliph Muqtafi li Amr Allah himself came to the Shaykh and sat down respectfully, the Shaykh lectured the caliph and reproached him so severely that he burst into tears, then the Shaykh treated him with kindness.<sup>22</sup> Thus it was taught that caliphs and viziers were to be father figures to their people and would then be respected.

Al-Jilani preached from the high pulpit. His speech was fast, loud and clear. His commands were immediately responded.<sup>23</sup> Muhammad ibn al-Khidr al-Husayn al-Mawsili, one of al-Jilani's servants said: "he used to receive visits from caliphs and viziers, and when he wrote to the Caliph his letter was as follow: "Abd al-Qadir writes, bidding you do this or that; he has a right to command you and you are bound to obey him; he is the pattern and evidence against you".<sup>24</sup> When he received such a message, the Caliph would obey at once. Al-Mustanjid (555-566A.H.) was also strongly criticized by al-Jilani.<sup>25</sup> If we assume any truth in these traditions we must conclude that the Shaykh had remarkable charisma and that he commanded a considerable popular following.

The period during which the Shaykh was engaged in preaching publicly was forty years, starting from the year 521A.H, when he was about 50 years of age. He was head of the college for thirty-three years, from the year 561A.H, the year of his death. Abd al-Wahhab, son of al-Jilani says: "My father used to deliver sermons three times a week; once on Friday morning, once on Tuesday evening in his own school (*madrasah*), and once in the monastery (*ribat*) on Sunday morning"<sup>26</sup>

The author of *Mir'ah al-Zaman* (the Mirror of the Time) well known as Sibt ibn al-Jawzi (583-654A.H./ 1187-1256A.D.)<sup>27</sup> said that the Shaykh himself preferred silence to speech but spoke direct to the peoples' hearts, and enjoyed great fame and popularity. He did not leave his school (*madrasah*) except on Friday or when he went to his monastery (*ribat*). The majority of the people of Baghdad submitted to him, and most of the Jews and Christians were converted to the Islam by him. He could only be seen during prayer times. It was reported that it was not unusual to see many Jews and Christians reiterating their faith in Islam to him, after he delivered his sermons. In this way about 500 Jews and Christian became Muslims and it is said, thousand of Muslim murderers, robbers and evil-doers repented their past sins and reformed themselves. (The figures given in the texts are astonishingly high).

Regarding conversion al-Jilani said: "I should like to be in the desert and waste places as I was at first, neither seeing mankind nor being seen. "Yet", he went on to say, "God desired to benefit mankind through me, and indeed more than 500 persons of Jews and Christians have by me been converted to Islam and more than 100,000 robbers<sup>28</sup> and bandits have been brought by me to repent. And this is a great deal of good".<sup>29</sup>

Thus, it seems that his sermons facilitated and prompted many conversions, as well as elevating many Muslims to a "higher life". Because of the success of the mission Ibn al-Jawzi, al-Jilani's contemporary succeeded him in this role of chief preacher in Baghdad.<sup>30</sup>

The Shaykh had no set topics in his sermons and frequently changed their content as a result of the many requests from his listeners. For example<sup>31</sup> one day, in 529 A.H Abu al-Hasan Sa'ad was present in a session where the Shaykh was delivering a sermon on renunciation (*zuhd*). Sitting behind everybody, he told himself that he would like to hear a sermon on gnosis (*ma'rifah*). The Shaykh suddenly changed his subject and spoke on *marifah* and produced a discourse such as he had never heard before. Next al-Jilani again changed the sermon to the subject of intense desire (*shawq*). Al-Jilani then spoke on the subjects of annihilation and subsistence (*fana'*



and *baqa'*), and lastly on *huduri*<sup>32</sup> and *ghaybah*.<sup>33</sup>

Besides his oratory technique to attract, his reputed psychic powers greatly influenced his audience. Once his son, Abd al-Wahhab, having travelled and studied at different centres of learning, returned to Baghdad after having acquired different fields of knowledge. He ascended his father's pulpit with his prior permission. But he failed to stir the audience. Then al-Jilani rose, and told a story about an egg which his wife had put on a plate, and which was then knocked off by the cat only to break on the table. Upon hearing this short story, the whole audience burst into laughter. After al-Jilani descended from his pulpit, Abd al-Wahhab asked his father the secret of his success in preaching the sermon. Al-Jilani said: " O my son! you were proud of your travels for seeking knowledge, but have you ever travelled there?", al-Jilani pointed out with his fingers to heaven, and then exclaimed: " O my son! I am sure that when I occupy the pulpit, the truth is evident in me and the truth speaks by itself. I accordingly speak to that effect".<sup>34</sup>

Abd al-Wahhab further narrates that on another occasion, he spoke from the pulpit, addressing the public with knowledge from various fields; his father was also there. As nobody was interested, he stepped down to give way to his father to speak. His father said as he

began: "Dear non-knowledgeable man , the yardstick for brevity is mere patience". The audience applauded and were engrossed with his sermon delivered thereafter. After the sermon Abd al-Wahhab asked him about his mistake and al-Jilani explained : "You only address yourself, but I address persons other than myself".<sup>35</sup>

It is clear that these stories do not simply refer to al-Jilani's great rhetorical skills. They constitute in themselves lessons in the art of oratory. They have moreover a sparkle and humour which is often to be found in sufi literature. Much of the benefit in studying texts of al-Jilani's sermons consists in looking at their structure. Here we can only begin to present some examples.

#### A. THE INTRODUCTION TO THE SERMON

Before al-Jilani gives a sermon in his session, he begins with this introduction:<sup>36</sup> "Praise is only for Allah, the Lord of the universe" (*Al-hamd li Allah Rabb al-alam*) Al-Jilani becomes silent, and says again the same words twice more with a silence between each utterance; then he praises God again and follows this with some more prayers (*du'as*) seeking guidance for himself and his audience. After that he turns to his right and says: "there is no god but Allah, whatever God intends will be done, there is no power and no strength

save in God, the Most High, the Exalted". After that, he turns to his left and says the same words. Lastly for the introduction, he says yet other prayers (*du'as*) for guidance.

#### B. THE CONTENT OF HIS SERMON

After this characteristic introduction, he starts to deliver the sermon proper. Here is an example delivered on the *Sawwal*, 546A.H./1151A.D. in the monastery (*ribat*).<sup>37</sup>

"To criticise Almighty God on account of events which are predestined would result in the death of religion, including *tawhid* (unification of God), *tawakkul* (trust in God) and sincerity. A true believer's heart does not question the wisdom of predestination, but accepts events in their entirety".

One's evil desire (*nafs*) is a considerable enemy: if anyone desires to correct this, he should fight (*jihad*) against it until such desire diminishes. As a result of your struggle with evil desires you will eventually conquer and subdue them; thereafter your desires will not be sinful, your *nafs* will actually aid you to carry out all forms of worship and give up all sins. At last, God gives this saying to you: "O righteous desire (soul) return to your Lord well pleased and well-pleasing unto



him".<sup>38</sup>

Natural desire (*nafs*) then becomes enamoured of God and its wickedness vanishes. It breaks of former connections with all creatures this is analagous to our ancestor Prophet Abraham (peace be on him). He gave up his lower self and did not allow greed to take possession of himself and hence acquired peace of heart (*qalb*). All of the creatures presented themselves to him and offered him their services, the Prophet Abraham answered them: "I do not require your help. God is aware of my circumstances and this knowledge prevents me from seeking the help of others". When the Prophet Abraham was found to have excelled in *tawhid* and *tawakkul*, God directed fire in the following terms; "be cool and safe for Abraham".<sup>39</sup> (We see here the importance placed on an autonomy which is synonymous with reliance on God alone - central to al-Jilani's teachings).

"God the Almighty and the great grants innumerable aids to those of His creatures who are patient in this world and His rewards to them in the hereafter are countless. God said: "boundless reward will be granted to the patient".<sup>40</sup> God does not conceal what the patient suffer for the sake of Him. Be patient with Him for an hour, because you have enjoyed His favour and reward for years. Heroism is the patience of an hour. "God (with his help) is with the patient".<sup>41</sup> Be patient together with

him, be on your guard for him and be not neglectful, so that you may get victory and triumph.

Do not divert your attention after death, because such attention after death is meaningless. Be vigilant before meeting death. Be warned before you are reminded or else you will regret it later on. Correct and perfect your heart. When the heart is perfected all your conditions become perfected thereafter. for this reason the Prophet (peace be upon him) said; "In man is a lump of flesh; when it is in good order, all his body remains in good condition, and when it degenerates, all his body degenerates. Remember that the lump of flesh is the heart". Good-hearted people are those who are fearful of God and trustful of His Unity, and full of sincerity. If these elements are absent, then the heart degenerates. The heart is like a bird in a cage within the body, or it is a pearl in a box, or it is money in a strong room, hence of paramount importance is the bird, not the cage, the pearl not the box and the money not the strong room.

"(O God!) make our limbs engage in your worship and hearts busy in knowledge of You and keep them engaged, day and night, throughout our lives; make us companions of good men, who have flourished in the past and conferred on us the favours which you had conferred on them and deal with us in the same way in which you dealt with them. Amen!".

"(O my people) be obedient to God as the good men of the past have been, so that He may be yours as much as He is theirs. If you desire that God be yours, then worship Him, and be patient with Him, and be satisfied with His actions, though these may be relevant to others rather than you, good men abstain from the world and conquer it by fear of God and piety. Then they desire to possess the hereafter and strive for its attainment; they act against their evil desire (*nafs*) and become obedient to god the Almighty and the Great. They tutor their own evil desire (*nafs*) and then those of others".

"(O servant of God!) first address your own evil desire (*nafs*) and then that of others. Especially, purify your own evil desire (*nafs*) and do not go attempting other things. Alas! you think you know how you can save others?. As you yourself are blind, how can you show the path to others?. Only a man possessing eyes can lead others to the right path and only a good swimmer can save them from the sea. Only the men who have knowledge of God can lead others to Him, but how can a man, who has no knowledge, point Him out to others?. As long as you love God and act for Him and not for others, as long as you fear God and not for others, you have no cause to criticize His doings. This state comes about through the purification of the heart and not by mere words, by seclusion and not by sociability.



When *tawhid* is at the door of a house, but *shirk*<sup>42</sup> is within, then it is hypocisy. Alas! you are pious in words but sinful in deeds; your tongue is thankful but your behaviour is discontented. God the Almighty and the Great said: "O son of Adam! good proceeds from Me to you, but evil comes from you". Alas! you claim to be his servant, but you are subservient to others. If you had been really a servant of Him, you would have borne love to Him and not enmity. A true believer (*mu'min*) does not obey his evil desire (*nafs*) nor Satan nor his avarice. He ignores Satan let alone rejects him; he does not care for the world but rather belittles it.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand he seeks the goods of hereafter and when that is achieved, he gives them up too and unites with Lord the Almighty, the Great. Every moment, he worships Him for His sake and for no other motive, listening to the saying of God: "And they have not been commanded anything but to worship God, attaching themselves solely and purely to Him"<sup>44</sup> Give up *shirk*, believe God to be one; He is the creator of all things, and everything is in His power. O you, who seek for ought from anyone other than God are fools. Is there anything which is not in the store room of God?. God, the Majestic, the Great said: "There is nothing except by our side, the treasures are stored".<sup>45</sup>

(O servant of God!) sleep beneath the cover of *taqdir*, resting on patience and wearing the garland of

satisfaction with God's decree and expecting plenty. When you adopt this course then on account of God's favour and beneficence such destined things will come to you, which you could not properly have asked for nor desired. (O my people!) be satisfied with *taqdir* and promise to me to accept it. I accept that *taqdir* which thereafter leads me to the path of God.

(O my people!) come forward, let us submit to God, the Almighty, and His decrees and action, and Let us bow down our visible and invisible heads. Let us accept *taqdir* and march together in its entourage as it is the messenger of the king, we honour it because of its sender. When we act likewise, we shall be elevated to the Almighty on account of our submission to *taqdir*; So "In that place is the Kingdom of God".<sup>46</sup> You drink from the sea of his knowledge, you eat on the table of His favours, you enjoy His love, and you are protected by His mercy. This is such as to one in a million only, drawn from the many tribes". (Again, here is this constantly repeated sufi message - To accept positively the inevitable, to celebrate it).

(O servant of God!) make piety obligatory to yourself. It is necessary for you to observe the boundaries of *shari'ah*, and to fight against evil desire (*nafs*), Satan, and bad companions. In the battle against these a believer (*mu'min*) never takes his helmet from his

head, nor his sword from his girdle nor his saddle from the back of his horse. His horse always remains saddled. Like the saints, he sleeps only when overpowered by fatigue, his meal is simple and brief, and he speaks only when necessary. But God gives him the inclination to speak and makes his tongue eloquent in this world, just in the same way as He will make the hands and feet speak on the day of resurrection. Almighty God on that day will make all his creations have the ability to speak in their own right. Likewise, Almighty God will offer the same ability and means for inanimate things to speak. When He requires a being to do any work He accords it such faculties.

When God desired to give sufficient opportunity to His creatures and not leave any loopholes for excuses, He made the prophets and apostles eloquent in order to persuade the people with warning (*nadharah*) and good news (*bisharah*). When He recalled the prophets and apostles to Himself, He made the learned men (who acted according to their learning), the representatives of the prophets and apostles and made them eloquent for the good of the people. The prophet once said: "The learned men are the heirs of the prophets".

"(O my people!) be thankful to God for the good things possessed by you, and consider them to have come from Him because God has said: "Whatever you possess are



all derived from God".<sup>47</sup> You who derive pleasure from the good things, ponder the matter of gratitude. You consider His good things to come from others not from Him; sometimes you look to others; sometimes you talk of steadfastness but remain in expectation of things which are not with you; and sometimes you do sinful things with the wealth that was showered by God upon you".

(O servant of God!) in your seclusion you are in need of such piety which may save you from sins and you also stand in need of such contemplation as will remind you of the merciful look of God. The ruin of wise men is in going astray, that of pious men is in lust, and that of the *abdal* is in doubts in seclusion. But the destruction of the *siddiqs*<sup>48</sup> is the outcome of their failure to look after of thier hearts. They used to sleep at the gate of the king. The task of *siddiqs* is to stand at the station of invitation (*da'wah*) calling people to the gnosis of God the Great. They are constantly inviting their hearts and say: "O hearts!", "O spirits and souls!", "O men!", "O jinn!" and "O seekers of the king!" come to the gate of the King, run towards Him with the feet of heartfelt piety, *tawhid* and knowledge, and run to Him with abstinence of high order and run with renunciation of this world and the hereafter and of everything besides God. This is the task of the saints. Their most important task is to upgrade the condition of the people. Their activity extends from the 'Arsh (throne

of God ) to the centre of the earth.

(O servant of God!) give up evil desire (nafs) and lust, and be the dust of the feet of the saints and be like a clod of earth in their presence. God the Almighty and the Great has said: "He brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living"<sup>49</sup> He produced Prophet Abraham from his dead (i.e, kafir) parents. The believer (mu'min) is alive and the unbeliever (kafir) is dead. The "unitarian" (is the believer in tawhid) is alive, a mushrik is dead. For this reason God has said in a Hadith Qudsi: "Of my creatures the first being who died is satan". It means that satan disobeyed God, and died from disobedience".

"In these later times, hypocrisy and lies are rampant. Do not associate with the hypocrites, the liars and imposters. Alas! your desire (nafs) lead you to hypocrisy, mistrust, idolatry, lust and mushrik. Hence, how can you bear it? Oppose it and do not obey it, treat it as it deserves, put limits around it, uproot it by asceticism. As for your desires, conquer them and do not allow them to conquer you. Do not follow your natural inclination; it is a little boy, it has no discretion; how could you learn useful things from a little boy, and could you follow it?. Satan is an enemy of yourself as much as he was to your progenitor, Adam (peace be on him). How can you incline to him and obey him. He is your

old enemy. He slaughtered your ancestors Adam and Eve. As soon as he overpowers you, he will slaughter you, as he slaughtered them. Take piety as your weapon. Make *tawhid* (unification of God), contemplation, piety and sincerity in seclusion and beseeching God's help your army. This weapon and army are capable of defeating Satan, conquering him and routing his army. Why should you not rout him when God is with you?".

"(O servant of God!) unite this world with the hereafter and bring them together, but make your heart quite empty of them attaching yourself solely to God. Do not approach Him without being devoid of all things besides God. Do not depend on creatures, but deal with the Creator directly. Give up these causes and give up these idols. If you have the ability, assign this world to your desire (*nafs*), the hereafter to your heart (*qalb*) and the Creator (God) to your soul (*sirr*). (Note here again this theme of renouncing even the lure of the hereafter for even it is a distraction).

"(O servant of God!) do not be a slave of your desire nor of your lust nor of this world nor of the hereafter; do not obey anyone else except God. Then you will get such precious rewards which will never vanish. At that juncture, you will receive from God the Great such guidance as will never mislead you. Repent of your sins and turn to God from them, so repent outwardly and



inwardly; repentance is a state of the heart. For the sake of God throw away your sins with sincere repentance and genuine shame before God". (Again, there seems to be a much greater emphasis on repentance among sufis than among the "exoterically" minded).

"After the purification of your limbs with lawful practices, the practices of the heart come in: the practices of the limbs are one and those of the heart another. When the heart escapes from the ways and means of creatures and dependence on them, then it comes to the sea of trust in God (*Tawakkul*) and knowledge of Him; giving up causes and means, it searches for the Maker of causes and means. When he reaches the middle of the sea, he says: "God who has created me, will give me guidance".<sup>50</sup> At this juncture, he gets the route from one shore to another, and from one place to another. Finally he reaches the right path. Every time he thinks of God, the path becomes clear to him and he will not be deceived. The heart then traverses the distance of this search of God the Great, and leaves it behind. When he is afraid of destruction on any path, his faith makes him bold. Then the fire of bewilderment and fear is extinguished and in their place the light of affection and the pleasure of proximity to God is experienced".

"(O servant of God!) when you are sick, be patient and wait for medication; when medicine reaches you, take

it with thanks: when you are in such a state you will feel good with great pleasure. The fear of Hell scorches the heart of the believer and makes his appearance pale and his heart grievous. When these feelings become overwhelming, then God the great showers on his heart the rain of His mercy and bounties, and opens the gate of the hereafter to him, whereupon he sees his resting place therein. When he enjoys calmness, safety and peace for a short time, God opens the gate of his majesty for him: this crushes his heart and inner self and he is afflicted with greater fear than before. When this stage is completed then the gate of God's grace is opened for him. Now he attains quietness and security and is awakened: he takes his position at a station, whence he progresses to higher and higher stations". (This is a good example of a progress through stations and states; it is a kind of spiritual dialectic).

"(O servant of God!) You should not take as your the ultimate objects of desire good food, drink, dress, marriage, house and property. These are the desires of your lower self. Where then is the desire of the inner self and heart?. It is the quest of God the Great, the Majestic. Your desires for such things lead you to trouble. Hence your ultimate desire should be for God, the Great, the Majestic, and the things that are with Him. What is the result of giving up this world?. It is the hereafter. What is the result of giving up the

creatures?. It is God, the Great, the Majestic. The more you give up this world, much greater and better things will be in store for you in the hereafter. Supposing today is the last day of your life, you should be preparing yourself for the hereafter and thereby making ready for the arrival of the Angel of Death (*Malak al-Mawt*). The world is the kitchen for the saints, and the hereafter is their mansion. When the supremacy of God, the Great, the Majestic is manifest the veil that was between them and the world divides. Thereafter God, the Benevolent and Gracious, directly becomes their object. Hence they no longer need this world or the hereafter".

"O liars in the enjoyment of good things conferred by God, you profess to be friends of God, the Great, the Majestic, but when you are tested by God, you run fast, as if you never had any love for Him. At the time of test a man is revealed. When calamities come from God and you remain steadfast, then you are a friend of God, but if you change, then your false claim is exposed and your past deeds become fruitless": (the theme of the trial and examination is emerging here).

"A man approached the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: "O the Messenger of God! I bear love to you". The Prophet replied: "Then be ready to bear poverty". Another man appeared before the Prophet (peace be upon



him) and stated: "I bear love to God, the Great, the Majestic". The reply was, "Be ready to suffer calamities". Love for God and the prophet is mixed with poverty, starvation and calamity. Some pious men have therefore said: "Calamity is inseparable with *wala'* (friendship with God and His Prophet)", so that everyone would not claim to be such. Otherwise everyone would have claimed love of God, the Almighty, the Great. Hence firmness in calamity and poverty has been made essence of this love. O our Lord! grant us good things in this world and the hereafter, and save us from the torments of hell".

#### C. THE END OF HIS SERMON

Al-Jilani closes his sermon with a prayer (*du'a*) for guidance to him and the audience. Al-Jilani's son Abd al-Razzaq narrates the prayer (*du'a*) of his father for to closing his sermons".<sup>51</sup>

The translation, of-course, is inadequate in capturing the eloquence and poetic resonance of the sermon. We have to assume also that the sermons derive some of their strength from the reputation, a longside the text itself, of al-Jilani's performances.

### 3. AL-JILANI'S PUBLIC AND SPIRITUAL EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES .

Al-Jilani was the leader of the Hanbalites in his time. He was, it is said, "a pious jurist, orthodox, frequently repeating the Qur'an, constantly meditating". He got his training as a jurist from Judge (*qadi*) Abu Sa'id al-mukharrimi, and was the companion of Shaykh Hammad al-Dabbas.

Every day al-Jilani used to deliver one lecture on details of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and another on the differences to be found therein. He used to teach the thirteen disciplines of knowledge, e.g. Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), commentaries of the Qur'an (*tafsir*), traditions of the Prophet (*hadith*), principles of the jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*), syntax (grammar "*nahu*"). After midday prayer (*zuhr*) he would teach translation of the Qur'an.<sup>52</sup>

The students who come to al-Jilani had no necessity to go to any other teacher for the completion of their education, because al-Jilani would teach them all subjects which were generally taught at the time. Students from every part of Iraq and from all the Muslim countries began to come to his school (*madrasah*) in search of knowledge. Pious, holy and learned persons also assembled there to derive benefit from his society and his lectures. Others also came to him simply with the

intention of acquiring merit by seeing him.<sup>53</sup> Again, this is typical of the charisma and *barakah* attributed to someone like al-Jilani.

Most of the pious, holy and learned men who had assembled around al-Jilani, become his disciples (*murids*) and were influenced by his piety, honesty and charity. Upon completion of their education, students returned to their own towns and villages and formed centres for the advancement of education. Piety and honesty were spread through Iraq and the Muslim world and Islam was revived and morality was improved. Most of the holy men become famous saints, and most of the students become famous savants of their time. One can see how in this "transmission" of al-Jilani's teachings there is the beginnings of a *tariqah*.

According to al-Shattanawfi, Abd al-Qadir's disciples taught his *tariqah* in various parts of the Islamic world. Haddad in Yemen, Muhammad al-Bata'ih in Syria, and Muhammad ibn Abd al-Samad in Egypt.<sup>54</sup> The author of *Ghibtah al-Nazir* gives a list in his book<sup>55</sup> of a large number of learned and famous scholars who were trained by Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani in both exoteric and esoteric science; traditions of the Prophet were handed down on his authority, and people gladly came from distant regions to benefit by his instruction. Among those who were trained by him in exoteric knowledge were



his ten sons discussed above including Abd al-Wahhab, Abd al-Razzaq and Musa, as well as *al-hafiz* Abu As'ad al-Sam'ani, Umar ibn Ali al-Qurashy, *al-hafiz* Abd al-Ghani ibn Abd Wahid ibn Ali Surur, Shaykh al-Wuwaffaq Abd Allah ibn Ahmad ibn Qudamah, Shaykh Ali ibn Idris al-Ya'qubi; Abu Hurayrah ibn al-Wastani, Ahmad ibn Mas'ud, Yahya ibn Sa'ad Allah al-Takriti, Ahmad ibn Muti' al-Bajrani. Their authority as teachers derives to a considerable extent from al-Jilani as much as from their own learning. In the words of the author of *Natijah al-Tahqiq*,<sup>56</sup> "al-Jilani is too great to require that his greatness be proclaimed, and too fair to require that his beauty be adorned".

Al-Shattanawfi informs us of others of al-Jilani's disciples and says that among the saints (*walis*), Shaykh Ali ibn Hiti and Shaykh Baqa ibn Batu used to sweep the yard of the school of al-Jilani. The former become a pole (*qutb*) of his time and was one of the four great saints of Iraq. Meanwhile Shaykh Baqa ibn Batu become head of the *awtad*?<sup>57</sup> Beside those saints al-Shattanawfi informs us of another famous scholar and saint; he was Shaykh Shihab al-Din Omar Shuhrawardi who during his youth days read voraciously books on *kalam* (scholasticism of theology) in spite of the advice of his uncle to the contrary. But after Shuhrawardi had studied under al-Jilani, his mind was filled up with the knowledge which is with God. He later became the leader of persons

treading the path of God and the author of the famous book on Sufism named *Awarif al-Marif*.<sup>58</sup> Thus the great spiritual genealogy is woven, connecting these awliya' to one another on an esoteric map.

The famous students of al-Jilani are too numerous all to be mentioned. But among those students who studied under al-Jilani were Abu Muhammad al-Khashshab the famous grammarian, and Abu al-Hasan, the famous preacher of Egypt, Abu Muhammad Mahmud ibn Othman "an ornament to the jurist and pious men", Abu Omar Othman ibn Ismail who was so distinguished a scholar that he earned the title of *shafi* of his time.<sup>59</sup>

One of al-Jilani disciples, Shaykh al-Muwaffaq<sup>60</sup> when asked about al-Jilani, gave the following reply: "We found him still living, but towards the end of his life. He lodged us in his school, and looked after us. He often sent his son Yahya to light the lamp, and would frequently send us food from his own lodging. He used to lead in the regular prayers, and I recited to him from memory out of the book of al-Khiraqi<sup>61</sup> in the morning, whereas Abd al-Ghani the hafiz used to recite to him from the book called *al-Hidayah fi al-Kitab*.<sup>62</sup> We were the only persons studying with him during that time. We remained with him a month and nine days, when he died; and we prayed over him at night in his school".<sup>63</sup> This looks like a claim on their part to some spiritually

privileged access.

Al-Sa'rani describes the essence of al-Jilani's *tariqah* and his spiritual education as follows:<sup>64</sup> "His *tariqah* is the pure unity of God (*tawhid*) and the unity of Oneness (*tafrid*) with presence (*huduri*)<sup>65</sup> in the stage of servanthood (*abdiyyah*) neither by something nor for something (*la bi shay' wa la li shay'*). His *tariqah* is to cling to the Divine foreordainments (*aqdar*) with the agreement of the heart and spirit (*ruh*), and to merge the inward and outward, and skin off the characteristics of the psyche or lower self (*al-nafs*) with absence (*ghaybah*)<sup>66</sup> from all seeing of benefits, harm, nearness and farness. His *tariqah* is to merge word and deed, and accept all with sincerity and submission, agree with the Qur'an and the Sunnah in every breath, idea, thought and be in state of constancy with God (*thubut ma'a Allah*)".

These kinds of claims are by no means unusual. We know that networks of teachers and *ulama'* are established which derive their unity and character from a particular *madrasah* (or, in Southeast Asia, *pondok-pesantren*) and usually a particular teacher. Part of the authority of the "members" comes from their contact with the master. These networks in turn are often also *tariqah*.



#### 4. AL-JILANI'S "FATAWA"

##### (LEGAL DECISIONS OR INTERPRETATIONS)

While al-Jilani was engaged from 528A.H./1133A.D. to 561A.H./1166A.D. in giving free education with board and lodging to the students who flocked to his school (*madrasah*), he also gave free of charge his answers on all questions of Islamic law addressed to him from all parts of the Muslim world. On account of his mastery of the subject, it is said that he no longer needed to consult his books to think over the matter. After reading the question he would at once record his opinion below it. He would not keep such questions even for a day with him before giving his opinion; he is said to have answered *impromptu*. He was qualified to issue legal decisions (*fatawa*) according to the schools of the two *imams*; al-Shafie and Ahmad ibn Hanbal, but the school on which he relied chiefly in the first instance was that of Ahmad ibn Hanbal.<sup>67</sup>

If we look at the most celebrated of his "*fatawa*", however, it turns out that once again they really constitute occasions for guidance on the *sufi* path; the question and answer illustrate some difficult point concerning the stations and states; often they clarify the meaning of some term but in such a way that the "*legality*" of the idea and practise is established. So these are "*esoteric*" *fatawa*. The following are taken from

al-Sha'rani and others.

A. Once an 'Ajami (a non-Arab) swore that he would divorce his wife if he could not for a short time be engaged in worshipping God in such a manner that none else could at the time worship God in that manner. The learned men of Iraq were questioned as to what the man would have to do, so that he might not have to divorce his wife. No one could give a satisfactory answer. When the question came before al-Jilani, he instantly wrote that the man should go to the Ka'bah and get it vacated and make seven circuits of it (this is a form of worshipping God), so that his vow might be fulfilled because no other person could possibly be engaged at the time in that mode of worship.<sup>68</sup>

B. Once al-Jilani was asked about a person who claimed that he had seen God by his eyes. Al-Jilani asked him if it was true as had been suggested. He answered with affirmative. Al-Jilani prohibited him to say this, and the shaykh then obliged him not to make such a claim again in future. Later al-Jilani was further asked about the truth of that man's claim, and al-Jilani said: "What he has said is true, but he is in confusion, because he witnessed with his *basirah* (vision of the mind or heart) the light of beauty (*nur al-jamal*) and then a radiance (*lam'*) broke through from his *basirah* to his eyes, so his eyes saw with his *basirah*, and the radiance of his

*basirah* connected with the light of his witness (*nur al-shuhud*). As a result, he thought that his eyes had seen what he witnessed with his *basirah*. It is surely that his eyes saw with his *basirah* only, so that he knew nothing about that. God says: "He has let free the two bodies of flowing water, meeting together; between them is a barrier which they can not transgress".<sup>69</sup> After a group of outstanding savants had heard this explanation, they recognised the answer and were amazed at the wisdom of his account of the state of the person.<sup>70</sup> This is an interesting case of legally fixing the trust. A mystical experience is described and interpreted so as to account for it in a non-transgressive way.

C. He was asked about *buka'* ("crying") and answered: "A person may cry for Him, and from Him, and towards Him, there is no objection (*la haraj*) to crying"<sup>71</sup>. There is perhaps here a reference to the "sadness" of the sufi and the desolation experienced at certain stages.

D. He was also asked about the worldly (*al-dunya*), and said: "Take the worldly from your heart and keep it in your hand, and so that it does not harm you".<sup>72</sup> This is a very typical sufi idea - "Do not let it hold you; you hold it".

E. He was asked about *shukr* (thankfulness) and said: "The reality of *shukr* is acknowledgement of the



grace of God in the way of submission and obedience, the witnessing of kindness and preservation of the holiness (*hurmah*); and in the way of distinguishing weakness from thankfulness" And al-Jilani said: "A poor man who has been patient with God is more excellent than a rich man who has been thankful to Him, and a poor who has been thankful is more excellent than both, and a poor who has been patient and thankful is most excellent than all".<sup>73</sup>

F. He was asked about good behaviour, and said: "The roughness of creature should not effect your judgement of him and your knowledge of his faults; regard this being according to their faith and wisdom".<sup>74</sup>

G. He was asked about *baqa'* (subsistence), and said: "*Baqa'* would not exist without *liqa'* taking place like a glimpse of eye. One of the signs of the peoples of *liqa'* (*ahl al-liqa'*) is abstinence from matters of the evanescent world (*fanin*) because both of them are in contact to each other". He further said: "When you remember Him you are lover (*muhibb*), and when you heard His remembrance of you, you are beloved (*mahbub*). The creature is your veil to yourself, and yourself is your veil to your God, as long as you see the creature, you can not see yourself, and as long as you see yourself you can not see your God".<sup>75</sup>

According to the narration of Mufrih ibn Nabhan ibn

Barakat al-Shaybani the reputation al-Jilani had spread widely throughout the Muslim world. Once a hundred leading jurists of Baghdad assembled to test the ability of al-Jilani in various subjects of knowledge. Every one of them had agreed to have a question in hand. They later attended al-Jilani's sermon session and during question time, they could not ask him those questions as they have forgotten their questions. Al-Jilani realized that and answered all questions which they had forgotten to ask him. So they acknowledged the virtue of al-Jilani and his knowledge.<sup>76</sup>

This demonstrates clearly that the *fatawa* establish the authority of Abd al-Qadir as occupying the highest spiritual ranks. Whatever was actually offered by way of advice by him, it has been transformed into an intriguing literature of spiritual guidance. Equally, though, we should not reject the possibility that these topics were of great public concern.

##### 5. AL-JILANI'S WRITINGS

We have stated in the preceding chapter<sup>77</sup> that al-Jilani is said to have composed in prose and poetry. He wrote for the purpose of serving mankind to make them Godly. His works are all religious in character and largely consist of reports of his sermons or addresses. Many works; mystical treatise, collection of prayers and

sermons are ascribed to him. These works are the most solid contribution of al-Jilani to Islamic thought.

There is no doubt that he had a very clear conception of his mission (*da'wah*). Judging from the work he had done, we can safely say that his mission was to criticise unbelief, heresy and false doctrine and reaffirm faith in prophecy, revelation and the religion of the Prophet. He had several of his texts distributed among the people. Al-Jilani appears as teacher of theology, law and ethics in his book *al-Ghunyah li Talib Tariq al-Haqq*. In this book he starts with an exposition of the ethical and social duties of a Muslim. Thus, in general it is in the category of revival or regeneration literature, like much of the later work of al-Ghazali.

The sermons included in *al-Fath al-Rabbani* (62 sermons) and *Futuh al-Ghayb* (78 sermons) are some of the very best in Muslim literature; the spirit which they breathe is one of charity and philanthropy; al-Jilani would like "to close the gate of Hell and open those of Paradise to all mankind".<sup>78</sup>

Al-Jilani often directs the attention of his audience to the perfect saint. Yet both contents and style show that the sermons were not addressed exclusively to sufi circles, because although he employs sufi technical terms, he uses them in a way which is



publicly accessible. It may well be as a populariser of sufism that he is most important; as someone who brought the spiritual teachings into ordinary, folk Islam.

The general theme of the sermons in *al-Fath al-Rabbani* is the necessity of period of asceticism during which the aspirant can wean himself from the world, after which he may return and enjoy his portion while converting others. The plain manner, avoiding sufi terminology and often very simple moral admonishment suggest that they were delivered before a large audience.

Besides mentioning books of al-Jilani, there are many collection of prayers (*du'a's*), mystical treatises, compiled later on by his followers and ascribed to him. One of the most useful books in this category is *al-Fuyudat al-Rabbaniyyah fi al-Ma'athir wa al-Awrad al-Qadiriyyah*, compiled by al-Sayyid al-Haji Isma'il al-Qadiri.<sup>79</sup> This bears witness to the popularity of the tariqah and its role as a propagator of orthodoxy.

## 6. AL-JILANI'S DAILY LIFE AND HIS FINANCIAL CONDITION (THE SERVICES OF HUMANITY)

Every evening before the evening prayer (*maghrib*), a friend of the Shaykh used to be send four or five pieces of bread, made of grain specially grown for the Shaykh with his money. Al-Jilani used to break them into several pieces and distribute them among the needy persons who

happened to be present there and keep a few pieces for himself. Again after the evening prayers his table cloth would be spread, because he used to observe fast throughout the year (except on the days in which it was not lawful to fast). He would then break his fast and the attendant Muzaffar would call aloud that anyone requiring bread might come there, and after taking his meal he might rest there until the time of the night prayer (*Isha'*).<sup>80</sup>

Ibn al-Najjar stated that when something was presented to him, al-Jilani would said: "Put it under the *sajdah* (prayer carpet) and when his attendant comes, he would says: "take something under *sajdah* and pay it to the green grocer or baker or others".<sup>81</sup> Al-Jilani says: "I have examined all deeds, and can find no more meritorious than the bestowing of food. How I wish the whole world were in my possession, so that I might feed the hungry, there for my hand has a hole in it; it can retain nothing. If I were to receive two thousand dinars not one would be left with me by nightfall".<sup>82</sup>

After night prayer (*Isha'*) al-Jilani would enter into his closet alone and would offer non-obligatory prayers, sit in meditation of the Almighty. He would then recite the Qur'an and would then remain in *sujud*<sup>83</sup> in contemplation of Creator.<sup>84</sup> Although al-Jilani's life was full of spirituality, he wore the religious scholars'

dress, put a shawl on his head, and he rode on a mule.<sup>85</sup>

It is evident that we are to understand from the tradition that al-Jilani was a practical saint engaged in exemplary charitable activity. This fits, of-course, with the teachings of the "tariqah".

Because of his various activities in da'wah and his services to mankind, Muslim, from all over the world would respectfully tender presents to him. He would spend the money to support the students, to whom free education, and free board and lodging would be given. He would also feed the pious and learned men around him, as well as strangers and needy persons who would come there.

Baghdad in those days of al-Jilani was one of the "modern" cities. As stated before, al-Jilani professes to have made large number of converts among the criminal classes in the great city of the caliphs; and, like some modern agencies for moral reform, he offered temporal relief as well as spiritual counsel. Money was sent to him for distribution among the poor, as it might be sent to the head of a "mission" in these days; and his *fatawa* was that alms should be given equally to the deserving and the underserving.<sup>86</sup>



## CONCLUSION

All of these different aspects of his "mission" confirm the image of the popularising sufi and Islamic reformer.

It seems that his sermons elaborated the classical framework of sufi spirituality in an accessible manner and in such a way that they can be taken as moral exhortations. They recommend a pure life of piety without necessarily demanding that ordinary people follow the path. One can assume that the themes of renunciation, self-purification, etc., appealed to people during a time of uncertainty and pluralism in ideas and activities. He thus fits in well with the archetypal reformer and purifier of the faith. He is by tradition a people's *da'i* rather than the more intellectual al-Ghazali.

In the biographies, his life becomes exemplary and as we have seen the completeness of his saintly way is utilized in a variety of contexts as a form of instruction in itself.

Persuading by the accounts of his activities in all of these different spheres is the sufi way. Nearly all of the stories make a point concerning how to live close to God and "realise *Tawhid*".

Nevertheless, it would be very wrong to render his importance as largely esoteric. We will now examine the lessons for da'wah to be derived from this most exemplary of *da'i*.

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## NOTES TO CHAPTER V

1. Al-Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 33, p.80
2. The generation after the Companions
3. Al-Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 33, pp.77-80
4. Al-Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 24, pp.24-28
5. Yusuf al-Hamadani (440-535 A.H./1048-1140A.D.). An account of him was given by Haji Khalifah after Ibn al-Najjar and Sam'ani. According to him, he was born in the village of Buzanajird, came to Baghdad, where he studied with Abu Ishaq al-Shirazi and other outstanding jurists. He travelled to Isfahan and Samargand, where he acquired further knowledge, and also devoted himself to piety and ascetion. Later he returned to Baghdad in 515A.H./1121A.D. where for some time he taught and preached at the Nizamiyah college. There after he spent his life at Merv and Herat, and died at Bama'in on the Merv road. Further details about him are found in the "*Hada'iq al-Wardiyyah fi Haqa'iq al-Naqshabandiyyah*" (cairo, 1308, p.109) from which further imformations on the titles of his books could be obtained such as "*Khutbah al-Hayah; manazil al-Sa'irin* and *Manazil al-Salikin*. See Haji Khalifah, *Kasfh al-Zunun*.
6. Staying in celler (*sirdab*) is a form of asceticism. It was dwelled under ground.
7. The actual expression translates literally as: "without admixture and preachless".
8. Ibn Hajar, *Ghibtah al-Nazir*, p.13
9. Al-Shattanawfi, *op.cit.*, p.25
10. Al-Dhahabi, *Life of Abd al-Qadir*, p.283
11. *Ibid.*, p.283; see also al-Shattanawfi, *op.cit.*, p.92.
12. An inner gate East Baghdad, Shutting of the Maymuniyyah Quarters. See strange le, *Baghdad*; map VIII.
13. H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p.6
14. Ibn al-Jawzi, *al-Muntazam*, Vol.X, p.219
15. Al-Mukharrimi is related to a village called "*al-Mukharrim*" in Baghdad which some of children of Yazid ibn al-Mukharim occupied this place, so later on will be known with their names. See al-Tadhifi, *Qalaid al-Jawahir*
16. Al-Asqalani, *Ghibtah*, p.34.
17. *Mihbarah* is a person who dictate speeches, re-write them and compile them as a record.
18. Al-Asqalani, *Ghibtah al-Nazir*, pp.16-17
19. Al-Shattanawfi, *op.cit.*, p.92
20. *Ibid.* p.91
21. Sibte ibn al-Jawzi, *Mir'ah al-Zaman*, Vol.VIII, p.265
22. S.A. Salik, *The Saint of Jilan*, p.31
23. Al-Shattanawfi, *Bahjah al-Asrar*, p.98
24. *Ibid.*, p.86
25. *Ibid.*, pp.61,77



26. Al-Asqalani, *op.cit.*, p.16
27. Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi, *Op. cit.*, pp.294-295
28. The *ayyarun* are frequently mentioned in the histories of this time.
29. Al-Shattanawfi, *op.cit.*, p.96; see also Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *op.cit.*, p.19; al-Dhahabi, *op.cit.*, p.304.
30. Ibn al-Jawzi, *al-Muntazam*, p.219
31. S.A. Salik, *op.cit.*, p.33
32. "*Huduri*" is sufi term, means presence of the heart in God.
33. "*Ghaybah*" is also sufi term, means absence of the heart from all things except God.
34. Al-Shattanawfi, *op.cit.*, p.92; see also Al-Asqalani, *op.cit.*, pp.17-18
35. Al-Shattanawfi, *op.cit.*, p.92; al-Asqalani, *op.cit.*, pp.16-17
36. Al-Shattanawfi, *op.cit.*, p.92
37. Al-Jilani, *al-Fath al-Rabbani*, pp.3-9. This sermon is a sermon of the first session (*majlis*) in the book
38. *The Qur'an*, al-Fajr, XXVII: 28
39. *Ibid.*, XXI: 69
40. *Ibid.*, XXXIX: 10
41. *Ibid.*, VIII: 46
42. "*Shirk*" means setting up a god besides God
43. He does not seek pleasure, but considers it base
44. *The Qur'an*, XCVIII: 5
45. *Ibid.*, XV: 21
46. *Ibid.*, XVIII: 44
47. *Ibid.*, XVI: 53
48. "*Siddiq*" is a highest order of saints. *Siddiq* literally means the trustfulness.
49. *The Qur'an*, XXX: 19
50. *Ibid.*, XXVI: 78
51. Al-Shattanawfi, *op.cit.*, p.93
52. Al-Asqalani, *op.cit.*, p.15
53. Al-Shattanawfi, *op.cit.*, p.96
54. *Ibid.*, pp.101, 109-110.
55. Al-Asqalani, *Ghibtah al-Nazir*, p.33
56. Al-Dila'i, *op.cit.*, p.160
57. Al-Shattanawfi, *op.cit.*, pp.153-156, 156-160
58. *Ibid.*, pp.233-235
59. S.A. Salik, *op.cit.*, pp.59-60
60. Muwaffaq al-Din Abd Allah ibn Qudamah. He was a voluminous author on Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*)
61. *The Mukhtasar* of Hanbalite law by Abu al-Qasim Umar al-Khiraqi.
62. A Hanbalite *Hidayah* is mentioned by Haji Khalifa, as the work of Ibn al-Khattab Mahfuz al-Tubadi.
63. Al-Dhahabi, *op.cit.*, p.278
64. Al-Sha'rani, *op.cit.*, p.110
65. See footnote no.32
66. See footnote no.33
67. Al-Sha'rani, *op.cit.*, p.109; see also al-Asqalani, *op.cit.*, p.15

68. Al-Sha'rani, *op.cit.*, p.109; see also al-Asqalani, *op.cit.*, p.15
69. The Qur'an, al-Rahman SLV: 19-20
70. Al-Sha'rani, *op.cit.*, p.109
71. *Ibid.*
72. *Ibid.*
73. *Ibid.*
74. *Ibid.*
75. *Ibid.*
76. Al-asqalani, *op.cit.*, p.29; see also al-Shattanawfi, *op.cit.*, p.92; al-Sha'rani, *op.cit.*, p.109
77. See above in the Third Chapter
78. H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, *op.cit.*, p.6
79. See above in the Third Chapter
80. Ibn Hajar, *op.cit.*, p.33
81. See al-Dhahabi, *op.cit.*, p.284: see also Ibn Hajar, *op.cit.*, p.34.
82. Al-Tadhifi, *Qalaid al-Jawahir*, p.9
83. "Sujud" is a position bowing down the head on the prayer carpet.
84. S.A. Salik, p.63
85. Al-Shattanawfi, p.98
86. *Ibid.*, p.104

## CHAPTER VI

### AL-JILANI'S METHODOLOGY IN DA'WAH

#### INTRODUCTION

Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani lived in Baghdad for seventy-three years, and experienced the rule of five successive Abbasid caliphs. When he moved to Baghdad, the Muslim empire was under the rule of Caliph al-Mustazhir (1094-1118A.D.), followed by al-Mustarshid (1118-1135A.D.), al-Rashid (1135-1136A.D.), al-Muqtafi (1136-1160A.D.), and al-Mustanjid (1160-1170A.D.).

During this times Seljuq sultans administered the government without prior consultation and approval from the caliphs. This problem later escalated and resulted in intense fighting between the caliphs and the sultans' army and eventually resulted in war, Muslims killing each other. Such a scenario often occurred during the time of Caliph al-Mustarshid, who was regarded as the most powerful and the kindest of the Abbasid caliphs in the later Abbasid era.<sup>1</sup> He won most of the wars, but on 10th of Ramadan, 519A.H./1125A.D. his army was seriously defeated whilst fighting Sultan Mas'ud's army.

Ibn Kathir, a historian wrote: "The Sultan's army won the battle and thereafter the Caliph was captured and the properties of the people of Baghdad confiscated. This



news was quickly spread throughout the Muslim world. When that news reached Baghdad, the people were perplexed and fearful and the situations was chaotic. People flocked to the mosque and assembled there, only to be dispersed by the Sultan's army and were warned not to assemble. The women marched through the streets in great numbers because of the capture of their Caliph. Many Muslims throughout the world showed their sympathy towards the people of Baghdad. There was public disorder and tension in certain parts of the Muslim empire, and such problems continued until the month of *Dhu al-Qa'adah*, when King Sanjar wrote to his nephew (Sultan Mas'ud) reminding him of the outcome of the escalating problems if they were not settled, and he further instructed him to restore Caliph al-Mustarshid to his post as caliph, and to give him back his palace. Sultan Mas'ud followed that instruction which later however saw the caliph being killed by the Batiniyah whilst on his way to Baghdad to take up this post".<sup>2</sup>

Such devastating and dreadful events were encountered by al-Jilani himself; Muslims were split and were fighting against each other. They did anything they liked so long as they could achieve a position, having a high esteem in society and holding power. Hence society became "materialistic" in character and people were prepared to go to the extent of acting like slaves to the king and governors. They glorified and idolised them.

Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani experienced all those events with disturbed feelings. From the bottom of his heart, he tried to rectify the situations and guide this "split society" to the right path by preaching, teaching, educating and other activities. On top of that, he tried to revive the spirit of faith and reinforce belief in the existence of hereafter, emphasising less earthly life, but looking forward to life in hereafter, thus boosting morale with faith in the oneness of God.

To achieve those objectives, al-Jilani made a concerted effort, using various methods of da'wah and organising a variety of religious activities. Amongst these methods were wa'az (speech and lecture), teaching and education, giving fatawa (decisions) on doubtful matters, da'wah through writings, da'wah by example and giving services. These have all come to be regarded as specific forms of da'wah in which a person can be trained.

#### 1. DA'WAH BY GOODLY COUNSEL (MAW'IZAH HASANAH)

As explained in the foregoing paragraphs,<sup>3</sup> most of the historians believed in the miracles of al-Jilani as narrated by Shaykh Muwaffaq al-Din ibn Qudamah: "Never have I ever listened to stories of miracles of someone which could compete with the miracles of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani". Shaykh Izz al-Din ibn Abd al-Salam

is also quoted as saying to the same effect: "No shaykhs have real miracles attributed to them except Shaykh Abd al-Qadir because his miracles were narrated by *mutawatir*".<sup>4</sup> Ibn Taymiyyah also authenticated them to the same effect.<sup>5</sup> This latter fact is particularly important given the status of Ibn Taymiyyah in Islamic reform.

Our own intention mentioning this subject is actually in the context of explaining his miracles metaphorically. E.g., he revives dead hearts<sup>6</sup> i.e. people with diehard attitude, by instilling in their hearts the need to be faithful to God. Al-Jilani's preaching and education managed to instil faith and vigour in those dead hearts. Likewise it managed to give productivity and energy to those hearts which were not functioning efficiently. Thus, the wave of faith spread again in the Muslim world. So from a da'wah point of view, we can utilize the tales of his miracles in this more rationalistic way.

Al-Jilani believed that he was called to da'wah and commanded to invite people to Islam. He said in one of his sessions:

"Praise God who had put it in my heart to give advice to His creatures. The giving of advice is the most important of my concerns, so I am counsellor and I do not like to take any repayment for that. I have got my



repayment from my God, I am not seeking the worldly and I am not a servant of the worldly and as well as not hereafter, I am myself not seeking other than God, I am not worshiping except the Creator, the One, the Infinity. My happiness for your success and my sadness because of your ruin".<sup>7</sup>

#### A. METHOD OF "WISDOM" (HIKMAH)

Al-Jilani's public sermons and preaching are consistent with the fact that the majority of people in the Muslim world at that time lived the worldly life without much concern for the spiritual aspect. Al-Jilani in his speeches shows concern with the problems of society. He gives priority to the spiritual diseases like sinfulness, unbelief, ungratefulness, injustice, hypocrisy and disobedience. To fight these diseases, al-Jilani combines "the gentleness of da'is" and "assertiveness of kings", because he knows that the obligation of da'wah to persuade and convince people who have done wrong is not an easy job. It needs thorough knowledge and a special qualification in da'wah.

The method applied by al-Jilani is known in da'wah as *hikmah* (wisdom) method.<sup>8</sup> In the Qur'an, there are many Qur'anic verses drawing people to accept Islam and warning them of the consequences of abandoning it. It is the proof that this method is very useful in da'wah.<sup>9</sup> In

the traditions of the Prophet it is narrated that the Prophet used to apply this method when he promised Paradise to the Muslims who had bay'ah with him. It was narrated that the Prophet said to the people who had done *Bay'ah al-Aqabah* first: "If you are satisfied (with the agreement) you should have paradise."<sup>10</sup> And it was narrated also that when the Prophet passed by Yasir's family who suffered because of his conversion to Islam, he said: "Be bound O Yasir's family! your reward is paradise".<sup>11</sup>

To put this method into operation is, for example, to remind people that they already have the graces of God, thus they should obey God's commandments because He has kindly given all the graces to them. On the other hand, one cautions them that they will lose those graces, if they abandon their acceptance of Godly law and bring upon themselves punishment.

Returning to al-Jilani's methods in his preaching, we have seen that he used to apply the *hikmah* (wisdom) method in his da'wah. He was, it is said, just like a physician with patients coming to him; thus he gave them treatments and medicines, according to their diseases. There used to come to al-Jilani's sessions people who had no interest in the way of God, but living in unrest and anxiety. Thus, al-Jilani attracted them by wisdom (*hikmah*) explained to them that God is zealous towards

His servants and wants them to be sincere to Him. Al-Jilani said to them in one of his sessions:<sup>12</sup>

"How often do you say, "whomsoever I love, my love for him does not endure. Separation intervenes between us, either through absence or through death or through enmity or through the destruction or loss of wealth". So you are told, do you not know, O believer in Allah, on whom Allah has conferred gifts, the one whom Allah has paid attention to, one whom Allah guards with jealous care, do you not know that surely Allah is jealous. He has created you for Himself and you are desirous of belonging to somebody else than Him. Have you not heard His words: "He loves them and they love Him".<sup>13</sup> As also His commandment: "And I have not created the Jinn and the men, but that they should serve Me".<sup>14</sup> Or have you not heard the saying of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon Him): "When Allah loves a servant, He puts him on a trial; then if he shows patience, He looks after him". He was asked: "O Prophet of God, and what is He looking after? He said: "He does not leave for him any wealth or any children". And this is because when he has any wealth or children whom he loves, his love for his Lord becomes divided, then it becomes diminished and scattered, then it is distributed between Allah and others and Allah does not brook any partner and He is jealous and He is powerful over all things and predominant over all".



"So He destroys His partner and annihilates it in order to monopolise the heart of His servant for His ownself to the exclusion of all others. Then will be proved the truth of the word of Allah: "He will love them and they will love him".<sup>15</sup> Till at last the heart becomes clear of all partners of Allah and idols such as wife and wealth and children and enjoyments and fashions and longing for dominions and kingdoms, for miracles and spiritual states and spiritual stages and stations and gardens of heavens and spiritual grades and nearness to Allah no purpose will remain in the heart and no desire. Then the heart will become like a vessel with a hole; in which no liquid can stay, because it is now broken by the act of Allah. Whenever any purpose grows therein, the act of Allah and His jealousy break it. The screens of dignity and might and awe are hung round it and besides this trenches of greatness and might are dug. Thus, no desire about anything will be able to approach the heart. Then nothing of wealth and children and wife and friends and miracles and authority and power of interpretation will be able to do any harm to the heart. Then surely all these things will remain outside the heart, and therefore they will not excite the jealousy of Allah. Rather, all these things will be a sign of honour from Allah for His servant and His kindness towards him and His blessings and sustenance and a thing beneficial to those who go to Him".

One might say that the tone here is frightening, with this emphasis on the priority of God. But one can see the frequently expressed theme of the untarnished reward of reliance on, and submission to God alone, characteristic of much of this discourse. As we shall see, affirming the Unity and Majesty of God is part of the "recipe" for times of chaos. It is exemplary of the balance between hope and fear, in the sufi cosmology.

Al-Jilani was known to be very kind to creatures in general and human beings in particular. He always invited them to follow the commandments of God and he always asked God's forgiveness on behalf of them. In one speech, he addresses his audience thus:

"O creature of God! I am searching for your goodness and your benefit in totality. I do hope that the gates of hell be closed and even do not exist at all, then nobody among the creatures of God will enter in there. I do hope as well to open the gates of paradise that all creatures will be able to enter. I wish this because of my knowledge of the mercy of God to His creatures. I am in this place to teach and educate your hearts. Please do not go away because of the roughness of my speech, I was educated with roughness in the religion of God; my speech is roughness and my food is roughness, whosoever goes away from me and from one like me (the person who has the same character like me) will not be successful".<sup>16</sup>

In another public address, al-Jilani describes the qualities of the *da'is* and spiritual scholars who show this mercy and kindness to God's creatures He says:

"Why do they show mercy to the sinners also who are the object of sympathy, repentance and apology. The *arif* (spiritual scholar) aspires to God's qualities. Thus, he strives to cleanse the sinner of his possession by Satan. If someone among you had seen his son imprisoned by unbelievers. would he not strive for his son, likewise the *arif* because all the creature are as if his children".<sup>17</sup>

Speaking of the spiritually inclined people who display this mercy and good counsel he says:

"There are still others who, when they enter the market place, find that their hearts are filled on account of God, with mercy for the people in it. This pity for the people of the market keeps them too occupied to look at things which belongs to these people and which are before them. So such people remain engaged right from the entrance up to the time of their exit in prayer in seeking the protection of God and intercession for its people, in an attitude of affection and mercy. So their heart turns to seek benefit to cancel their loss, and their tongues remain engaged in the praise of God on account of all that He has given them from his



blessing".<sup>18</sup>

B. METHOD OF "SUBMISSION TO THE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE IMPORTANT" (*TAQDIM AL-AHAM FA AL-MUHIM*)

As mentioned in the foregoing pages the city of Baghdad was the centre of the Abbasid empire. People who lived under the Muslim empire expected better fortune in their lives from the caliphs, viziers, amirs and officials. So, the people often sought the help of mediums (*wasitahs*). They believed the mediums could give them benefit and harm. Thus, the means and mediums becomes "lords" besides God; so many people in that time believed that the caliphs and their officials had powers to provide with the means of subsistence and so they competed for their favours and attention. Thus, paganism started to emerge in the capital of Islam; the idols were the caliphs and their officials, the temples were government's offices, so the people turned from worshiping God only to take refuge in creatures.

To counter this situation, al-Jilani came out openly asserting the unity of God (*tawhid*) and contempt of creatures; caliphs, viziers, amirs, wealthy people and he explained their weakness and incapacity because they did not have power even to control their own selves. He described this weakness of the creature with the following example:

"Consider the whole creation as a man who has been arrested by a king with a great kingdom, strong command, awe-striking might and power, then as if the same has fettered his neck and legs and then crucified him on a pine tree on the bank of a big river, with huge waves and of great width and depth, and strong in current, and as if then the same king sits on a big throne of great height which is difficult to reach and the king is armed heavily with arrows and spears and bows and various kinds of weapons of which a true estimate cannot be made by any but himself; then as if he starts throwing towards the crucified man anything that he likes from among those weapons, can anyone admire a person who sees all these and then turns away his sight from the king and becomes devoid of fear from him and hope from him and fears instead the man crucified and hopes from him?. Will not the man who does this be called in the judgment of intelligence a foolish man, lacking comprehension, a lunatic, and a brute and not a man?".<sup>19</sup>

If the situation of the caliph was very weak why then did mankind appeal for help to him and seek refuge in him. Thus, al-Jilani incites the audience to draw near to God only and seek refuge in Him. He says:

"Do not be ill-mannered. Look at one who also looks at you and be attentive to one who is attentive to you, and love one who loves you and respond to one who calls

you and extend your hand to one who keeps you firm against falling, who brings you out from the darkness of your ignorance, and saves you from perishing and washes you clean from your dirt and purifies you from your filth and will release you from your death and stinking self and from your base desires and from your unredeemed self which commands evil and from your misguided associates who are your devils and from your ignorant friends who are waylayers on the way to God and who stand between you and everything that is decent, precious and attractive. How long will you stick to your animal nature, to the creation, to your disobedience and to the world, to the life after death and to whatever is besides God?. Why are you so far from the creator of things and from One who has brought everything to existence, who is the First and Last, the Manifest and the Secret, the Returning Point and the Issuing Point of things, and to Whom belongs the heart and the solace of souls, and the Unburdening of burdens and the Giving of gifts and Bestowing of favours?".<sup>20</sup>

### C. METHOD OF "AMR MA'RUF" AND "NAHY MUNKAR"

Furthermore al-Jilani does not limit his preaching to the laymen only, but includes all classes in society - caliphs and their assistants, bad scholars, hypocrites and so on. He is active in *amr ma'ruf* and *nahy munkar* (enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong) without



fear for any body even the caliph. He actually criticized the caliphs, sultans, kings, amirs and so on fearing them no more. Ibn Kathir had narrated about this activity as follows: "Al-Jilani's *amr ma'ruf* and *nahy munkar* was to the caliphs, viziers, sultans, judges, high class men and layman, he came out openly with the truth by witnesses in the pulpits, and in the gatherings, he rejected the caliph who gave power to the tyrants".<sup>21</sup>

Besides that, caliphs and their officials in the government were condemned by al-Jilani because of their disobedience of the God's commandments. He also rejected the scholars of the palace or the official scholars who accompanied the caliphs, sultans, kings and *amirs*. Their companions were drawn from the high classes in society. They agreed with all the ideas of their companions without referring to the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. Al-Jilani condemned these groups of scholars, addressing them in harsh tones:

"Where are you and they? (the pious scholars). O you who are disloyal in knowledge and deeds! O enemies of God and His Messenger! O robbers who robbed the servants of God!, you are in visible tyranny and obvious hypocrisy. When is this hypocrisy going to end?. O scholars! O ascetics! how often are you hypocrites talking with this leaders of this worldly ephemera?, you and the majority of the kings in this day are tyrants and traitors to the

legacy of God. O God destroy the strength of hypocrites and cut them off or make repent from their sins! Amen!"<sup>22</sup>

The image presented here is of a da'i who fears none but God and hopes only of God; as a result he is able to criticize those who have temporal power. Al-Jilani thus provides a very powerful model of protest at the abuse of power.

Al-Jilani condemns the real hypocrites which were plenty in Muslim society. These people maintained their evil desire and rejected the commandments of religion. They exploited their relation to Islam to keep their rights as Muslims in the state. Al-Jilani addresses them:

"O hypocrites! you considered that religion was conversation and the affairs of the religion was useless. It is not noble of you, your leaders and your bad companions. O God, may they repent!; purify them from degraded hypocrisy and the control of *shirk*".<sup>23</sup>

The rhetorical force here lies in this unqualified condemnation of corruption, backed by the threat of Divine retribution.

#### D. METHOD OF "MEDIATION, FLEXIBILITY AND HAVING BALANCE"

Al-Jilani was well known as an outstanding figure in sufism, but he did not concern himself with spirituality only. He was of the opinion that there is no objection to lawful enjoyment of the worldly affairs. Although in giving this permission, he objected to pursuit of enjoyment with greed, passionate love and sensual desire. He believed in the saying of the Prophet: "The world was created for you, and you were created for the hereafter". Thus, man deals with the world as a master who is obeyed, not as a servant who obeys. Al-Jilani described this matter clearly as follows:

"You should not eat your share from the world as if it is sitting and you are standing, but both in front the gate of the king, you are sitting and it is standing with the tray on its head. It is serving people who are sitting in front of the gate of God and it is degrading the people who are standing in front of its gate. Both of them are the same once they become strong with God".<sup>24</sup>

Al-Jilani has no objection to the person who takes his portion of the world, but he objects to the person whose heart is controlled by the world:

"Among the people, there is the person who has the world in his hand, but he does not like it. He possesses



the world, but it could not possess him. The world loves him, but he does not love it. It runs behind him, but he does not run behind it. He puts the world into servicing him, but it could not put him into service. He separates the world, but it could not separate from him. His heart is pious to God and the world would not be able to destroy it so he discharges the world, but it could not discharge him. Thus, the prophet said: "What an excellent possession there is for the servant!"<sup>25</sup>

The point is that this typical sufi doctrine is actually very appealing to anyone who seeks a sense of autonomy in their life. So one is making an appeal of a very persuasive kind.

Al-Jilani has no objection to the possessions which are kept in the house or in a box, so to speak, he objects to the existence of possessions in the bottom of the heart. He says in another session:

"Alas! The world in the hand is lawful, in the pocket is permitted, storage of possessions for some good reason is permitted, but storing it in the heart is not permitted. Sitting at the possession in front of the gate is permitted, but entering beyond the gate is not permitted! because it is not nobility".<sup>26</sup>

To attempt to possess completely is to possess nothing but only to be possessed.

Al-Jilani condemned the life of inactivity and unemployment and those who live entirely dependent on others. He exhorts people to work and see their means of living as follows:

"Worship God and see his help by searching the means of living to worship Him. God loves a believer and obedient servant, who is eating from his own effort. He loves a person who eats and works, and He hates a person who eats with hypocrisy and has confidence in creatures".<sup>27</sup>

It is very much to be noted that throughout, what is emphasized is both acknowledgement of God's Will and a sense of personal autonomy.

From the above discussion of al-Jilani's typical sermons and preaching, we can extract some methodological approaches applied by al-Jilani within his da'wah. These methods we summarize as follows.

I. Al-Jilani was subtle in his approach to his audience in this method of wisdom (*hikmah*). He knew that the audience in his sessions was multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-purposed. Some of them did not

know the religious teachings exactly, and others were sinners and disobedient to the commendments of God, and others had their own problems. Al-Jilani knew exactly the major problems of his audience, so he preached them with a softness, and he attracted people with goodly counsel, trying to understand their problems. On the other hand, after the method of softness has been applied, he changed to the method of hardness by rejecting and condemning evil desires, hypocrisy and so on. The latter method was applied to people who are still with ignorance and living in darkness.

II. Muslim society in the day of al-Jilani was lawless, sinful and immoral, especially as belief in God which was gradually transforming into *shirk* cause of the admission of worldly goals like possessing power and so on. To counter this al-Jilani applied the method of *taqdim al-aham fa al-muhim* (submission or offer the more important than the important). Al-Jilani knew that the solutions of these problems begin with the *tawhid* of God; believing in the Oneness of God, the hereafter and spirituality, because faith is crucial in Islam. After the problem of faith had been solved, al-Jilani then went into the other problems like sinfulness, ingratitude, injustice, hypocrisy and so on.

III. To change the attitude of men and their habits is very hard and difficult, especially if the change is



going to be very strange to them. In this connection, it was said that to flatten a hill is very much easier than to change the attitude of men. Although that is the position, men in general might change their attitude if the inviters attempt to open their heart by using the approach of offering examples, similar cases, metaphors and short stories. The content of da'wah usually includes spiritual matters which are sometimes difficult to accept as relevant by the unconverted. Thus, al-Jilani used to apply this method in his sermons and preaching.

IV. Al-Jilani was well-known as an outstanding figure in sufism and the majority of his sermons expressed spirituality and hereafter. But al-Jilani was not an extremist because in most of his sermons and preaching, he exhorts people to work and condemns the life of inactivity, unemployment and dependence on others. This method is known in the field of da'wah as mediation, flexibility and having balance. Al-Jilani was well aware of the material, worldly pursuits of most people. Putting it another way, if spirituality appeals, it ceases to appeal if becomes so total as to lose meaning. Balance is the secret of the da'i as it is of the successful sufi.

V. The qualities of courage, bravery and confidence and also trust in God are very useful for a preacher. These qualities and attitudes existed in al-Jilani. He

was not afraid to criticize and condemn anyone without exception who had committed sins and disobeyed the commandments of God. The ruling powers in those days- caliphs, sultans, kings and others- were criticized and condemned by al-Jilani, when they had committed injustice, sinfulness, disobedience or hypocrisy. This method of da'wah is *amr ma'ruf* and *nahy munkar* (enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong). Indeed, in these examples we see the meaning clearly of this Islamic expression.

Briefly, we can say here that al-Jilani's sermons and preaching confirm his status as a great reformist. As an outstanding figure in sufism and as a founder of the Qadiri order, it is not strange for us to find the values like ascetism, the world and hereafter, evil desire, soul, spirit and issues in contemporary ethics in almost any part of his sermon. From his preaching, al-Jilani succeeded to revive "dead hearts" and give them just treatment and good education later on. Thus, it was narrated that in every public sermon many of the bandits, robbers and sinners came before him to report their sins and many of the Jews and Christian were converted by him.

The implications of this for da'wah are actually quite crucial. It seems that without the spiritual dimension, no progress can be made. We will take this point up later.

## 2. DA'WAH BY EDUCATION (TARBIYAH)

It is worth mentioning that according to the science of da'wah if the da'i achieves a response from *mad'us* (the called) who accept Islam, it is necessary for the da'i to teach and educate them in the fundamentals of Islam to prevent lapse into unbelief and idolatry. In a sense this is intrinsic to the whole nature of mission.

In the Tradition of the Prophet, there is the precedent pointing to the correct method in da'wah (teaching Islam to the people who accept Islam). It was established when Umayr ibn Wahb was converted to Islam and the Prophet said to his companions: "Give your brother the knowledge of his religion and teach him how to read the Qur'an".<sup>28</sup> From this *hadith* it is typically concluded that the act of teaching Islam to the new convert is an obligation. The person who knows about Islamic teachings is obliged to teach the newly converted Muslims.

It is narrated also in the Traditions that the Prophet sent Mus'ab ibn Umayr to Madina to teach the Qur'an and to invite people to Islam. He continued until Islam spread among the *Ansar*.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, when Banu al-Mustalaq converted to Islam, the Prophet sent them a delegate who taught them doctrine.<sup>30</sup> The Prophet was very anxious to teach people the full way. It was narrated by



Abu Rifa'at Tamim ibn Asid who said: "I came to the Prophet who was preaching, so I said : "O the Messenger of God! I am a stranger who came to ask about Islam which I could not understand". And then the Prophet turned to me, stopped his speech and approached me. A chair was brought to me and as soon as he sat on it he gave me the Islamic teachings. And then he went back to complete his sermon".<sup>31</sup>

From these *hadiths* it is concluded that one must teach the converts without any delay because the Prophet in this instance left his sermon and stepped down from his chair to teach the questioner about Islam. Thus, it is obligatory to the *da'i* to teach and educate people in Islam and introduce them the nature of God's commandments. We can stress here that it is not enough just to deliver public sermons by drawing upon general meanings and terms attracting people's emotion to accept Islam; this should be followed by helping them to understand the specific meanings of Islam by teaching and education. It is not sufficient for the *da'i* just to teach the responsive meanings of Islam. Instead he must try to find a way to hold them to practice it in their deeds. This is what we mean by knowledge in education, and this method was employed by earlier Muslims like Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud who said: "Among our group, when one of us has learned ten verses of Quran, he should not enter upon other verses until he understands the meanings and

carried them out".<sup>32</sup>

Let us return to al-Jilani's activities and the methodology of da'wah. His occupation with public sermons and preaching did not keep him from this more educational effort. Al-Jilani's knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence followed Ahmad ibn Hanbal, the traditionalist. Ibn Rajab said: "Al-Jilani firmly connected his teaching with *Sunnah* on the problems of Divine attributes (*al-sifat*) and Divine predestination (*qadar*) and so on, and he strongly attacked people who differed from the *Sunnah*".<sup>33</sup>

Sufism in the fifth century A.H., was characterised by the trend towards freedom which ended with separation from *shari'ah*. It became an institution or school which existed on its own terms without any connection with *shari'ah* except perhaps for a formal one. The *shath* of sufis, claims of union with God and reaching an end-state which freed them from the religious duties (*fara'id*) and commandments of *shari'ah* as well as the monism of *wahdah al-wujud* emerged; disorder was to be found in some *zawiyahs* of the sufis. At any rate, this disorder and waywardness was certainly perceived by many who were troubled by what they considered a loss of purity and soundness. This situation is typical of the kind in which reformist movements arise and in which the sense of mission in particular arises. This is why it is as much a movement to "purify the faith" as it is to find

new converts. Shaykh Abd al-Qadir was one of the greatest opponents of the trend to corruption. As we have seen, there was, in his sufism, this purification orientation.

Al-Sha'rani says: "His tariqah involved the pursuit of unification and also the implementation of shari'ah outwardly and inwardly".<sup>34</sup> Al-Jilani says to his companions: "Follow the *Sunnah* and do not innovate obey and do not be diverse".<sup>35</sup> It is narrated also that he once said: "If some limitations of *shari'ah* were unsettled in yourself, you would know that you are fascinated that surely Satan tricked you, so return to the judgement of *shari'ah* and adhere to it, and desist, stop evil desire! because every reality not recognised by *shari'ah* is false".<sup>36</sup>

Al-Jilani says: "Every matter not confirmed by *shari'ah* is *zandaqah*. Fly to the God with two wings; the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, and come onto Him with your hand in the hand of the Prophet! make the Prophet your vizier and your teacher!"<sup>37</sup> He said of those who believed that the commandments of *shari'ah* can be dropped by *salik* in certain states: "Omitting obligatory worship is *zandaqah*, and perpetration of the forbidden is disobedience; the religious duties are not to be dropped by some one in any of his state".<sup>38</sup>



The way in which the dual goals of the sufi, union with God and adherence to *shari'ah*, are pursued centres in the teachings of al-Jilani, on the idea of abandoning one's freewill and accepting *qadar*, Divine predestination and power. It is the doctrine of "entrusting" (*tafwid*) and agreement (*muwafaqah*) in which the individual entrusts their Being to *qadar* and identifies with it. Central to this sufism, it is no doubt a difficult doctrine. Yet it seems to be emphasized in al-Jilani's missionary efforts. Shaykh Adi ibn Musafir says: "Al-Jilani's *tariqah* provides at the end an adherence to *qadar* with the agreement of heart and spirit (*ruh*)".<sup>39</sup>

To reach the highest level of faith, al-Jilani fought against evil desire in himself, taking pains in self-control; he describes this struggle and its results as follows:

"I fought against lower self of "evil desire" in order to renounce my free will (*iradah*) until I could drop it, and thus be led by *qadar*; the favour helped me, the performance stirred me, the real protected me, the will I had obeyed, the precedence advanced me, and Allah upgraded me".<sup>40</sup>

The individual, that is in his deeds and states is blessed by the decree of Allah and is moved to the highest stations. His own effort so to speak, is not his

own but God's. This "taste" (*dhawq*) and this trend are very clear in his sayings. Once al-Jilani described a man who "separated" from his will and committed himself to *qadar* and the will of God (Divine will). The man was al-Jilani himself. He says:

"When the servant of God is on trial he first tries to escape from it with his own efforts, and when he fails, he seeks the help of others from among men such as kings and those in authority, people of the world, men of wealth, and in the case of illness and physical suffering physicians and doctors; but if the escape is not secured by these he then turns towards his creator and Lord the Great and Mighty and applies to Him with prayer and humility and praise. So long as he finds resources in his own self, he does not turn towards the people and so long as he finds resources in the people he does not turn towards the Creator. Further, when he does not get any help from God he throws himself in His presence and continue in this state, begging and praying and humbly entreating and praising and submitting his neediness in fear and hope. God the Great and Mighty, however, tries him out in his prayer and does not accept it until he is completely disappointed in all the means of the world. The decree of God and His work then manifest themselves through him, and this servant of God passes away from all the worldly means and the activities and efforts of the world and retains just his soul".<sup>41</sup>

And he says elsewhere: "For the servant of God, if he knows God, all created things drop away from his heart, scattered from his heart like the dried leaves scattered from the tree; then his heart and his soul (sirr) remain without the created totally, he is blind to the created, he becomes deaf to their worlds".<sup>42</sup>

It seems remarkable, in this secular age, that this message should be in any way popular. But the appeal of this teaching can be inferred from its prominence in the sermons and teachings of al-Jilani. Of-course, it is in certain respects a difficult and unappealing teaching from a "worldly" point of view. The traditions indicate that there were those who did not "hear the call".

The "materialism" which we have referred to in al-Jilani's period extended widely over the Muslim world. As noted before the people were busy pursuing their everyday interests and typically only a few continued to attend religious schools and study the religious sciences. Moreover, The Nizamiyyah colleges, under Seljuq policy, were really limited to a small number of students. They could not play a major role in any kind of reform movement. A part from the activity of issuing *fatawa* in response to questions, they were irrelevant to the concerns of the layman.



It is also important to mention that the Nizamiyyah colleges followed the Shafi'i school in all of their activities. This was in accordance with the wishes of Nizam al-Mulk. There was perceived a somewhat fanatical commitment to the Shafi'i school with an equally vigorous rejection of the other schools.<sup>43</sup>

The scholars were considerably isolated, dwelling in "their own world". The cultural and intellectual gap between them and the layman was very wide. What connection, there was between the Nizamiyyah colleges and scholars and the people was superficial and intellectual only. They did not touch the hearts of the people, not having the ability nor the authority to influence the lifestyle and habits of the majority.

Indeed, while the first successors of the Prophet had fulfilled their duty to promote knowledge of religious obligations. Later on, however, the caliphs came more and more to ignore this side of their duties. They concentrated primarily on such tasks as collecting taxes, duties, jizyahs and promoting military activity. They "lined their own pockets" and those of their families and clients. On the other hand, the scholars and jurists were increasingly preoccupied with their own studies or with the issuing of detailed fatawa. What was increasingly missing was the Islamic mission.

It was into this situation that the pious da'is stepped as renewers of the faith calling the people to their Islamic obligation (*mithaq al-Islam*). With their da'wah, people came once again to accept Islam in their hearts and with understanding. The goal of the da'i was to bring people to the grace of Islam and the pleasure of the faith. They "removed from them the power of passion, slavery to desire and worship of men", and they "occupied them with the worship of God and obedience to Him", as well as making them in turn active in da'wah and jihad in the way of God.

Among those legendary in the activity of da'wah by preaching and education were Hasan Basri, Fudayl ibn Iyad, Ma'ruf al-Kurkhi, al-Junayd; all of them great sufis. But by the end of the 6 century A.H.. affairs were far away from Prophetic times. The situation and condition were different, the Muslim world was diverse, material developments were admired every where and spirituality was abandoned. So Muslims' hearts were divided and lost in a world of disobedience and sin.

Al-Jilani come to this situation and opened the gate of bay'ah<sup>44</sup> and repentance to Muslims. They came from all over the Muslim world to see al-Jilani and made bay'ah with him to renew their commitment, obligations, responsibilities, promises and contracts with God. They promised to have no association with unbelief,

sinfulness, un-Islamic innovation and injustice.

The point to emphasize throughout this discussion is that those who came to al-Jilani sought and received more than just intellectually acceptable teachings nor even just right guidance. They became, often enough, disciples as such through the *bay'ah*. It is said, in the traditions, that al-Jilani gave the *ijazah* to many of these disciples who in their turn spread the characteristic teachings of the master throughout the Muslim world.<sup>45</sup> No doubt it was out of this that the *tariqh* developed and certainly circles were established in many places, *ribats* built and so on.<sup>46</sup>

What we see as important from our point of view here is the intrinsic connection between spiritual education which is sufism and successful da'wah.



## 2.1 AL-JILANI METHODOLOGY IN SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

### INTRODUCTION

When we use the term "methodology" to cover the areas of theory and technique, we are claiming that in the teachings of al-Jilani and in the traditions concerning his life there is to be discerned an overall method and strategy for the *da'i*. We consider this important because *da'wah* is frequently misunderstood.

"Spiritual education" in Islam means the education of the soul of the person to become truly a servant of God, seeking His satisfaction. When the soul of a person is educated with the spirit of Islam, he will be in peace, safety and harmony.<sup>47</sup> Generally sufis try to remember God (*dhikr Allah*) in all of their daily life: "Such are the people who have accepted (the message of this Prophet) and their hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Note it well that it is Allah's remembrance alone that brings comfort to the hearts".<sup>48</sup>

Thus, sufism is integral according to this way of thinking, to any satisfactory life within Islam. Spiritual education was practised by the Prophet and his companions in a series of practises; *tahannuth* (practise piety, perform words of devotion, and seek religious purification), *khalwah* (privacy, isolation), *ta'ammul* (consideration, contemplation, meditation), *uzlah*

(seclusion), asceticism (*zuhd*), withdrawal from conversation, doing of *ma'ruf*, supererogatory action (*nafilah*), and in general avoidance of all that is forbidden inward and outward.<sup>49</sup> This at any rate, is the way of the Prophet, according to the sufis.

To practise spiritual education, the sufis begin with the qualities of slavery and servanthood to God. Without this, there can be no pursuit of *ma'rifah* and the peace and harmony of heart and soul which goes with it. Asceticism (*zuhd*) is the first station (*maqam*) for the sufi in his journey to God in pursuit of His satisfaction and surrender to His commandments. Those people who do not practise asceticism in their lives live only for worldly things; they run after forbidden things. Asceticism is seen to be a major source of true Islam, genuine obedience and righteous effort.<sup>50</sup>

Asceticism (*zuhd*) literally means to refuse to have anything to do with worldly things. To become an ascetic is to withdraw from worldly things and pursue the hereafter.<sup>51</sup> But there are different versions of this in sufism. Al-Qushayri writes of asceticism thus:<sup>52</sup>

"Some groups say that ascetism consists of not practising unlawful things because only the lawful is permitted by God; others say that what is lawful is obligatory. Another group says that asceticism is based

on the saying of God in the Qur'an: "(This is done so that) you are not disheartened over what you may lose nor feel exultant over what Allah may give you. Allah does not love those who are arrogant and boastful".<sup>53</sup>

Al-Muhasibi said that renunciation of the unlawful is obligatory and practice of the lawful commendable. Thus asceticism does not mean refusing totally what is lawful in this world. He adds: "The correct way is to obey the commandments of God as far as possible, without considering family and property. Those who do so should not be blamed for accumulating property so long as they are not seeking comfort only but are rather remembering God, even in their worldly activities."<sup>54</sup>

The major motivation to pursue asceticism lies in the familiar idea of living as if it is the last day of one's life<sup>55</sup> and excellence in behaviour is all that counts.<sup>56</sup>

According to Qasin Ghanim,<sup>57</sup> asceticism has three stages which are as follows: The first stage is to protect one's heart and deeds from arrogance. The second stage is accept the sayings of the sufis and ascetics. The third stage is to emulate the ascetics who devote themselves to love of God.



Asceticism, however it is defined, is essential in the path of the sufi, contrary to the views of some who want to seek knowledge without this discipline. We are suggesting that it is recommended as part of any pious life.

Striving or jihad is also essential to this way. Jihad in this context means struggling and fighting against all enemies, outward and inner.<sup>58</sup> According to sufis fighting against evil desires (the hidden enemy) is the most important, thus al-Jilani classifies jihad into the outward jihad and inward jihad. The outward is jihad against the enemies of Islam who seek ways to destroy Islam. Meanwhile the inward jihad is fighting against evil desires, Satan, and repenting of disobedience and of unlawful practise. Always, the emphasis is on purification and renunciation. Sufism is defined in this version in these terms and is thus the essence of becoming a good Muslim.

#### A. THE REGULATIONS OF SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

Spiritual education, then, is integral to da'wah, which means that an orthodox *tariqah* like this is a da'wah movement.

Each *tariqah* had its own regulations for the students or disciples. These regulations form the basis

of their lives. Al-Jilani established a system of such regulations for his disciples. There were many conditions to be followed by the *murid*. It is obligatory for the beginner to have the right basic faith. Al-Jilani describes that right faith as the faith of the worthy ancestors (*salaf salih*), the people of *Sunnah* (*ahl al-sunnah*) who follow the traditions of the prophets, companions, the followers of companions and the saints. It is obligatory also for them to adhere to the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* and to practise this in their deeds. The result is achievement of the knowledge of the truth.<sup>59</sup> God says: "Those who will strive in our cause, we shall guide to Our own paths".<sup>60</sup>

It is necessary also for the students to free or purify their hearts from the pursuit of worldly things. They do not expect from God anything other than forgiveness for their sins and protection in their future life from disobedience to the commandments of God.<sup>61</sup>

The disciples of the *tariqah* are obliged as a result of the agreement (*bay'ah*) with the master (*shaykh*) to follow the regulations of the *tariqah*. It is worth examining this in detail, for *bay'ah* is controversial.

*Bay'ah* is an agreement with the master (*shaykh*) to worship God sincerely, and also a promise to abandon polytheism (*shirk*), unbelief (*kufr*), sinfulness (*fisq*)

heretical innovation (*bid'ah*), and tyranny (*zulm*). The message that they should constantly follow the law is also reinforced.<sup>62</sup>

According to the author of *al-Fuyudat al-Rabbaniyyah*,<sup>63</sup> the *bay'ah* takes place in the following way. First of all, it is necessary to the disciple to do two *raka'ats* of prayer with his *shaykh*; then he sits face to face with his *shaykh*, his two knees adjoining with two knees of his *shaykh*, whereupon he puts his right hand in the right hand of his *shaykh*; the *shaykh* reads *al-Fatihah* for the Prophet, the other prophets, the companions of the Prophet, and other scholars and pious men, and for the founder of this *tariqah*, Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, in order to get good fortune (*tawfiq*) and Divine guidance (*hidayah*) for him and his disciple.

After that, the *shaykh* begins to teach his disciple to ask God's forgiveness and to obey all that is good and to deny all that is evil. And then he reads secretly three time "O One!<sup>64</sup> O Exalted! breathe upon us with your breath". Then the *shaykh* reads a verse of the Qur'an relevant to *bay'ah*: "O Prophet, those who were swearing allegiance to you were indeed swearing allegiance to Allah, Allah's hand was over their hands. Now whosoever breaks the pledge breaks it at his own peril, and whosoever keeps his pledge that he has made with Allah, Allah will soon grant him a great reward".<sup>65</sup> In the



*bay'ah*, the disciple also promises that he will not hate other human beings, but will help them because they are brothers in Islam. He should also respect and honour other people and make sacrifices in the way of God. The shaykh teaches his disciple to follow "noble manners" and to abandon the opposite. Lastly he prays to God on behalf of his disciple for his success and good fortune in his life.<sup>66</sup>

After *bay'ah*, the disciple should be patient, stable, satisfied and accept the trial and examination of God. In this state, the disciple should be hungry as if he had not eaten and he should fast. This training is useful in that it develops patience to handle life's trials; it is both a spiritual and a practical virtue.<sup>67</sup>

Besides what is obligatory, there are other rules of conduct (*adab*) in the *tariqah* which involve both the disciples and the *shaykh*.

According to al-Jilani in the *Ghunya*,<sup>68</sup> it is obligatory on the disciple to abandon any opposition to his *shaykh* outwardly and to abandon it inwardly; he should always have before him the saying of God: "Who says: Our God, forgive us and forgive all our brothers who embraced the faith before us, and do not place in our hearts any malice toward the believers. Our Lord, You are very kind and Compassionate".<sup>69</sup> If seems to him that the

*shaykh's* deeds conflict with the latter's teachings, he must enquire of his *shaykh* by example and indirectly. If he perceives what seems to be a fault in his *shaykh* he must see if he cannot find justification in *shari'ah*. If he still cannot find a reason or excuse, it is his duty to pray for his *shaykh* and ask his forgiveness, for his good fortune, Divine guidance and protection. It is worthy of comment that he should not automatically see the *bay'ah* as terminated.

Al-Jilani explains further that the disciple should attempt to continue even if the *shaykh* is clearly angry and avoiding him. He must inquire of himself whether it was he, the disciple who had abandoned God's commandments. In this case, he should ask God's forgiveness and return to the *shaykh* begging his pardon and indicating renewed sincerity.

It is worth mentioning here that the master (*shaykh*) is very important in sufism because the *salik* in his spiritual journey to God must meet with many trials and examinations. Thus al-Jilani speaks of the *shaykh* as essential to the disciple in opening the gate which the *salik* must enter on the way to God. The *salik* must have a *shaykh* to guide him to God except in the special cases of one of those persons who God chooses from among His servants to educate them in "noble manners" and spiritual education, protected from Satan. Among these people were

the Prophet Abraham, the Prophet Muhammad, the saint Uways al-Qarni and others.<sup>70</sup>

The *salik* then says al-Jilani must stick with his *shaykh* until he attains his goal. By that time, God gives him his education. The *tariqah* and the *shaykh* within it is envisaged in this way. God created the Prophet Adam and give him knowledge of the names of the creatures. Thus Adam was the student of God as the disciple is of the *shaykh*. Likewise the Prophet Moses and the Prophet Aaron taught their sons and the Jews, then the Prophet Jesus taught his disciples and followers, and Gabriel taught the Prophet Muhammad and the Companions learned from the Prophet, the followers of Companions from the Companions, from time to time and from generation to generation. Every prophet had his own companion who accepted his teaching as guidance and then succeeded the prophet after his death. Likewise the saints and pious men were together as teacher and student - like Hasan al-Basri and his student Utbah al-Ghulam, Sari al-Siqti and his servant and his sister's son Abi al-Qasim al-Junayd and so on.<sup>71</sup> The *tariqah* is thus conceived spiritually as part of the very transmission of essential knowledge.

At the same time, in the Qadiriyyah *tariqah* besides these *adabs* of the disciple, there are the rules of conduct of the *shaykh* towards his disciples. Al-Jilani



sets up these rules in *al-Ghunyah*<sup>72</sup> which states that the purpose of shaykh is to accept a disciple not for himself, but for God only, so he educates him by giving sincere attention and observes him with kindness. If his disciple is incapable of spiritual exercise he meets him softly as a mother educates her child, and a wise father educates his son and his servant. Furthermore al-Jilani emphasizes that the shaykh must start with the easiest and most convenient and avoid trying to teach his disciple above his ability moving slowly forward. For example in the first stage, the *shaykh* instructs his disciple to abandon and reject evil desire, and to follow the permission of *shari'ah* as much as possible. Thus, the disciple can remove himself from the demand and command of evil desire and then surrender to and obey the obligations and commandment of *shari'ah* as well as its permission. After this stage, the *shaykh* teaches his disciple to move from the "permission" of *shari'ah* to the determination (*azimah*) of *shari'ah* gradually, so that, the quality of "permission" is wiped off and the quality of "determination" is established; then the *shaykh* gradually trains his disciple to move to harder disciplines.

Moreover, al-Jilani emphasizes that the shaykh's services to his disciple do not involve in turn the service of his disciple neither to get benefit from his money nor service from him. He expects no consideration

from God for his services in education, but educates his disciple and teaches him Islam in order to seek God only and to obey His commandment. He accepts the disciple as His gift, for the disciple who came without any invitation from or selection by the *shaykh* is considered as a present from God. It is necessary for him to accept them and give them good education.

It is obligatory to the *shaykh*, adds al-Jilani, that he should repent secretly on behalf of his disciple, if his disciple has done wrong, and keep the secret for it is part of the trust guaranteed during the supervision. It is reported: "The chests of the freemen are grave yards of secrets". Thus, it is necessary for him to observe the welfare of his disciple and to keep his secret. If his disciple has done something in conflict with *shari'ah*, the *shaykh* should advise him personally, not in public and warn him with goodly counsel and admonition.

What we can abstract from this spiritual framework is the personalism of the relationship between the teacher and student, between the *da'i* and *mad'u*. It is "tailored" education, more like counselling, in which the needs and capabilities of the individual are recognised and met. Indeed counselling is part and parcel of *da'wah*.

## B. AL-JILANI'S SPIRITUAL EDUCATION BY ZIKR

It is time at last to look at the most specific discipline associated with sufi spirituality, *dhikr*, and the associated practice of *khalwah*. *Khalwah* and *dhikr* often go together. The former is really a state of seclusion, which may or may not require location in a particular place.

Every disciple of the *Qadiriyyah tariqah* has to practise *dhikr*<sup>73</sup> during his *khalwah*.<sup>74</sup> Before he enters into *khalwah*, he should express the intention of *khalwah* with these words: "O God! I have intended *khalwah* to devote my life to You for Your satisfaction and for Your sake, because it is due to you and for Your generosity. O God, who is Most Generous!".<sup>75</sup> After the intention to do *khalwah*, he should accept all the disciplines which stipulated for him as a disciple. He should fast in the daytime and attempting wakefulness during the night with much *dhikr*. If the disciple is overcome by sleep, when he wakes up he should renew his ablution immediately and pray two *raka'ats* and then engage again in *dhikr*. He should strive to the limit of his abilities against sleep at night by standing, walking and renewing the ablution; if sleep overcomes him again, he should do as before. After he has performed the morning (*subh*) prayer and two *raka'ats* prayer should he sleep again after sunrise then upon waking, he should have ablution and perform two



raka'ats prayer and then engaged again in *dhikr*.<sup>76</sup>

During the *khalwah* time, the disciple should follow the rules of *khalwah*. One of these is sincerely to seek God's satisfaction and to believe that God is incomparable to any other creature and to hold this in consciousness. No conversation is allowed; if the disciple wants to instruct the servant, the servant should only be given signals or instructions in writing. If there is no way in which to avoid speaking, he must speak as briefly as possible.

During these activities which are very intense, the *shaykh* should be very careful in observing and looking after his disciple. It is worth mentioning here that the *shaykh* has the right to fix the number of *khalwah* days according to the capability of each of his disciples who are different. For a beginner, probably only one or two days of *khalwah* are necessary and for the disciples who have the capability, the *shaykh* may fix four days of *khalwah* before they return to normal life again.

Before coming to spiritual education by *dhikr* according to the *Qadiriyyah*, it is worth mentioning here some details about *dhikr* in Islamic teaching because of its centrality in sufism and *tariqah*.

*Dhikr* literally means "reminding one self,"<sup>77</sup> and as

a religious technical term "the glorifying of Allah with certain fixed phrases, repeated in a ritual order, either aloud or in the mind or in the heart with peculiar breathings and physical movements".<sup>78</sup>

*Dhikr* in the mind or heart (*bi al-qalb*) means "remembrance", and with the tongue (*bi al-lisan*) "mentioning", "relating". Thus, when the mentionings are pronounced aloud, it is called a *dhikr jali*, whereas an inward *dhikr* is called *dhikr khafi*.<sup>79</sup> This practice is based ultimately on the Qur'an "O you who believe, remember (or glorify) Allah with much remembering (or glorifying)"<sup>80</sup> "Remind yourself of your Lord when you forget".<sup>81</sup> *Hadiths* are often quoted in support and in praise of the practice. The Prophet has often been quoted: "There sits not a company remembering (or glorifying) Allah, but the angels surround them and the (Divine) mercy covers them and Allah most High remembers (or glorifies) them among those who are with him".<sup>82</sup>

Another term used in this connection is *wird*, explained by Sufis to mean "access", "arrival" (with Allah), and applies to a short invocation, drawn up by the founder of a fraternity, the recitation of which is now a pious work.<sup>83</sup>

A simpler *dhikr* is that of formulae to be repeated after each regular prayer (*salah*), but in *tariqah* it is

more often a *dhikr* or ritual of its own, constructed and imposed by its founder which can be modified freely by the shaykh as "spiritual director". The *shaykh* directs and regulates the recitation in the collective sessions. It is he who must guide the solitary disciple step by step. The beginner is recommended to close his eyes and to place the image of his *shaykh* before his mind or heart (this kind of attitude to the *shaykh*, is, one should note, disliked and disapproved of by many who are hostile to the *tariqah*) The disposition of the "circle" in the collective *dhikr* is carefully regulated, at least twice daily; after morning prayer and evening prayer. A customary formula for the commencement is the first *shahada* (*la ilah illa Allah*).

The *Qadiriyyah tariqah* had his own method to be practised by the members. *Dhikr* in this *tariqah* involves three main methods. These methods may be distinguished and subdivided into; *dhikr jali*, *dhikr khafi* and *dhikr muraqabah*.<sup>84</sup>

FIRST METHOD: *DHIKR JALI* (*Dhikr with loud voice*)<sup>85</sup>

The procedure which is followed in the *Qadiriyyah tariqah* is that a sufi aspirant has first to pass a preparatory stage. He has to set his beliefs right, discard evil habits, avoid major sins (*kaba'ir*) and abstain from small ones (*sagha'ir*) as much as he can. He



should perform the obligatory prayers and other duties (*fara'id*) which the *shari'ah* has placed on him, and observe the *Sunnah* of the Prophet which he has recommended. When this is completed, the aspirant can take up the first stage of *dhikr*; *dhikr* with loud voice (*dhikr jali*). This *dhikr* is *dhikr* of the tongue with "intention of the heart" (*niyyah*), the mere *dhikr* of the tongue without *niyyah* is rejected. (One might add here that some modernists and fundamentalists consider this, like so much in sufism, to be innovation).

Among the contents of the *dhikr* with loud voice (*dhikr jali*) are the saying of the name of Allah (*ism al-dhat*) loudly and the saying of the *dhikr* of negation and affirmation, that is, to say *la ilaha illa Allah* (there is no god "negation" except Allah "affirmation"). The exercise usually involves rhythmic and sustained breathing patterns

#### I. SAYING THE NAME OF ALLAH (*ism al-dhat*)<sup>86</sup>

This *dhikr* is practised in 4 stages or procedures.

##### a. First Stage with One Stroke

Let the aspirant begin by saying the name of Allah (*ism al-dhat*) loudly, with one stroke. That is, he should

say "Allah" loudly, stretch the word as he pronounces and do it with all the force of his heart and throat. He should then pause, regain breath and repeat "Allah". He has to do this for some time.

#### b. Second Stage with Two Strokes

At this stage, he should say "Allah" with two strokes. That is, he should sit as he does in salah,<sup>87</sup> say "Allah" pointing first to the right knee and then to the chest or heart. He should repeat the *dhikr* without break. When he strikes at the heart he should do it particularly with force, so that his heart feels its effect and his mind attains concentration.

#### c. Third Stage with Three Strokes

At this stage, he should say "Allah" with three strokes. That is, he should sit with his legs crossed, say "Allah" pointing first to the right knee and then to the left knee and then to the chest or heart, but he should say "Allah" the third time with full force and loudly.

#### d. Fourth Stage with Four Strokes

At this stage, he should say "Allah" with four strokes. That is, he should sit with his legs crossed

exactly as in the third stage and say "Allah", pointing first to the right knee and then to the left knee and then to the chest or heart and lastly to his front. But he should say "Allah" the fourth time with full force and loudly.

## II. SAYING THE DHIKR OF NEGATION AND AFFIRMATION

This involves a two fold saying of "la ilaha illa Allah" (there is no god "negation" except Allah "affirmation"). This dhikr should be taken up after the above procedure. The disciple should sit as he does in salah facing the Qiblah, close his eyes and say "la", as if he takes it out from his navel and stretches it till it reaches his right shoulder. Then he should say "ilaha", as if he takes it out from his forehead, then say "illa Allah" with full force. When he says these words he should think that nothing in the world is worth desiring and loving, nor anything at all exists. God alone is to be sought and loved, and He alone exists.<sup>88</sup>

These two dhikrs help to concentrate attention on God, ignite His love and make Him the sole object of one's longing. If a sufi says them four thousand times every day and night, he is sure to feel that effect within two months.



SECOND METHOD: DHIKR KHAFI (dhikr of the heart)

When the first method of dhikr; dhikr jali is achieved, the sufi is advised to take up silent dhikr. To practise this dhikr two procedures are advocated as follows:

I. THE NAME OF ALLAH IS CONNECTED  
WITH THE MAIN ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

That is, he should close his eyes, shut his mouth, and say in his heart:

- a. "Allah Sami" - Allah is hearing
- b. "Allah Basir" - Allah is seeing
- c. "Allah 'Alim" - Allah is knowing

The voice should be "lifting", as if the words come from his navel to his heart, to his brain, and then to the heaven or throne of God. The second time he should do it in the reverse order as follows:

- a. "Allah 'Alim" - Allah is knowing
- b. "Allah Basir" - Allah is seeing
- c. "Allah Sami" - Allah is hearing

The voice should be "lifting", as if, the words were beginning at the throne of God, going to the brain, to

the heart and then to the navel. All of them together constitute a round (*dawrah*) of *dhikr*; the sufi should say them many times every day and night. Some of *Qadiriyyah* groups had added to this as follows:

d. "Allah Qadir" - Allah is possessing power or strength<sup>89</sup>

## II. SAYING IN HIS HEART THE *DHIKR* OF NEGATION AND AFFIRMATION

The sufi should do the same with the *dhikr* of negation and affirmation. That is saying "*la ilah illa Allah*". To practise this *dhikr* is entirely the same as *dhikr jali* in this connection.

According to the *Qadiriyyah tariqah*, this kind of *dhikr* is very useful in fighting against evil desires and bad ideas. As a result of this *dhikr*, the sufi is sure to develop intense longing and passionate love for God, achieve complete concentration, love and silence, to avoid intercourse with people, dislike of involvement in worldly affairs and to devote himself exclusively to God.

### THIRD METHOD: *MURAQABAH* (MEDITATION)

When the second method of *dhikr*; *dhikr khafi* has been achieved, the sufi is now ready to enter into

meditation (*muraqabah*). He should meditate on saying or reading the verses of the Qur'an with his tongue or imagining the verses with his imagination or his heart and understanding the meanings of the verses exactly, until no other imaginings come to trouble him and he is completely devoted to the meanings of the verses only.

Muraqabah was practised by the Prophet as he said "Ihsan is worshiping God as if you see Him, if you could not see Him, but surely He sees you".<sup>90</sup>

To describe the procedure of *dhikr* by *muraqabah*, the sufi should do as follows:

#### I. SAYING BY HIS TONGUE OR IMAGINING

##### BY HIS HEART THESE SAYINGS:

"Allah Hadiri" - Allah is before me

"Allah Naziri" - Allah sees me

"Allah Ma'i" - Allah is with me

He should imagine that God is present beside him, sees him, and is with him clearly and vividly, but placing Him above space, and concentrate on it till he is completely absorbed in it.



II. OR HE MAY MEDITATE ON THE MEANINGS  
OF SUCH QUR'ANIC VERSES AS FOLLOWS:

"He is with you wherever you are"<sup>91</sup> or

"Whichever way you turn there is the face of  
Allah"<sup>92</sup> or

"Does he not know Allah sees"<sup>93</sup> or

"We are nearer to him than his jugular vein".<sup>94</sup> or

"Listen! He encompasses every thing"<sup>95</sup> or

"With me indeed is my Lord. He surely guides me"<sup>96</sup>

or

"He is the First as well as the Last, the Manifest  
as well as the Hidden"<sup>97</sup>

All the Qur'anic verses which have been mentioned  
above are very important and useful in connecting one's  
heart to God and these meditations will produce  
absorption in God.

However, if the sufi meditates on this verse:  
"Everything on earth will perish, only the face of your  
Lord, the Glorious and the Majestic will survive".<sup>98</sup> he  
will lose every interest in the world and will be  
completely absorbed in God in a state of intoxication  
(*sukr*) and effacement (*mahw*).<sup>99</sup>

The sufi may also meditate as these verses: "The  
death from which you flee will certainly overtake you"<sup>100</sup>

and "As to death, it will overtake you wherever you may be, even though you may be in fortified towers"<sup>101</sup>

The proper way to attain it is to imagine that you are dead, reduced to ashes and are blown about by the wind, that the heavens have split, and every thing has disintegrated and vanished and that only God is there. If you persist in this meditation for some time you will forget yourself and obtain complete effacement.

What is perhaps most important for us to notice here is that these are very specific meditational techniques which would be recognised by the adherents of other spiritual traditions. They are however strictly based on Qur'anic verses and "indications" in *hadith*.

The whole systematic progress from one station to another, one state to the next, involves the concerted effort to "realise" the literal meaning of these sacred words. This is further proof that the Sufi centres his entire spirituality on a rigorous and "pure" effort to become the truest Muslim.

This is what has to be understood. In the context of al-Jilani's da'wah, these spiritual exercises are seen as constituting a path to God which enhances the Islam of a person. It is the practical method, pointed to in his sermons, for realising the living in God which for

al-Jilani is the supreme reward in and of itself. Taken in isolation from the whole context of al-Jilani's teaching and preaching, these exercises can look like a most un-Islamic pursuit, an esoteric indulgence. We have here argued that they fit into the wider call of the shaykh for the people to come or return to Islam.



### 3. DA'WAH BY FATAWA (LEGAL DECISIONS OR INTERPRETATIONS)

It is requested of every Muslim that the Islamic way of life should be obeyed in his deed as much as possible, and that he should accept the *shari'ah* as the guide of his actions. He should behave toward others in accordance with the *shari'ah*. If he does not know the *shari'ah*, it is necessary for him to seek knowledge of it to avoid overstepping its limits.

One of the ways to knowledge *shari'ah* is through the teaching and preaching of the *ulama'* who bring to the public details of the lawful and the unlawful. The other is when the laymen requests guidance of the *ulama'* on specific matters.

The obligation to preach and teach is there all the more during times of innovation (*bid'ah*). If the *ulama'* fail to preach and teach, they themselves are sinners and will be charged because they neglect this obligation. They will be regarded as those people who hide the knowledge of *shari'ah* which is entrusted to them to preach and teach to others. If the *ulama'* offers this preaching and teaching, it is obligatory for the laymen to come to them to listen to what they say. If they do not, they also are sinners and should be charged as such.

In spite of the efforts of the *ulama'*, many people

still do not know the Islamic teachings. Sometime the *ulama'* have given up their activities, and ignorance spreads to a high degree. At this point we are reminded that Allah said: "If you do not know, you may ask the people who possess the knowledge".<sup>102</sup>

The uneducated asks a question concerning *shari'ah*, and the *ulama'* answers the question, and this process is known in *shari'ah* as the *ifta'* system (*nizam al-ifta'*). In *Lisan al-Arab* "*fatwa*" it literally means explanation and answering the question.<sup>103</sup>

From the above discussion, we know that asking *fatwa* literally means asking for something or asking for an opinion on a question. The person who asks the question is called *mustafti*, and the person who is asked and then answers the question is called *mufti*, and his effort is called *ifta'* and the result is the *fatwa* (plural *fatawa*). The decision which is required should be in Islamic law (*shari'ah*), so *ifta'* means specifically notification of a decision concerning the commandments of God.

Spiritually, then, *ifta'* is in reality one of the ways of conveyance, transmission and information what God commands for His servants. It has this spiritual religious dimension.

The first person who performed this method of da'wah was Prophet Muhammad and then after him were the companions of the Prophet; among those companions who had given the *fatawa* were many groups some who produced large numbers of *fatawa*, some only a few. There were about 130 companions; male and female. The most important were seven companions as follows: Umar ibn al-Khattab, Ali ibn Abi Talib, Abd Allah ibn Mas'uh, A'ishah, Zayd ibn Thabit, Abd Allah ibn Abbas and Abd Allah ibn Umar.<sup>104</sup>

As long as the *fatawa* includes a decision of *shari'ah*, it is obligatory to base them on the Qur'an, the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, *Ijma'*<sup>105</sup> and *qiyas*.<sup>106</sup> We have seen in fact that al-Jilani's *fatawa* were almost always "spiritual" in content.<sup>107</sup>



#### 4. DA'WAH BY WRITING

Writing is one of the most important ways of conveying da'wah. Writing means in this context either writing of letters to the person who is invited by da'i to Islam exhorting rejection of what conflicts with Islam, or the production of literary works of any kind - articles in newspapers, magazines, etc.

The Prophet commanded his followers to write letters to the heads and rulers of non Muslim states inviting them to Islam such as his own letters to Kisra the emperor of Persia,<sup>108</sup> Heraclius the empereror of Byzantium<sup>109</sup> and Muqawqis the ruler of Egypt.<sup>110</sup> Likewise the ulama' sent letters to Muslim rulers inviting them to follow and obey the commandent of God, such as the letter of al-Awza'i which was sent to Abbasid governor in Syria and Palastine about *zimmis* and the obligatory to protect their right given them by Islam.

On the other hand da'wah through widely circulating books explaining the nature of Islam is most important. In particular, the translation of texts and the writing of books in languages other than Arabic is absolutely essential. The da'i must know how to pitch his language at the right level, using simple language and expressions when necessary so as to leave the person in no doubt as to the meaning of the message.

let us return to the al-Jilani's activities in da'wah, he was not only active in preaching and education, but he was also active in da'wah by writings. His daily routine, it is said, was to work as preacher and educator full time for the benefit of mankind with little rest and sleep. He did not have enough time for literary work, but he realized that writings were very important things in da'wah. He wrote many books both in prose and poetry with the same object of serving humanity by making them goodly.

Almost all of his literary works were on theology, Islamic jurisprudence, sufism and ethics. One of the most important and comprehensive books of al-Jilani is *al-Ghunya li Talibi Tariq al-Haq*, whose contents are very comprehensive including worship, social inter-course "mutual relation or business relations" (*mu'amalat*), marriage laws, sufism and ethics. It is to this text which we have frequently referred (see above).

The other great text of al-Jilani is *Futuh al-Ghayb*. This is a book on sufism and knowledge. So important is it that it circulates in many (often inadequate) translations, throughout the Muslim world.

Besides those books, there were many books, booklets and pamphlets which were done by al-Jilani or compiled by

his disciples and his followers on account of his prayers, wirids and dhikr which are practised in Qadiriyyah order. These texts, as we have said, circulate widely and constitute very important examples of wide-ranging da'wah.



## 5. DA'WAH BY GOOD EXAMPLE, GIVING SERVICES AND FINANCES

It is doubtless that one of the most important ways of conveying da'wah and attracting people to Islam is through the good example of the da'i and in general giving services and finances in the way of God. It is better to mention here that the da'i who has good behaviour and noble manners is a good exemplar for the other people, as if an opened book on the meaning of Islam which has easily read by the public or laymen, who are then attracted to the book. Attraction by deeds and conduct is more influential than only speech.

Evidently, Islam spread over the world through such good example. Thus, the good example of the da'i is the most practical method of da'wah, in the end. It is reported by Khadijah binti Khuwaylid when the Prophet told her what had happened in Hira' Cave, she said: "Be happy, and God surely does not disgrace you anyway! you surely contracted a relationship, spoke the truth, bore the tiredness, and helped in the calamity".<sup>111</sup>

It was narrated as well that once a bedouin came to see the Prophet and he said to him: "Who are you?". The Prophet said: "I am Muhammad ibn Abd Allah", the bedouin further said: "Are you he who had said about him that he was a liar?". The Prophet said: "Yes, I am who they had said about me like that", and then the bedouin said:

"This face is not that of a liar, what is the matter you are inviting us to?". The Prophet told him what he invited to Islamic teachings, and the bedouin said: "I believe in you and I declare that there is no god except Almighty God, and I declare that Muhammad is the messenger of God".<sup>112</sup>

Thus, the bedouin had enough reason to believe the Prophet and his message. The brightness of his face which belongs to the people of truth and noble manners had persuaded him of the Prophet's truthfulness. These traditions are used in da'wah to reinforce this final strategy. Indeed, it is not even a strategy. If the da'i does not set a good example, he cannot be effective.

The foundations of the good example which the da'i sets are twofold: noble manners and deeds in accordance with words. Thus, his lifestyle is itself a silent da'wah to Islam. If these two basic attributes vanished, his lifestyle would be bad and would become a silent da'wah to avoid and reject Islam. The da'i is warned that his deeds must not conflict with his teachings, because people are naturally disposed not to accept the sayings of a person who does not practise his beliefs. God said: "O you who have believed why do you say that which you do not do?. Most hateful it is in the sight of Allah that you should say that which you do not".<sup>113</sup>

The teachings of al-Jilani located in his texts and in particular the collections of sermons outline a spiritual path with rigorous disciplines associated with it. These in turn are offered as a means to self-purification in the cause of Allah. The appeal of the teachings at a popular level seems to lie in this clear and pure version of Islam. His sufism is located within the context of an overall reformism, a call to return to the righteous path of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*.

One can draw from the sermons a range of exemplary techniques for the purposes of da'wah. Indeed, his biography itself can be used as a model for the da'i.

It is in the combination of a spiritual path, appealing to a popular sensibility and a rigorous reassertion of Islamic values which seems to offer in outline, a methodology of da'wah.



## NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

1. Ibn Kathir says: "Al-Mustarshid was courageous, brave, high-minded, eloquent (skillful in using the literary language), companionable speech, noble willing, handsome, good worshiper, desirable to laymen and middle class. He was the last caliph who seen as a deliverer sermon on Friday prayer. He was killed and his age was 45 years and 3 month, and the period of his caliphate was 17 years and 20 days." (See Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, Vol.XII, p.208)
2. *Ibid.*
3. See above in the third chapter
4. Ibn Rajab, *al-Dhail 'ala Tabaq'at al-Hanabilah*, Vol.I, p.292; *mutawatir* means successive narration which was narrated by such groups of pious people.
5. *Ibid.*, Vol.I, p.292
6. "Dead hearts" in spiritual contaxtt means the unbelieving hearts.
7. Al-Jilani, *al-Fath al-Rabbani*, session 6
8. Muhammad Husayn Fadl Allah, *Uslub al-Da'wah fi al-Qur'an* (Beirut, 1972), pp.43-57.
9. See the Qur'an, Nuh LXXI: 1-3; Muhammad XLVII: 13; Surah al-Taghabun LXIV: 8-9.
10. Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*, Vol.II, p.41.
11. *Ibid.*, Vol.I, p.342
12. Al-Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 32, p.76
13. *The Qur'an*, Ma'idah V: 54
14. *Ibid.*, Dhariyat LI: 56
15. *Ibid.*, Ma'idah V: 54
16. Al-Jilani, *al-Fath al-Rabbani*, session 49, p.162
17. *Ibid.*, session 53,
18. Al-Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 72, p.162
19. *Ibid.*, *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 17, pp.41-42.
20. *Ibid.*, *Futuh al-Ghayb*, Discourse 62,
21. Ibn Kathir, *op.cit.*, Vol.XII, p.208
22. Al-Jilani, *al-Fath al-Rabbani*, session 51
23. *Ibid.*, session 46
24. *Ibid.*, session 21
25. *Ibid.*, session 34
26. *Ibid.*, session 51
27. *Ibid.*, session 46 p.148
28. Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*, Vol.II, p.208
29. *Ibid.*
30. Al-Maqrizi, *Imta' al-Uqul*, p.34
31. Al-Nawawi, *Riyad al-Salihin*, p.268
32. Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Quran al-Karim*, Vol.I, p.3
33. Ibn Rajab, *al-dhail*, p.129
34. Al-Sha'rani, *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*, p.129
35. Al-Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghayb*, p.129
36. Al-Sha'rani, *op.cit.*, p.131
37. Al-Jilani, *al-Fath al-Rabbani*, session 44
38. *Ibid.*, session 11, p.39
39. Al-Sha'rani, *op.cit.*, p.127
40. Al-Jilani, *al-Fath al-Rabbani*, session 43, p.140

41. Al-Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghayb*, session 3
42. Al-Jilani, *al-Fath al-Rabbani* 56
43. Ghulam Husayn Yusufi "al-Siyasiyy al-Ajuz" as an introduction to Nizam al-Mulk's book *Siyasah Namah*, pp.14-15.
44. Bay'ah means literally agreement, in spiritual contact it means agreement to follow and obey commandments of God and was made between a *shaykh* and disciples.
45. Arnold, Thomas, *Preaching of Islam*, for the spread of Islam in Africa, see pp.315-365; in Malaysia and Indonisia, see pp.367-412; in China, see pp.297-314; and in India, see pp.257-296
46. For detailed discussion, see appendix
47. Mustafa Zahri, *Kunci Memahami Ilmu Tasawwuf*, (Surabaya: Pustaka Bina Ilmu 1979) p.37.
48. *The Qur'an*, XIII: 28
49. Qamar al-Kilani, *Fi al-Tasawwuf al-Islami*, (Beirut: 1962) pp.18-19
50. Abi Nasr al-Sirraj al-Tusi, *al-Luma*, (Egypt: Dar al-Kutub al-Hadith, 1960), p.72.
51. See *Munjid fi al-Lughah* (Beirut: Dar al-Mashriq, 1975) p.308
52. al-Qushayri, *al-Risalah*, Vol.I, pp.365-366
53. *The Qur'an*, LVII: 23
54. Al-Muhasibi, *al-Masa'il fi A'mal al-Qulub wa al-Jawarih* (Cairo: Alam al-Kutub, 1969)
55. According to al-Qushayri that the above point of views had been stated by Sufyan al-Thawri, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Isa ibn Yunus and others, see al-Qushayri, *al-Risalah*, Vol.I, p.369.
56. Al-Muhasibi, *al-masa'il*, *op.cit.*, p.45
57. Qasim Ghanim, *Tarikh al-Tasawwuf fi al-Islam*, (Cairo: Maktaba al-Nahda al-Misriyya, 1970) p.271.
58. For detailed explanation, see above in the first Chapter.
59. Al-Jilani, *al-Ghunyah*, Vol.II, p.163
60. *The Qur'an*, XXIX: 69
61. Al-Jilani, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.163
62. Abu al-Hasan Ali al-Nadwi, *Rijal al-fikr wa al-Da'wah*, pp.281-282.
63. Isma'il ibn Sayyid Muhammad Sa'id al-Qadiri, *al-Fuyudat*, pp.28-31.
64. The attribute of God
65. *The Qur'an*, XLVIII: 10
66. Al-Jilani, *al-Ghunyah*, p.164
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Ibid.*
69. *The Qur'an*, LIX: 10
70. Al-Jilani, *al-Ghunyah*, pp.165-166
71. *Ibid.*
72. *Ibid.*
73. *Dhikr* means literally memory, remembrance, recollection, but in sufism it means invocation of God, mention of God's names or incessant repetition of certain word or formulas in praise of God



74. *Khalwah* means literally alone, but in sufism it means staying in a special place, far away from noisy one and the disciple exercises the *dhikr*. This training is an important part of spiritual education.
75. Al-Qadiri, *Fuyudat*, p.64
76. *Ibid.*,
77. Tenku Iskandar, *Kamus Dewan*, (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1970) p.240. See also *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, Vol.II p.223
78. H.A.R. Gibb and J.K. Kramers, *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p.75; see also Muhammad Farid al-Wajid, *Dairah al-Ma'arif*, Vol.IV (Egypt: n.d.) p.125
79. H.A.R. Gibb and J.K. Kramers, *op.cit.*, p.75
80. *The Qur'an*, XXXIII: 41
81. *Ibid.*, XVIII: 24
82. Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*. book 80, Chapter 66.
83. See word "*wird*" in Lane, *Lexicon*.
84. Shah Wali Allah al-Dihlawi, *al-Qawl al-Jamil*, translated by Abd. Aziz Ahmad. pp.32-36.
85. The source for the procedure of *dhikr* in Qadiriyyah order is summarised from Shah wali Allah al-Dihlawi, *al-Qawl al-Jamil fi Bayan sawa al-Sabil*, translated by Abd Aziz Ahmad with the tittle in Malaysian language "*Penawar Ruhani*" pp.32-41; see also Muhammad Abdul Haq Ansari, *Sufism and Shari'ah* (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 1986), pp.33-35.
86. The Muslim scholars had differences of opinion wheather lawful or not to practise *dhikr* with saying the name of Allah only (*ism al-dhat*), because the Prophet did not given the commandment to do that.
87. He should sit on his heels.
88. The saying *La 'ilaha illa Allah* in this context means in three meanings, the aspirant is free to chose which one of them he like:  
 (a) *La' mahbub illa Allah* - there is no beloved except Allah.  
 (b) *La maqsud illa Allah* - there is no purpose except Allah.  
 (c) *La Mawjud illa Allah* - there is no existing except Allah.
89. By the addition, the procedure as follows:  
 (a) Allah Sami from the navel to the heart  
 (b) Allah Basir from the heart to the brain  
 (c) Allah 'Alim from the brain to the heaven  
 (d) Allah Qadir from the heaven to the throne of God.
- From the reverse order:  
 (d) Allah Qadir from the heaven to the throne of God  
 (c) Allah 'Alim from the heaven to the brain  
 (b) Allah Basir from the brain to the heart  
 (a) Allah Sami from the heart to the navel.
90. Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, book 2: chapter 37; see also Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, book 1; hadith 1,5,7.
91. *The Qur'an*, LVII: 4
92. *Ibid.*, II:115
93. *Ibid.*, XCVI: 14

94. *Ibid.*, L: 16
95. *Ibid.*, XLI: 54
96. *Ibid.*, LXII: 26
97. *Ibid.*, LVII: 3
98. *Ibid.*, LV: 26,27
99. *Mahw* in spiritual contaxt means all the ordinarily attributes of person had been vanished. See *al-Qashayri, al-Risalah, Vol.I, p.273*
100. *The Qur'an*, LXII: 8
101. *Ibid.*, IV: 78
102. *Ibid.*, XXI: 7
103. Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, See the word "fatwa".
104. Abd al-Karim Zaydan, *Usul al-Da'wah*, p.150
105. *Ijma'* means literally unamimity; *ijma' al-ra'yi* means unanimous resolution. But in Islamic law it means consensus of the authorities in a legal question; one of the four fundemented basics of Islamic law.
106. *Qiyas* literally means measure, comparison, analogy.
107. For detailed explanation, see above in fifth chapter
108. Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, book 3: chapter 7; see also Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, book 32: chapter 75.
109. Bukhari, book 56: chapter 99, 102, 122;
110. Ibn Sa'ad, *Tabaqat*, vol,i, p.16.
111. Abd al-Karim Zaydan, *Usul al-Da'wah*, p.467
112. *Ibid.*, pp.467-468
113. *The Qur'an*, LXI: 3



## CONCLUSION

This thesis is a study of al-Jilani's contribution to the methodology of Islamic da'wah (mission). The emphasis is on the significance of his teachings and his lifestyle also.

### 1. THE CONCEPTION OF ISLAMIC DA'WAH

For the purpose of a better understanding of Islamic da'wah we discussed this in general in the first chapter and we can conclude as follows:

The word "da'wah" in the Arabic language has a range of meanings, but all those are derived from the primary meaning of "call" or "invitation". However in Islamic terminology, da'wah is an invitation extended to human beings by the prophets to believe in Islam. From the Islamic point of view the religion of all the prophets is Islam, and each prophet has his own da'wah. Muhammad's da'wah was the last da'wah among the prophets, it is commonly known as the specifically Islamic da'wah (*al-da'wah al-Islamiyyah*).

Thus, Islamic da'wah is "an invitation extended to human beings by the Prophet Muhammad to believe in Islam". In "invitation" included admission, inviting, request and call to come to Islam as a faith and as a way

of life, as *al-din*, and in "human being" is included Muslims and non-Muslims alike, because Islam is universal religion.

Another term in relation to da'wah is jihad. The findings of my study confirm that the concept of jihad in Islam has met with misunderstanding and misconception. Jihad is unique in Islam because the word "*jihad*" literally means ability, effort, endeavour, and exertion of power. So jihad means the exerting of one's power or effort. If we were to refer to the word "*jihad*" in the Qur'an, we find that jihad is freely used in the context of exerting one's power and ability, without implying war or aggression. Thus, Islam correctly rejects the word "*war*" (*harb*) and other Arabic words bearing the same meaning like *qital* and *muqatalah*.

From this, we can suggest that according to Islamic point of view based on the Qur'an and the *sunnah* Jihad means to strive to the utmost to gain and achieve a goal. Jihad does not only revolve around aspects of war and terror, but rather represents a total effort to bring about an Islamic revival.

For the question, what is the concept of jihad in Islam?, we conclude that any effort made according to the *shari'ah* constitutes jihad. Efforts to improve oneself and to become a better Muslim constitute a jihad. So the

word jihad should be understood in its comprehensive form to apply more widely to all Muslim activities in general in various situations and in many different forms.

Thus the domains of jihad and da'wah overlap, without either implying aggression.

## 2. AL-JILANI'S HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

To study the life and works of an outstanding figure, we have to trace and analyse the historical background of his time.

The Muslim world at the time of al-Jilani, especially in the later Seljuq period, after the death of Sultan Malik Shah in 1093A.D., was a period when stability ended and civil wars among his sons weakened the central Seljuq authority. So caliphs in Baghdad proclaimed their independence. Such devastating and dreadful events were encountered by al-Jilani himself. Muslims were split and were fighting against each other. They would do anything they could so long as they could achieve some position of prestige and power. Society was "materialistic" in character. The point we have emphasized is that this kind of situation is precisely that which engenders experienced need for reform and return to fundamentals.

In all spheres, ethical, social, political, economic, as well as the specifically religious there was both uncertainty and pluralism. There were competing notions of what constituted the righteous path as well as apparent laxity. At least, we can infer this from the tone adopted by al-Jilani in his sermons. There is a sense in them of large numbers of people straying far from *shari'ah* and also of people not being clear what the content of *shari'ah* is.

Society was hierarchical but also we detect in the Shaykh's teachings and sermons a sense that the elite, in particular, were particularly corrupt. The emphasis on moral purity and a return to *shari'ah* was at least in part a vehicle for attacking the elite, and some of Shaykh's popularity seems to derive from this.

On the positive side, though, this was a time of intellectual and cultural ferment with the rise of institutions like the Nizamiyyah schools to prominence. There was a possibility for the much wider and faster dissemination of ideas than before. The Shaykh no doubt benefited from this.

### 3. AL-JILANI'S MYSTICAL TEACHINGS

We have examined al-Jilani's mystical teachings as found primarily in his book *Futuh al-Ghayb*. This study



consisted of an outline of his mystical teachings and a discussion of the book. The major conclusion to be drawn concerns the orthodoxy of his mysticism. His doctrine is strictly orthodox in its adherence to the *shari'ah*; he does not endorse musical sessions (*sama'*) or dances (*raqs*). He holds that the goal of sufism is neither union with God, nor with His attributes, but simply to obey the *shari'ah* and to be a faithful servant of God. There is no stage higher than the stage of servanthood (*'abdiyyah*), although we have seen that there is a sufi version of what this entails. He is a Hanbalite, and his sufism does not seem to affect his status as a legal specialist. The unquestioning submission to the message of the Prophet as it is set forth in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, excludes on the part of the sufi any claim to inspired revelation.

Other sufi themes and concepts are equally given this fundamentalist treatment, for example, the concept of self annihilation (*fana'*). He expounds the meaning of *fana'* as vanishing from createdness and desire, rather than the more extravagant claims of union made by others. Because of this Ibn Taymiyyah admired him very much and called his *tariqah* as *al-Tariqah al-Shar'iyyah al-Sahihah* (the true *shari'ah* order).

The teachings were moreover not just for a special circle of his disciples. His teachings were delivered publicly in his sermons. The central teachings of the

Qadiri Order are to be found in his major texts along with his ethical prescriptions.

#### 4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUFISM AND DA'WAH

Sufism and da'wah are intrincically connected. Sufism is not an attempt to lead a kind of life different from the life of the Prophet. For a sufi, as for an ordinary Muslim the ideal is the Prophet's life. That is the standard of excellance and perfection. The sufi who spends most of his time in *dhikr*, forgetting himself and the world around is not at all an ideal. It is to be appreciated only as a step towards finalising sobriety and offering intelligent service to God. The sufi should regain self-consciousness and return to the world. He should engage himself in preaching and instructing, in purifying life and promoting piety, and serving the relegion of God as the Prophet did. He must be active.

No sufi is independent of the Prophet, nor equal to him. Sufism is essentially a *tariqah* to purify one self to attain strong conviction in the truth of the Prophet's revelation. Al-Jilani makes it very clear in his *Futuh al-Ghayb* that the criterion of greatness lies in things related to the mission of the Prophet such as the propageting of Islam and persuasion of the people to follow religion.

Sufism as defined and practiced by al-Jilani has its rightful place in Islam, and can without reservation be called "Islamic Sufism" because it has a very close link with *shari'ah* and *da'wah*. He has the right attitude towards sufism, and he accepts what is in agreement with the Qur'an and the Sunnah giving a reinterpretation of sufism's teaching; if they contradict *shari'ah* they are to be rejected.

In *da'wah* al-Jilani was very active. He was famed as a preacher and as well for his direction of his school. He was active as *mufti*, teacher of *tafsir* and *hadith*, *fiqh* and so on. He used to deliver sermons three days in a week. And every day in the morning and in the afternoon, al-Jilani used to teach in his school. Every evening before evening prayer (*maghrib*) he used to give food to the needy. And again after the evening prayer his attendant would distribute food. He worked in this way day and night with little rest. Al-Jilani also wrote prolifically it seems. The writing is polemical in nature oriented towards *da'wah*. His works are all religious in character and largely consist of reports of his sermons, mystical treatises, collections of prayers and sermons ascribed to him. These works are the most solid contribution of al-Jilani to Islamic thought. His life itself however "mythologised" it has become, is a model for the *da'i* to persue.

## 5. AL-JILANI'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO DA'WAH METHODOLOGY

There is indeed need to know and understand da'wah in general and da'wah methodology in particular. Before an Islamic missionary starts thinking about methods and approaches, skill and techniques, ways and means, he must examine his conduct and behaviour to ascertain whether it is Islamic or not. Al-Jilani started his preparation for da'wah by gaining as much as possible of the knowledge of his time, especially religious knowledge. After completing his study, he purified himself by practising the spiritual disciplines in order to get Divine guidance and then came back to the society to start his activities in da'wah.

From this examination of his biography and his activities in da'wah, the conclusion is reinforced that al-Jilani comes within the category of a purifier of the faith trying to revive the spirit of Islam and faith in the existence of the hereafter, the emphasis less earthly life, but rather looking forward to life in hereafter, to boost morale, to encourage belief in Oneness of God and to achieve sincerity. To achieve these objectives, al-Jilani made a concerted effort, using various means and methods, and organising a variety of religious activities. Among those means and methods are what we now classify as: da'wah by goodly counsel (*maw'izah hasanah*), da'wah by education (*tarbiyah*),



da'wah by legal decisions or interpretations (*fatawa*), da'wah by writings, da'wah by good example, giving services and finances. Al-Jilani seems to have won popularity as an outstanding Islamic missionary (*da'i*), and saint (*wali*). His life, as we have said, is regarded as exemplary, and these are what we consider to be, the acknowledged ways and means of da'wah.

#### A. DA'WAH BY GOODLY COUNSEL (*MAW'IZAH HASANAH*)

Al-Jilani's preaching instilled faith into "dead hearts". He believed that he was obliged and commanded to invite people to Islam. He said: "praise God who has laid upon my heart the duty to give counsel to the creatures. Giving counsel is the most important of my concerns. So I am counsellor and I do not like to take any reward for that, I have got my reward from my God".

Al-Jilani's public sermons indicate, as we have said, fact that the majority of people in the Muslim world at that time, lived a "worldly" life without concern for the spiritual aspect. He knew their problems and he gave priority to the spiritual diseases of sinfulness, unbelief, ingratitude, injustice, hypocrisy and disobedience. To fight these diseases, al-Jilani combined the gentleness of *da'is* and the threat of a ruler, because he knew that the obligation of da'wah especially to persuade and convince people who had

committed sins required both skills.

Al-Jilani showed kindness to the people inviting them to follow the commandments of God and always asking God's forgiveness on behalf of them; as he said: "I do hope that the gates of Hell will closed and cease to exist, and that nobody among the creatures of God will enter in there. I do hope as well to open the gates of paradise and that all the creature be permitted to enter there".

The attitude of the majority of the people of Baghdad was akin, according to al-Jilani, to paganism. People had "taken refuge in the creatures". To counter this, al-Jilani reasserted the Unity of God (*tawhid*) and along with that contempt of creatures. He described their weakness and incapacity, their lack of power over themselves. This is what we mean by "assertion of ruler". Al-Jilani utilized a number of techniques.

I. He approached his audience with wisdom (*hikmah*), knowing that the audience in his sessions were multi-racial, multi-religious, and multi-purposed. Some of them did not know the religious teachings, others were sinners, disobedient, having problems and so on. Thus al-Jilani preached them with "softness and gentleness". After this method, he changed to the method of "hardness" by rejecting and condemning the evil desires hypocrisy and so on.

II. To counter irreligion al-Jilani applied the method of giving priority to the "more important than important" (*taqdim al-aham fa al-muhim*). He knew that the solutions to all these problems started with *tawhid*, belief in the Oneness of God, the hereafter and spirituality. After the basic reaffirmation of faith, other problems can be approached.

III. To change the attitude of men and their habits is very difficult. The counsellor must approach them using examples, similar cases, metaphors and short stories. Al-Jilani's public sermons are exemplary in this.

IV. The majority of his sermons talk about spirituality and the hereafter. But al-Jilani was not an extremist. Plenty of his sermons exhort people to work and condemn a life of inactivity and unemployment, dependant on others. This method is known in the field of *da'wah* by mediation (*tawassut*), flexibility and having balance. Al-Jilani understood that one must start from the material interests of people.

V. The qualities of courage, bravery, confidence and trust in God are essential to the preacher. These qualities were found in al-Jilani. He seemed to fear no one. The ruling powers in those days, caliph, sultans, kings and others were criticized and condemned by

al-Jilani. This method is known as *amr ma'ruf* and *nahy munkar* (enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong).

#### B. DA'WAH BY EDUCATION (TARBIYAH)

The sufism in the fifth century A.H. was characterised by a trend away from *shari'ah*; it had become institutionalised around certain barely Islamic practises and was located in the dubious location of the *zawiyah*. Al-Jilani was one of the greatest opponents of this rebellious trend and sought to subject the *tariqah* to *shari'ah* and adherence to the Qur'an and the Sunnah. He seemed to stop this trend and brought back sufism to the normative state of former times.

Al-Jilani fought evil and hypocrisy in Muslim society by offering the "gates of *bay'ah* and repentance (*tawbah*)" to a wide audience. Muslims came to Baghdad to see him and to make *bay'ah* with him by which they renewed their commitment to the commandments of God. The point is that this was a popular sufism. Those people who came to al-Jilani became his spiritual disciples and in turn spread his teachings rapidly and far and wide.

Al-Jilani emphasized the method of spiritual education as we have seen as a normal part of the Muslims path to seeking God's pleasure.



The *bay'ah* and the consequent spiritual disciplines are thus taken to contribute to the personal ability of the individual to carry out the *da'wah* which is the Muslim's duty. The basic teachings of the *tariqah*, considered to be set forth in texts like *al-Ghunyah*, circulate through the branches of the *Qadiriyyah*. We can thus consider it to be in itself an astonishing *da'wah* movement, widespread throughout the world.

Beyond spiritual education, in its narrowest and broadest senses, the model of *da'wah* suggested by *al-Jilani's* life and work includes also, as we have seen, the capability and duty to give *fatwa* when called upon. Indeed, given the content of the sermons which the *da'i* must give, one could say that he must expect to be called upon and even challenged to clarify and "legislate" upon matters of importance and controversy. It does not take a great deal of imagination to envisage the possible atmosphere of a large "sermonising" meeting, with detractors as well as supporters challenging the *da'i* frivolously as well as seriously.

In general, though, the *da'i* must be able make clarifications of Islamic doctrine and practise which will require a knowledge of *fiqh*. In the case of *al-Jilani* many of the *fatawa*, recorded by the biographers, concern spirituality and associated doctrine rather than more "mundane" points of law.

We can assume that this is because it was fundamentals that were, in his time, contested, rather than matters of law which were dealt with in a customary fashion. Also, in promoting sufism as part of the correct path, he would have been required to deal with questions of orthodoxy. This may often be the situation of the *da'i*, especially working in these contexts of multi-cultural and multi-ethnic pluralism.

We must also remember that for al-Jilani the spiritual path is put at the service of Islam and not the other way round. At least in its early days the *tariqah* had the emphasis of the Shaykh himself which was very "fundamentalist" e.g., in the way it followed *madhhab* Hanbali, receiving as it did a stamp of approval from Ibn Taymiyyah.

It is part of the "model" of *da'wah* developed here that propagation of the faith be carried further, if possible, through writing. This is perhaps for many too great a demand and it is not reasonable to expect of an individual that they have the levels of energy and devotion attributed in the narratives to al-Jilani. What we can say is that it is essential to the right functioning of this kind of missionary work that texts circulate as well as oral teachings. Otherwise uncertainty might set in yet again. In the absence of the hierarchical organisation of a church, for example, it

becomes more important that a consensus of opinion (required by *fiqh*) can be referred to an agreed set of texts. The importance of al-Jilani as a traditionist cannot be underestimated.

Finally, of-course, the most pressing duty of the *da'i* is that he is that he be exemplary in his conduct and performance of what is demanded by *shari'ah*. In particular he is to offer service to his community and in general adopt of generosity and openness. He is to try to have "noble manners" and show patience and tolerance in public and private. Without this personal integrity any efforts in *da'wah* will be quite futile.

The teachings and life of al-Jilani are legendary throughout the world of Islam. He is revered in many places, especially by ordinary people, as the saint of saints and his life is recounted and referred to in a variety of ceremonies (see appendix for Indonesia). In many ways his hagiography provides a model for the biography of other saints, throughout the Islamic world. His specifically sufi teachings circulate and versions of *Futuh al-Ghayb* are very common in sufi circles.

But in this discussion, we have sought to emphasize other, equally important aspects of the heritage of al-Jilani. These involved two related aspects of his life and work.

First, we have tried to demonstrate the reasons for thinking of him as a "fundamentalist" sufi. We emphasized the rigorous orthodoxy of his teachings in general and in particular his own adherence to the Hanbali rite. This kind of sufism allies itself often to the Hanbali tendency and gives great prominence to the *hadith*. It is an overlooked but extremely important area of sufism which can be seen to be an early development rather than a tendency which emerged after the Wahabis.

Secondly, we have argued that al-Jilani provides us with a model for da'wah. In particular his sermons are remarkable examples of an area of Islamic activity much ignored in the West. What we have noted is that his sufism is integral to the whole activity of da'wah and not marginal. Spiritual education is not just part of the training of the da'i but it is essential to the personal development of any Muslim. We could say that without it the mission is fruitless. All of this is important. It is crucial that we present da'wah in its true nature for it has come to be much misunderstood especially in connection with the misunderstood concept of jihad.

Finally, we have argued that the context of al-Jilani's life was one which demanded the activity of the missionary like him. It is our suggestion that the times in which we live now are similar and once again da'wah must be a living force.



## APPENDIX

### QADIRIYYAH ORDER: DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICE

#### 1. DEVELOPMENT

It is the opinion of the authorities that the name of Qadiriyyah order is derived from that of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, who is held to be the founder of this order.<sup>1</sup> During his life time, it seems the order spread to various places as a result of the efforts of his followers, such as Ali ibn al-Haddad in Yemen, Muhammad al-Bata'ihī who lived in Ba'albek and also works in Syria, Taqi Al-Din Muhammad al-Yunani who worked in Ba'albek and Muhammad ibn Abd al-Samad in Egypt.<sup>2</sup>

The precise date of the spread of this order outside Iraq is not certain. It is also not certain when a first zawayah of this order outside Iraq was set up. Tradition has it that his sons introduced it, during the Shaykh's life time to Morocco, Egypt, Arabia, Turkistan and India.

The Qadiriyyah order is said to have been introduced to Fez, Morocco by two of the Shaykh's son, that is Ibrahim (d.592A.H./1196A.D. in Wasit) and Abd al-Aziz (who died in Jibal, a village of Sinjar). Their descendants spread throughout Morocco.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, his other children also played an important part in the

spread of Qadiriyyah order, such as Abd al-Razzaq and others.<sup>4</sup>

The order was introduced to Asia Minor and Constantinople by Isma'il Rumi, founder of a *khanqah* (*ribat*) which is known as Qadiri-Khanah at Top-Khanah. He (d.1041 A.H./1631A.D.) was known as *Pir-i-thani* (Second Shaykh) and is credited with having set up about 40 branches of this order in these areas.<sup>5</sup>

In the Arabian Peninsula, the order was influential through the establishment of various important *zawiyah* in Jeddah and Medina with the existence of about 30 *shaykhs* in Mecca.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile in Egypt the order came to prominence alongside others.<sup>7</sup>

The order was first widely introduced in West Africa in the fifteen century by people who migrated from Tuat, that is an oasis in the Western Sahara. They made Walata their organisational base, but their desendents were banished from this town and had to seek refuge in Timbaktu in the East of the Sahara.<sup>8</sup> In the early 19th century the rise of spiritual awareness which greatly influenced the Islamic World drove the followers of this order to renew their aims and the spirit of the *ummah*. In the meantime theologians fused with this *tariqah* and they can be found scattered through the whole of West Sudan, from Senegal to the estuary of the Niger river.<sup>9</sup>

The centre of their da'wah movement can be found, among many places, at Kanka, Timbo (Futah Jallon) and Musardu at Mandingo. This da'wah centre initiated the Islamic influence amongst the pagan population. Before long they managed to influence the community around and also various individuals. Besides spreading their activities they also strove to send the order's members to further their studies to colleges in Tripoli or to the Fez University and also to the University of al-Azhar in Cairo. There, they stayed for a few years and after they had mastered the Islamic knowledge they returned to their own country to propogate Islam. In this way a new way of thinking emerged in the African population making the idol worshippers slowly and gradually accept Islam.<sup>10</sup> It can be said that the tariqah is of central importance in this.

Up till the middle of the nineteenth century most of the schools in Sudan were set up and led by teachers who were in the *Qadiriyyah* order. The order propogated Islam with tolerance giving emphasis on setting a good example in the everyday life of the teacher towards their pupils, in schools and also in society.<sup>11</sup> Thus once again being seen to be a da'wah movement.

The order spread into Somalia under the leadership of Shaykh Uways ibn Muhammad al-Barawi who was born in Brava, on the west coast of Somalia in 1847A.D.. His

family originated from the Tunni Tribe. When he was young he was sent to learn the Qur'an at a school in Brava under Shaykh Muhammad Tayini or Zayini al-Shashi. Uways was taught in *tafsir*, *nahw* and *saraf* (syntax and morphology), the principles of the Shafi'e school and sufism. From Shaykh Muhammad Tayani started to link Uways with the *Qadiriyyah* order teachings.<sup>12</sup>

Under the encouragement from Shaykh Muhammad, Uways moved to Baghdad in 1870A.D. until about 1880A.D. to study the *Qadiriyyah* order training from the head shaykh of the order named Shaykh al-Sayyid Mustafa ibn Salman. After completing his studies and training he returned to his own country. In 1880A.D. Uways opened an order branch at Kolonqol in north Somalia. At Brava Uways had many followers but there were also a lot of people against him. The opponents are mainly from the *Shadhiliyyah* order headed by Shaykh Muhammad Abd Allah Hassan. Uways was considered as the refounder of the *Qadiriyyah* in Somalia. (The first head who spread *Qadiriyyah* order in Somalia was Shaykh Abd al-Rahman al-Zilani). When Uways was leading the group, he had many supporters, not only in the Somalia region, but also in the surrounding regions. Uways was good in administering this organization and he trained many preachers to spread this order. He had designated more than 100 assistants to preach according to the order. These assistants came not only from Brava but also from Southern Somalia, Zanzibar, Comoros and



other regions in East Africa. This order grew and grew until there were 520 preachers.<sup>13</sup>

In 1880's and 1890's Uways travelled a lot to spread the order's teaching and establish influence. The willingness to mix with dignitaries and also foreign governments made his task to spread this order easier. When Zanzibar was under the rule of Sayyid Khalifa ibn Sa'id (1880-90A.D.) and Uways was on his way to the pilgrimage he was given 2,500 dollars. And under the rule of Hamid ibn Tayani (1883-1896A.D.), Uways was presented with a large house for him and his pupils use. He seemed always to be well-treated by the rulers.<sup>14</sup>

This can be seen clearly in Zanzibar where the order has widely spread to Dar-al-Salam, Bagomoyo and Pangani at the Mrima Beach and south Makindani. Besides this it also spread to Delta Rufiji, Yoa at the border of Mozambique, Tanyanyika Islands, Manyema and others.<sup>15</sup>

In the coastal areas the *Qadiriyyah* order compete with the *Shadhiliyyah* order, but because the order was more active, it had more success than the latter. This was also because such activities as lectures and discussions were effective and attracted many people. The leadership also tended to be strong.<sup>16</sup>

At the end of the 1880's and the next decade, the

order's activities slowed down but after 1908A.D., this order resumed its efforts vigorously to increase its members. These activities were clearly known to the German authorities because they always conducted their specific dhikrs in groups and aloud and accompanied by drums in mosques. Besides this the order members also read out poems written by Uways to enhance their spirituality. It seems that the order movement had many followers in the Zanzibar government. This relationship safeguarded their position in the country.<sup>17</sup>

In conclusion this branch under Uways was very active and successful in spreading Islamic teachings through the *Qadiriyyah*. He succeeded in dominating Islamic expansion in South Somalia, East Zaire, a portion of Mozambique and Malawi, Comoro Island and Western Madagascar.

Meanwhile in India, the order first became famous, 300 years after the death of the main founder Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani. The movement in India was pioneered by Sayyid Muhammad Ghawth. He was born in Allepo. From an early age, he had travelled far and wide. He reached India and settled in Lahore. After some time in India, he returned to Allepo. In 1428 .A.D. he returned to India and settled in Uch. Uch was the centre of the activities of the *Shuhrawardiyyah* order.<sup>18</sup>

Before the arrival of this *tariqah*, the name Shaykh Abd Al-Qadir had already been heard in India and he was known as *pir-i-piran*, meaning the saint of saints. Thus, the arrival of Muhammad Ghawth to India to propagate the order received a warm welcome from the people. The name Muhammad Ghawth thus became famous in India and in a short span of time he received many supporters. The followers included not only the ordinary people but also the Sultan of the day, Sikandar Lodi who was the Afghan ruler in Delhi. The Sultan not only became a follower (disciple) but he gave his daughter in marriage to Muhammad Ghawth. He did this after he had a dream in which he was instructed by Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani to give his daughter to Muhammad Ghawth for marriage.<sup>19</sup>

The spread of the order in India was continued by a number of his followers using different names such as *Qumesiyyah* lead by Shah Qumes, but these were branches of the *Qadiriyyah* order and continue to flourish.<sup>20</sup>

The followers of this order continued to spread the teachings till it reached South-East Asia. It is not known exactly when it first reached Peninsula Malaysia. But Hamzah Fansuri in 1600A.D. indicates that he was of the *Qadiriyyah* order and in 1488A.D. Malacca was already a centre of sufism in the Peninsula Malaysia. It is also known that Hamzah visited Pahang and it can be reasonably assumed that a man of repute such as he, must have drawn

around him a circle of disciples and followers to whom he would transmit the teachings of the Qadiriyyah order.<sup>21</sup> It is believed that there are nine sufi orders existing in Peninsula Malaysia. These are the Qadiriyyah, Naqshbandiyyah, Riffa'iyyah, Shadhiliyyah, Chistiyyah, Shattariyyah, Ahmadiyyah (also known as Idrisiyyah), Tijaniyyah and Alawiyyah.<sup>22</sup>

According to Hamka in Indonesia the spread of sufi orders that were brought by Islamic missionaries and tradesmen from India, Iran and Arab also covered Indonesia. Up till the thirteenth and fourteenth century and this last century there appeared sufi orders like the Naqshbandiyyah order from central Asia, Qadirriyyah order from Baghdad. Idrisiyyah from Hadramaut, Rifa'iyyah from Egypt and others.<sup>23</sup>

The entry of these orders is associated with a number of famous sufi experts like Hamzah Fansuri who was influenced by the ideas of Ibn Arabi and adhered to the *wahdah al-wujud* doctrine. He also referred to ideas of al-Hallaj and al-Junayd. Of the influence of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani on him he once said in a poem that the very existence of his knowledge was from Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani.<sup>24</sup>

Beside Hamzah Fansuri there were others noted in sufism and this order such as Abd al-Ra'uf Singkel and



Nur al-Din al-Raniri who came from India. Meanwhile Yusuf Taj al-Khalwati from Ujung Padang, Makassar who became mufti Banten, at the time of Sultan Agung Tirtayasa and banished to Sri Lanka had received a *Qadiriyyah* order *ijazah* from Shaykh Nur al-Din al-Raniri.<sup>25</sup>

The movement of this order in Indonesia is not clear exactly, but it became widespread. According to Aboe Bakar Atjeh, *manaqib* Shaykh Abd al-Qadir became the practise in Indonesia. It is recited by most of the Indonesian population on important days in the life of a particular family. This recital is normally begun with the recital of *al-fatihah* and the ceremony is completed with flowers, chilled water and the burning of incents. In the mists of the fragrant atmosphere a *kiyai* (a religious scholar) will read the said *manaqib*, whilst the whole house will listen with *khusu'* and *tawadu'* (submissiveness and humility). The contents of this *manaqib* concerns mainly the life of Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, and the main points that are highlighted in the recitals are his good manners, his pioussness, his asceticness and saintliness or the uniqueness that is found in Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani.<sup>26</sup>

Branches of the order were to be found in many places; for instance in Yemen and Somalia, *Yafi'iyyah* (14th century), *Mushari'iyyah* and *Urabiyyah*; in India, the *Banawah* and *Gurzmar* section; in Anatolia as the

Ashrafiyyah, Hindiyyah, Khulusiyyah, Nabulusiyyah, Rumiyyah and Waslatiyyah. Meanwhile in Egypt the Faridiyyah and Khasimiyyah section (19 century); in Maghrib as the Ammariyyah, Arusiyyah, Bu'aliyyah and Jilalah; and in West Sudan there is another section called Bakka'iyyah<sup>27</sup>

Various other sources have refer to other branches of the Qadiriyyah order such as the Akbariyyah and Rifa'iyyah in India. Meanwhile, in Egypt, there are the Al-Badawiyyah and Isawiyyah and other branches like Jabawiyyah, Jishtiyyah, Bayyumiyyah, Dasuqiyyah, Mawlaniyyah, Arusiyyah-Salamiyyah and Ammariyyah.<sup>29</sup>

The order sections which are also considered branches to the Qadiriyyah order besides the ones already stated above are Ahdaliyyah, Asadiyyah, Da'udiyyah, Faridiyyah, Ghawthiyyah, Hayat al-mir, Junaydiyyah, Kamaliyyah, Khutusiyyah, Mawzaliyyah, Miyan khal, Mushari'iyyah, Nawshahi, Qumaysiyyah, Sawadiyyah, Urabiyyah, Waslatiyyah, Zayla'iyyah and Zinjiriyyah.<sup>30</sup>

In conclusion the followers of the Qadiriyyah order are found throughout the world. In fact it is the most important and popular order in the Islamic community. It flourishes from Morocco to the Far East including China, Malaysia and Indonesia. In short the followers of this order are found wherever there are Muslims.<sup>30</sup>

## 2. PRACTICES IN THE QADIRIYYAH ORDER

One of the al-Jilani's disciples, al-Shuhrawandi said, that the spiritual exercise for each disciple has to be determined by his *shaykh* according to the personality of the individual. Al-Jilani did not therefore make his system of practices in *dhikr* and *wird* so rigid that it could not be adopted to the circumstances. The *dhikr* and *wird* are practiced in various groups of the *Qadiriyyah* order. And generally the ceremony in Turkey are different from that in Africa.<sup>31</sup>

The *dhikr* and *wird* in some *Qadiriyyah* branches involves "*astaghfir Allah al-Azim*" said 100 times; "*subhana Allah*" 100 times; "salutations and blessings to his Prophet and his family" 100 times, and "*la Ilah illa Allah*" 500 times. As an addition, there are one or two more *wird* that are observed after specific prayers.<sup>33</sup> Others say that a member of the order must observe *wird* 3,000 times a day.<sup>34</sup>

Meanwhile the *dhikr* of the *Qadiriyyah* order in Malaysia is as follows. On the eleventh day of the Muslim month, it is usual for the *shaykh* to summon his disciples and followers to congregate at his house. The *dhikr* usually begins after the *isha'* prayers. In this ritual the *shaykh* sits in the centre of a circle formed by those present. The *fatihah* is then read, followed by the



offering of salutations and blessings to the prophets soul. After reading the second *fatihah*, salutations and blessings are offered to the soul of those of the prophets house and those of his companions. Then the third *fatihah* is read with salutations and blessings offered to the souls of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani and further blessings are offered to the souls of the members of all orders and those of the parents and families who have departed <sup>34</sup>

The *dhikr* commences with a loud chanting of the *salawah*<sup>35</sup> "*Allahumma salli 'ala Muhammad, ya Rabi salli 'alayhi wa sallim*", this is repeated for 100 times. After this follows the recitation of *surah al-Inshirah*<sup>36</sup> 79 times, followed by a recitation of *surah al Ikhlas*<sup>37</sup> 1000 times. After this, two short different verses are recited, each repeated 100 times. Then the *salawah* is chanted again and the loud *dhikr* is ended with recitation of God's name in the heart immediately follows, and is carried on for about half an hour.<sup>38</sup>

As the *Qadiriyyah* continues to flourish, it is possible that the teachings and also the *dhikr*, *wird* and *hizb* are altered from time to time. But nevertheless the *dhikr*, *wird* and *hizb* resemble the one observed by Shaykh Abdul al-Qadir al-Jilani is mentioned in *al-Fuyudat Al-Rabbaniyyah*<sup>39</sup> which was compiled by Isma'il Al-Qadiri. This is probably the most complete compilation.



## NOTES TO APPENDIX

1. W.Montgomery Watt, *Muslim Intellectual: A study of al-Ghazali* (Edinburgh, 1963), p.177; see also H.A.R.Gibb, *Mohammadanism* (Great Britain, 1954), p.155
2. Ali ibn Yusuf al-Shattanawfi, *Bahjah al-Asrar* (Cairo, 1304A.H.), pp.109-110
3. H.A.R.Gibb and J.H.Kramers, *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden & London, 1961), p.204
4. J.Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford, 1971), p.42
5. H.A.R.Gibb and Kramers, *op.cit.*, p.204
6. Bon Carra De Vaux, "Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani" in James Hastings, (ed.) *Encyclopaedia of religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh, 1908), p.12
7. Tawfiq al-Tawil, *al-Tasawwuf fi Misra Ibbana al-'asri al-Uthmani* (Egypt, 1365A.H./1946A.D.), p.71
8. T.W.Arnorld, *The preaching of Islam* (Lahore, 1979), p.331
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, p.332
12. See Abd al-Rahman ibn Umar al-Qadiri, *al-Jawhar al-Nafis fi Khawas al-Shaykh Uways* (Cairo, [n.d.]), p.8; see also B.G.Martin, *Muslim Brotherhood in Nineteenth-Century Africa* (Cambridge, 1976), p.160
13. Abd al-Rahman ibn Umar al-Qadiri, *op.cit.*, pp.9-12,17; see also B.G.Martin, *op.cit.*, pp.160-163
14. *Ibid.*, p.164
15. *Ibid.*, p.165
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. John A. Subhan, *Sufism: It Saints and Shrines* (New York, 1970), p.253
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*, p.255
21. Syed Naguib al-Attas, *Some Aspects of Sufism as Understood and Practised among the Malays* (Singapore, 1963), pp.51-52
22. *Ibid.*, p.32
23. Hamka, *Tasawwuf: Perkembangan dan pemurniannya* (Jakarta, 1980) p.218
24. Abd al-Rahman Haji Abdullah, *Sejarah Pemikiran Islam* (Selangor, 1981), p.258
25. Hamka, *op.cits.*, p.220
26. Aboe Bakar Atjeh, *Tarekat Dalam Tasawwuf* (Kota Bharu, 1982), p.49
27. H.A.R.Gibb and J.H.Kramers, *op.cit.*, p.516
28. Bon Carra De Vaux, *op.cit.*, p.12
29. J.Spencer Trimingham, *op.cit.*, pp.271-273
30. See A.M.A.Shustery, *Outlines of Islamic Culture* (Mysore, 1954), p.359; see also Bon Carra De Vaux, *op.cit.*, p.12
31. H.A.R.Gibb and J.H.Kramers, *op.cit.*, p.203

32. Nicola Zaidah, *Sanusiyyah: A Study of A Revivalist Movement in Islam* (Leiden, 1958), p.10
33. Jamil M. Abu al-Nasr, *The Tijaniyyah: A Sufi Order in The Modern World* (London, 1965), p.57
34. Syed Naguib al-Attas, *op.cit.*, p.55
35. "Salawah" means invocation of blessings. As an example: "May Allah bless Muhammad, O lord, bless him with peace".
36. *The Qur'an*, Inshirah XCIV
37. *Ibid.*, Ikhlas CXII
38. Syed Naguib al-Attas, *op.cit.*, pp.55-56
39. Isma'il ibn Muhammad sa'id al-Qadiri, *al-Fuyudat al-Rabbaniyyah fi al-Ma'athir wa al-Awrad al-Qadiriyyah* (Egypt, 1353A.H.)

## GLOSSARY

- 'aba' (or jubbah). An outer garment with full length sleeves.
- adab (pl. adab). Manner; conduct; behaviour; adab al-shari'ah: manners of daily life prescribed by shari'ah.
- al-afdal. Excellent standing; best; better.
- 'ajami. Non-Arab; foreigner.
- ahl al-mujahadah wa al-muhasabah. The people of spiritual struggle and self-inspection.
- ahl al-sunnah. The people who follow the traditions of the Prophet, consisting the majority who are usually referred to as Sunnis. Sunnis generally are different from Shi'ahs.
- akhirah. Hereafter; the next world; the world of resurrection.
- 'alim (pl. ulama'). Learned man; scholar; savant; expert.
- amir. A commander in the army, in the Abbasid period amir was head of a battalion (approx. : colonel).
- amir al-mu'minin. Commander of the faithful. In Sunnism the title is given to caliphs, however in Shi'ism the title is only given to Ali ibn Abi Talib.
- amir al-umara'. Commander of the commanders, a title given in Abbasid period to Turkish ruler in Baghdad.
- amr. Command; order.
- al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar. Enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong. It means to order the good and exhort against that which is forbidden, one of the important precepts of nearly every school within Islam.
- Ansar. Helpers, those in Medina who helped the Prophet in establishing the Islamic community after his migration from Mecca to that city.
- 'aql. The intellect, also reason; 'aqli: rational.
- 'Arafah. The plain near Mecca where the pilgrims assemble before the end of the rite of pilgrimage; the day of 'Arafah: the day previous to the 'Id of sacrifice.



*al-'arif* (pl. *al-'arifun*). The gnostic, in contrast to the *'abid* and the *zahid*; he who possesses *ma'rifah* and knows by God.

*'arif*. Every ten men of the army, during the Abbasid caliphs were commanded by an *'arif*.

*'arsh*. The Divine Empyrean and Throne.

*'asin* (pl. *'usah*). Disobedient.

*ayah* (pl. *ayat*). Sign; simbol; or portent. The phenomena of the created order are identified as "signs" of God. The verses of the Qur'an are also called *ayah*; *ayah Allah* (pl. *ayat Allah*): sign or portent of God. In Shi'ism since the late thirteenth century the term has become an honorary title for the highest religion dignitaries.

*'azimah*. Determination.

*badal* (pl. *abdal*). A substitute; or a successor.

*baqa'*. To survive, abide; survival, continuance; subsistence, permanence; the state of one who has been lived by and in God after experiencing annihilation (*fana'*).

*barakah* (pl. *barakat*). Benediction, blessing, grace; in spiritual context it means grace or Divine Presence, which permeates the universe and draws man back to God.

*al-basar* (pl. *absar*). Sight, view, eye, vision; the organ of vision.

*al-basirah* (pl. *basa'ir*). Inner vision; the faculty of the intellect (= *al-'aql*); situated in the heart.

*bast*. The experience of joy, gladness and expansion of the self; the opposite of *qabd*: contraction.

*batini* (pl. *bawatin*). The inward, the esoteric, the interior; the opposite of *zahir* (the outward).

*bawadi'*. Glimpses.

*bay'ah*. Pact made between the head of the Islamic community and leaders within the community, as well as the initiate pact made between the spiritual master and the disciple. Both of these practices go back to the Prophet.

*bayt al-mal*. Department of finance.

*bid'ah*. Unauthorised innovation in religious matters.



*bisharah*. Good news.

*buka'*. Crying.

*burdah*. Outer garment.

*burj*. Tower

*burraq*. Name of the creature on which Prophet Muhammad made his ascension to heaven.

*da'i*. Islamic missionary.

*da'wah*. (pl. *da'awat*). Mission; invitation to accept a religion or a particular school within a religion; *al-da'wah al-Islamiyyah* means missionary activity associated with Islam.

*dhawq*. Taste, intuition.

*dhikr* (pl. *adhkar*). To remember, remembrance; words used in remembering, such as one of the Names of God; *dhikr bi al-lisan*: *dhikr* by tongue; *dhikr bi al-qalb*: remembering in the heart; *dhikr 'amali*: remembering God in action by obeying His commands; *dhikr ism dhat*: to say "Allah"; *dhikr nafy wa ithbat*: to say "La ilaha illa Allah" (There is no god except Allah).

*dhikr jali*. *Dhikr* with loud voice.

*dhikr khafi*. *Dhikr* of the heart.

*dibaj*. Brocade.

*al-din*. The normative or perfect religion which Allah ordained for humanity, including faith, ethics, law, devotions, institution and judgement.

*dinar*. Gold coin or a piece of gold.

*diwan al-kharaj*. Bureau of taxes.

*diwan al-nazar fi al-mazalim*. The board for the inspection of grievances.

*diwan al-shurtah*. The police department.

*diwan al-tawqi'*. A board of correspondence or chancery.

*diwan al-zimam*. An audit or accounts office.

*du'a*. Any invocation or prayer addressed to Allah.

*al-dunya*. The worldly; the lower values of this world, when compared to the other world; life dedicated to the pursuit of such values.

*fajr*. Dawn.

*fana'*. Self-annihilation, a state in sufism in which the soul becomes annihilated before God.

*fiqh*. Islamic Jurisprudence.

*faqih*. Jurist.

*faqr*. Literally, poor or poverty or material need, but in sufi context it means spiritual need.

*fara'id*. Religious duties.

*fard*. Obligatory.

*farq*. Separation.

*fasiq*. Disobedient, who violates the rules of religion openly.

*fatwa* (pl. *fatawa*). Legal decision or interpretation.

*fisq*. Sinfulness.

*fursan*. Cavalry.

*al-ghadr*. Betrayed.

*ghaflah*. Negligence.

*ghawth*. A help or an aid.

*ghaybah*. Heart in God; absence of the heart from all things except God; unawareness of the world around caused by a spiritual experience.

*ghina*. Wealth; richness; independence; the opposite of *faqr*.

*ghulam* (pl. *ghilman*). A kind of slave who might be an eunuch. They wore rich and attractive uniforms and were known to beautify and perfumed their bodies in an effeminate fashion.

*ghurbah*. Solitude.

*hadith* (pl. *ahadith*). Report of the Prophet's words, or on his deeds, approvals and disapprovals.

*hadith qudsi*. "Sacred" *hadith*, a saying of the Prophet in which God speaks in the first person.

*hafiz*. A person who is an expert on *hadith*.

*hal*. State.

*halaqah* (or *halqah*). Ring; circle; group of students studying under a teacher.

*halal*. Lawful.

*hal haqq al-haqq*. The state of the "truth of truth".

*hal al-haqiqah*. The state of reality.

*hal al-taqwa*. The state of piety.

*hal al-taslim*. The state of resignation.

*hajj*. Pilgrimage.

*hama'in masnun*. Black mud or odorous earth.

*haqq*. The Truth; the Real; a name of God.

*haqiqah*. Truth; essential reality; spiritual reality.

*haram*. Forbidden.

*haras*. The caliph's bodyguard.

*harbiyah*. Infantry.

*haybah*. Awe; dignity.

*hidayah*. Divine guidance.

*hikmah*. Wisdom.

*hudud*. Prohibitions; the limits.

*huduri*. Presence of the heart in God.

*hujrah*. A small room.

*hulul*. Interfusion; incarnation.

*hurmah*. Holiness.

*ibadah*. Worship; obedience with absolute humility and love.

*ibn sabil*. Literally, son of the road. It means traveler; way farer; vagabond; tramp.

*ijazah*. A document of initiation with its *silsilah*.

*ijma'*. Literally, unanimity; *ijma' al-ra'yi* means unanimous resolution. But in Islamic law it means consensus of the authorities in a legal question; one of the four fundamental basics of Islamic law.



*ijtihad*. Independent judgement in a legal or theological question, based on the interpretation and application of the four *usul* as opposed to *taqlid* ; individual judgement.

*ilhah*. Heresy.

*ilham*. Inspiration.

*ilm al-kalam*. Scholastic theology.

*ilm al-wirathah*. Knowledge by inheritance.

*ihsan*. Virtue and beauty, identified with the inner dimension of Islam.

*ikhtilaf fi al-fiqh*. Differences of opinion in jurisprudence.

*i'la kalimah Allah*. Exaltation of the word of God.

*iman*. Literally, "he who stands before"; leader of prayer; authority in religious sciences; caliph.

*inabah*. Seeking God.

*al-indhar*. Warning from the bad news.

*iqamah al-din*. Establishment of the religion.

*iradah*. Will; the determined pursuit of spiritual goal in all deeds; the starting point of a *salik* in his spiritual journey.

*isharah*. Literally sign, but in the spiritual context it means constant communion with God through prayer.

*al-islam*. Reformation.

*islam*. Surrender to God.

*iman*. Faith in God.

*ism al-dhat*. The name of Allah.

*istighathah*. Appeal for aid or call for help.

*istitar*. Disappearance.

*i'tiqad*. The faith.

*ittihad*. Union.

*izhar al-din*. Presentation of the religion.

*Jabariyyah*. Determinists.



*Jahiliyyah*. Ignorance.

*Jam'*. Collectedness; reunification with God; the opposite of *farq*.

*jarad*. Javelin-throwing.

*jawari*. Maidens among slaves who were also used as singers, dancers and concubines.

*al-Jawn*. A ruddy colour.

*jihad*. Literally ability, effort, endeavour, exertion of power.

*jihad akbar*. The greater *jihad* or major *jihad*; the struggle against low self.

*jihad asghar*. The lesser *jihad* or minor *jihad*; warfare with the unbelievers.

*jihad fi sabil Allah*. *Jihad* in the way of God or the cause of God.

*jizyah*. Tax levied on non-Muslims in lieu of their exemption from military service.

*jukan*. Polo ball.

*jund*. Regular troops.

*kafir*. Disbeliever.

*al-kamil*. The perfect.

*al-kasb*. Acquisition.

*kashf*. Reveal; uncover; knowledge through mystical means e.g. vision, audition, dream, inspiration, insight, etc..

*khalifah*. Every fifty men of the army during Abbasid caliphs were commanded by a *khalifah*.

*khalifah Allah*. God's caliph.

*khalwah*. Literally alone, but in sufism it means staying in a special place, far away from any disturbances, and the disciple exercises the *dhikr*. this training is an important part of spiritual education.

*al-khalis*. Pure or unmixed.

*khirqah*. Sufi livery as the sign of the end of his noviciate.

*khisyan*. Eunuch.

*khayrat*. Good deeds.

*kufr*. Unbelief.

*kunyah*. Agnomen (consisting of *abu* or *ummu* followed by the name of the son).

*kurdus*. A hundred men of the army formed a company or squadrom, and several such companies constituted a *kurdus*.

*kursi*. A chair.

*lam'* (pl. *lawami'*). A radiance; flash.

*laqab*. Agnomen; nickname; title; honorific; last name; family name.

*liqa'*. Literally meeting; get-together; reunion.

*ma'bud*. The object of worship, reverence, loyalty and obedience.

*madhhab*. School; rite of *fiqh*; religious creed.

*madrasah*. School, college or university.

*mad'u*. That called to Islam.

*al-mafdul*. Lesser standing.

*al-ma'hud*. The normal life.

*mahw*. Effacement. In spiritual context it means all the ordinarily attributes of a person had been vanished.

*majlis* (pl. *majalis*). Gathering, session used in sufism in a technical sense as the gathering of the sufis.

*Majusi*. Magians or Zoroastrians.

*majzub*. In spiritual context it means a man of distracted mind owing to Divine attraction.

*makruh*. Undesirable.

*al-mala'*. Chiefs.

*malik al-mashriq wa al-maghrib*. King of the east and the west.

*maqam*. Stage; station.

*al-maqdur*. Things determined by the Eternal Will.

*mandub*. Commendable.

*ma'rifah*. Knowledge.

*marju'*. The mystic who returns to the world, after he has achieved union, in order to reform the world and lead men to God.

*masdar*. Infinitive noun or verbal noun.

*al-mashru'*. The Divine command.

*mawdu' al-da'wah*. Da'wah content.

*maw'izah hasanah*. Goodly counsel.

*mawt ma'nawi*. Spiritual death.

*mihbarah*. A person who dictate speeches, re-write them and compile them as a record.

*minhaj al-da'wah*. Da'wah methodology.

*mithaq al-Islam*. Islamic obligation.

*mubah*. Permissible.

*mudarris* (pl. *mudarrisun*). Teacher, professor.

*mufti*. The person who is asked and then answers the question.

*muhajir*. Emigrant.

*muhibb*. Lover.

*muhtasib*. The chief of municipal police who acts as overseer of the markets and public morality.

*mujahadah*. Ascetic discipline and spiritual struggle upon the sufi path.

*mujadalah bi allati hiya ahsan*. Argument in a gracious manner.

*mujahid*. The warrior.

*al-mujall*. The exalted; the honored.

*mujtahid*. An authority who can give independent opinion in the *shari'ah*, that is, practice *ijtihad*; qualified jurist.

*mu'min*. A believer.

*munafiq*. Hypocrite.



*muntahi*. A person who has completed his journey and reached the destination of his *tariqah*.

*muqatalah*. Fight.

*mu'id*. Assistant teacher; tutor who seats by the teacher's side, repeating his words to the students and explaining difficult points.

*murad*. The "finisher" at the end of the path, but *murid* is the beginner.

*muraqabah*. Contemplation; meditation.

*murid* (pl. *muridun*). A person who wants to follow the way of sufi; disciple.

*murtaziqah*. Regular paid soldier.

*mushaf* (or *mashaf*). Copy of the Qur'an.

*mushahadah*. Spiritual vision.

*mushrik*. Polytheist.

*mustafti*. The person who ask the question.

*mutasawwif*. A person who commits himself to being a "sufi"; a beginner.

*mutatawwi'ah* (or *muttawwi'ah*). Volunteers.

*al-muthallath*. The third.

*al-muthanna*. The second.

*muwafaqah*. Agreement.

*nabi*. Prophet.

*nadharah*. Warning.

*nafilah*. Supererogatory.

*al-nafs*. Self; one's evil desire.

*nafs mutma'innah*. Righteous desire.

*nahu*. Syntax; Grammar.

*al-nas*. Mankind.

*nasab*. Lineage; descent.

*nard*. Backgammon; trick-track of Indian origin.

*nisyan*. Forgetfulness.



niyyah. Motivation.

nur al-jamal. The light of beauty.

nur al-shuhud. The light of witness.

al-nush. Good counsel.

qabd. Contraction.

Qadariyyah. Indeterminists.

qadi. A judge.

qadi al-qudah. Chief judge.

qa'id. Every hundred men of the army during the Abbasid caliphs were commanded by a qa'id.

qalanswah. The black high-peaked hat made of felt or wool.

qalb. Heart.

qari. Qur'an reader.

qasid. Literally, a person with a goal or purpose. But in sufi context, it means a person who has reach a second stage after the stage of iradah.

qiblah. Direction to which Muslims turn in praying (toward the ka'bah).

qil wa qal. Literally, idle talk or gossip, but in sufi context, the person who listens to gossip or idle talk is not serious in his attitude or stand. Whereas sufism is serious in its perspective.

qital. Fighting.

qiyas. Literally measure, comparison. But in Islamic law it means analogy; one of the four fundamental basics of Islamic law.

qudwah. Exemplary godliness.

quftan. Jacket.

qutub (pl. aqtab). A pole or an axis.

raghbah ila Allah. Desire for God.

rahmah li al-'alamin. Mercy for all the worlds.

rahim. The compassionate.

*rak'ah*. A bending of the torso from an upright position (in Muslim prayer ritual).

*Ramadan*. The month of fasting.

*ramiyah*. Archers.

*raqs*. Dervish dances.

*rasul*. A messenger of God.

*ra'uf*. The merciful.

*rayhan*. Basil.

*rehlah*. Travelling; globe-trotting.

*ribat*. A monastery.

*rida*. Satisfaction.

*risalah*. Prophethood or messengerhood.

*risalah al-Islam*. The message of Islam.

*ruh*. Spirit.

*rukun al-dawlah*. The honorific title means pillar of the state.

*sadaq*. Bride's dowry payable under the marriage contract.

*al-sahabah*. The Companions of the Prophet Muhammad.

*sahi*. Sober; the sufi who has overcome his spiritual intoxication (*sukr*).

*sahib al-barid*. Chief of the postal department.

*sahib al-shurtah*. Chief of police incharge of the caliph's bodyguard.

*sahw*. Sobriety.

*sajdah*. Prayer carpet.

*al-salaf al-salih*. Pious ancestors.

*salah*. prayer.

*salam*. Greeting.

*salih*. Good; right; sound.

*salik*. One who follows the spiritual path.

*salsal ka al-fakhar*. Dried clay.

*sama'*. Musical session of the sufi.

*sarawil*. Wide trousers of Persian origin.

*al-sawad*. Black region (of dark-coloured vegetation, contrasted with the dazzling whiteness of the desert).

*sawlajan*. Mallets, a sort of croquet or hockey.

*sayyids*. Title of the Prophet Muhammad's direct descendants.

*al-shahadah 'ala al-nas*. Witness before mankind.

*shahid*. Witness; martyr, one killed in battle with the infidels.

*shari'ah*. The Islamic law; prophetic way.

*al-shath*. Words uttered in ecstatic state in which the sufi boasts of superhuman power or status; theopathic utterances.

*shawq*. Intense desire.

*shaykh* (pl. *mashayikh* or *masha'ikh*). A master of sufi order.

*al-shaytan*. Satan.

*shirk*. Association of partners with God; setting up a god besides God; polytheism.

*shukr*. Thankfulness.

*al-sibt*. The grandson.

*siddiq*. Truthful man; a highest order of saints. *Siddiq* literally the trustfulness.

*silsilah*. A sort of spiritual chain of the names of all the masters of the brotherhood.

*sirdab*. Celler.

*sirr*. Soul.

*sufi*. A "*mutasawwif*" will become the "*sufi*" through his efforts; an advanced along the path.

*sujud*. A position of bowing down the head on the prayer carpet.

*sukr*. Spiritual intoxication.



*sunnah*. The tradition of the Prophet, embracing his manner and ways of doing and acting in different circumstances in life.

*surah*. Chapter in the Qur'an.

*ta'alluq bi Allah*. Attachment with Allah.

*ta'ammul*. Consideration; contemplation; meditation.

*al-ta'awun 'ala al-birr*. Cooperation in the godliness.

*tabi'i*. The generation after the Companions.

*al-tabligh*. Conveyance.

*al-tabshir*. Announcement of the good news.

*al-tadhkir*. Reminder.

*tafrid*. The unity of oneness.

*tafsir*. Commentaries of the Qur'an.

*tafwid*. Entrusting.

*taghyir*. To change.

*tahannuth*. Practise piety, perform words of devotions and seek religious purification.

*tajalli*. Appearance.

*taqdim al-aham fa al-muhim*. Submission to the most important than the important.

*taqdir*. Decreed; foreordained; predestined.

*tanasukh*. Transmigration.

*tarbiyah*. Education.

*tarhah*. A sort of gown worn by professor in the Abbasid period.

*tariqah*. Sufi order.

*tawakkul*. Trust in God.

*tawali*. Glimmers.

*al-tawasi bi al-haqq*. Exhortation one another with truth.

*tawassut*. Mediation, flexibility and having balance.

*tawbah*. Repentance; "return to God".



*tawfiq*. Good fortune.  
*tawhid*. Oneness of God.  
*taylasam*. Distinctive black turbans and metals.  
*tazkiyah*. Purification.  
*tin*. Simple earth.  
*thubut ma'a Allah*. In state of constancy with God.  
*tubban*. A knee-length shorts.  
*ubudiyah*. Servanthood.  
*ulu al-'azm*. Men with strong determination.  
*ulum laduniyyah*. Mystical ideas.  
*ummah*. Muslim community.  
*uns*. Fellowship.  
*usul al-fiqh*. Principles of the jurisprudence.  
*uzlah*. Seclusion.  
*wahdah al-wujud*. The belief or doctrine that all existence is one; monism of *wujud* (existence / being); pantheism.  
*wahy*. Revelation.  
*wali* (pl. *awliya'*). Saint.  
*walimah*. An invitation to a meal.  
*waqf*. Public endowment.  
*wasitah*. Medium.  
*watad* (pl. *awtad*). A peg.  
*wazir*. A vizier.  
*wazir tafwid*. Vizier with full authority, unlimited.  
*wazir tanfidh*. Vizier with limited executive power only.  
*wilayah*. Saintliness.  
*wird*. The litany recited usually many times a day in sufi order.  
*zahir*. Outward.

zakah. Alms giving.

zandaqah. Blasphemy.

zanni. Uncertain.

zawiyah. A sufi center.

zil Allah 'ala al-ard. God's shadow on earth; a title special to caliph in the Abbasid period.

zimmi (or ahl al-zimmah). Literally protected. They are the free non-Muslim subjects living in an Islamic state.

zindiq. Unbeliever; atheist.

zuhd. Asceticism; renunciation of the world.

zuhr. Midday.

zulm. Tyranny.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

THIS BIBLIOGRAPHY IS DIVIDED INTO SEVEN SECTIONS AS FOLLOWS:

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