

Personalities >> Hazrat Ghaws e Azam, Shah Abdul Qadir Jilani

"King of this world & Hereafter is Shah Abdul Qadir, Leader of the Children of Adam is Shah Abdul Qadir. The sun, moon, heavens, the Throne and the Pen, All receive their light from the heart of Shah Abdul Qadir."

~ Hazrat Shah Naqshband

#### BASIC FACTS:

Birth Name: Abdul Qadir Jilani

Born in: Jilan, Iran on 1st Ramadan 471H

#### Parents and Ancestry

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani was born into a pious Syed family (descendants of the Holy Prophet) in Jilan, Iran. His father Abu Swaleh Jangidost was an extremely virtuous person and was married to the equally saintly daughter of Syed Abdullah Saumi, a well-known divine of his time.

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani's father, Hazrat Abu Swaleh Musa Jangidost during his spiritual meditation once passed along a riverside. He had not eaten for several days, and saw an apple fall beside the river. The intense hunger resulting from not eating for over three days naturally made him eat the apple. However, after eating it, he realized that he had not obtained the permission of the owner.

Consequently, he set out in search of the owner of the apple. He had only gone a short distance when he saw a garden which had trees laden with ripe apples hanging over the water. Understanding that the apple he had eaten came from this garden, he learnt that the owner was a man named Abdullah Saumi. He approached the owner with an apology for eating the apple without his permission. Hazrat Abdullah Saumi, who himself was a righteous and God-fearing person, recognized this young man's extraordinary piety. He therefore decided to keep Hazrat Abu Swaleh as a caretaker of this garden for a while, as part of his apology.

Hazrat Abu Swaleh worked with much dedication and the end of the appointed term arrived. Hazrat Abdullah Saumi then told him there was one more condition that Hazrat Abu Swaleh would have to fulfill. He said that he had a daughter who was blind in the eyes, deaf in the ears and handicapped in the arms and legs. For the apology to be accepted, Hazrat Abu Swaleh would have to accept her in marriage.

On the night of the marriage, Hazrat Abu Swaleh found his wife free from all the external defects mentioned, and instead she was blessed with extreme external beauty. Seeing this, he became apprehensive that perhaps he had married the wrong girl and he left the room, perplexed.

Hazrat Abdullah Saumi sensed his dilemma and said, "O Prince, this is your wife! What I had said about her is true; She is blind in that she has never lifted her eyes towards a non-Mahram. She is deaf in that she has never heard anything against the Shariah. She is handicapped in the hand in that she has never used them against the rules of the Shariah, and she is handicapped in the legs in that she has never stepped out of the house against the Shariah."

Hazrat Abu Swaleh was ecstatic upon hearing these words and proclaimed his gratitude to Allah. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani is the blessed son of these two extraordinarily pious individuals.

## Childhood

The name of his mother was Fatima, a pious lady, who gave birth to him when she was 60 years old. After his birth, he was named Abdul Qadir Jilani.

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani was considered a great Divine blessing.

A miracle is in the fact that when he was born, he did not drink the milk of his mother during the daytime due to it being the Holy Month of Ramadan (the month of Fasting).

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani lost his father at an early age. When he reached the age of 8 or 9, his mother decided to send him away to Baghdad so that he could be properly educated.

Before he left, she told him to never tell a lie and gave him 40 Dinars (coins). For safety, she had sewn the coins on the inside of his jacket.

After bidding farewell to his mother, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani joined a caravan destined for Baghdad. They had barely reached Hamdan, when suddenly they were attacked by a group of bandits. A few of the bandits at last approached a poor simple-looking boy sitting quietly at one side. They asked him "have you got anything with you?"

"Yes", he replied, "I have 40 Dinars with me."

The robbers did not believe it and thought that the boy was telling a lie, so they took him to their Chief. Their Chief again asked him, "You say you have 40 Dinars with you. Where are they?"

The boy tore open a portion of his jacket and took out 40 Dinars to the utter surprise of the robbers. The Chief enquired "Why do you disclose your precious property?"

The boy replied that "I was instructed by my mother, who had stitched these Dinars into my jacket, never to speak a lie."

The Chief was moved to the inner-most depth of his heart and tears rolled down his face. He exclaimed by saying, "While I am disobedient to even my Creator, this boy is obedient to his mother." The Chief ordered to return all the looted property to the members of the caravan and renounced his evil ways, thus becoming a devoted Muslim.

Furthermore, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani never told a lie during his lifetime. There even exist records to prove that a caravan bound for Baghdad from Jilan, on which he was travelling, was encountered by a band of robbers.

### Spiritual Elevation and Struggles

Once Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani had nothing to eat for several days and he wandered near the ruins of the palace Kasra in search of Mubah (something which is permissible to eat). But when he reached there he saw 70 other pious men searching for food.

Seeing them, he returned to Baghdad, tired and sad. On the way back he met a foreigner who had a message from his mother; she had sent him some money.

It was a gift from Allah. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani went back and distributed the money amongst the 70 pious men and kept a little for himself.

After many trials and tribulations, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani developed extraordinary levels of tolerance, willpower, determination and complete faith in Allah. He avoided situations and conditions that would disturb his prayers as he longed for closeness to His Lord. His steadfast faith took him to higher levels of Sainthood, till he eventually became the King of Saints. Once Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani resolved neither to eat or drink or change dress until he was given all those by a pious person favoured by Allah. Thirty nine (39) days passed in this manner by meditation and prayer. On the 40th days someone left a plate of food by his side and went away. Although he was attracted towards the food due to hunger, he did not break his pledge. Also he was a Syed, and if the food was Zakat or charity then it was forbidden to him. Hence, he decided not to partake the food. After sometime his teacher, Abu Saeed Mukharruni arrived and enquired about his welfare and invited Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani to his house. He accepted his master's invitation and informed that his nafs (self) was restless but his spirit was blessed by Allah and His secret was now revealed to him.

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani's successful struggle made the master so happy that he served Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani's food with his own hands. He also awarded Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani the khiqa (robe) and made him his Khalifa.

The teacher also informed him that the robe was that of Rasulallah who had bestowed it to Hazrat Ali and thereafter it passed on through generations, from saint to saint, until it had reached him. Baghdad was then a great centre of Islamic learning and Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani became the favourite pupil of Allama Abu Zakariya Tabrezi, Principal of the Jamia Nizamiah. He studied there for 8 years and acquired mastery in all branches of learning. During this period young Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani had to pass a life of trials and tribulations, including that he passed some of his days under starvation, but he loathed begging of food from any one. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani often left the city life and wandered the lonely deserts and jungles of Iraq. He endured hardships and self denial to discipline his self (ego) and purify his soul, heart and mind. He urged his entire self towards Allah as done by Rasulallah. He would recite the Qur'an Sharif and often perform prolonged prayers during the whole night. Often there would be no need for fresh ablution for the morning prayers due to the extent of his worship during the night. He wore a long woollen robe and lived on dates and water.

### Enlightening Baghdad

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani had come to Baghdad to serve humanity, but moral degeneration and Islamic values exploited by men in power disgusted him. He decided to leave Baghdad and help people in the rural areas.

With the Holy Qur'an in his hands, he left the city but he had hardly reached Bab-e-Halbah on the outskirts of Baghdad when he heard a voice restraining him from leaving Baghdad. It was the will of Allah and so Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani returned to Baghdad.

The next day while he was passing through a street, an elderly man opened a door and greeted Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani. He enquired about his earlier intentions on leaving the city and then closed the door. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani was shocked as his intentions were not disclosed to anyone and wondered how this stranger could have known about it.

After many days Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani saw the same elderly man passing through the street and he was invited to his house. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani went to his house, and the man was Sheikh Hammad Al Dabbas who was a pious Syrian and a syrup vendor. This Dervish was a reputed saint of Baghdad and emphasized spiritual training, Tasawwuf and Tareeqat. He taught students to act in consonance with the Will of Allah while maintaining their individuality.

Sheikh Hammad al Dabbas adored Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani and gave special attention and trained him in Tasawwuf. At first, Sufi religious aspirants did not include Aalim (scholar) and Faqih (Jurist). Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani paved the way to change this; he was a Sufi, Aalim and Faqih.

On completion of his education, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani set out to acquire spiritual training. He spent several long years undergoing the rigorous and spiritual life, and passing his time in meditation and in search of truth & Allah.

Title of Mohiuddin; the Reviver of Religion

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani was gifted the title of Mohiuddin i.e. the Reviver of Religion.

In the year 511 AH, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani saw in a vision that he was walking along a street in Baghdad. There he met on the roadside an old and sick man who greeted him with Salaam and asked him to help him get up. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani answered his salutation and helped him up.

No sooner did Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani help him, the man's health improved dramatically and his stature healed. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani was wonderstruck and a little afraid, but the man allayed his fear and said, "I am Islam, the religion of your Grandfather. I had become diseased and poorly but Allah has revived me through your help."

Later at a public appearance in the Masjid, a man addressed Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani as 'Ya Syed Mohiuddin' and since then people have addressed him with this title.

## Connection with the Holy Prophet

Blessed by Allah's Messenger , he became a great preacher, orator and reformer. Through this spiritual wealth, he enriched Islam with a fresh example and vision of the Straight Path shown by the Holy Prophet.

Once in Shawwal 521 AH, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani saw Allah's Messenger in his dream advising him to make a speech and to impart his knowledge to others.

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani asked to be blessed with eloquence as he was an Ajami (non-Arab). Allah's Messenger recited the verse of the Qur'an, "Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preachings' (16:25) seven times and blew on the face of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani .

The same day after Zuhr prayer, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani mounted the pulpit and addressed the people with a sermon. The audience were entranced by his words. His assemblies were attended by men of all calibre.

About 400 men remained engaged in recording his speeches (Akhbarul Akhyar).

Many embraced Islam under the influence of his sermons. His fame for learning, piety, inner illumination, truth and strict adherence to Shariah spread all over. People flocked to hear his lectures and benefit from the sermons that covered all aspects of life and enlightened their understanding. Muslim sinners would change their course of life after listening to his discourses and his spiritual personality awed even the greatest of men.

When Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani spoke he was prompted by the Grace of Allah causing the miraculous and revolutionary impact of his words.

## The Departure of Sheikh Abdul Qadir

The greatest of all divines and mystic saints of Islam, Hazrat Peeran-e-Peer Ghaws e Azam Shah Abdul Qadir Jilani breathed his last on the 11th Rabi-us-Sani, 561 A.H. at the age of 91 years. His

death cast a gloom over the world of Islam but his life and teachings will forever illuminate the hearts of Muslims.

His blessed tomb (Mazaar Sharif) is in Baghdad, Iraq and is situated at Babul-Sheikh, Resafa (East bank of the Tigris).