

## **Mystic Thought of Shaikh Sayyid 'Abdul Qadir Jilani (R.A)<sup>1</sup>**

### **Part –I**

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Shaikh 'Abdu'l Qadir Jilani (Rah.'A) infused breath of new life, zeal and self-confidence into countless persons through his power of speech and the spiritual power of his heart. He was, in truth, a blessing for the world of Islam for he renovated and revived the true content of the faith and tapped the sources of moral and spiritual strength for a religious renaissance.<sup>2</sup> Shaikh 'Amr al-Kaisani reports that there was hardly a sermon delivered by 'Abdu'l Qadir after which a number of Jews and Christians did not embrace Islam, marauders and robbers did not repent for their sins, and heretics and apostates did not renounce their mistaken beliefs.<sup>3</sup>

Al-Jubba'i relates that 'Abdu'l Qadir once told him that he wished to lead the life of a recluse in the wilderness but God had willed that people should derive benefit from him. And, it was a blessing granted unto him that more than five thousand Jews and Christians embraced Islam and about one lack sinners and criminals repented for their misdeeds under his guidance.<sup>4</sup>

Gifted with divine grace and enlightenment, 'Abdu'l Qadir was ever conscious of the purification of spirit and rectitude of morals, yet he did not lose sight of the importance of teaching and disseminating the correct doctrines of the faith. Being a follower of the Hanbalite school of Sunni theology, he endeavoured, to root out innovations and deviations from the orthodox faith and practice.

The discourses of 'Abdu'l Qadir had a magnetic effect which is still discernible in them. 'Abdu'l Qadir is at his best in *Futuh al-Ghaib*, *al-Fath-i al-Rubbani* and *Jila'l-i Khatir* and

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*al-Ghunya li Talib-i Tariq al-Haqq*. In describing the love and unity of the Divine Being he appears to be inspired by higher sources. The reader can still find the spirit of sincerity and enthusiasm running through his sermons.

Following the footsteps of the Prophet (SAAS), his companions and the enlightened saints of the earlier period, 'Abdu'l Qadir touched on the current problems of his days, analysed the reasons for the miseries and maladies of the people and provided answers to their doubts and deficiencies. Along with this, the tremendous sincerity and earnest zeal for the welfare of the people fired his haranguing with a frenzy of enthusiasm and magnetic effect capable of pulling the strings of the heart.

The Shaikh used to take daily a class each of the Qur'anic exegesis, Traditions and Jurisprudence. The classes were held in the morning and evening, while 'Abdu'l Qadir listened to the recitation of the *Qur'an* after the midday prayers and thereafter dictated *fatawa* on religious or legal questions referred to him. In formulating his answers 'Abdu'l Qadir generally followed the Shafe'ite and Hanbalite schools of Jurisprudence. His juristic opinions were highly praised by the jurist-scholars of Iraq, for these provided a striking example of the acuteness of his intellect.<sup>5</sup>

Once the question referred to him was that a man had taken an oath that he would perform a religious observance in a manner that nobody else in the whole world would be able to share the privilege with him but, if he failed to fulfil his undertaking, this would mean an irrevocable separation between him and his wife. The scholars were astounded by the strange oath taken by the man and could not suggest an observance which could be performed by him alone in the whole world. 'Abdu'l Qadir, however, replied that the man should be allowed to circumambulate K'aba alone seven times to perform the lesser *hajj*. Everyone agreed that this was the only authorized religious observance which he could perform alone

at a time when nobody else would be engaged in the same *'Ibadah*.<sup>6</sup>

Profound knowledge of the religious lore and meticulous observance of the Traditions of the holy Prophet, aided by the grace of Allah, had unveiled the mysteries of celestial world to 'Abdu'l Qadir, who had reached the stage where a believer is bestowed with the qualities of discernment and sagacity. He had acquired the certitude of knowledge that the *Shari'ah* of the last Prophet (SAAS) was perfect and that any claim made contrary to the divine edict was simply a satanic suggestion. 'Abdu'l Qadir himself relates an incident that he once came across. He says:

Once I saw a dazzling light which filled the entire sky. Then a human frame appeared therein and said. "O 'Abdu'l Qadir, I am Lord, thy God. I have made every prohibited thing lawful unto thee." I replied, "Get away from me, O Devil." As soon as I uttered these words, the lustre in the sky turned into darkness and the human frame began to fizzle out into smoke. Then I heard someone saying, " 'Abdu'l Qadir, I had misled seventy mystics with this device, but God saved thee on account of thy knowledge and piety." To this I rejoined, "No, It was simply a grace of Allah." After 'Abdu'l Qadir had related the incident someone asked, "How did you know that it was the *Satan*." "Since he told me," replied 'Abdu'l Qadir, "that he had made the prohibited thing lawful for me."<sup>7</sup>

He used to tell his disciples that if any action transgresses the commandments of Allah, then it is surely an imposition by the *Satan*. In such cases one should return to the tenets of the *Shari'ah*, inculcate an unflinching faith, and firmly reject the temptations of self-indulgence; for, whatever is not permitted by the *Shari'ah* is decidedly misleading.<sup>8</sup> Here, we refer now to some of the recurring themes of his mystic thought.

#### **Tawhid (Oneness of Allah)**

The Shaikh (Rah.'A) asks for the declaration of the Unity

of Allah and holds that whoever perishes for His (Allah's) sake, receives his compensation from Him. He asserts, "And proclaims the unity of Allah and do not associate anything with Him and make yourself the target of the sorrows of providence which will strike you not to kill but to injure and whoever perishes for the sake of Allah receives his compensation from Him."<sup>9</sup>

He affirms that one should seek assistance from Allah alone because the whole humanity can neither harm nor benefit any person in contrary to the will of Allah. He maintains:

So when you ask, ask from Allah, and when you seek assistance, seek it from Him and if the servants of Allah strive to benefit you with anything which Allah has not decreed for you, they will not be able to do it, and if all the servants of Allah strive to harm you with anything which Allah has not decreed for you, they will not be able to do so.<sup>10</sup>

Jilani (Rah.'A) holds that Allah is alone in His knowledge of good and evil of things. He says, ". . . He (Allah) transfers you from one state to another and to the one that is the opposite of it, because you do not know wherein lies good — in poverty or affluence, in calamity or in ease. He has kept the knowledge of certain things hidden from you and He is alone in His knowledge of good and evil of things. . . ."<sup>11</sup>

Allah, according to 'Abdu'l Qadir (Rah.'A), is unparallel in His might and power. He says, "Allah alone is the giver of strength and the helper, because there is no might and power excepting in Allah, the High, the Great."<sup>12</sup> He advises one to be with Allah in such a way as if no other creation exists. He opines, "Be with Allah, the Mighty, the Glorious, as if no creation exists. And be with the creation as if there is no self in you."<sup>13</sup>

When Jilani (Rah.'A) was suffering from the illness of which he died, his son Shaikh 'Abdu'l Wahhab requested him, "Give me a parting admonition which I should act upon after

you have left this world.” The Shaikh advised him: “It is incumbent upon you to fear Allah and not fear anyone excepting Him, and not to hope from anyone excepting Him and entrust all your needs to Him. And do not rely on anyone except Him and ask everything from Him and do not place confidence on anyone besides Him. Stand by His unity, stand by His Unity, all are agreed on this.”<sup>14</sup>

At the last moment of his life the Shaikh (Rah.’A) praised Allah and His attributes in these words, “I seek the help of Allah . . . there is no object of worship excepting Allah, glory be to Him and be He exalted, the everlasting, who does not fear annihilation; glory be to Him who has established His superiority through His power and overpowered His servants by means of death. There is no object of worship excepting Allah and Muhammad (SAAS) is the Prophet of Allah.”<sup>15</sup>

In one of his sermons the Shaikh (Rah.’A) explains the significance of obedience to Allah in these words: “Make obedience to Allah the primary thing under which every other thing should come and make it the guiding factor and make whatever is besides this as of secondary and subordinate consideration.”<sup>16</sup>

Commenting upon *tawhid* (oneness of Allah) and seeker’s behaviour, the Shaikh (Rah.’A) says, “Obey (Allah and His Messenger) and do not create innovations (in religion); support (religion) and do not oppose it. Be obedient (to Allah and His Messenger) and do not be disobedient (to them); Be sincere and not polytheist; believe in oneness of Allah and do not escape from His door (in search of others); Ask from Him and none else; seek His assistance and no one else’s; trust Him and none else.”<sup>17</sup>

Jilani (Rah.’A) holds that one should believe so much in the oneness of Allah that not even a stray of the world should find any abode in his heart. He maintains, “Believe so much in the oneness of Allah that not even a stray of this world be there in your heart. *Tawhid* abolishes everything (other than Allah).”<sup>18</sup>

On the same theme the Shaikh (Rah. 'A) comments, "How come do you claim Islam, *Iman* (belief) and *iqan* (faith) when you actually trust upon your energy, potential and your *asbab* (worldly means)." <sup>19</sup> He adds, "... Ask for all things from one (Allah) who is the Creator of all things, spend all your resources in His search." <sup>20</sup>

The indulgence in the worldliness had become so strong during 'Abdu'l Qadir's time that the entire social and economic life of the community appeared to be woven into the context of political situation then prevailing; people had developed a tendency of depending upon the kings and nobles for realization of their worldly ends and had begun to treat them as ultimate dispensers of benefits and harms. In order to counteract this mistaken tendency of the people, the Shaikh comments in one of his sermons:

This entire creation is like a man who has been imprisoned and chained by a king whose dominions are vast and countenance awesome. The prisoner has been hanged from a pine tree beneath which flows a river, wide and deep. The king is seated on an elevated chair, having arrows and bows, javelins and spears by his side. He hits the captive with whatever weapon he desires. Now, would it be prudent for anyone witnessing the scene to divert his attention from the king and expect harm or favour from the captive instead of the king? Would not such a man be deemed a fool or even mad? O God, I seek thy refuge from blindness after having given eyes, from being cast off after getting near Thee, from regression after being promoted to Thy favour, from being misled after obtaining Thy guidance and from apostasy after having granted faith. <sup>21</sup>

In another sermon he asks to instill the love of Allah to the exclusion of everything else.

Keep your eyes fixed on Him who is looking at you;  
keep yourself before One who keeps Himself before you;  
love Him who loves you; hark unto Him who calls you;  
seek help from Him who can save you, take you out of

the darkness of ignorance, cleanse you of the impurity of your soul, and redeem you from the baser self and misleading temptations, despair and timidity. Your earthly desires are like your foolish friends who keep you off the righteous path and deprive you of the things, pleasing and desirable. How long would you remain slaves of your desires, temptations, greed and pride in this transitory world? How long would you remain forgetful of the Hereafter and of your Creator, the Fashioner of everything, the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden; everything is couched within His grasp from which emanates the love within your heart, the peace and solace, blessings and favours?<sup>22</sup>

‘Abdu’l Qadir throws light on the same topic in his yet another discourse in these words: “The entire creation is helpless. Nothing can do good or harm to you. It is only Allah who lets a thing be done by you, or, in other words, the will of Allah finds expression through you or somebody else. Allah has already destined whatever is to happen to you; whether it be beneficial or harmful; and the destiny cannot be changed. Those who are faithful and virtuous, they set an example unto other creations. There are a few among these who have so purified their heart that their interior and exterior selves have become one; even if they have riches, their desires never seethe with the worldly attachment. Verily, only those are courageous, valiant and powerful who have purified their hearts and attained this state of enlightenment. Unto these alone belongs the kingdom of Heaven and Earth, for they have cleansed their heart of everything save Allah; they are like a soldier who guards the door of his heart, with the sabre of *tawhid* (Unity) and the *shariah* in his hand, to bar the entry of all creations to a place reserved for the Creator. Since they have attuned their hearts to the ultimate source of power, the *shari’ah* beautifies their exterior while *tawhid* and the wisdom of God’s knowledge decorate their interior.”<sup>23</sup>

While warning against the worship of false objects the

Shaikh (R. 'A.) explains:

You put your trust in your own self, in others, in your wealth, in your rites and customs, in your trade and business, or in your rulers; but, in whatever object you place your reliance, it becomes, to say the truth, your object of worship. If you fear someone, or expect harm, or favour from him or else deem him as an intercessor with Allah, then he is the object of worship for you.<sup>24</sup>

On another occasion, 'Abdu'l Qadir vividly describes the jealousy and pride of Allah and His abhorrence of all associates, as also the wisdom lying behind the loss of the things adored and loved by man.

“You often complain, as you would ever do, that you have to suffer the loss of whatever you set your affections on. The object of your fancy, if it is a human being, either separates or dies. If it is wealth that you care for, you incur losses or are deprived of it. Then, should I tell you, that Allah is in love with you, and He is jealous too! He has created you for Himself but you want to be enraptured by others! Have you not heard what Allah has said: *He holds them dear who love Him*, and also, *I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me.*<sup>25</sup> And, are you not aware of what the Prophet once said: *When Allah loves anyone; He places him in trouble but if he puts up with it with endurance and forbearance, Allah then sets him apart for Himself.* Requested to elucidate what he meant by “setting apart of a man,” the Prophet replied: *God deprives him of his possession and progeny.* This is so because it is natural for a man to love his offsprings and possessions and thus his love which should have been for Allah alone is divided between the Creator and the created, between the Eternal and the finite.”

The Shaikh continues: “God is, however, extremely Proud and Mighty and therefore, He destroys whatever threatens to become an associate in the love for Him. It is only then that the heart of the man whom He loves gets attuned to Him. And,



then, this man can claim to enjoy the distinction of what has been described thus by Allah: *He holds them dear who love Him*. It is the stage when the heart of the man is cleansed of all idols and associates (of God) such as the offsprings, riches, pleasures and desires. It has now no yearnings, no longings left, worldly or otherwise, not even those relating to piety and miraculous powers, stations and states, nearness and remoteness; the heart becomes a bottomless vessel in which nothing can be kept. Allah Almighty being extremely Proud and Jealous makes the heart of His beloved incapable of nourishing any other desire; He shrouds the heart of His devotee with His awe and a gasp of admiration, and guards it with His Glory and Might so that nothing can get inside this heart; nor can the possessions and riches, family and progeny, friends and relations, piety and miraculous powers do any harm to it. None of these finds a place in the heart of such a man nor, then, Allah remains, jealous of them. Whatever is granted thereafter to this man is a gift or reward from his Allah so that he may be of help to those who are around him or visit him.”<sup>26</sup>

#### **Enjoining the lawful and forbidding the unlawful**

Enjoining of lawful and forbidding of the unlawful is frequently stressed by Shaikh ‘Abdu’l Qadir Jilani (Rah.’A) in his sermons. He says that holding the commandment of Allah, abstention from forbidden things is indispensable for a believer in all the circumstances. He speaks; “Three things are indispensable for a believer in all conditions of life: he should keep the commandments of Allah; he should abstain from the forbidden things, and should be pleased with the decree of providence.”<sup>27</sup>

Shaikh says, “Abstinence from unlawful things is incumbent on you or else the rope of destruction is coiled round you.”<sup>28</sup> He quotes a *hadith* of the Prophet (SAAS) in support of it, in which he has expressed that the foundation of religion is abstinence from unlawful things and its destruction is in

greed, and that whoever goes round a protected pasture land is only too likely to fall himself into it as a cattle pasturing freely by the side of a cornfield is only too likely to stretch his mouth towards it. It is unlikely that the cornfield should remain safe from him.

Jilani (Rah.A) also quotes sayings of Hadrat 'Umar Ibn Khattab and Hadrat Abu Bakr in support of it. The former is reported to have said, "We used to abstain from nine-tenth of lawful things in the fear lest we should fall in the zone of unlawful things," and the latter is reported to have said, "We used to avoid seventy doors of permissible things for fear of getting involved in sin."

Jilani (Rah.'A) adds that, these personages did so just to be away from any proximity to unlawful things; and in doing so they acted on the saying of the Prophet (SAAS), "Beware! Verily every king has a protected pasture land and the pasture land of Allah is His forbidden things."<sup>29</sup>

To express the significance of *Amir bil maruf wa Nahi anil munkar*, the Shaikh quotes a few verses of the Holy *Qur'an* in the beginning of *bab 8<sup>th</sup>* chapter of his famous work, *Ghuniyah*.<sup>30</sup> He opines that there are three groups to prohibit unlawful, the ruler, the '*ulama*' and the common people. He quotes a *hadith*<sup>31</sup> of the Prophet (SAAS) to substantiate his view.

The Shaikh (Rah.'A) prescribes five conditions for the fulfilment of this duty:

1. The prohibitor should himself be fully equipped with the knowledge of prohibited actions in accordance with the *Shariah*.
2. To win the pleasure of Allah and strengthen Islam should be his sole aim in fulfilment of this task.
3. He should adopt a generous and polite approach and not impolite and stern one in this task of prohibition of unlawful actions. He should advise the accused in an affectionate manner. The Shaikh warns of the

designs of devil if one fails to adopt an Islamic approach. He quotes these verses of the Holy *Qur'an* to explain it.

"... He (Satan) invites his adherents, that they may become companions of the Blazing Fire."<sup>32</sup>

Allah addresses his Messenger in these words:

"It is the part of the Mercy of God that thou dost deal gently with them. ..."<sup>33</sup>

4. One who shares this responsibility should be *sabir* (patient), affectionate, dignified, courageous and polite and should be having full control and command over his own whims. . . .
5. His way of life should be in conformity with his mission, so that others (the accursed ones) do not make it an excuse and he does not become blameworthy in front of Allah, who says:  
"Do ye enjoin the right conduct on the people, and forget (to practise it) yourselves, and yet ye study the scripture? Will ye not understand?"<sup>34</sup>

The Shaikh (Rah. 'A) holds this view that it is better to impart advice, with regard to enforcement of lawful and prohibition of unlawful, in isolation because in such state it appeals to one deeply. 'Abdu'l Qadir Jilani (Rah.'A) affirms that in no case one should shun this responsibility as, in that case, it amounts to displeasure of Allah.

It has been stated in the Holy *Qur'an*;

Why do not the Rabbis and the doctors of law forbid them from their (habit of) uttering sinful words and eating things forbidden? evil indeed are their works.<sup>35</sup>

### **Love of Humanity**

The love of humanity, in general, and the affection for the *ummah*, in particular, was symptomatic of 'Abdu'l Qadir's sublimated soul and indicative of his close affinity to the successors of the Prophet (SAAS). In one of his sermons he

delineates the object and the mental states of different types of persons visiting a market. Coming to the last category, he perhaps describes his own feelings in these words:

And there is the fifth man whose heart is filled, when he enters a market, with the awe and reverence of the Almighty to seek His blessings for those present in the market. He becomes oblivious of everything else save his benediction for the people; he remains immersed, from the time of his entry into the market till he comes out of it, in the solemn invocation of divine blessings and in repenting for the sins of those who happen to be there, and thus he hardly gets any time to see what they are selling or buying. His heart bleeds and eyes shed tears over the ingratitude of man while his tongue remains busy in thanking Allah over what He has bestowed unto his bondsmen.<sup>36</sup>

#### **Evils of *Shirk* (Polytheism)**

According to Jilani (Rah.'A) keeping expectations for gifts and favours with people tends to associate them with Allah. He says "Thus, so long as you remain with people you hope for their gifts and favours and ask from them with expectations at their doors, you are associating Allah's creation with Him."<sup>37</sup> In the same discourse he states that relying on one's earning while being forgetful about the favours of Allah is a form of polytheism. He preaches, "... And you begin living on your earning and then rely on earning and become contented with it and forget the favour of your Lord (Allah), you are again behaving like a polytheist and this polytheism is subtler than the previous one."<sup>38</sup>

Man, according to the Shaikh (Rah.'A) is the most unjust and greatest offender in the sense of ascribing partner to Allah. He explains, "While you are the most unjust one and greatest offender because moved by your animal passion you have taken the initiative in your own self and the creation of Allah and thereby indirectly you have ascribed a partner to Him."<sup>39</sup> He

quotes a Qur'anic verse in this context: "Verily Allah will not forgive that any partner be ascribed to Him and will forgive what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases."<sup>40</sup> Jilani (Rah.'A) continues, "Keep away from associating anything with Allah with utmost effort and do not go near this sin and shun it in all your movements and restful conditions during the night as well as during the day both in moments of solitude and when you are in the company of others."<sup>41</sup>

In his another discourse 'Abdu'l Qadir Jilani (Rah.'A) asks for proclamation of the Unity of Allah and not associating anything with Him. He holds, "And proclaim the Unity of Allah and do not associate anything with Him and make yourself the target of the arrows of providence which will strike you not to kill but to injure and whoever perishes for the sake of Allah receives his compensation from Him."<sup>42</sup>

According to the Shaikh (Rah.'A) the polytheistic tendencies amount to unbelief and take a man away from Allah. He says, "How can comfort be claimed in face of the existence of diseases, both internal and external, and how can the faith in the unity of Allah be claimed in face of polytheistic tendencies which amount to unbelief and which take a man away from nearness to Allah. . . ,"<sup>43</sup>

Polytheism, according to the Shaikh, does not consist only in idol-worship but also following the desire of the flesh. He says, "Polytheism consists not merely in idol-worship. It is also polytheism to follow the desire of the flesh and to adopt anything of this world and of the Hereafter in association with Allah."<sup>44</sup>

When one, according to Jilani (Rah.'A), takes anything other than Allah into account for bringing him profit or loss, he is performing an act of polytheism. He affirms, "You are slave of yourself, your world, your whims. You are slave of creatures for you regard them as partners unto Allah, because in any form of profit or loss you take them into account."<sup>45</sup>

The eyes of one's heart, according to Jilani (Rah.'A),

remain closed till he regards people as partners unto Allah. He says, "... Until you beg to people and regard them partners unto Allah the eyes of your heart will remain closed."<sup>46</sup>

In one of his discourses the Shaikh (Rah.'A) strongly condemns the creation of innovations (*bid'at*) and ascribing anyone as partner to Allah. He says, "... do not create innovations and do not transgress . . . and do not ascribe any partner to Him (Allah)."<sup>47</sup>

### **Sufi, Tasawwuf and Spiritual Struggle**

The Shaikh (Rah.A) holds that the Sufi is such a person whose *batin* (interior) and *zahir* (exterior) have become pure and serene through following the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* (way) of the Prophet Muhammad (SAAS). In such case the Prophet becomes an ambassador between him and his (Sufi's) Lord (Allah). He elaborates:

Woe unto you! You claim to be a *Sufi*, yet you are disturbed! The *Sufi* is one whose *batin* (inward) and *zahir* (outward) have become pure and serene through following the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allah. As this pure serenity increases, he further emerges from the sea of his existence and gives up his will, choice and violation.<sup>48</sup>

Again, he comments: "When someone's heart becomes pure and serene, the Prophet will become an ambassador between him and his Lord, as was Gabriel. The foundation of good is in following the Prophet (SAAS) in both the word and the deed."<sup>49</sup>

On the blessings of pure food, clothes and heart, Jilani (R.'A.) asserts: "Purify your heart by taking the foods which are lawful. You will achieve *m'arifat* (gnosis) of Allah. Purify your food, clothes and heart, you will become *safi*. *Tasawwuf* is derived from *saffa*. One who wears *suf* (wool) and is true at his *tasawwuf*, his heart remains purged of all except Allah."<sup>50</sup>

According to Jilani (Rah.'A), *Sufi* is one who is purified

by Allah. Commenting on purification the Shaikh says, "one who purifies his heart of all calamities of *nafs* (self), remains aloof from vices, performs pious deeds, fulfils the rights of Allah, whose heart feels anxiety in the love of people, remains attentive to Allah by adopting solitude and feels satisfaction in his being attentive to Allah, is the desired purified one."<sup>51</sup>

Commenting upon the status of *Sufi*, the Shaikh maintains; "Allah purifies *Sufi* by the spring of His wisdom and deeds, then he (*Sufi*) attains the place of peace . . . deceives his *satan* (devil) and *nafs* (self), relinquishes his whims and desires, remains absorbed in the worship of Allah, involves his *nafs* in self-mortification, spares Himself for none but Allah . . ."<sup>52</sup>

'Abdu'l Qadir Jilani (Rah.'A) puts forward eight qualities of *Sufis* in the following way:

1. Generosity like that of Hadrat Ibrahim ('A.S.)
2. Cheerful submission like that of Hadrat Isma'il ('A.S.)
3. Patience like that of Hadrat Ya'qub ('A.S.)
4. Prayer like that of Hadrat Zakariyya ('A.S.)
5. Poverty like that of Hadrat Yahya ('A.S.)
6. Wearing of woollen clothes like that of Hadrat Musa ('A.S.)
7. Travelling about like that of Hadrat 'Isa ('A.S.)
8. A life of poverty with resignation and content like that of Prophet Muhammad (SAAS).<sup>53</sup>

Commenting upon the way for the achievement of *tasawwuf*, Jilani (Rah.'A) asserts, "*Tasawwuf* is obtained not through discussion and talk but through hunger and giving up even those things which are liked and approved of (in ordinary circumstances)."<sup>54</sup>

The Shaikh (Rah.'A) pronounces ten characteristics for those who are engaged in spiritual struggle and in self-introspection and are determined to attain the spiritual goal to which they must stick. While describing these characteristics he says. ". . . The servant should not *swear* by Him whether truthfully or falsely, intentionally or by mistake. . . . He should

avoid *untruth* seriously or out of joke. ... He should be aware that when he *promises* anything to anyone he should not break his promise or he should not make any promise at all. ... He should refrain from *cursing* anything in the creation nor should he cause any harm to anything. ... He should refrain from praying for any *harm* to anyone among people, even if he has been treated unjustly. ... He should not affirm his evidence on *polytheism, unbelief* and *hypocrisy* of one of those who follow the same *qibla* (direction of prayer). ... He should refrain from looking at anything of a *sinful* nature both outwardly and inwardly and should restrain his organs of the body from it. ... One should avoid putting any *burden* on anyone whether it be small or big. He should be free from all *expectations* from men, nor should he feel tempted in his heart by what is with them. . . . The tenth characteristic is *humility*, because it is with this trait that the station of the servant is raised high and his position made lofty and his honour and eminence made perfect in the sight of Allah.”<sup>55</sup>

#### **Ahwal (States) and Maqamat (Stations)**

Commenting upon different states and stations of the *Sufi* path, Jilani (Rah.’A), enumerates states of *salihat* (piety), *wilayat* (sainthood), *abdal*, *ghawth* and *siddiq* as the prominent ones. He preaches; “Follow the Law (of *shari’ah*) in all that may happen to you if you are in a state of *salihat* (piety) which is the first step and follow the commandment in the state of *wilayat* and in the state of dying out of the existence of desire and do not go beyond this, and this is the second step. And be pleased with the action of Allah and be reconciled to it and vanish into the state of *abdal*, *ghawth* and *siddiq*. These are the final stages.”<sup>56</sup>

‘Abdu’l Qadir Jilani (Rah.’A) holds that the spirit of man can be either in the state of happiness or in the state of trouble. He elaborates his statement in these words:

The spirit of man can be in two conditions and there is



no third one: the state of happiness and the state of trouble, so when it is in trouble there is anxiety and complaint and displeasure and criticism and finding fault with Allah, the Mighty, the Exalted, lacking in patience and cheerful submission and reconciliation; sin of associating the creation and worldly means with the Creator and finally unbelief. Then when it is in comfort, it is a victim of greed and insolence and predominance of low desire and enjoyments. . . . Thus, when it is in trouble it does not desire anything except its removal and forgets all pleasure and desires and delightful things and does not ask anything out of these.<sup>57</sup>

The Shaikh holds that when this sufferer is blessed with an easy and comfortable life, he returns to arrogance and greediness and disobedience to his Lord and plunges in his sinful occupation. He forgets the misfortune he had lately been into and the calamity to which he had been a victim.

The Shaikh subscribes to this view that a man can either be close to Allah or away from Him. He comments, "The state of your affairs can be either the one or the other of the following two:

- i. Either you are not in the nearness of Allah, the Mighty, the Glorious, or
- ii. You are close to Him,"<sup>58</sup>

'Abdu'l Qadir (Rah.A) enumerates four states in attaining the enjoyments and allotments. He says;

... There are four states in attaining the enjoyments and allotments. The first state is that of the urges of nature and this is an unlawful one. The second state is of the law and this is permissible and lawful. And the third state is that of inner commandment and this is the state of *wilayat* and discarding of desires. And the fourth state is that of Divine favour, and this is the state of disappearance of purpose and attainment of *badaliyyat* and of being the (divine) objective, standing by the decree of destiny, which is the act of Allah, and this is the state of knowledge and of being possessed of the

quality of righteousness, and no one can be called righteous unless he has really attained this position.<sup>59</sup>

In his another discourse, the Shaikh regards the different states of spiritual experience as states of restraint. He observes; "All the different states of spiritual experience are states of restraint because the *wali* (pious saint) is commanded to look after them. And whatever is ordered to be looked after brings restraint."<sup>60</sup> Jilani (Rah.'A) also holds this opinion that a devotee is always either in the state of calamity or in that of blessing. He says, "Your condition must be either of the two. It will be either a state of calamity or of blessing, so if it be a state of calamity you should ask therein for patience. . . . And if it be a state of blessing you should ask in it thankfulness on account of it."<sup>61</sup>

At another place the Shaikh opines that when a believer persists in a spiritual struggle, Allah gives him what He has guaranteed him. He explains, "So when a believer persists in a spiritual struggle like this, up to the point of the coming of death and meets his Lord with a drawn sword besmeared with the blood of his *nafs* (self) and his desires, He gives him what He has guaranteed him of the paradise in His words.<sup>62</sup> And as for him who fears to stand before his Lord and forbids the soul from low desires then surely the garden is his abode."<sup>63</sup>

#### **Worldliness and its Fate**

The excessive accumulation of worldly objects, according to Jilani (Rah.'A), will take the form of poisonous animals in *akhirah*. He regards all the worldly objects as idols and warns against one's forgetfulness about the Almighty Allah and worshipping of various forms of idols. According to him, it is advisable to worship the Creator of idols so that idols will humble themselves to the believer. He elaborates:

Woe Unto you! You are busy in accumulating one gold coin on the top of another, and your accumulation is endless. These will be scorpions and snakes that will

bite you (in *akhirah*).<sup>64</sup> This world is your idol, the Hereafter is your idol . . . lustful desires and pleasures are your idols . . . praise, commendation and people's acceptance of you are your idols. (Remember) everything other than Allah is an idol!<sup>65</sup>

He continues: "You have made your only concern to work hard and secure your allotted shares in this world and protect them. You have forgotten death and what lies beyond it. You have forgotten Allah, changed Him, replaced Him and left Him behind your backs."<sup>66</sup>

"Every heart that is filled with things of this world, lustful desires and pleasures is a shell that is only suitable for the Fire. If you find inside your heart anything from this world, you should know that you will be punished."<sup>67</sup>

"If you glorify the tyrants of this world, its Pharaohs, its kings and its rich, yet forget Allah and do not glorify Him, the verdict on you will be the verdict passed on the worshippers of idols . . . worship the Creator of the idols and then the idols will humble themselves to you."<sup>68</sup>

The Shaikh (Rah.'A) explains the transitoriness of the world in different ways and asks to be in it with renouncing hearts. While comparing believers with hypocrites he says that hypocrites are slaves of the creatures and objects of the world while the believers are always with their Lord. His perception of the world is that it seeks anyone who runs away from her. He maintains:

You earn, instead of religion, worldly status and you amass rents, gold coins, clothes, houses, maidservants, horses and servants. All these things will soon be separated from you. Turn back to your Lord.<sup>69</sup>

"Be in this world with renouncing hearts. Do not settle in it. . . . This abode is the prison of the believer in comparison with the abode of the Hereafter."<sup>70</sup>

"The hypocrites are slaves of creatures . . . slaves of the might, strength, and earnings and slaves of the rich, kings and

*sultans* . . . the believers are always with their Lord.”<sup>71</sup>

“O Seekers of this world, as long as you are seeking her, you will remain in tiredness! She seeks anyone who runs away from her.”<sup>72</sup>

“O people, pay heed to my words and renounce this world for your desire and your love of it screen you from the Hereafter and from nearness of your Lord and it blinds your hearts.”<sup>73</sup>

The Shaikh holds that sorrows, griefs, fear and apprehension in the heart of a person are the consequences of worldliness. He says “But so long as there remains in his heart any attraction for this world, sorrows and griefs and fear and apprehensions will have a standing abode in his heart and abasement will be a necessary concomitant for him as also the state of being veiled from Allah, the Mighty, the Glorious, and from His nearness, by a veil thick in several folds.”<sup>74</sup>

In his another discourse Jilani (Rah.’A) says that Allah does not lessen the (worldly) wealth even if one turns indifferent towards it, provided he is obedient to Allah. He says, “And if you engage yourself with obedience to Him (Allah) and become indifferent towards the wealth, Allah will make a free gift of it to you and will not lessen it even by an atom.”<sup>75</sup>

The Shaikh regards the worldly life as a cultivation ground of the life Hereafter. Good deeds, according to him, consist in observing the patience and reconciliation in the midst of trial. He affirms; “The worldly life is a cultivation ground of the life Hereafter and the good deeds of the Prophets and *awliya* (pious people) after the performance of commandments and prohibitions consist in patience and pleasure and reconciliation in the midst of trial.”<sup>76</sup>

Worldliness, according to Jilani (Rah.’A), spoils a seeker’s heart the way the acid spoils honey. He warns, “Do not be a seeker of the world and do not be angry for not getting some share of it, because it will spoil your heart the way an acid spoils the honey.”<sup>77</sup>

The world, according to the Shaikh (Rah.’A) remains in

a bow position in front of the true believers. He advises a seeker to kill the ill desires of his *nafs* (self) with the sword of *tawhid*. He maintains, "You are, running after the world to get some share of it and the world is running after the true believers so as to give some share to them. It remains in a bow position in front of them. Kill (the ill desires of) your *nafs* (self) with the sword of *tawhid*. Carry cloth of *tawfiq* (generosity), arrow of *mujahadah* (self mortification), shield of *taqwa* (piety), and sword of belief to fight against it."<sup>78</sup>

Jilani (Rah.'A) neither asks to give up the worldly pleasures in total nor does he preach monasticism. He emphasizes in his sermons that worldly things should be made use of by a man to the extent of need but he should never allow himself to become subservient to his desires and temptations. Explaining the purport of the *hadith* (Tradition) which runs, "verily, the world has been created for you, and you have been created for the Hereafter," Jilani (R.'A.) affirms; "Do not try to obtain your share of the worldly gifts in a way that you have to keep standing before it like a beggar. You ought to be like a sovereign who keeps himself seated while the gifts are presented before him. This world acclaims those who stand and wait at the door of God Almighty, but it demeans those who wait upon it. Thereafter, get your share of the worldly benefits without demeaning yourself or compromising your dignity, and this is what Allah expects of preachers (true believers)."<sup>79</sup>

In another sermon he says: "It is perfectly lawful to lay hands on the world and its gifts, to possess it or even to accumulate it for a commendable purpose, but it is forbidden to set your heart upon it. You may allow it to stand at the door of your heart but it is prohibited to allow it to get inside the door, for it shall not bring any honour to you."<sup>80</sup>

Jilani (Rah.'A) regards decorations, vanities and snares of the world as a fatal poison which is soft exteriorly and whose inside is injurious. He adds that the poison of the world keeps people indifferent towards its evils and treacheries and breaches

of promises. He says, "Its (world's) fatal poison of which the outside is soft to touch and the inside injurious . . . and keeps them indifferent towards its evils and treacheries and breaches of promises."<sup>81</sup>

He advises a true believer to turn away his sight from world's tinsels and close his nose against the foul smell of its sensualities and gross enjoyments. He gives its logic/wisdom in these words, "So that you may remain safe from its trials."<sup>82</sup> In this connection he quotes the following verse from the Holy *Qur'an*, "And do not cast your look of greed on what we have given to certain classes of men to enjoy the splendour of this world's life, that we may thereby try them and the sustenance given by your Lord is better and more abiding."<sup>83</sup>

### **Love of Allah**

Shaikh 'Abdu'l Qadir Jilani (Rah.'A) holds that the heart of a believer should be filled with the love of Allah alone and one should purify his heart of all things other than Allah. This enables a person to see gold and clay as equal. As an effect of it, one loses his own will. The Shaikh shows his surprise to see a believer who claims that he loves Allah but does not obey Him. He affirms:

... You do not have two hearts, but it is a single heart; once filled with something, there will be no room for another. Allah has said: 'Allah has not made for any man two hearts within his body.'<sup>84</sup> A heart that loves the Creator and a heart that loves the creatures.<sup>85</sup>

"The lover becomes the beloved once he has purified his heart of anything other than Allah, that he would not wish to leave Him for the sake of anyone else."<sup>86</sup>

"... The person whose heart becomes sound and attached to his Lord will see as equal: gold and clay, praise and blame, sickness and good health, affluence and poverty, good fortune and bad fortune in this world. . . ,"<sup>87</sup>

"The Lovers feel no rest in their hearts even if they enter

a million paradises until they see their Beloved. They do not wish for a created thing but they wish for the Creator<sup>88</sup> . . . when someone loves Allah, he loses his will because the lover can have no will above the will of his Beloved.<sup>89</sup> . . . Woe unto you! You claim that you love Allah, yet you do not obey Him! The love of Allah comes about only after observing the commandment, refraining from the prohibitions, being satisfied with whatever one gets and being content with the divine decree.”<sup>90</sup>

Jilani (Rah.’A) maintains that the lovers choose Allah in preference to His creatures because they see the blessings that as having come from Him and not from anyone else. He regards that a false claim will be a cause for one’s destruction. Love for Allah and other than Him can’t be stored in the same heart. He explains it in these words: “The lovers choose Allah in preference to His creatures. They see the blessings that as having come from Him not from anyone else. They recognize His subtle favours, His preparations for them and His rewards for them, so they love Him . . . they abandon bed and blankets, sleep and rest.”<sup>91</sup> Then he quotes this verse, “Their sides shun their beds.”<sup>92</sup> The Shaikh further elaborates in these words; “Woe unto you! you claim to love Allah yet, in fact, you love other than Him! Your claim will be a cause for your destruction. He (the lover) has a special language and special speech. He does not wish for anything in addition to his Beloved, which is one of the greatest signs of his truthfulness.”<sup>93</sup>

“Love for Allah and other than Allah cannot be stored in the same heart . . . world and *akhirah* and Creator and creatures cannot have the same abode.”<sup>94</sup>

### **Criteria for Love and Hatred**

In one of his discourses, the Shaikh opines that the criteria for love and hatred should be the *Qur’an* and the *Sunnah*. He advises, “. . . If one happens to be dearer to these two authorities (*Qur’an* and *Sunnah*) you should love him, but if they are

hateful to him you should hate him . . . ,”<sup>95</sup> He subscribes to this fact that one’s safety lies in strictly adhering to the injunctions of the *Qur’an* and the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (SAAS). He preaches, “And safety lies in the Book of Allah and the practice of the holy Prophet (SAAS), and destruction in what is besides them and with the help of these two (*Qur’an* and *Sunnah*) the servant of Allah gets promoted towards the state of *wilayat*, *badaliyyat* and *ghawthiyyat*. ”<sup>96</sup>

He regards the obedience to Allah as the primary thing under which other things should come. He says; “Make obedience to Allah the primary thing under which every other thing should come and make it the guiding factor and make whatever is besides this as of secondary and subordinate consideration.”<sup>97</sup>

### **Striving against the *Nafs* (Lower Self)**

The Shaikh (Rah.’A), while commenting on this theme, says that one should clean both; his clothes (of dirt) and heart (of sins). To create a barrier between oneself and lustful desires one should keep the grave and death in view. The seeker of success, according to him, must teach his lower-self, the self-renunciation. He elaborates:

Do not occupy yourself with washing the clothes of your body yet leave the clothes of your heart dirty . . . combine both acts of washing, both acts of purification. Wash your clothes clean of dirt and wash your heart clean of sins.<sup>98</sup> ... Stick to the door of His mercy, build a barrier of iron between yourself and the lustful desires, keep the grave and death under the eyes of your head and your heart. . . .<sup>99</sup> The person who seeks success must exhort his lower self, teach it renunciation and strive against it.<sup>100</sup> Give up the lustful desires, for in this lies the healing and pure serenity of the hearts. Gratifying the desire to unlawful things blinds and intoxicates the heart, so what is the benefit of satisfying the desire to unlawful things?<sup>101</sup>



The Shaikh (Rah.'A) treats purification of heart as an obligatory duty. The lower-self being ignorant, needs proper education, training and discipline. He compares it with an unruly horse. He holds, "Work on purifying your heart first, for this is an obligatory duty, and then move to the acquisition of knowingness. Because if you miss the root, your engrossment in the branch would not be accepted of you."<sup>102</sup>... The lower-self is ignorant, so educate it. It lacks polite behaviour, so teach it that. It is unable to distinguish between the disease and the medicine, between what is lawful and what is unlawful and between what mends and what ruins. It keeps on disputing with its Lord...<sup>103</sup> O people acquire faith and strike your lowerselves with the stick of striving. Hand it over to the trainer of faith. It is an unreliable horse. Your lower selves are untamed, untrained and full of ignorance and pride.<sup>104</sup> The believer must strive against his lower self in order to improve his behaviour and force it to adhere to good manners."<sup>105</sup>

The Shaikh (Rah.'A) exclaims how one could wish for nearness to Allah when he is inclined towards lustful desires and pleasures. He advises to fight against *nafs* (self), whims and the self will in the hope of *nusrat* (victory) from Allah which is then sure to come. He affirms: "Make it binding on your lower selves to behave with humility towards Allah and the believers among His creatures."<sup>106</sup> "... How could you wish for nearness to Allah when prohibited things have infiltrated your body through your food and drink, when your lower self is in control of you, when your passion is guiding you, when you are inclined towards lustful desires and pleasures. . . ."<sup>107</sup> "... Do not forget your commitment. Fight against your *nafs* (self), your whims, devil, your will and your world and don't lose hope so far as His *nusrat* (victory) is concerned because that is due to come to your rescue."<sup>108</sup>

In his discourses Jilani (Rah.'A) warns about the ill effects of the *nafs* (self). He holds, ". . . *nafs* (self) of man entertains presumptions wherefrom arise false hopes and passions and

sensual pleasure.”<sup>109</sup> In the same sermon he says that *khaer* (good) lies in fighting against one’s own *nafs* (self) in all conditions. He speaks, “. . . all good lies in fighting one’s self in everything and in all conditions of life.”<sup>110</sup> In order to make one understand the wisdom of disobeying one’s low desires of *nafs* (self), he quotes this verse of holy *Qur’an*: “. . . Do not follow your low desires because they will lead you astray from the path of Allah”<sup>111</sup>

Shaikh correlates the state of reality with the state of *wilayat* (saintliness) and he advises to retain this state by way of opposing one’s passions (of *nafs*) and obeying the commandments of Allah. He comments in these words, “And if you are in the state of reality and it is the state of *wilayat* (saintliness), then stand opposed to your passions and obey the commandments (of Allah) fully.”<sup>112</sup> While elaborating his precise statement, Shaikh adds, “An obedience to commandments (of Allah) is of two kinds. One is that you should take from world the means of subsistence to the extent of the just demands of yourself and that you should avoid indulging in sensual pleasures and sins, open and secret. And the second kind relates to the hidden commandments.”<sup>113</sup>

Treating attainment of different states of spirituality as a consequence of striving against the lower self, the Shaikh (Rah.’A) asserts, “And where there is not (even) this hidden commandment, and is just an act of Allah, it entails a state of resignation. And if you have attained the realization of Truth which is otherwise called the state of *mahw* (immersion) or *fana* (annihilation), it is the state of *abdal* — who are broken-hearted on account of Him, a state belonging to pure muwwahidin, to men of spiritual enlightenment, to men of knowledge and (higher) intelligence.”<sup>114</sup>

[The other part of the paper will be published in the next issue of the journal. Editor]

## Notes and References

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3. Ibid.
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7. Ibid. p.127
8. Idem.
9. Shaikh 'Abdu'l Qadir Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghaib*, Eng. tr. M. Aftab-ud Din Ahmad, Kitab Bhawan, New Delhi: 1990, Discourse no. 38.
10. Ibid., no.42
11. Ibid. no. 69.
12. Ibid; no. 76.
13. Ibid; no. 77.
14. Ibid; no.79
15. Ibid; no. 80.
16. Ibid; no. 59.
17. Shaikh 'Abdu'l Qadir Jilani, *Fath-i Rubbani*, Discourse no. 47.
18. Ibid., no.62
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghaib*, op. cit., Discourse no. 17.
22. Ibid.
23. Jilani, *Fath-i Rubbani*, Discourse no. 13.
24. Ibid., no. 20.
25. Holy Qur'an, *Adh-Dhariyat*: 56.
26. Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghaib*, op. cit., Discourse no. 32.
27. Ibid; no. 1.
28. Ibid., no. 35.
29. Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghaib*, op. cit., Discourse no. 35.
30. Holy Qur'an: III: 110, IX:72.
31. Abu Sa'id Khudri (Rad.'A) narrates that the Prophet (SAW) said, "If you witness violation of *shariah*, you should check/stop it with your hand (i.e. using your power/strength); if you are not

capable enough then you stop it with your tongue; if you have not this capacity too, then keep hatred (against the evil) in your heart; (but) it is the weakest (stage) of Iman (faith)”

32. Holy *Qur'an*, XXXV: 6.
33. *Ibid.*, III: 159.
34. *Ibid.*, II: 44.
35. *Ibid.*, V: 66.
36. Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghaib*, Discourse no. 72.
37. *Ibid.*, no. 16.
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Ibid.*, no. 22.
40. Holy *Qur'an*, IV: 16.
41. Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghaib*, Discourse no. 22.
42. *Ibid.*, no. 38.
43. *Ibid.*, no. 73.
44. *Ibid.*, no. 7.
45. Jilani, *Fath-i-Rubbani*, Discourse no. 17.
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47. Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghaib*; Discourse no. 2.
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50. Jilani, *Fath-i-Rubbani*, p. 150.
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53. Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghaib*, Discourse no. 75.
54. *Ibid.*
55. Jilani, *Ghuniyat ul-talibin*, pp. 670-72.
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58. *Ibid.*, no. 50.
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61. *Ibid.*, no. 59.
62. *Ibid.*, no. 67.
63. Holy *Qur'an*, LXXIX: 41.
64. Jilani, *Jila'ali Khatir*, p. 157.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 158.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

67. Ibid., p. 163.
68. Ibid., p. 164.
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74. Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghaib*, Discourse no. 54.
75. Ibid., no. 12.
76. Ibid., no. 71.
77. Jilani, *Fath-i-Rubbani*, Discourse no. 56.
78. Ibid., no. 62.
79. Ibid., no. 21.
80. Ibid., no. 51.
81. Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghaib*, Discourse no. 5.
82. Ibid.
83. Holy Qur'an, XX: 131.
84. Ibid. XXXIII: 4.
85. Jilani, *Jil'aali Khatir*, Eng. tr., Setha al-Dargazelli and Louoy Fatoohi, p. 21.
86. Ibid., p. 22.
87. Ibid., p. 23.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid., p. 24.
90. Ibid., p. 25.
91. Ibid., p. 21.
92. Holy Qur'an, XXXII: 16.
93. Jilani, *Jila'ali Khatir*, p.28.
94. Jilani, *Fath-i-Rubbani*, Discourse no. 24, also cf. Discourse no. 59.
95. Ibid., Discourse no. 31.
96. Ibid., no. 36.
97. Ibid., no. 59.
98. Jilani, *Jila'ali Khatir*, p. 62.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid., p. 63.
101. Ibid., p. 64.
102. Ibid.
103. Ibid., p. 68.
104. Ibid., p. 69.
105. Ibid., p. 69.

106. Ibid., pp. 69-70.
107. Ibid., p. 73.
108. Jilani, *Fath-i-Rubbani*, Discourse no. 11.
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110. Ibid.
111. Holy Qur'an, XXXVIII: 26.
112. Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghaib*, Discourse no. 10.
113. Ibid.
114. Ibid., no. 10.