



WEEKLY BOOKLET: 308

A discourse on the sheikh of the Qadiriyyah Riḍāwīyyah
'Aṭṭariyyah order entitled,

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رحمة الله عليه

25 Pages



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فیضانِ شیخ ابو بکر شبلی رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shibli

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Translation Department (Dawat-e-Islami)

Aalami Madani Markaz, Faizan-e-Madinah, Mahallah Saudagran,
Purani Sabzi Mandi, Bab-ul-Madinah, Karachi, Pakistan

UAN: ☎ +92-21-111-25-26-92 – Ext. 7213

Email: ✉ translation@dawateislami.net

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shibli

An English translation of *Faizān-i-Sheikh Abū Bakr Shibli*



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Aalami Madani Markaz, Faizan-e-Madinah Mahallah Saudagran,
Purani Sabzi Mandi, Bab-ul-Madinah, Karachi, Pakistan

✉ **Email:** maktabaglobal@dawateislami.net – maktaba@dawateislami.net

☎ **Phone:** +92-21-34921389-93

🌐 **Web:** www.dawateislami.net

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

Du‘ ā for reading this book

Read the following *du‘ ā* (supplication) before you study a religious book or an Islamic lesson; you will remember whatever you study إِنَّ شَاءَ اللَّهُ:

اللَّهُمَّ افْتَحْ عَلَيْنَا حِكْمَتَكَ وَاَنْشُرْ
عَلَيْنَا رَحْمَتَكَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

Translation

O Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ! Open the doors of knowledge and wisdom for us and have mercy on us! O the One Who is the most glorious and honourable! (*al-Mustatraf*, vol. 1, pp. 40)

Note:

Recite *ṣalāt* upon the Prophet ﷺ once before and after the *du‘ ā*.

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Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ
أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ط

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ

Attar's du'ā

O Lord of the Prophet! Whoever reads or listens to this 25-page booklet about Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, protect them from loving the world, grant them ability to sincerely perform good deeds and allow them entry into Jannat al-Firdaws without accountability!

أَمِينٌ بِجَاهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأَمِينِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

The excellences of reciting *ṣalāt* upon the Prophet ﷺ

The reputed spiritual guide of the Qādiriyyah Riḍawīyyah ‘Aṭṭāriyyah spiritual chain, Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī al-Baghdādī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ explains, “I saw my deceased neighbour in a dream and asked, ‘How did Allah deal with you?’” He replied:

I encountered severe difficulties. I was unable to answer the questions of Munkar and Nakīr (the angels who pose questions in the grave).

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shibli رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ

Thoughts then began running through me, and I felt I had perhaps died without faith. A voice declared, “This punishment is for speaking unnecessarily in the world.”

Angels then began to approach. Just as they were about to inflict torment upon me, a person came between them and myself. He was beautiful in appearance and emanated fragrance. He reminded me of the answers to Munkar and Nakir’s questions. I answered accordingly and **أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ**, punishment was lifted from me.

I turned to the person and said, “May Allah have mercy on you! Who are you?” He explained, “I was created from the blessings of your abundant recital of *ṣalāt*. I have been tasked to help you in every difficulty.”¹

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Seeing the Prophet ﷺ in our graves

سُبْحَانَ اللهِ When an angel can come into our graves and help us due to the blessings of *ṣalāt*, why would the Prophet **صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ** not be able to, when he is the personality upon whom *ṣalāt* itself is recited and is the master of all creation, including angels?

¹ *Al-Qawl al-Badī*, p.260

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

The rank of a person committed to *ṣalawāt*

O those who love Allah’s Messenger! Observe the incalculable blessings we can earn from reciting *ṣalāt*. If only we were consistent and punctual in its recitation.

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī al-Baghdādī رَحْمَةُ الْمَوْلَى عَلَيْهِ, the 12th murshid in the Qādiriyyah Riḍawiyyah ‘Aṭṭāriyyah spiritual chain, was an individual greatly loved by the final Prophet of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ. An inkling of this can be gleaned from the following story.

When he met Sheikh Abū Bakr b. Mujāhid رَحْمَةُ الْمَوْلَى عَلَيْهِ, a leading scholar of Baghdad, the latter embraced him, kissed his forehead, and seated him next to himself. Witnessing the profound honour displayed, attendees of the gathering exclaimed, “O our master! Until yesterday, you and the people of Baghdad were saying al-Shiblī had lost his senses. Why now do you afford him this steep respect?” He explained in reply:

I did not do this without reason. اَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ Last night, I had an amazing dream, in which I beheld the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ stand, embrace al-Shiblī, kiss his forehead and seat him next to himself. “O Messenger of Allah!”, I humbly inquired, “Why such kindness and compassion for al-Shiblī?”

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ

(Informing of the unseen) The final Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ stated, “He recites this verse after every salah, and then recites *ṣalāt* upon me.”¹

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ

رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢٨﴾

*Indeed, there has come to you that Messenger from amongst yourselves; heavy upon him is your suffering; he immensely desires your well-being; utmost kind, merciful for the Muslims.*²

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

His name in the Qādiriyyah Riḍawiyyah ‘Aṭṭāriyyah spiritual chain

The Amir of Ahl al-Sunnah has issued his murids and ṭālibs a table of spiritual lineage (*shajarah*), which they are to recite daily. This comprises of names belonging to pious predecessors and elders, including Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ.

In this shajarah, du‘ā is made to Allah with the intermediation (*wasīlah*) of the Sheikh, as follows:

¹ *Al-Qawl al-Badī‘*, p. 346

² *Al-Quran*, 9:128, Translation from *Kanz al-Īmān*

*Behr-i-Shiblī Sheyr-i-Ḥaqq dunyā kē kuttōn sē bachā
Eik kā rakh 'Abd-i-Wāḥid bē-riyā kē wāsītē*

Behr; for the sake of

Sheyr-i-Ḥaqq: Lion of Allah

Dunyā kē kuttōn: those selfish for worldly gain

Bē-riyā: a sincere individual

This couplet explained in summary

O Allah! For the sake of Abū Bakr al-Shiblī, who is Your righteous servant and lion, save me from those who are greedy for the world! For the sake of his successor, Sheikh 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Tamīmī, make me a sincere slave of Yours!

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Arabic shajarah

The Reviver of Islam and Imam of Ahl al-Sunnah, Imam Aḥmad Razā Khān رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ compiled a lengthy Arabic shajarah, penned in the form of *ṣalāt* upon the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ. In this, he mentions Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ in the following manner:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَيْهِمْ وَعَلَى الْمُؤَلَّى الشَّيْخِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ الشَّيْبَلِيِّ رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ

Dear Allah! Send *ṣalāt*, salam, and blessings upon the Prophet

صَلِّ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ!

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ

Send the same upon his family, Companions, and Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ.¹

An introduction to his life

Dear Islamic brothers! Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was born near Baghdad in 247 AH, in the locality of Sāmarah. His name was Ja‘far and his teknonym Abū Bakr. Due to living in Shiblah or Shabīlah, he became known as Shiblī.²

The Sheikh harboured deep-rooted love for the name of Allah. He would kiss it wherever he saw it written.³ Allah had lifted the veils from his eyes, as he himself explained, “When I go to the marketplace, I am able to read the words سعيد (fortunate) and شقي (misfortunate) written on the foreheads of people thereupon.”⁴

Regal garments

Studying sacred knowledge for 30 years, he became expertly proficient in jurisprudence and hadith. The Sheikh was also Mālīki and had memorised Imam Mālīk’s famous Muwaṭṭa in its entirety.⁵

¹ *Tarikh wa Sharh Shajarah Qadiriyyah Barakatiyyah Razawiyyah*, p. 109

² *Tazkirah Mashāikh Qadiriyyah Razawiyyah*, p. 202

³ *Masālik al-Sālikīn*, vol. 1, p. 318

⁴ *Tazkirah al-Awliyā*, vol. 2, p. 141

⁵ *Tazkirah Mashāikh Qadiriyyah Razawiyyah*, p. 202

The king of his time appointed his father as governor of the Nahāwand region, a position the Sheikh also acquired after acquiring sacred knowledge. The king once summoned all his governors and gave them expensive clothing. One of them sneezed and wiped his nose with the luxurious garment he had received. This enraged the king, who removed him from office and had the clothing returned to him.

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رحمته اللہ علیہ went to the king and said:

You do not like for anyone to disrespect what you gifted them, and you are a creation. Yet, the King of all creation has blessed me with His friendship. He would not like for me to waste this auspicious bounty.

The Sheikh left his governance behind and went to the gathering of Khayr al-Nassāj رحمته اللہ علیہ, whereupon he repented. The latter instructed him to visit the celebrated saint, Abū al-Qāsim Junayd al-Baghdādi رحمته اللہ علیہ, to whom he pledged an oath of allegiance (*bay'at*). The Sheikh then completely engrossed himself in acts of worship and spiritual exercise. Eventually, he was declared a successor of Junayd al-Baghdādi.¹

Un kā mangtā pāon sē thakrā dē woh duniyā kā tāj

*Jis kī khātir mar geyē mun' am ragar kar ēariyān*²

¹ Sharif al-Tawārīkh, vol. 1, pp. 583,584; Masālik al-Sālikīn, vol. 1, p. 316

² Hadaiq-e-Bakhshish, p. 86

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ

Dunyā kā tāj: worldly status and rank

Mun‘am: a person blessed with bounties

Explaining the poetry of Razā

In this couplet, Imam Aḥmad Razā Khan رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ espouses:

He who asks in the court of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ, is the wealthiest person of all. This is because they offer no importance to worldly positions of power and authority, and cast these away with a mere swipe of their foot. This is in contrast to others, who die for these worldly gains and rub their heels together in longing for them (this is an Urdu idiom and can be equated to how people rub their hands together out of greed).

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

When Sheikh Shiblī made du‘ā in sajdah

The pious servants of Allah do not desire worldly rank, material wealth or earthly comfort.

They instead flee from the world, its wealth and complexities, as these do nothing but distract one from Allah. Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ once saw a person wholly engulfed in worldly matters. He then made sajdah and recited:

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي عَاقَبَنِي مِنْهَا ابْتِئَالَكَ بِهِ وَفَضَّلَنِي عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ تَفْضِيلًا

All praise is for Allah, Who granted me safety from that He afflicted you with, and granted me superiority over much of His creation.¹

The scholar ‘Ali al-Qāri’ رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ writes:

When Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ came across a person absorbed in worldly affairs, he would recite this (to save himself from the calamities of worldly wealth): اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَفْوَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ: - “O Allah! I ask You for pardon and well-being in this world and the Hereafter.”²

May Allah have mercy upon him and grant us forgiveness without accountability for his sake.

أَمِينٌ بِجَاهِ خَاتِمِ النَّبِيِّينَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

¹ *Mirāt al-Manājih*, vol. 2, p. 389

² *Mirqāt al-Mafātih*, vol. 9, p. 95

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ

A favour's reward

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ once set out on a journey with forty of his murids. After leaving Baghdad, the Sheikh turned to them and said, “Allah guarantees His servants sustenance (*rizq*).” He then recited the following parts of Sūrah al-Ṭalāq’s 2nd and 3rd verses:

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا ۖ وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ ۗ

*And whosoever fears Allah, Allah will create for him a way of salvation. And (Allah) will provide him sustenance from where he could not (even) imagine; and whoever relies upon Allah, so He is sufficient for him.*¹

After this, he left his murids where they were and went elsewhere. His absence lasted three days, and his murids had nothing to eat in this time. When he returned on the fourth day, he encouraged them by saying, “Allah has given His servants permission to search for sustenance. It was declared (in Sūrat al-Mulk’s 15th verse)”:

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ ذَلُولًا فَامْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِهِ

*It is He Who made the earth subservient to you; therefore, walk on its paths and eat from the sustenance (bestowed) by Allah.*²

¹ Al-Quran, 65:2-3, Translation from Kanz al-Īmān

² Al-Quran, 67:15, Translation from Kanz al-Īmān

“Send one of yourselves to look”, the Sheikh ordered, “Hopefully he will find something to eat.” The murids selected a poor person from amongst them and sent him back to Baghdad. He wandered from street to street but could not find any kind of sustenance. He eventually sat down, tired and dejected.

Nearby was the medical store of a non-Muslim doctor, who expertly skilled in diagnosing illnesses by checking a person’s pulse. The doctor saw the person sitting on the floor and thought him to be unwell. Calling him close, the doctor checked his pulse, and then asked for bread, meat, and a sweet dish. He gave this to the poor person and said, “This is the cure for what ails you.”

“There are 40 other patients like me”, the murid replied. The doctor arranged for more food, which was to be transported back to the other murids by way of servants. The doctor himself stealthily followed behind, with nobody aware of his presence.

The poor person returned to his fellow murids, accompanied by servants bearing food. When it was presented before Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ, he did not touch it with even a fingertip. “O righteous slaves of Allah!”, he exclaimed, “There is a marvellous secret in this food.” The murid who went to Baghdad then explained the entire situation. The Sheikh said, “A non-Muslim has treated us exceedingly well. Is it right for us to eat without recompensing him?”

“O Sheikh, we are but poor people”, the murids replied, “what can we possibly give him?” The Sheikh said they will all make

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ

du‘ā for the doctor before eating, which they did collectively. The blessings of this became immediately apparent. The doctor, who was in hiding and watching everything unfold, felt something in his heart which he had never felt before.

He came out of hiding, sat before the Sheikh and recited the *kalimah*. Having now become Muslim and repented from his past, he went on to become a high-ranking murid of the Sheikh.¹

May Allah have mercy upon them and forgive us without accountability for their sake.

اٰمِيْنَ بِجَايِ خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّيْنَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Loving and serving the awliyā'

Dear Islamic brothers! Look at the unique way the awliyā' (friends of Allah; saints) call others to righteousness. Whoever loves, serves, or helps them, never returns empty handed.

We also learn we should make du‘ā for whoever shows good conduct towards us. If a non-Muslim helps or does us a favour, we should pray for them to accept Islam. The du‘ā of Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ and his murids was accepted, and the doctor became Muslim.

¹ *Rawd al-Riyāhīn*, p. 157

A non-Muslim doctor who accepted Islam

Here is another amazing story of a non-Muslim doctor embracing Islam.

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ once became extremely ill and was taken to a hospital for treatment. The minister of Baghdad, ‘Ali b. ‘Īsā, saw the severity of the Sheikh’s illness and contacted the king, requesting an experienced doctor to be sent as soon as possible.

The king sent a non-Muslim doctor. Despite the latter’s skill and extensive spectrum of treatment, the Sheikh’s health did not improve. The doctor sighed, “If I came to know your remedy lay in my flesh itself, I would not hesitate to cut it off for you.”

Hearing this, the Sheikh explained, “My treatment can be achieved for less than this.” When the doctor asked how, he replied, “Become Muslim.” The doctor accepted Islam, and Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ regained his health that very moment.¹

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

اٰمِيْنَ بِجَاةِ خَاتِمِ النَّبِيِّينَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

The Reviver of Islam and Imam of Ahl al-Sunnah, Imam Aḥmad Razā Khān رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ penned a Persian couplet extolling the Sheikh, which translates as:

¹ *Rawḍ al-Riyāhīn*, p. 158

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shibli رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ

The progeny of Allah's Lion are also lions; O Abū Bakr al-Shibli! I ask you to help me!

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Dear Islamic brothers! Islam is the only true religion. It corresponds to the natural disposition of mankind. Inviting non-Muslims to Islam is the sunnah of all prophets and messengers عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ.

The fundamental reason prophets and messengers عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ were sent into this world, was so mankind could be extracted from the darkness of disbelief and led to the light of Islam.

The preceding stories highlight the vigilance and passion of Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shibli رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ regarding calling to Islam. When a non-Muslim embraced Islam, he immediately became well out of happiness. The Sheikh came with bodily illness, yet he overlooked this and cured someone suffering from a spiritual ailment. The Sheikh came with a problem, yet he solved the problems of another by inviting them to Islam.

To further this call to righteousness across the world, travel in the sunnah-inspired Madani qafilahs of Dawat-e-Islami. You too can bring people to Islam and guide Muslims who have lost their way.

Unshakeable love for the sunnah

The jurist and historian, 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ writes:

Abū Bakr al-Shiblī al-Baghdādī رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ needed to use miswāk during wuḍū. Despite searching, he did not come across one. He proceeded to purchase a miswāk for one dinār (a gold coin) and began to use it. Some people said, “You have spent so much! Has a miswāk ever been bought for this price?”

The Sheikh replied, “In the sight of Allah, this world and everything in it has less status than the wing of a mosquito. How will I answer if Allah asks me on the Day of Judgement, ‘Why did you abandon the sunnah of my beloved? Whatever wealth I gave you does not hold the value of a mosquito’s wing in My court. Why did you not spend such lowly wealth for an esteemed sunnah?’”¹

Dear Islamic brothers! Look at how much the Sheikh loved and valued the sunnah. May we too become true living reflections of the sunnah and devotees of Allah’s Messenger.

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

A heart-rending ḥajj

When Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ arrived on the plains of ‘Arafah during his ḥajj, he remained completely silent until sunset. When he performed saṭ and passed the two green

¹ *Lawaqih al-Anwaar*, p. 38

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ

mileposts, tears began flowing from his eyes. He then expressed his feelings with a handful of Arabic couplets, which translate as:

I set forth with the seal of your love stamped upon my heart. Only your love is what shall remain within it.

If only I were steadfast; if only I could keep my eyes close, and not open them until I beheld you.

When tears pour from the eyes onto the cheeks, it becomes apparent who is truly crying and who is merely pretending.¹

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

اٰمِيْنَ بِجَاہِ خَاتِمِ النَّبِيِّيْنَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Curing the caliph

The people of Allah are not worried by bodily ailments or worldly problems. With the permission of Allah, the awliyā' can even cure terminal or incurable diseases in the blink of an eye.

Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ once became ill. Medicine and treatment were unable to return him to health. Six months passed in this state. He came to know Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was passing by his palace, so he requested for the saint

¹ *Rawḍ al-Riyāḥīn*, p. 100

to visit him. When the latter arrived, he explained, “Do not worry. By the mercy of Allah, you will recover today.” The Sheikh recited *ṣalāt* upon the Prophet and passed his hand over the caliph’s body, curing him instantly.¹

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

The Muhammadan faith

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shibli رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ relates:

I was once travelling from Makkah to Shām. En route, I met a Christian scholar residing in a monastery. I asked, “Why have you secluded yourself here?” He replied, “I stay here to concentrate on performing a lot of worship, and so worldly tasks are not an obstacle to this.”

“Who do you worship?”, I asked.

He responded, “Isā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.”

I further asked: “Why do you worship a prophet of Allah, instead of Allah Himself? The only God is Allah, and only He is worthy of worship.”

The monk insisted, “Isā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ went forty days and nights without eating.” I asked, “You think someone

¹ *Rāhat al-Qulūb (Farsi)*, p. 50

can become God by spending forty days and nights without eating?” The monk said yes in reply.

I then said I will stay with him there, and he can count how many days and nights I go without eating or drinking. I busied myself with worshipping Allah for forty days, not eating or drinking once in that time.

When this time passed, I suggested, “If you wish, I can spend further time without food and water.” The monk then asked me what my religion was. “I am from the *ummah* of Allah’s final Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ”, I said, “I am a humble servant of his, and my religion is Islam.”

The monk forsook his religion, recited the *kalimah* and became Muslim. I took him with me to Damascus and said to the people there, “Ensure to look after this new Muslim brother of yours, and do not allow him to face any difficulty.”

I stayed there for a few days before leaving. When I returned, I found this new Muslim brother was always worshipping Allah and was beginning to be considered a saint.¹

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

¹ *Uyūn al-Hikāyāt*, vol. 1, p. 189

اٰمِيْن بِجَايِ خَاتِمِ النَّبِيِّيْنَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

The Sheikh's threshold of zakat

Ibn Bashhār would once prevent people from sitting with and listening to Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ.

He one day decided to test the Sheikh himself. Ibn Bashhār asked, “How much zakat is there upon five camels?” The Sheikh remained silent and did not offer a response. When he repeated the question many times, the Sheikh finally explained, “According to shari‘ah, one goat is wājib. The ruling for us is to give them all in zakat, however.”

“Do you have an imam you follow in this ruling?”, Ibn Bashhār inquired. The Sheikh declared he did. When asked who this was, he said, “Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, as he gave all his wealth in charity. When the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ asked what he had left for his family, he replied, ‘Allah and His Messenger.’”

Ibn Bashhār was greatly moved by this, and never forbade anyone from meeting with the Sheikh again.¹

One hadith from four thousand

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ acquired knowledge from upwards of four hundred scholars. He himself states:

¹ *Ṭabaqāt Kubrā li al-Sha‘rani*, vol. 1, p. 149

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shibli رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ

I studied four thousand hadith. I specifically selected one from amongst them, reflected deeply upon what it means, and began practically implementing it. I found salvation from punishment and my own personal success lay in this one particular hadith, in which Allah's Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to some of his Companions, "Busy yourself with preparing for the world and the grave for as long as you are to remain in them. Perform deeds for Allah as much as you are in need of Him, and undertake actions for the fire of Hell as much as you have strength to bear it."¹

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Servant of the noble saints رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِمْ

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shibli رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ once saw a Bedouin readily and wholeheartedly serving the Sufis of Makkah. When asking the reason behind this, the Bedouin said:

I once journeyed through a desolate wasteland. I came across a bareheaded and barefoot person, who had no travel belongings with him of any kind. Seeing this, I decided to approach and offer any food and water I had available.

I drew closer to him slowly. When I was but a foot away, he suddenly disappeared from my sight entirely. The

¹ *Ayyuha al-Wald*, p. 17

suddenness of this took me back, and I began to think this person was a devil. A voice then said, “No, he is not a devil. He is but totally engrossed in love for the Divine.”

I called for the person; “For the sake of He Who sent Muhammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ as a true prophet! Hear what I have to say, even for but a moment!” The person appeared and replied, “O young man! You have exhausted both you and I!”

I then said I merely wanted to help him, as I saw him alone in a wasteland. He responded by saying, “How can somebody who has Allah with him ever be alone?”

I mentioned how I did not see him with travel provisions or belongings of any kind. He replied, “When I am hungry the dhikr of Allah becomes my provision, and when I am thirsty, beholding Him becomes my objective.”

I requested if he could provide me with food. He asked, “Do you not believe in the miracles of the awliyā’?” “Indeed, I do”, I said, “yet I ask simply to satiate my heart.”

He struck his hand on the desert floor, took a handful of sand and gave it to me. “O deceived soul! Eat this.” I saw the sand had become edible grains, which appeared delicious and exquisite. He explained, “In the wilderness,

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ

saints are bestowed with many such bounties, if you understood.”

I asked him for water to drink. He struck his foot upon the earth, to which a spring of water and honey burst forth. I sat down to drink from this, and when I raised my head, he had disappeared again. I have no idea where he could have gone.

From that day, I resolved I shall serve the awliyā'. Perhaps I will see a saint like him again.¹

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

اٰمِيْنَ بِجَاہِ خَاتِمِ النَّبِيِّينَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Speaking good is better than remaining silent

In *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, Sheikh ‘Ali al-Hajwayrī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ writes:

Abū Bakr al-Shiblī al-Baghdādī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was passing through a district of Baghdad, when he heard a man saying, اَلْسُّكُوْتُ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْكَلَامِ - “Silence is better than speech.”

¹ *Baḥr al-Dumū*, p. 74

He responded, “Your silence is better than your speech, whilst my speech is better than my silence.”¹

Unique advice in regard to rizq

A man came to the Sheikh and said, “I have a big family, yet my means of acquiring rizq are few.” He advised, “Enter your home and remove everybody whose rizq you consider to be dependent upon you. As for those whose rizq is guaranteed by Allah, let them remain therein.”²

Passing away whilst acting upon the sunnah

Ja‘far b. Muhammad b. Nuṣayr al-Baghdādī رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ asked the Sheikh’s servant, Bakrān Dīnawarī, “What happened when Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ passed away?” The servant revealed:

The Sheikh lamented, “Someone’s dirham reached me through a path of oppression and lays in my responsibility. I have given thousands on behalf of its owner in charity, yet thoughts of it are eating away at me.”

He then ordered me to help him perform wuḍū. I did so but forgot to help him make *khilāl*. At that point, he was unable to speak, so he could not verbally remind

¹ *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, p. 402

² *Ṭabaqāt Kubrā li al-Sha‘rānī*, vol. 1, p. 148

Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shibli رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ

me. He took hold of my hand and led it to his beard, after which I made *khilāl* for him. He passed away after this.

Hearing this, Ja'far b. Muhammad رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ began to cry and exclaimed, “What can be said of a man who did not miss an etiquette of shari‘ah even in his final moments?”¹

Passing away

He passed away on Friday 27th Dhū al-Hijjah 334 AH, at the age of 88. His shrine is in Baghdad.²

Replying on behalf of all Ādam’s offspring

After his passing away, someone saw him in a dream and asked, “How did you face the angels of questioning in the grave?” He explained:

When they asked who my Lord is, I replied, “My Lord is He Who created Ādam, and watched you and other angels prostrating to him.” They heard this and said, “He has answered on behalf of all the offspring of Prophet Ādam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.” They departed after this.³

6 saintly aphorisms of Sheikh Abū Bakr al-Shibli

1. Gratitude is not to focus on what bounties you receive. Instead, it is to focus on He Who bestows them.⁴

¹ *Ihyā al-‘Ulūm*, vol. 5, p. 233

² *Tadhkirah Mashāikh Qādiriyyah Razawiyyah*, p. 210

³ *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā’*, vol. 2, p. 153

⁴ *Al-Risala al-Qushayriyya*, p. 212

2. When a Muslim nears his time of death, his complexion turns pale, as he fears standing in the court of Allah. When he exits his grave, his face shall be illuminated.¹
3. Bad opinions of the pious are developed when one adopts bad company.²
4. You shall most certainly acquire what is yours. As for what is not yours, you will not acquire it even with effort.³
5. To derive blessings from the Quran's advice, you must keep your heart attentive and not let it slip even for the blink of an eye.⁴
6. Hajj has two letters: **ح** and **ج**. **ح** entails clemency whilst **ج** means sin. The meaning gathered from this equates to a person saying, "O Allah! I have come to Your court with my crimes, hoping for Your clemency and mercy! If You do not forgive me, then who will?"⁵

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

¹ *Ṭabaqāt Kubrā li al-Sha'rani*, vol. 1, p. 148

² *Al-Kawakib al-Durriyah*, vol. 2, p. 86

³ *Sharif al-Tawarikh*, vol. 1, p. 603

⁴ *Tafsīr al-Sa'labi*, *Qaaf*, under verse no: 37, vol. 9, p. 106

⁵ *Al-Rawḍ al-Fāiq*, p. 57

Next Week Booklet



Aalami Madani Markaz, Faizan-e-Madinah, Mahallah Saudagaran
Purani Sabzi Mandi, Bab-ul-Madinah, Karachi, Pakistan

UAN: +92 21 111 25 26 92 | Ext: 7213

Web: www.maktabatulmadinah.com | E-mail: feedback@maktabatulmadinah.com