

شانِ رفاعى

Shan-e-Rifaa'i

Greatness of Imam Rifaa'i

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Greatness of Imam Rifaa'i

The English translation of 'Shan-e-Rifaa'i'



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الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ
أَتَابَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Du'a for Reading the Book

Read the following Du'a (supplication) before you study a religious book or an Islamic lesson, you will remember whatever you study, **إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ**:

اللَّهُمَّ افْتَحْ عَلَيْنَا حِكْمَتَكَ وَاَنْشُرْ
عَلَيْنَا رَحْمَتَكَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

Translation

O Allah **عَزَّوَجَلَّ**! Open the door of knowledge and wisdom for us, and have mercy on us! O the One Who is the Most Honourable and Glorious! (*Al-Mustatraf, vol. 1, pp. 40*)

Note:

Recite Salat upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ once before and after the Du'a.

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أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ
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Greatness of Imam Rifaa'i

Du'a of Attar

O Allah Almighty! Whoever reads or listens to the 22-page booklet 'Greatness of Imam Rifaa'i', grant him the blessings of Imam Ahmad Kabeer Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ and forgive him without accountability.

اٰمِيْنَ بِجَاهِ النَّبِيِّ الْاَمِيْنِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Virtue of Salat upon the Prophet ﷺ

The Beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: 'Indeed, your names along with your identities are presented to me, therefore, send Salat upon me in a good manner (i.e., with beautiful words).'

(Musannaf Abdul Razzaq, vol. 2, p. 140, Hadees 3116)

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Seven glad tidings of seven Awliya

A beloved young child once passed by some righteous people of Allah Almighty and they began to look at that child. One of

them recited Kalimah Tayyibah لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ and said: 'That blessed tree has appeared.'

The second person said: 'Many branches will grow from the tree.'

The third said: 'The shadow of this tree shall soon expand.'

The fourth person said: 'Its fruits shall increase in a short time and the moon shall glow.'

The fifth person said: 'After some time, the people shall witness (saintly) miracles manifest from him and they shall be greatly inclined towards him.'

The sixth person said: 'Within a short space of time, his excellence and greatness shall be elevated and signs will manifest.'

The seventh person said: 'Who knows how many doors (of evil) shall shut because of him and many shall become his disciples?' (*Jami'ah Karamat Awliya, vol. 1, p. 490*)

Dear Islamic brothers! It is the immense grace of Allah Almighty that He has created love for the Awliya رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ in our hearts. The pious and blessed child who was just mentioned was none other than the founder of the Rifaa'iyyah Sufi order, Sayyiduna Muhy-ud-Deen Sayyid Abul Abbas Ahmad Kabeer Rifaa'i Husayni Shaafi'i رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ. He was from the descendants of the grandson of the Beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ,

Sayyiduna Imam Husayn رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. (*Seerat Sultan Awliya, p. 22, selected*)

In order to gain blessings, let us listen to his introduction. Sayyiduna Sufyan Bin 'Uyaynah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ states:

عِنْدَ ذِكْرِ الصَّالِحِينَ تَنْزِلُ الرَّحْمَةُ, meaning, 'Mercy descends when the righteous are mentioned.' (*Hilya-tul-Awliya, vol. 7, p. 335, Raqm 10750*)

Vision of the Chosen One ﷺ and glad tidings

Forty days before he رَضِيَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ was born, his maternal uncle, Sayyid Mansoor Bata`hi رَضِيَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ was blessed with the vision of the Beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ in his dream. The Beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: 'O Mansoor! A son will be born to your sister after forty days, name him Ahmad, and when he reaches the age of discernment, send him to Shaykh Abul Fadl Ali Qaari Waasiti to study, and never become heedless of his upbringing.'

Exactly forty days after this dream, Sayyiduna Ahmad Kabeer Rifaa'i رَضِيَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ was born. (*Tabqat-ul-Saufiyyah lil Manaawi, vol. 4, p. 191*)

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Under the care of his maternal uncle

He رَضِيَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ memorised the Quran at the age of 7 and in the

same year, his father travelled to Baghdad for some work and passed away there. After the passing of his father, him and his mother were called by his maternal uncle, Shaykh Mansoor رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, so that he could continue his formal and spiritual learning and upbringing under his own guardianship.

He رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ had already memorised the Quran previously, so after a few days, Shaykh Mansoor رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ acted upon the command of the Beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ and sent him to Waasit to study under Shaykh Ali Qaari Waasiti رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ. Shaykh Ali Qaari Waasiti رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ paid special attention to his studies and training.

As a result of his teacher's efforts and his God-given abilities, Sayyid Ahmad Kabeer Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ studied Quranic exegesis, Hadees, jurisprudence, Ma'ani, logic, philosophy and all of the formal branches of knowledge at the age of only 20, and alongside this, he رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ also acquired the internal sciences from his maternal uncle, Shaykh Mansoor رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ. With the grace of Allah Almighty, he رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ very quickly attained mastery in the internal sciences also. (*Seerat Sultan-ul-Awliya*, pp. 45-46 summarised)

Account of appointing successor

When the time of Shaykh Mansoor's رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ death approached, his honourable wife said: 'Make a will for your son to become your successor.'

Shaykh Mansoor رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ said: 'No, I make a will that my nephew, Ahmad, will become my successor.'

When his wife was insistent on this, he called his son and his nephew, Imam Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, and said to both of them: 'Bring date-leaves to me.'

His son cut many leaves and brought them, but Sayyiduna Imam Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ did not bring any leaves.

When asked the reason for this, he رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ gave a wise answer, saying: 'I witnessed them all glorifying Allah Almighty, which is why I did not cut any leaf.'

After hearing his response, Shaykh Mansoor رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ looked towards his wife whilst smiling and said: 'I also made Du'a for my son to become my successor many times, however, I was always told that my nephew is my successor.'

Thus, at the age of 28, Sayyid Ahmad Kabeer Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ became the successor of his uncle and Shaykh Mansoor رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ passed away in the same year. (*Bahjat-ul-Asraar*, p. 270)

May Allah Almighty have mercy upon him and forgive us without accountability for his sake.

اٰمِيْنَ بِجَاہِ النَّبِيِّ الْاَمِيْنِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Abundance of voluntary prayers

He رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ would pray 400 units of Nafil Salah every day, in

Greatness of Imam Rifaa'i

which he رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ would recite Surah Ikhlas 1000 times. Moreover, he رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ would perform Istighfar 2000 times daily. (*Tabqat-ul-Sufiyya, vol. 2, p. 225*)

'Ibadat mayn guzray mayri zindagani

Karam ho karam Ya Khuda Ya Ilahi

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Compassion towards creation

When he رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ would walk in the heat and a locust would seek shade on his clothes, he رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ would remain at that place until it flew, and he رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ would say: 'It has received shade from us.' (*Tabqat-e-Kubra-lil-Sha'rani, juzz 1, p. 200*)

Mercy towards a dog

He رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ once saw a flea ridden dog which had been expelled by the locals. So, he رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ took it to the jungle and built a canopy (to protect it from the heat and rain) over it. Also, he رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ began to feed it, give it water and look after it in every way. As a result of his continued efforts, the dog eventually became healthy again. So, he رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ washed it with warm water and cleaned it. (*Tabqat-e-Kubra-lil-Sha'rani, juzz 1, p. 200*)

Dear Islamic brothers! There is a great lesson for us in this blessed conduct of Sayyiduna Ahmad Kabeer Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ.

Therefore, we should not treat humans and animals in a bad manner and display good manners towards them. It could be this action of ours that gets accepted in the court of Allah Almighty and become a means of our forgiveness.

The Beloved Prophet ﷺ said: 'An indecent woman was forgiven just because she passed by a dog who was panting near a well and was about to die due to the severity of thirst. That woman removed her shoe, tied it to her scarf and drew out some water for it. She was forgiven just due to this action.'

(Bukhari, vol. 2, p. 409, Hadees 3321)

Serving the lepers and the crippled

It was the practice of Sayyiduna Imam Ahmad Kabeer Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ to visit the sick and the crippled (those who had lost the use of their legs) and treat them with compassion.

He رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ would wash their clothes, clean the dirt from their heads and beards, take food to them, eat with them and very humbly ask them to make Du'a for him.

When he رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ would hear about anybody falling sick in the village, he رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ would visit them even if they were very far. At times, it would take two or three days getting there and back. Sometimes, he رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ would wait on the path for a blind person and if anyone passed by, he رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ would take him holding his hand and guide him to his destination. *(Tabqat-*

Greatness of Imam Rifaa'i

e-Kubra-lil-Sha'rani, juzz 1, p. 200)

Dear Islamic brothers! Aiding the poor and the sick is a means of attaining great rewards. If Allah Almighty gives us the ability, we should help the devotees of the Prophet within our vicinity and our neighbours during the times of difficulty.

The Merciful Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: 'The one who relieves a Muslim of a burden from the burdens of the world, Allah Almighty will relieve him of a burden from the burdens of the Judgement Day; and the one who creates ease for a poor person in the world, Allah Almighty will grant him ease in the world and the Hereafter; and the one who conceals a Muslim's shortcomings in the world, Allah Almighty will conceal his shortcomings in the world and the Hereafter; and Allah Almighty keeps helping His bondsman as long as the person keeps helping his brother.' (*Tirmizi, vol. 3, p. 373, Hadees 1937*)

*Hamayshah haath bhalai kay wasitay uthayn
Bachana zulm-o-sitam say mujhay sada Ya Rab
Rahayn bhalai ki rahoon mayn gaamzan har dam
Karayn na rukh mayray paoon gunah ka Ya Rab*

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Compassion towards children

Dear Islamic brothers! The righteous slaves of Allah Almighty

do not hurt the feelings of anyone. Hence, Sayyiduna Imam Ahmad Kabeer Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ passed by some children who were playing. They looked towards him and ran away out of his awe. He رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ went behind them and said: 'You became fearful due to me, so forgive me and continue playing.' (Tabqat-e-Kubra-lil-Sha'rani, juzz 1, p. 200)

*Mayray akhlaq achy hun mayray sab kaam ache hun
Bana do mujh ko tum paaband Sunnat Ya Rasoolallah!*

(Wasail-e-Bakhshish, p. 186)

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Compassion towards the elderly

When he رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ would see an elderly person, he رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ would go to people of his locality and tell them the following Hadees: The Beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, 'The one who honours an elderly Muslim, Allah Almighty will appoint someone that will honour him when he becomes old.' (Tabqat-e-Kubra-lil-Sha'rani, juzz 1, p. 200; Tirmizi, vol. 3, p. 411, Hadees 2029)

Explaining this Hadees, the well-known exegete of the Quran, Hakeem-ul-Ummah, Mufti Ahmad Yar Khan رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ states: 'Whoever respects an elderly Muslim only because he is older (thinking) his worships are greater than mine and he was a

Muslim before me, then **إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ** he will witness in the world that the people will respect him when he grows old. It has also been mentioned that such a person will live a long life, he will receive wealth, prosperity and honour in the world, and rewards in the Hereafter.' (*Mirat-ul-Manajih, vol. 6, p. 560*)

Helping the poor and the widows

When he **رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ** would reach near his hometown upon returning from a journey, he **رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ** would remove the rope that would tie his provisions and then gather wood and place them on his head. Witnessing this, the other poor people would do the same and after entering the city, they would distribute that wood to the widows, destitute, crippled, sick, blind and elderly. He **رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ** would never recompense hatred with hatred. (*Tabqat-e-Kubra lil Sha'rani, juzz 1, p. 200*)

Dear Islamic brothers! Did you see how our pious predecessors **رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ** would live their lives. Sometimes, they would treat animals well, at other times they would care for the sick, and on other occasions, they would aid the needy and grief stricken, and look after the blind and the elderly. In short, these personalities were living examples of the following Hadees of the Beloved Prophet **صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ**: **خَيْرُ النَّاسِ أَنْفَعُهُمْ لِلنَّاسِ**, meaning, 'The best of people are those who benefit people.' (*Jami'ah Sagheer, p. 246, Hadees 4044*)

Therefore, we should look after and bring joy to our Muslim

brothers also.

Shaykh-e-Tareeqat, Ameer-e-Ahl-e-Sunnat, the founder of Dawat-e-Islami, 'Allamah Maulana Abu Bilal Muhammad Ilyas Attar Qadiri دَاعَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمُ الْعَالِيَةَ mentions the following in regards to wishing well for and bringing joy to others: 'Bringing joy to Muslims holds great importance. Hence, it is stated in a blessed Hadees, 'After the obligatory acts (*Faraaid*), the most beloved action to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ is to bring happiness to the heart of a Muslim.' (*Mu'jam Kabeer*, vol. 11, p. 59, *Hadees 11079*) Indeed, if we were to all alleviate the grief and problems of one another in this day and age, the entire world would change at once.

But alas! Brother is seen fighting with brother, and the honour, life and wealth of Muslims is being violated at the hands of Muslims. May Allah Almighty grant us the ability to end hatred and spread love.' (*Faizan-e-Sunnat*, vol. 1, p. 1244)

Musalman musalman kay khoon ka piyasa

Huwa waqt aaya 'Ajab Ya Ilahi

Sabhi aik hojain iman walay

Paye Shah-e-'Aali nasab Ya Ilahi

اٰمِيْنَ بِجَاہِ النَّبِيِّ الْاَمِيْنَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

صَلُّوْا عَلَي الْحَبِيْب

Inform me of my defect

Once, Imam Sayyid Ahmad Kabeer Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, out of humility, said to his disciples: 'If you have seen any defect within me, then tell me.'

One disciple stood up and said: 'O master! You have one very big defect.'

Sayyid Ahmad Kabeer Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ asked: 'O my brother! What defect?'

He (very humbly) said: 'Blessing people like us (bad people) with your company.'

After hearing this, all of the disciples began to cry at once. Sayyid Ahmad Kabeer Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ also cried and said: 'I am your servant; I am the lowest among you.' (*Tabqat-e-Kubra-lil-Sha'rani, juzz 1, p. 201*)

Dear Islamic brothers! Did you see how humble and modest Imam Ahmad Kabeer Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was despite possessing a great rank of sainthood. No doubt, his life contains many Madani pearls for us. But remember, humility should only be expressed for the pleasure of Allah Almighty. Just as this humility is means of attaining great reward and high ranks, if a person displays humility just to show-off, then this humility can become a means of ruin also.

Ameer-e-Ahl-e-Sunnat, 'Allamah Maulana Abu Bilal

Muhammad Ilyas Attar Qaadiri دامت برحمته العالیه encourages us to refrain from false humility in 'Pious deed number 42', where he states: 'Today, did you refrain from committing the sin of hypocrisy and showing off by uttering such words of humility which your heart does not agree to? For example, to create one's own respect in the hearts of other people, saying things like, 'I am inferior', or 'I am lowly', but in fact, one does not consider himself inferior or lowly in his heart.

Lowered his head at the saying of Ghaus-e-A'zam

In Bahjat-ul-Asraar, it is stated that when Shaykh Abdul Qaadir Jilani رحمته اللہ علیہ said: قَدَرِمِي هَذِهِ عَلَى رَقَبَةِ كُلِّ وَلِيٍّ اَللّٰهُ (this foot of mine is on the neck of every saint), Sayyid Ahmad Kabeer Rifaa'i رحمته اللہ علیہ lowered his head and said: عَلَى رَقَبَتِي (your foot is upon my neck also).

Those who were present said: 'Shaykh! What are you saying?'

Thus, he رحمته اللہ علیہ said: 'At this present moment in Baghdad, Shaykh Abdul Qaadir Jilani رحمته اللہ علیہ has made the announcement, قَدَرِمِي هَذِهِ عَلَى رَقَبَةِ كُلِّ وَلِيٍّ اَللّٰهُ, so I have lowered my head and complied.' (*Bahjat-tul-Asraar, p. 33, summarised*)

A'la Hadrat, the Imam of Ahl-us-Sunnah, Maulana Imam Ahmad Raza Khan رحمته اللہ علیہ narrates an account of Sayyiduna Khidar Mawsili رحمته اللہ علیہ on page 388 of volume 28 of *Fatawa Razawiyyah*: (he states that) Once, I was present before Shaykh

Abdul Qadir Jilani رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ when a thought entered my mind that I would like to see Shaykh Ahmad Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ.

Shaykh Abdul Qadir رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ said: 'Do you wish to see Shaykh Ahmad?'

I said: 'Yes.'

Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ lowered his head for a short moment and then said: 'O Khidar! Look, this is Shaykh Ahmad.'

Thus, I found myself in the presence of Shaykh Ahmad Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ and when I looked towards him, I saw that he was an awe-inspiring individual. I stood up and gave him Salam, upon this, Shaykh Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ said: 'O Khidar! The one who has seen Shaykh Abdul Qadir, the leader of the saints, then why does he desire to see me? I am from his subordinates.'

After saying this, he رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ disappeared from my sight.

After the passing of Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, he travelled from Baghdad to Umm-e-Ubaydah to visit Shaykh Ahmad Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ and saw that it was the same Shaykh that he saw in the presence of Shaykh Abdul Qadir رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ. Seeing him for the second time did not increase his familiarity regarding him. Shaykh Ahmad Kabeer Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ said: 'O Khidar! Was the first meeting not sufficient for you?'

Imam Rifaa'i and the Awliya

The words of many renowned Awliya and pious predecessors رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ can be found regarding the greatness, excellence and high rank of Imam Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ. Let us read the statements of three such personalities:

1. Someone once asked Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ regarding Imam Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ, whereupon he said: 'His character is fully in accordance to the Shari'ah, Quran and Sunnah, and his heart is busy in the remembrance of Allah Almighty. He left everything and acquired everything (i.e., He turned away from the world for the pleasure of Allah Almighty, so he acquired the Lord and love for the Lord, thus, he attained everything).' (*Seerat Sultan Awliya, p. 200, summarised*)
2. The great Wali, Sayyiduna Ibrahim Hawazini رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ states: 'How can I praise Sayyid Ahmad Kabeer رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ. Every hair of his body has become an eye, by which, he observes the right, left, East, West and every direction.' (*Seerat Sultan Awliya, p. 200, summarised*)
3. A'la Hadrat, the Imam of Ahl-us-Sunnah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ states: 'He is included amongst the four Aqtaab, i.e., he is from the four who are most superior and distinguished amongst the Aqtaab. The first is

Sayyiduna Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, the second is Sayyid Ahmad Rifaa'i, the third is Sayyid Ahmad Kabeer Badavi and the fourth is Sayyid Ibrahim Dusooqi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِمْ.'

Promise of a heavenly palace in the world

Once, Sayyiduna Imam Ahmad Kabeer Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ went to purchase a garden at the request of his close disciple, Sayyiduna Jamal-ud-Deen رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ. The owner of the garden, Shaykh Isma'eel, said: 'If I do not receive what I desire in return for this garden, then I will never sell it.'

He رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ said: 'O Isma'eel! Tell me what price do you want for it?'

He said: 'O master! I can only give you this garden in exchange for a heavenly palace.'

Imam Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ said: 'Who am I that you are asking me for a heavenly palace? Ask me for any worldly thing that you desire.'

He said: 'I desire no worldly thing.'

Imam Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ lowered his head and the colour on his face changed and became pale. After a short while, he رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ raised his head and the paleness had turned into redness. He

رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ then said: 'O Isma'eel! I have purchased this garden in exchange of what you were asking for.'

He said: 'O master! Write this down and give it to me.'

After writing down بِسْمِ اللهِ on a piece of paper, he رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ wrote down the following: 'This is the palace that Isma'eel Bin Abdul Mun'im has purchased from the lowly servant, Ahmad Bin Abu Hasan Rifaa'i, and its guarantor is Sayyiduna Ali رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. Its boundaries are such that on one side is Jannat-e-'Adan, on the second side is Jannat-e-Maawa, on the third side is Jannat-e-Khuld and on its fourth side is Jannat-e-Firdaus. All of its Hoors, male servants, carpets, supplies, rivers and all trees are included in this contract; this palace is in exchange for the worldly garden of Isma'eel. Allah Almighty is a witness and guarantor to this.'

He رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ then folded that piece of paper and gave it to Shaykh Isma'eel. Shaykh Isma'eel رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ took that piece of paper, went to his children and said: 'I have sold this garden to Sayyid Ahmad.'

His children said: 'Why did you sell it whilst we are in need of it?'

So, he told them about the account of receiving the heavenly palace. The children said: 'We will only be pleased when we also have a share in that palace.'

He said: 'It belongs to all of us.'

After a little while, Shaykh Isma'eel رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ passed away. He had already instructed his sons during his lifetime to place that piece of paper in his shroud. Thus, the next morning, they found the following written on his grave: 'قَدَّوْجَدْنَا مَا وَعَدَنَا رَبُّنَا حَقًّا' (i.e. We have been granted our truthful promise which our Lord made to us). (*Jami'ah Karamat Awliya, vol. 1, p. 492, summarised*)

The deaf would hear his speech

It was the habit of Imam Sayyid Ahmad Kabeer رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ to sit down and deliver lectures. Those who were distant would hear just as easily as those who were close to him, such that, those who lived in the neighbouring areas would climb onto their roofs and listen to his lectures, and they would hear every word clearly. When the deaf would come to his gatherings, Allah Almighty would bestow them with the ability to listen to his speech.

When the Shaykhs of Tareeqah would come to his gatherings, they would spread out their garments during the lecture, and when Imam Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ would finish delivering the lecture, they would place their garments to their chests and then go to their disciples and relate everything they would hear. (*Tabqat-e-Kubra-lil-Sha'rani, juzz 1, p. 199*)

Freedom from Hell

Two disciples of Sayyiduna Imam Riffaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ were once present in the desert for the purpose of worshipping.

One of them had a desire that they receive a pass that grants them freedom from Hell. In the meantime, a white piece of paper fell from the sky. When they picked up the piece of paper and examined it, they could not see any visible writing on it. So, they took that piece of paper to their Murshid but did not inform him what happened.

When Sayyiduna Imam Riffaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ looked at the piece of paper, he fell into prostration. He then lifted his head and said: 'All thanks to Allah Almighty who showed me the pass of my disciples attaining freedom from Hell in this world.'

It was said to him: 'Master! This is a blank paper.'

He رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ said: 'Allah Almighty is not in need of ink etc.; this paper is written with light (Noor).' (*Jami'ah Karamat Awliya, vol. 1, p. 493*)

Sayings of Ahmad Kabeer Riffaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ

1. The one who necessitates unnecessary matters upon himself also ends up ruining necessary matters.
2. The person who thinks that his actions will lead him to the Lord Almighty has lost his way. (Instead of relying upon his actions, he should rely upon the Divine

Mercy).

3. Allah Almighty informs the Ghaus and Qutb of the unseen (Ghayb), thus, they are aware of which tree grows and which leaf is green and fresh.
4. The one who relies upon Allah Almighty, Allah Almighty places wisdom in his heart and it becomes sufficient for him in every difficult situation.
5. How many joyous people are there whose joy becomes suffering, and how many grief stricken are there whose grief becomes a means of salvation for them.
6. Woe to the one who receives some of the world and becomes preoccupied with it, and becomes grieved when it is taken away.
7. A sign of loving Allah Almighty is that one should be wary of all of creation besides the Awliya رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ, because love of the Awliya is due to love of Allah Almighty.

His children

He رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ was blessed with a lot of children. He رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ had 12 sons and 2 daughters. His lineage grew further through four of his sons. (*Seerat Sultan Awliya, p. 82, summarised*)

Final days of his life

His close servant, Sayyiduna Ya'qoob رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, states: 'Before his passing, Sayyid Ahmad Kabeer Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was afflicted with an ailment of the stomach and remained in this hardship for a month, and did not eat or drink anything for 20 days. Also, in the last stages of his life, he رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was overcome with a great emotional state and he would keep wiping his face and beard on the soil and cry. The following Du'a was on his lips, 'O Allah! Show forgiveness and pardon. O Allah! Forgive me. O Allah! Make me a covering for the calamities that are to fall upon the creation.' (*Tabqat-e-Kubra-lil-Sha'rani, juzz 1, p. 202*)

At the age of 66, after guiding and instructing the people, he رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ left this world for the Hereafter on Thursday 22nd of Jumadal Oola 578 AH, corresponding to 13th of September 1182 CE, at the time of Zuhr. His final words were:

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

Fulfilling needs after death

Shaykh Umar Farusi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ states: 'I had the honour of presenting myself at the shrine of Imam Rifaa'i رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ many times. Once, he رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ even mentioned a need of mine from the grave, and said in a loud voice: 'Go! Your need has been fulfilled.'" (*Jami'ah Karamat Awliya, vol. 1, p. 491*)

Greatness of Imam Rifaa'i

May Allah Almighty have mercy upon him and forgive us without accountability for his sake.

اٰمِيْنَ بِجَاةِ النَّبِيِّ الْاَمِيْنَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

صَلُّوا عَلَيَّ الْحَبِيْبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ