



The Knowledge of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani

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For Islamic Brothers

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الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّينَ
أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Knowledge of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رحمته الله عليه

وَعَلَى الْإِكِّ وَأَصْحَبِكَ يَا حَبِيبَ اللَّهِ

الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ

وَعَلَى الْإِكِّ وَأَصْحَبِكَ يَا نُورَ اللَّهِ

الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ

نَوَيْتُ سُنَّتَ الْإِعْتِكَافِ

I make intention of Sunnah *i’tikāf*.

Dear Islamic brothers! Whenever you enter a masjid, make an intention of performing *i’tikāf* whenever you remember. If you do this, then for as long as you stay inside, you will earn the reward of *i’tikāf*.

Remember! Normally in *masājid*, Islamic law does not give us permission to eat, drink, sleep, partake in *suḥūr* or *iftār*, or even drink Zamzam water. Yet, if one makes an intention of *i’tikāf*, he will be allowed to do these actions in the masjid. It is also important that one shouldn’t make this intention of *i’tikāf* just to eat, drink, or sleep. It should be done only to please Allah Almighty.

As mentioned in *Fatāwā Shāmī*: “If someone wants to eat, drink, or sleep in a masjid, he should intend *i’tikāf*, perform *dhikr* of Allah, and then do what he desires.”

The excellences of reciting *ṣalāt* upon the beloved Prophet صلوات الله عليه

The final Prophet of Allah, our master Muhammad صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ أَنْجَاكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ أَهْوَالِهَا مَوَاطِنَهَا أَنْ تَكُونُمْ عَلَيَّ صَلَاتِي فِي دَارِ الدُّنْيَا

O people! Undoubtedly, those of you who shall attain quickest salvation from the terrors and accountability of the Day of Judgement, shall be those who sent abundant *ṣalāt* upon me in the world.¹

صَلُّوا عَلَيَّ الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ

Speech intentions

The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **أَفْضَلُ الْعَمَلِ الصَّادِقَةُ** – “The best of deeds is a sincere intention.”²

Dear Islamic brothers! Make it a habit to form good intentions before every action, as good intentions can lead one to Paradise. Before listening to the speech, we can make the following good intentions:

- I will listen to the entire speech to gain knowledge.
- I will sit respectfully.
- I will avoid being lazy.
- I will listen with the intention of self-improvement.
- I will try to convey what I learn to others.

صَلُّوا عَلَيَّ الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ

Dear Islamic brothers! **الْحَبِيبُ لِلَّهِ** Today marks the 11th of Rabī‘ al-Ākhir. On this occasion, we commemorate the life of the renowned Shaykh ‘Abd

¹ Firdaws al-Akhabār: Hadith 8210

² Al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaghīr: Hadith 1284

al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ. In the Indian subcontinent, this event is known as *Gyarhwīn Sharīf*.

Let us now have the honour of discussing the acclaimed Shaykh, and in particular, his immense knowledge and scholarly status. After his passing, the Shaykh was buried in Baghdad, and is famously known across the world as Ghawth al-A‘zam. Allah blessed him with great status of sainthood, such that he is the leader of every saint.

Beginning our discussion, let’s look at an amazing story detailing the profound knowledge of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.

Sea of knowledge

Ḥāfiẓ Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ relates:

Ibn al-Jawzī and I once attended a gathering conducted by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. After a *qārī* recited verses from the noble Quran, the Shaykh started his speech. He mentioned one of the verses that had been recited and explained one of its meanings.

I asked Ibn al-Jawzī if he knew about the *tafsīr* the Shaykh had just presented. “Yes, I know this particular *tafsīr* of this verse,” he replied.

Afterward, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī mentioned 11 further explanations, one by one. Upon my asking every time, Ibn al-Jawzī replied he knew of these interpretations. The Shaykh mentioned 40 interpretations of that verse along with the names of the scholars who held those viewpoints.

After the 11 initial explanations, Ibn al-Jawzī shook his head to indicate he was not aware of the other 29.¹

¹ Akhbār al-Akhyār, p. 11

Dear Islamic brothers! From this, the level of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī’s knowledge can be seen. He mentioned 40 interpretations for just one verse. 29 out of those 40 were not even known to somebody of the calibre of Imam Ibn al-Jawzī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, who was a major Islamic scholar and imam of his time.

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ wrote masterful works on many sciences, including Quran, Hadith, *fiqh*, geography, medicine, history, astronomy, mathematics, Arabic lexicology and Arabic syntax. His books number over 300. Many of them are voluminous, spanning several volumes.¹

Shaykh Ibn Qudāmah al-Ḥanbalī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ said:

Imam Ibn al-Jawzī was the leading orator of his time. He penned expert works on a variety of subjects. Alongside his prowess in teaching, he was also a *ḥāfiẓ al-ḥadīth* (this refers to somebody who has memorized a hundred thousand *Aḥādīth* along with their chains of transmission).

Despite being one of the leading imams and scholars of his time, Ibn al-Jawzī knew only 11 interpretations of the 40 mentioned by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in that gathering. From this, we gain an understanding of the immense knowledge possessed by the Shaykh.

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

¹ Muqaddimah ‘Uyūn al-Ḥikāyāt, part 1, p. 16

Glad tidings issued by the beloved Prophet ﷺ

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was born in the town of Jīlān, near Baghdad, on Friday the 1st of Ramadan 470 AH.¹

The Shaykh’s father was Sayyid Abū Ṣāliḥ Mūsā رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, famously known also as Jangī Dōst. On the first night after the Shaykh’s birth, Sayyid Abū Ṣāliḥ رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ had a dream in which he beheld the beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ, the noble Companions رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ and blessed saints رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِمْ in his home.

The beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ gave him the following glad tidings:

O Abū Ṣāliḥ! Allah has blessed you with a son who is a saint. He is beloved to me and Allah. His rank among the saints and spiritual heads is like my rank amongst the prophets and messengers.²

Glad tidings given by the noble Prophets عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَام

In addition to the Prophet Muhammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ, other noble Prophets عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَام also gave glad tidings to the Shaykh’s father that all the saints of Allah will be obedient to Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, and that the Shaykh’s blessed foot will be upon their necks.³

Dear Islamic brothers! As you have gathered, our Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ has such a great status and rank that just after his birth, none other than the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ gave glad tidings of the Shaykh’s grand status, and told the Shaykh’s father that his son was to become the leader of every saint.

¹ Bahjat al-Asrār, p. 71

² Sīrat Ghawth al-Thaqalayn, p. 55

³ Tafriḥ al-Khāṭir, p. 57

In other words, his blessings became apparent as soon as he was born.

The Shaykh’s appearance

Describing the Shaykh’s physical appearance, Shaykh Abū ‘Abdullāh b. Aḥmad b. Qudāmāh رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ writes:

Shaykh al-Islam, Sulṭān al-Awliyā’, Muḥy al-Dīn, Sayyid ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was slim in build, medium in height, and broad chested. His beard was thick and his complexion brown. His eyebrows were joined, and his voice was powerful. Alongside being exceedingly handsome, he was very intelligent.¹

Early education

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was but a small child when his father passed away. He was then raised by his righteous grandfather, ‘Abdullāh Ṣawmā‘ī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, one of the leading Islamic figures of Jīlān. He oversaw the Shaykh’s initial education.

In 488 AH, the Shaykh moved to Baghdad at 18 years of age to further his Islamic studies. In that time, Baghdad was the academic and political hub of the Muslim world.

An indication to gain Islamic knowledge

Shaykh Muhammad b. Qā’id al-Awānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ mentioned he was once with Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, asking him various questions. One of them was, “What do you use as a criterion when dealing with your matters?”

¹ Nuzhat al-Khāṭir, p. 19

The Shaykh proclaimed:

I decide my matters based on truth. I have never lied or misrepresented anything. I never lied even in my childhood, back when I studied in madrasah.

Once, during Hajj season, I went to a forested area (in Jīlān). I saw a bull and began following it. Suddenly, it looked at me and said: **يَا عَبْدَ الْقَادِرِ مَا لِهَذَا خُلِقْتَ** – “O ‘Abd al-Qādir! You have not been created for this [type of activity].”

I rushed home, perplexed and anxious. I went to the roof of the home, and from there, I saw people standing in the plains of Arafah.

I then went to my mother and asked for her permission, so I may travel in the way of Allah Almighty, head to Baghdad, and acquire Islamic knowledge there. She asked what led me to this decision, so I told her of the incident with the bull. This moved her to tears. She brought the 80 dinars my father left in inheritance. I took 40 of them and left the rest for my brother, Sayyid Abū Aḥmad al-Jīlānī.

My mother sewed these 40 dinars in a specific thobe of mine, which had many patches. She granted me permission to go to Baghdad, encouraged me to tell the truth in every situation, and accompanied me some distance outside Jīlān to see me off.

She declared: **يَا وَلَدِي إِذْهَبْ فَقَدْ خَرَجْتُ عَنْكَ لِلَّهِ فَهَذَا وَجْهٌ لَا أَرَاهُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ** – “My dear son! Go! I separate from you for the sake of Allah. I will next see your face on the Day of Judgement.”

I departed for Baghdad along with a small caravan. On the way, our group was besieged by sixty highway robbers on horses, who

started snatching belongings from travellers. Yet, none of them troubled me in the slightest.

One of the robbers asked, “What do you have?”

I replied truthfully, “I have forty dinars.”

He asked where they were, to which I explained, “They are sewn into this pocket under my arm.”

The robber thought I was joking and moved ahead. After a short while, another came and asked me the same question, to which I gave the same reply. He also then moved ahead. When both robbers informed their chief about me, I was taken to him as per his orders. At that time, they were all dividing among themselves the possessions they had stolen. Their chief asked about what I had, and I said the same as before, that I had 40 dinars sewn into my thobe.

At his order, my pocket was cut open and the robbers saw I was telling the truth. The chief was profoundly shocked. مَا حَبَّبَكَ عَلَىٰ هَذَا الْإِعْتِرَافِ – “What compelled you to admit this?” he asked.

I said, “My mother made me promise to always tell the truth and not go against this vow.” The chief burst into tears and exclaimed, “Here you are, upholding the promise you made to your mother. Here I am, spending years going against the promises I made to Allah.”

The chief repented to Allah Almighty right then and there. The other robbers said, “We were with you throughout these robberies. Now, we will join you in repentance.” They all

repented and returned the stolen items. These were the first people who repented due to being positively affected by me.¹

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Dear Islamic brothers! Observe how passionate Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was for gaining Islamic knowledge. He not only left his home and travelled vast distances for this noble cause, but he also left his caring mother.

She herself made immense sacrifices. She not only gave her beloved son permission to gain Islamic knowledge, overlooking the pain and grief of sending him away, but also devoted him entirely to this endeavour. She clearly said: يَا وَكِدَيْ اِذْهَبْ فَقَدْ خَرَجْتُ عَنْكَ لِلّٰهِ فَهَذَا وَجْهٌ لَا اَرَاهُ اِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ – “My dear son! Go! I separate from you for the sake of Allah. I will next see your face on the Day of Judgement.” In fact, she not only gave him permission to travel far away, but gave him money to cover his expenses.

Those who financially support their children’s worldly education or business but do not help them in gaining Islamic knowledge should especially ponder over this point.

Another point of discussion here is the exceptional truthfulness of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ. He never lied once throughout his life. Truth was the basis of his actions, decisions, and every other matter.

One of the main reasons for this was the exemplary upbringing given to him by his pious mother, Umm al-Khayr Fāṭimah رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهَا. She made the Shaykh promise to always be honest and truthful. We too should also give our children a truly Islamic upbringing. We should always speak the

¹ Qalā'id al-Jawāhir, p. 8

truth and encourage our children to do the same, even from their childhood.

The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ instructed us to be truthful and avoid lying. He declared:

You must tell the truth, for indeed truth leads to virtue, and indeed virtue guides to Paradise. A man continuously speaks the truth and endeavours to tell the truth, to the extent he is written as truthful with Allah.

Beware of lying, for indeed lying leads to sin, and indeed sin leads to Hell. A man continuously lies and makes an effort in lying, to the extent he is written as a liar with Allah.¹

أَلْحَدِيثُ Mawlana Ilyas Attar al-Qadiri has written many true stories in booklet form, helping children and adults alike learn Islamic knowledge and life lessons. They are written to engage the reader’s interest, in an easy-to-understand manner, upon high quality paper, and with pictures to help cater for younger readers.

You can purchase these booklets from Maktaba tul-Madinah, as well as read, download, or print them from Dawat-e-Islami’s website:

www.dawateislami.net

These booklets are named:

- 1- Luminous Face
- 2- Pharaoh’s Dream
- 3- Unique Son

¹ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: Hadith 2607

4- The Lying Thief

5- Madani Infant

صَلُّوا عَلَيَّ الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ

Dear Islamic brothers! In Baghdad, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ sought Islamic knowledge from the most skilled and renowned scholars. He underwent extreme hunger and untold difficulties in this time, but his passion did not waiver.

Let us now look at the Shaykh’s love for Islamic knowledge and the patience he displayed when encountering difficulties on this path.

Hunger and patience

Shaykh Abū Bakr al-Tamīmī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ relates how Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ himself stated:

Once, a drought took place in Baghdad, due to which I faced severe hardships. I went days at a time without eating. Severely hungry, I went to the Tigris river, searching for edible greenery like spinach or something similar.

Wherever I went, I saw many poor people gathered, rushing wherever anything edible was found. I returned to the city, but could not find anything there either.

When hunger overwhelmed me entirely, I went to a masjid and sat in a corner. After a while, a non-Arab young man arrived with bread and roasted meat. He began to eat, and with every bite he took, I unconsciously opened my mouth as though I was eating. Yet, I controlled my *nafs*.

The young man looked at me, picked up the food, and brought it to me. He asked me where I was from and what I did. I replied, “I am from Jīlān and I am here to study Islam.”

He further asked, “Do you know about a young man named ‘Abd al-Qādir, who hails from Jīlān?’

I said, “I am the person you are looking for.”

Hearing this, he became nervous, apologised to me, and said, “Your mother gave me eight dinars to give to you. When I arrived in Baghdad, I had money for my living expenses, but it took me many days to find you and I ran out of money. I have not eaten for three days. As I had no alternative, I have spent some of your money that I was entrusted with to buy this bread and meat for a meal. You eat this, as it belongs to you. In truth, you are not my guest, but I am yours.”

I comforted him and expressed my happiness with this. When we finished eating, I gave him the remaining food with some money, and saw him on his way.¹

Passion for Islamic knowledge

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ went about acquiring sacred knowledge in amazing and dedicated fashion. He himself recalls:

In my student days, I would take a lesson given to me by my teachers and head to the wilderness. There, whether I was in arid deserts, empty wastelands, whether it was day or night, no matter the weather, I would never stop studying.

I wore a small ‘*imāmah*’ in those days and I would eat ordinary vegetables to remedy my hunger. Sometimes, I would not even

¹ Qalā'id al-Jawāhir, p. 9

have these to eat. When I saw other hungry poor people in search of food, I would deliberately return empty-handed, as I did not feel it appropriate to hurt their feelings.

After returning, I would continue my studies and sleep on an empty stomach, on a floor littered with rocks.¹

Dear Islamic brothers! This is where we need to pause and think. Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ studied Islamic knowledge whilst enduring very many hardships and difficulties, whilst not even complaining once.

From this account, we also learn that when someone experiences any trouble or worry, they should be patient and keep in mind the virtues of patience mentioned in the noble Quran and sacred *Aḥādīth*. Always remember that this world is a place of trials and tribulations. For every comfort and worldly pleasure, there is sadness and worry. Difficulty and ease go hand in hand here.

That is why, since humanity came into being, Muslims, and even the noble Prophets, Messengers and saints, have experienced trials and hardships along with comfort and happiness.

Sometimes, those who are close to Allah Almighty face more hardship than ease. Yet, they do not utter even a single phrase of complaint. These blessed souls endure these trials with untold patience. They even encourage others to be patient and support them in this process. Following in their footsteps, we should also be patient when we face hardships and be grateful to Allah Almighty for the blessings He bestows upon us.

The noble Quran has mentioned the virtues of patience in many verses. To help us build the beautiful characteristic of patience, let us

¹ Qalā'id al-Jawāhir, p. 10

listen to two verses of Allah’s noble Quran and two *Aḥādīth* of the beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ:

أُولَئِكَ يُؤْتَوْنَ أَجْرَهُمْ مَرَّتَيْنِ بِمَا صَبَرُوا

They will be granted their reward doubled as they were patient¹

وَلَنَجْزِيَنَ الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

And We shall most definitely grant those who were patient their reward for the excellent deeds they used to do.²

In a Hadith, the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ declared, “When a Muslim is pricked by a thorn or experiences a trouble lesser than this, one rank is recorded for him whilst one of his sins is erased.”³

In another hadith, he stated, “When Allah wills good for someone, He makes them experience hardship.”⁴

Dear Islamic brothers! Instead of complaining and mentioning our worries to people all the time, we should be patient when facing these trials and tribulations. Even if we are surrounded by sadness today, إِنَّ شَاءَ اللهُ we will be showered with joy tomorrow. Today, we are facing difficulties. إِنَّ شَاءَ اللهُ Tomorrow we will feel completely at ease.

The way happiness comes and goes, in the same way, hardship also comes and goes. That is why, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ would keep the following words in mind whenever he underwent difficulties:

¹ Al-Quran, al-Qaṣaṣ, verse 54; translation from Kanz al-‘Irfān

² Ibid, al-Naḥl, verse 96

³ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: Hadith 2572

⁴ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: Hadith 5645

إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ط

Surely, there is ease with hardship.¹

The Shaykh was resolutely steadfast in his patience. Due to this, Allah Almighty granted him an excellent reward, such that he surpassed all Islamic scholars of his time in rank.

More about the Shaykh’s scholarly rank

Shaykh Abū ‘Abdullāh b. Aḥmad b. Qudāmah رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ said:

Shaykh al-Islam, Sulṭān al-Awliyā’, Sayyid ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ strived exceptionally hard to acquire sacred knowledge. He studied under a host of renowned scholars and elders. Much of his time was spent with them.

As a result of this, he became the leading scholar of his age, but not without immense effort and whilst enduring severe difficulties. He detached himself from the worldly matters in the end, devoting all his time to *dhikr* and calling others to goodness.

He received worldwide acclaim. Due to him, the majesty of Islam became apparent to many, and sacred knowledge became even more highly regarded. Islamic law was implemented widely due to his positive influence.

A profuse number of scholars studied under his tutelage, and he issued *khilāfah* to many great Islamic scholars.²

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

¹ Al-Quran, al-Sharḥ, verse 6; translation from Kanz al-‘Irfān

² Nuzhat al-Khāṭir al-Fātir, pp. 19-20

His academic and scholarly prowess

Shaykh Muhammad b. Yahyā al-Tādafi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ writes:

Having completed his studies, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ began teaching and issuing *fatāwā*. His time was spent calling to Islam, inviting to righteousness, and practically spreading sacred knowledge far and wide.

Scholars from all over the world flocked to study under him. At that time, there was nobody equal to him in Baghdad.¹

The Shaykh was an ocean of knowledge. He had complete expertise in *fiqh*, Hadith, *tafsīr*, Arabic grammar, and a host of other sciences. When his teachers gave him authorisation in the field of Hadith, they said, “‘Abd al-Qādir, we give you authorisation in Hadith, but in truth we have learned how to understand the meanings of *Aḥādīth* from you.”²

Dear Islamic brothers! Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was so focused and passionate about propagating Islamic knowledge that he did not waste even a single moment to this end. His time was spent in academic, educational, or literary endeavours. Students from other cities, hearing of the Shaykh’s expertise, would come to study under him and benefit from his company.

Such was the Shaykh, that whoever came to study with him never left empty handed. Let us now discuss some of his amazing academic endeavours and how he practically implemented his knowledge.

¹ Qalā'id al-Jawāhir, p. 5

² Ḥayāt al-Mu‘azzam Fī Manāqib Ghawth al-A‘zam, p. 46

The Shaykh as a teacher

Qāḍī Abū Sa‘īd al-Mubārak رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ had a madrasah in Baghdad, where he delivered speeches and taught students.

When he learned of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī’s immense knowledge and practical implementation of it, he handed over his madrasah to the shaykh. When news of the Shaykh’s knowledge spread, huge numbers of people rushed to learn from him.¹

Expertise in 13 sciences

Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Shaṭnūfī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ explains:

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ used to deliver speeches, in which he would discuss 13 branches of knowledge. At his madrasa, students would study *tafsīr*, Hadith, *fiqh*, theology, and more.

From before midday to just after, the Shaykh would teach *tafsīr*, hadith, *fiqh*, theology, juristic principles, and Arabic grammar. After *Zuhr*, he would teach Quran, in which he taught students how to recite correctly, as well as the various modes of recitation.²

His love for students of sacred knowledge

Dear Islamic brothers! Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was a practical embodiment of knowledge, and possessed beautiful character. He was very affectionate towards students and would tend to even the smallest of their needs.

¹ Sīrat Ghawth al-A‘ẓam, p. 58

² Bahjat-al-Asrār, p. 225

Helping students of knowledge in their studies

Shaykh Ibn Qudāmah al-Ḥanbalī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was asked a question about Imam ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, to which he explained:

I met him towards the end of his life. I was living in his madrasah at that time. We were looked after to such an extent, that he would sometimes send his own son Yaḥyā to light lamps for us, and even send food for us from his own home.¹

Dear Islamic brothers! Look at the care and affection Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ showed students of Islamic knowledge, even sending food for them from his own home.

We too should address the needs of students of knowledge as per our financial ability. For example, if a person has no financial concerns, he should, for the sake of Allah Almighty and with good intentions, contribute to fulfilling the needs of poor Islamic students. For example, he can provide them with Islamic books, clothes, and accommodation. This way, one can include himself in the ranks of those who serve and help Islam. Perhaps by virtue of this good deed, Allah Almighty will become pleased with us forever. Perhaps by virtue of this, we will be forgiven.

Think of it this way. We want to give good food to our children. We want to see them in nice clothes. We take great care of them, trying to protect them from the cold or hot weather, and other things like this. In the exact same way, we should consider students of Islamic knowledge, as they may be in need of many basic necessities.

Today, we celebrate and learn from the life of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ. If we look at what he did, we see him excusing the shortcomings of his students and supporting them in their studies.

¹ Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’, vol. 15, p. 183

Shaykh Aḥmad b. Mubārak رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ said:

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ had a non-Arab student who struggled immensely in his studies. As the student sat near the Shaykh and went over his lesson, a person came to meet the Shaykh. When this person saw the student had learning difficulties, he was surprised at the patience of the Shaykh.

After the student left, the person said, “I am surprised how patient you are with this student.” The Shaykh announced, “My hard work with him is for less than a week, because this student of knowledge will die soon.”

We began counting the days of that student from then. When the week was about to come to an end, he passed away.”¹

The utmost authority in issuing *fatāwā*

Dear Islamic brothers! Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was an expert teacher, writer, and caller to Islam. In fact, there are many more fields in which he held unparalleled skill. Yet, when it comes to *fatāwā*, even the greatest Islamic scholars, jurists, and muftis of his age were left stunned by his brilliance.

Shaykh Muwaffaq al-Dīn b. Qudāmah رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ said, “In 561 AH, we went to Baghdad and saw that Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī was one of those who was given authority in knowledge, practice, and writing *fatāwā*.”²

His scholarly expertise was such that even if extremely complex matters were placed before him, he would present very easy solutions. He spent almost 33 years working for Islam by delivering speeches, teaching, and

¹ Qalā'id al-Jawāhir, p. 8

² Bahjat al-Asrār, p. 225

writing *fatāwā*. During this period, when his *fatāwā* were brought to the Islamic scholars of Iraq, they would be amazed at his intellectual responses.

Imam Abū Ya‘lā Najm al-Dīn رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ mentions, “Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī was renowned in Iraq for issuing *fatwā*. People would turn to him for this.”¹

Dear Islamic brothers! From the scholarly endeavours of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, it becomes obvious that he spent his entire life gaining and spreading Islamic knowledge.

We should continue this mission of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ and develop a deep-rooted passion inside us to gain Islamic knowledge. We should strive to reform ourselves and the people of the entire world through this.

Remember! Islamic knowledge makes a person an upstanding member of society. It is due to Islamic knowledge that people start loving a person. It is through Islamic knowledge that a person attains respect and nobility. It is by virtue of Islamic knowledge that a person becomes righteous. In fact, the beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ himself explained the excellences of Islamic knowledge and lovingly encouraged his devotees to acquire it.

Let us look at four *Aḥādīth* on this topic:

- 1) He who walks a path to seek knowledge, Allah makes the path to Paradise easy for him.²

¹ Ibid

² Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: Hadith 2699

- 2) Whoever leaves his home to seek knowledge is in the way of Allah until his return.¹
- 3) Whoever Allah wills good for, He grants him understanding of the religion.²
- 4) When a person dies, his deeds discontinue except for three: continuous charity, knowledge which is benefitted from, and a righteous child who supplicates for him.³

The dire consequences of not having knowledge

Dear Islamic brothers! These beautiful *Aḥādīth* not only highlight the excellences of Islam knowledge, but we also learn from them that ongoing charity, spreading Islamic knowledge, and righteous children, are good deeds one is rewarded for even after they die.

To perform these good deeds and provide your children with Islamic education, you can enrol them into Jamiat al-Madinah. Now, if we look around us, we see a severe lack of knowledge when it comes to Islamic law. This, in fact, is the worst evil in our society at large.

Evil acts are committed in every aspect of life due to a lack of Islamic knowledge. We see this problem in our domestic matters, business decisions, issues related to friends or relatives, marriages, or when raising children. In short, if we take a real look at ourselves, we see that whether something is related to the rights of Allah Almighty or the rights of people, we severely lack in Islamic knowledge.

Due to our lack of both knowledge and guidance, our characters and actions are not only negatively affected, but we also see mistakes and

¹ Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī: Hadith 2656

² Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: Hadith 71

³ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: Hadith 1631

evils entering our beliefs and acts of worship. This is spreading at an alarming rate. To remedy this, it is insufficient to only gain Islamic knowledge and stop there. We must learn, but then act upon our knowledge and try to reform others.

That is why Mawlana Ilyas Attar al-Qadiri encourages everybody to reform others along with themselves. One way he does this is via his famous mission statement: “I must strive to reform myself and people of the entire world, إِنَّ شَاءَ اللهُ.”

The books of Ghawth al-A‘zam رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ

Dear Islamic brothers! Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ wrote many books, both to spread Islamic knowledge and assist the Ummah.

In his book *Tadhkirah Qādiriyya*, Imam ‘Alā al-Dīn رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ mentions the names of 7 books written by the Shaykh, before saying, “Reliable narrations tell us he penned 69 books in total.”¹

His speeches

To spread physical and spiritual branches of knowledge, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ rendered countless services to Islam through his teaching, writing, and public speaking.

His speeches were captivating, such that people flocked to listen and paid close attention. Attendees in his gatherings would not leave part way through but remain seated and listen to the speech silently for its entire duration. His words moved hearts and inspired minds.

When he began giving speeches, the madrasah would run out of space due to the number of attendees. People proceeded to buy the buildings

¹ Sīrat Ghawth al-A‘zam, p. 61

around the madrasah and dedicated them to this righteous cause. Apart from Baghdad, people began coming from far and wide to listen.¹

He would deliver speeches three days a week. 70,000 would normally attend, including scholars and Sufis of Iraq.² 400 would attend his lessons with pens and inkpots, attentively writing everything the Shaykh said.³

Talking about Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī’s passion for reforming the *Ummah*, his son, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ states, “He delivered speeches for 40 years.”

Shaykh ‘Umar al-Kīmānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ said, “There was not a single speech of the Shaykh during which people did not embrace Islam, or thieves and major sinners did not repent of their sins at his hands.”⁴

Dear Islamic brothers! Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ spent his entire life in propagating Islamic knowledge. Following in his footsteps, we should also gain Islamic knowledge. اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ At present, Dawat-e-Islami is providing us with many opportunities to do this, such as Madrasat al-Madinah and Jamiat al-Madinah for Islamic brothers and sisters.

In addition, varying courses are being offered to provide Islamic education to brothers from different fields of life, and to help develop their skills further. You too are wholeheartedly encouraged to take part in these.

صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ

¹ Bahjat al-Asrār, pp. 202-203

² Qalā'id al-Jawāhir, p. 18

³ Ibid, p. 18

⁴ Qalā'id al-Jawāhir, p. 18