
Sufism and Mysticism: Short Biography of Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jeelani (R.A)

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ABSTRACT: *Sufism is a mystic body of religious practice found in Islam which is characterized by a focus on Islamic purification, spirituality, ritualism, asceticism and esotericism. Sufism is a path of spiritual advancements cum expansion of consciousness leading to awareness of self in the universe. The practice of Sufism leads to the development of innate spiritual and initiative abilities. Ancient Kashmir has been a practical place of stay and meditation for the saints, Sufis, Rishis and other devoted worshipers of Allah. The philosophy spread along the valley after the arrival of Sufis from central Asia. As necessitated by love's jealousy, the Sufi is taken away from all except the Truth. One of the most important doctrines of Sufism is the concept of the "Perfect Man" al-Insan al-Kamil. This doctrine states that there will always exist upon the earth a "Qutb" - a man who is the perfect channel of grace from God to man and in a state of wilaya sanctity, being under the protection of God. This paper is an attempt to understand the Short Biography of Sufi saint, Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jeelani (R.A)*

KEY WORDS: Sufism, Rishi, Islam, mystic, Humanistic, ethos, composite, culture.

INTRODUCTION

History of the word "Sufism" is the name given to Islamic mysticism in Western languages from the early 19th century. It's probable that the name "Sufi" stems from suf, which in Arabic means "wool," and refers to the early ascetics of Islam who lived in Prophet Muhammad's time and the immediate aftermath. These ascetics often wore tattered wool robes. Similar to this, Islamic mysticism is referred to as tasawwuf, which is Arabic for "to wear wool." The Arabic word faqir, which means "the poor," has another name for sufis: fuqara. Darvish is the Persian equivalent. In other cases, the word "Sufi" is substituted with the Persian phrase "old in knowledge," or "pir."5 The ahl-e-suffah 6 (literally, "the people of the bench"), a group of early Muslims who resided in the first mosque in Medina near to the Prophet Muhammad, have previously been discussed. Woolen robes were worn by them as they pursued spiritual happiness. The Arabic word safa, which

means "purity," is yet another probable source of the name "Sufi." Although the word "Sufi" draws its lexical meaning from the word "suf" (wool), its true meaning may be summed up as "purity." The cleanliness of the jism (body), qalb (thought), and nafs (soul) is referred to as sufi. So, in a word, we may say that a Sufi is someone who dresses in wool and has a pure heart that knows Reality. *Alaikum bi labs al suf tajiduna halawat al iman fi qulubekum* (the Prophet himself stated that wearing a suf improves the sweetness of faith) is a Hadith that makes it clear that Prophet Muhammad was used to donning a woollen robe. The same concept is reiterated in another Hadith: "Prophet Hazrat Muhammad also wore woollen robes and rode the ass" (*kanan nabi yalbasu suf wa yarkabul himar*).

Sufism and Mysticism

Atal Bihari Vajpayee, a former Indian prime minister, used the phrase "Insaniyat, Jamhuriyat, Kashmiriyat," which translates to "Humanism, Democracy, and Kashmiriness," to sum up his philosophy for promoting and sustaining the peace, advancement, and prosperity of the people of Jammu and Kashmir (FirstPost, 2018). Taking the reader a few centuries back, to a time when the mystical current of Islam known as Sufism was entering the Indian subcontinent and preaching the teachings of love, compassion, and humanity while promoting an ideology where caste hierarchy or an individual's financial standing did not matter, this paper will attempt to unravel the origins and meanings of this statement twenty years later. The structure and theory of this spiritual Islamic philosophy and theology, which has had a considerable impact on the evolution of Islamic politics and culture, will be thoroughly examined, as well as the many ways that religious devotion is expressed via shrines (Elias, 1998). Based on that, it will discuss the development of the 'Kashmiriyat', a tradition of syncretism that manifested in the Kashmir Valley of Jammu & Kashmir as a result of the cooperative efforts of both Muslims and Hindus towards coexistence, communal harmony, hospitality, non-violence, and mutual accommodation. Through observing the unholy alliance between organized fundamental interpretations of religion and gun culture, which has resulted in the weeding out of the remnants of this humanistic culture of Kashmir with its roots deeply embedded in the previously secular and glorious ancient past, it will follow the development of this idea and its eventual demise.

The paper will use in-depth content analysis and linguistic theories to shed light on the latter, showing how the term "Kashmiriyat" has frequently been used inconsistently in accordance with the particular agenda of relevant actors, such as political leaders, news reporters, and human rights activists who use it in their discourse. By taking this tack, the paper will come to the conclusion that the appeal of "Kashmiriyat" has devolved into a "empty signifier," which demonstrates the actors' failure to uphold the concept behind it. As a result, it has become "a truth beyond representation and falsification which reflects an imaginary rather than actual phenomenon" (Aggarwal, 2008, p. 231).

One of the earliest known Sufis in Kashmir is said to have been from Turkistan belonging to the Suharwadi order in the 13th century, Sayyed Sharfuddin Abdur Rahman, affectionately known as Hazrat Bulbul Shah, as detailed in the EFSAS Study, "Kashmir's Composite Culture: Sufism & Communal Harmony - Kashmiriyat". He is said to have come during the reign of King Suhadeva (1301–20) and was the first Saint who planted the seeds of Islam in Kashmir. He is reported to have brought about changes in the rigorously caste-based, Brahmin-dominated society of Kashmir. Lhachan Gualbu Rinchana, a Buddhist prince from Ladakh who rebelled against his uncle, the king of Ladakh, and fled to Kashmir after being routed, found refuge with the King of Kashmir, who appointed Rinchana as a Minister, thanks in large part to Bulbul Shah. After being crushed by Mongols who invaded Kashmir with 70,000 men, Raja Suhadev escaped to Tibet. After the Mongols left, Ramachandra, his prime minister, assumed control of the kingdom and named Rinchana as an administrator. Rinchana afterwards orchestrated Ramachandra's assassination and took control of Kashmir. In an effort to win over the local populace, Rinchana wed Ramachandra's daughter Kota Rani. Rinchana also wanted to convert to Hinduism, but Brahmin priests forbade him since they were unsure of which varna (caste) he would choose.

Abdul Qadir Jeelani (R.A.)

Unlike other kids, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) did not spend his time playing and having fun. He has always dedicated his time to remembering the Almighty Allah. A Voice from the Unseen would be heard calling, "Come towards Me, O blessed one," if he had ever planned to join the other children. When he first heard this voice, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) would shudder in fear. He would approach his mom and take a seat on her lap. He eventually became used to this voice. He would give up the idea of playing and preoccupy himself with the concept of remembering the Almighty Allah instead of going to his mother.

One day, he went for a stroll outside his house. He saw an ox in front of him while he was strolling through Jilan's streets. He followed it for a while while walking. Then the ox turned around and started speaking to him in human. "You have not been created for this and you have not been given instructions to do this," it said. He went back home right after and told his mother about the experience. He asked his mother's permission to go to Baghdad to finish his academic work and further his spiritual development. His mother, who was now 78 years old, readily agreed to this admirable request.

EARLY LIFE

Unlike other kids, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) did not spend his time playing and having fun. He has always dedicated his time to remembering the Almighty Allah. A Voice from the Unseen would be heard calling, "Come towards Me, O blessed one," if he had ever planned to join the other children. When he first heard this voice, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) would shudder in fear. He would approach his mom and take a seat on her lap. He eventually became used to this

voice. He would give up the idea of playing and preoccupy himself with the concept of remembering the Almighty Allah instead of going to his mother.

Passing on of Sheikh Abu Saleh Moosa (ra)

He was cared for by his grandpa, Sheikh Abdullah Sauma'ee (ra), after the death of his father. The marriage of the great Saint's parents was brought about by his grandpa. From an early age, he shaped Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) into the person he would become. He bestowed spiritual diamonds to Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra). He treated him tenderly and lavished him with wise counsel.

Commencement of Academic Studies

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra)'s mother enrolled him at a local Jilan Madrassa when he was four and a half years old—or, in other narrations, five years old. He attended this Madrassa till he was ten years old. During this time, a specific extraordinary incident took place. When Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) entered the Madrassa, he saw dazzling individuals going in front of him and calling out, "Give way to the Friend of Allah." When the great Ghaus (ra) was asked when he first learned of his Wilayah, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) said, "When I was ten years old, I found Angels walking beside me on my way to the Madrassa," according to his son Sayyidi Abdur Razzaq (ra). They would chant, "Give way to the Wali Allah, Give way to the Wali Allah," as we approached the Madrassa. This continued, and that's when I realized Wilayah was a blessing.

Passing on of Sheikh Abdullah Sauma'ee (ra)

When Sheikh Abdullah Sauma'ee (ra), his grandpa, died away, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) was still enrolled in the Madrassa in Baghdad. His mother took up responsibility for his schooling when his grandpa passed away. She handled this duty with a great deal of patience, honesty, and attention. When this occurrence happened, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) was around 18 years old.

Extraordinary Incident

One day, he went for a stroll outside his house. He saw an ox in front of him while he was strolling through Jilan's streets. He followed it for a while while walking. Then the ox turned around and started speaking to him in human. "You have not been created for this and you have not been given instructions to do this," it said. He went back home right after and told his mother about the experience. He asked his mother's permission to go to Baghdad to finish his academic work and further his spiritual development. His mother, who was now 78 years old, readily agreed to this admirable request.

Mother's Advice

It was such a time where parents in their old age usually depend on their children for moral and financial support, but this pious and pure servant of Allah only wanted the pleasure of Almighty

Allah and His Rasool ﷺ. Whilst she was very attached to Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra), she did not let her personal feelings come before the pleasure of Allah. She wanted her son to be a man of knowledge and wisdom. In those days, people used to travel either by foot or by camel or another animal. The roads passed through dense forests and jungles and there was always the danger of travellers being robbed and killed by bandits. Sayyida Ummul Khair Fatima (ra) knew of the dangers but still supported her son's. She wished him well with her Du'as. She said: "O my dear son! I have now become very old and I do not think I will ever get to see you again, but my Du'as will always be with you. May Almighty Allah grant you success in your quest for academic and spiritual knowledge."

She then said: "Your deceased father left eighty Dinars from which I am giving you forty Dinars for your journey and forty Dinars I will keep for your younger brother, Sayyid Abu Ahmad Abdullah." She took the forty Dinars and sewed them under the arm of his coat. She once again made Du'a for him. On bidding him farewell, she gave him the following advice: "O' my beloved son! Let this advice, which I am about to give you be an important part of your life. Always speak the truth! Do not even think of lies." The young Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) said, "My dear mother! I promise from my heart that I will always act upon your advice." Sayyida Fatima (ra) then embraced the apple of her eye with love and motherly gentleness for the last time, and with the words, "Go! May Allah be with you. It is He who is your Helper and Protector". The journey to Baghdad began.

A famous incident which illustrates his obedience to his mother occurred shortly after him leaving for Baghdad when his caravan (Qafila) was attacked by a sixty man band of highwaymen.

ARRIVAL IN BAGHDAD & EDUCATION

At a period of upheaval and division in the Islamic world, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) came in Baghdad in 488 AH (1095 AD), under the Abbasid Caliphate. The Islamic monarchs showed no sense of obligation and paid little attention to Islamic principles.

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) had already spent the forty dirhams his mother had given him when he got to Baghdad. He started to live in hunger and poverty without any money. He moved in the direction of the Arcade of Chosroes in quest of Halaal food because to his extreme poverty. He discovered that there were already 70 Awliya Allah looking for Halal cuisine when he arrived to the Arcade. He went back to Baghdad since he didn't want to get in their way.

He ran across a Jilan traveler on the way back. He spoke with him as to if he was familiar with a young guy named "Abdul Qadir" after learning that Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) was from Jilan. He was introduced to himself as Abdul Qadir by Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra). The traveler then gave a gold block to Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra), claiming that his mother had given it to him. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) instantly did the Shukr of Almighty Allah after hearing this. The

majority of the gold was subsequently given to the Awliya Allah, who were looking for sustenance, when he returned to the Arcade of Chosroes. After taking some for himself, he left for Baghdad.

He prepared meals, served the needy upon his return to Baghdad, and then shared this dinner with them. Even though he was starving, the great Ghaus fed the hungry first, then donated the majority of his riches to the Awliya Allah before consuming the meal himself. This is unquestionably the mark of an actual servant of Allah.

INITIATION INTO THE SPIRITUAL ORDER

Sheikh Hammad bin Muslim Ad Dabbaas (ra) and Sheikh Abu Saeed Al-Mukharrami (ra), two of the best Mystics of their day, provided Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) with his spiritual instruction in Baghdad. He had received several blessings from both of these individuals, but he had not yet sworn allegiance to a spiritual leader (Peer-o-Murshid).

When the moment was right, he appeared in the presence of Sheikh Abu Saeed Al-Mukharrami (ra) and joined his Halqa and spiritual order by becoming his student (Mureed) in accordance with the Will of Almighty Allah. This special student received special blessings of spiritualism and mysticism from Sheikh Abu Saeed (ra), who lavished him with love and care.

He once requested Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) to bring something when he and others were sat in front of the Sheikh. "One day, the foot of that young man will be on the shoulders of all the Awliya Allah, and all the Awliya of his time will humble themselves before him," Sheikh Al-Mukharrami (ra) declared in reference to the audience while he was gone.

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) was given a dinner by Sheikh Abu Saeed Al-Mukharrami (ra), who had just welcomed him into the spiritual order. In reference to this, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) said, "For every morsel of food that my Sheikh-e-Tareeqat put into my mouth, my heart began to fill with the light of Marifah."

THE ROSE OF BAGHDAD

Sheikh Abdul Qadir (ra) experienced a trial upon his return to Baghdad after his spiritual pilgrimage, which he overcame with majesty knowledge. The homecoming of Sheikh Abdul Qadir (ra), who had a sizable following of students due to his stellar reputation and spiritual stature, alarmed many of Baghdad's Islamic elite. The intellectuals got together and came up with a method of communicating their discontent with Sheikh Abdul Qadir's presence in Baghdad in a direct and understandable manner.

They gave the order to fill a sizable vessel to the brim and send it to Sheikh Abdul Qadir's (ra) rooms. The container stood in for Baghdad, and the water for the local students. This suggested that there was no longer place in Baghdad for a new Sheikh.

The Sheikh used a cunning bit of insight and displayed his remarkable abilities by plucking a rose and placing it on top of the water. He then gave the order to return the vessel to the senders, who upon viewing it instantly recognized the Sheikh's tremendous spiritual understanding and gave him the moniker "The Rose of Baghdad."

As was already said, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) arrived in Baghdad at a time when the city was rife with corruption and people were easily duped. The deceived also attempted to "debate" their claim that the Holy Quran was purportedly "a creation" around this period. Since the Crusades had began, when the whole Christian world was dedicated to overthrowing the Muslim Empire, it had been a very trying period for Muslims all around the globe. Al-Ghawth al-A'zam (ra) finished his education and engaged in twenty-five years of spiritual practice during which time Baghdad's situation deteriorated worse.

WORKS

Some of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra)'s well-known works include:

- **Futuh al-Ghaib (Revelations of the Unseen)** – 78 discourses, fairly short and to the point but very powerful.
- **Al-Fath ar-Rabbani (The Sublime Revelation)** – 62 discourses definitely longer, given in the Ribaat and Madrasa in Baghdad AH 545-546.
- **Jala' al-Khawatir (The Removal of Cares)** – 45 discourses, also in the same locations, given in the year AH 546.
- **Kitab Sirr al-Asrar wa Mazhar al-Anwar (The Book of the Secret of Secrets and the Manifestation of Lights)**
- **Malfuzat (Utterances)** – This is a collection of various sayings of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra). Generally it is found at the end of the hand copied Arabic manuscripts of Fath ar-Rabbani.
- **Al-Ghunya li-Talibi Tariq al-Haqq (Sufficient Provision for Seekers of the Path of Truth)** – also known in the Indian sub-continent as Al-Ghunya li-Talibin. These five volumes, written by the Sheikh, at the request of one of his murids, is a comprehensive guide to all aspects of Islam, both the inward and the outward.
- **Khamsata 'Ashara Maktuban (Fifteen Letters)** – These are 15 letters originally written in Persian by Sheikh Abdul Qadir to one of his murids.
- **Al-Fuyudat al-Rabbaniyya (Emanations of Lordly Grace)**
- **Bashair al-Khairat (Glad Tidings of Good Things)** – A Salawat by Sheikh Abdul Qadir by way of inspiration from Allah.

- **Answers to Various Important Questions** – Contains many concise answers to very important questions regarding a variety of topics.
- **Special Prayers** – Contains many special invocations taught to us by the Sheikh for their special blessings.
- **Gate of Poverty** – Contains the story excerpted from Necklaces of Gems of the Sheikh's struggle with the Devil Armies, Iblis himself, and his lower self (nafs).

“In one of his writings, Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jilani writes: "There are times when I wait to eat until God is content to say, "Abu Qadir, get up and eat for My sake, or wear these clothes to please Me." Men like him would only do even everyday tasks when instructed to do so by God; naturally, not for their own benefit but rather for that of God, since they want to please Him in everything that they do.

He was therefore gifted with a religious upbringing, and at the age of 18, he began a long spiritual journey that would span for around seventy-one years and lead him to the high station of Mujadadiyyat, maybe even higher. He informed his mother one day that he intended to go to Baghdad in order to acquire education. She started to cry when she saw how focused he was, and she gave him forty gold pieces, which she stitched into a pocket under his jacket's armpit. His lucky mother offered him the following advise before he left his hometown for Baghdad: 1. Follow God's instructions 2. Refrain from doing what is prohibited 3. Constantly accept the providential will 4. Always tell the truth.

“Some natures have a spiritual affinity with others. In this way my soul has an affinity with the soul of Syed Abdul Qadir Jilani and I have been made aware of it through clear spiritual visions. About thirty years back one night God informed me that He had chosen me for His own. By a strange coincidence an old woman who was about eighty years of age saw a dream the same night and related it to me the next morning that she had seen Syed Abdul Qadir Jilani (may Allah be pleased with him) in her dream. He was accompanied by another eminent personage both wearing green dresses. The second person was somewhat younger than Syed Abdul Qadir. First they offered prayer in our Jum'a Masjid and then they emerged into the courtyard of the mosque. The woman stood near them and presently a bright star appeared in the East. Syed Abdul Qadir was very happy at its appearance and addressing it greeted it with: Peace be on you. His companion also offered the greeting of peace. That star was my self. She saw this in the latter part of the night. As has been said: A believer see visions him-self and visions about him are vouchsafed to others”

CONCLUSION

Sufism is seen as an obscure aspect of human existence. The Qur'an was regarded by Sufis as the foundation of their religion and beliefs. They may rise beyond the ignoble and solvable issues that a class of individuals has enmeshed Islam in thanks to their mystic interpretation of the Holy

Qur'an. Sufism's interpretation of the Qur'an is founded on human intellect and humanism, both of which have a magnificence. It is pointed in the direction of the cosmos. It has a worldwide tone. This is most likely the proper interpretation of the Holy Qur'an. Tasawwuf, according to Sufis, has existed throughout the whole history of Islam. Titus Burckhardt claims that Tasawwuf, which is based on the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad's (S.A.W.) Sunnah, is the esoteric part of Islam.

He engaged in such serious spiritual practices for over 25 years that hearing about them makes one in awe of the commitment of this Great Saint. He quickly attained the statuses of "Fana-fi Rasool" and "Fana Fi Allah" because to his honesty and commitment to managing his nafs. He had now completely submerged himself in the ocean of love for Allah and His Prophet (s). He transformed himself into an immovable mountain of endurance and resolve. Numerous noteworthy events occurred throughout this period of his life. This information alone would fill books if they are documented. A few occurrences are cited to give us an idea of his spiritual state during the course of these 25 years.

The Promised Messiah (as) adored Sheikh Abdul Qadir (ra), who was unquestionably a wonderful servant of Allah (swt). Both people were fervent devotees of Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw). Both people put in a lifetime of nonstop devotion to Allah (swt), working ceaselessly day and night, until old age overcame them and their exterior shells began to show signs of the aches and pains that come with a lifetime of unwavering service. Insha'Allah, may Allah (swt) provide Sheikh Abdul Qadir (ra) a high position in paradise and grant all searchers of the truth the ability to emulate his righteousness by following his clean and upright example. Ameen

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