



THE EARLY LIFE OF SULTANUL AWLIYA HAZRAT SHAIKH ABDUL QADIR JILANI

Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh

Hazrat Shaikh Junaid Baghdadi (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) lived two hundred years before Sarkaar-e-Ghaus-e-Azam Hazrat Shaikh Sayyid Abdul Qadir Jilani (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) and foretold his coming in the following manner. Once while he was in a state of spiritual ecstasy, he stated, "His foot is on my shoulders, his foot is on my shoulders." After he had come out of this spiritual condition, his disciples questioned him concerning these words and he said, "I have been informed that a great saint will be born towards the end of the fifth century. His name shall be Abdul Qadir and his title will be Muhiyyudeen. He will be born in Jilan and he will reside in Baghdad. One day, on the command of Allah, he will say, "My foot is on the shoulders of all the Awliya Allah." While in my spiritual condition, I saw his excellence and these words were uttered by me without my control."

BLESSED BIRTH: The birth of Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) was a great blessing to the Ummah. It was the arrival of Sultanul Awliya (King of the Awliya), which had been foretold for centuries before his birth. He was born on the eve of the 1st of Ramadaan 470 Hijri in the city of Jilan and was blessed to his mother at an age when women are usually unable to have children. Sayyida Ummul Khair Fatima (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anha) was sixty years old when Sarkaar-e-Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) was born. This alone was one of the astonishing incidents related to the birth of the great saint.

HIS PARENTS: He is a descendant of the Holy Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) from both his mother's and father's side. He is Hassani from his father and Hussaini from his mother. His father's name was Sayyid Abu Saleh Moosa (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) and his mother's name was Sayyida Ummul Khair Fatima (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anha).

MIRACULOUS EVENTS SURROUNDING HIS BLESSED BIRTH: There were various miraculous events which occurred at the birth of Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh). Hazrat Sayyiduna Shahabudeen Suharwardi (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) quoted the following five miracles in his distinguished book, Manaqib-e-Ghausia:

- (1) On the eve of the birth of Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh), his father, Sayyid Abu Saleh, saw in his dream, the Beloved Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) who gave him the following glad tidings, "O Abu Saleh, Almighty Allah has blessed you with a pious son. He is my beloved and the beloved of Almighty Allah and he is the most exalted amongst the Awliya and Aqtaab."
- (2) When he was born, he had the impression of the footprint of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) on his shoulder. This alone was the proof of his Wilaayat (Sainthood).
- (3) Almighty Allah gave glad tidings to his parents in their dream that their son would be the Sultanul Awliya and those who oppose him would be misled (Gumrah).
- (4) On the eve of his birth eleven hundred males were born in Jilan and every one of them became a Wali of Allah.

(5) He was born on the eve of Ramadaan. During the entire month of Ramadaan he never drank milk after the time of Sehri and before the time of Iftaar i.e. he kept fast from the day he was born. His blessed mother says that he would never cry for milk the entire day and would only take milk at the time of Iftaar. Subhaanallah!

VOICE FROM THE UNSEEN: Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) was not like other children who spent their time playing and fooling around. From a tender age, he spent his time in the remembrance of Almighty Allah. If he at any time intended to join the other children, then from the unseen a voice would be heard saying, "Come towards Me O blessed one." At first, on hearing this voice, he would become afraid and go to his mother and sit on her lap. As the time passed, he became accustomed to this voice, and instead of going to his mother, he would abandon the thought of playing and occupy himself in the remembrance of Allah.

ANGELS AT THE MADRASSAH: When Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) was four and a half years old, his mother enrolled him into a local Madrassah in Jilan. He remained in this Madrassah until the age of ten and during this period an amazing event occurred. Whenever Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) would enter the Madrassah he would see angels walking ahead of him saying, "Give way to the friend of Allah, give way to the friend of Allah." It was then that he realized that he had been blessed with Wilayat.

DEMISE OF HIS GRANDFATHER: The father of Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) had passed away when he was very small and he was taken under the care of his illustrious grandfather Hazrat Abdullah Sauma'ee (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh). After the demise of his grandfather, the responsibility of his education fell to his blessed mother. With patience, sincerity and dedication, she fulfilled this responsibility that she had been blessed with.

Once, while Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) was about eighteen years old, he went out of his house for a stroll. He walked in the streets of Jilan and found an ox in front of him. He walked behind it for some time, then the animal turned around, and in the language of humans said, "You have not been created for this and you have not been commanded to do this." On hearing this, he immediately returned home and explained this incident to his mother. He then requested permission to journey to Baghdad in order to complete his academic studies and seek more spiritual knowledge. His mother, who was now seventy-eight years old, without a second thought acceded to this noble request.

HIS MOTHER'S ADVICE: In those days, people used to travel either by foot or by camel etc. and the roads passed through dense jungles and forests. There was always a danger of travellers being robbed and killed. Knowing all this, she still supported his request and wished him well with her Duas. She then said, "Your marhoom father left eighty dinars, from which I am giving forty dinars to you for your journey and forty dinars I will keep for your younger brother Sayyid Abu Ahmad Abdullah." She took the forty dinars and sewed them under the arm of his coat. She once again made dua for him and on bidding him farewell gave him the following advice, "O my beloved son, let this advice which I am about to give you be an important part of your life. Always speak the truth and do not even think of lies." Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) promised to follow this advice and then bid farewell to his blessed mother.

He then joined a caravan which was on its way to Baghdad. In those days, people travelled in groups for the sake of safety. However, their journey took them into a vast forest where they were attacked by sixty robbers. The leader of this band was a very notorious bandit called Ahmad

Badawi. The travellers did not have the means to defend themselves against the robbers and were forced to surrender their belongings and valuables to them.

After looting the travellers, the robbers gathered all the loot and began to distribute it amongst themselves. While all this was happening, Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) was standing very calmly amongst the travellers. Regarding him as just a young boy, none of the robbers approached him, until one of them decided to do so. He went up to Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) and asked if he had anything valuable. Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) replied by saying that he had in his possession forty dinars. On hearing this, the robber laughed and walked away, thinking that he was lying. After some time another of the robbers asked him the same question and received the same answer. He too dismissed this statement of Ghaus-e-Paak (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) as a joke. When the robbers had gathered, then both these robbers began to joke about the young boy who thought he had forty dinars. On hearing their discussion, their leader Ahmad Badawi asked them to bring this boy to him.

When the great saint was brought before Ahmad Badawi, the latter asked whether he had any valuables in his possession, and the saint replied in the same way as before. When Ahmad Badawi heard this, he asked for the forty dinars. Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) calmly showed him where the dinars were hidden. On tearing open the coat of Ghaus-e-Paak (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh), they found that there were really forty dinars sewn under the arm of the coat. On seeing this, Ahmad Badawi and his accomplices were taken aback. Ahmad Badawi then asked, "O young man, none of us knew that you had any money. Knowing we are bandits, why did you still tell us where the money was hidden?" The young Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) replied by saying, "When I had left on this journey, I had promised my elderly and pious mother that I would never lie. How then could I break this promise just for the sake of forty dinars?"

On hearing this, Ahmad Badawi felt great shame and in tears he said, "O young boy, you are so loyal in your promise to your mother, shame on me, that for years I have been disloyal to my promise with my Creator Almighty Allah." After saying these words, the bandit cried bitterly and then fell to the feet of Sarkaar-e-Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) and repented for his sins. When his accomplices saw this, then they too did likewise and repented sincerely from all their sins. They then returned all the belongings of the travellers and escorted them out of the jungle. It has been stated that the tauba (repentance) of these bandits was so sincere, that they were blessed with Wilaayat, through the Sadqa of Sarkaar-e-Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh).

ARRIVAL AT BAGHDAD: By the time Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) arrived at Baghdad Shareef, he had already spent the forty dinars given to him by his mother. He therefore began to spend his days in hunger and poverty. After a few days in Baghdad Shareef he enrolled for academic studies at the Jamia Nizamia.

HARDSHIPS FACED DURING STUDIES: Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) faced many extreme hardships during his studies and he said, "When the hardships and difficulties would become unbearable, then I would lie on the road and continuously recite the verse from the Holy Qur'an, "Therefore, surely there is ease with hardship. Undoubtedly there is ease with hardship [Surah 94, Verse 5-6]." With the continuous recitation of this verse I used to find great tranquillity and peace."

After adjourning from classes, he used to wander into the jungles and forests of Baghdad where he used to spend the entire night in the Zikr of Almighty Allah. He did this regardless of the weather conditions or season. If he became tired and weak, he would rest for a while making the ground his bed and a boulder his pillow. During these nights of Zikr, he would wear a small turban and a thin cloak. If he became hungry, he used to go towards the river Euphrates and eat whatever vegetables he could find beside the river. He always said that he gained much pleasure in this way of life and it caused him to gain closeness to Almighty Allah.

PATIENCE DURING A SEVERE DROUGHT: Once, while he was studying, the city of Baghdad experienced a severe drought. The conditions in Baghdad became so desperate that people became dependant on every grain that they could find. When there was no more grain, people began to eat plants and leaves from trees. During this time, Hazrat Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) used to also go out in search for food. But when he saw others in search of food, he would return to the city empty-handed, as he did not feel it appropriate to impose by disturbing others whom he thought needed food more than he did. Many days had passed by without him eating.

Due to intense hunger, he was compelled to go out in search of food towards a market in Baghdad. As he entered the market, his hunger had made him so weak and tired, that he could not stand anymore. He saw a Masjid nearby and slowly dragged himself towards it. He entered the Masjid and sat against one of the walls of the Masjid to support his now tired and weak body. He sat there for a while. Then he saw a person enter the Masjid. The person sat in one corner and opened a parcel in which there was fried meat and bread, which he then began to eat. Hazrat Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) says, "The intensity of my hunger was so great that every time the person lifted a morsel of food to his mouth, my mouth would open uncontrollably with his and would wish that I also had something to eat."

When this continued happening, Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) turned to his nafs and said, "Do not be impatient. Have trust and faith in Almighty Allah." After saying these words he did not feel this way anymore. After a little while, this person came to Huzoor Ghaus-e-Paak (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) uninvited and offered him some food. He kindly declined, but the person insisted. Upon such insistence, Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) joined him in his meal.

Whilst eating, the person asked Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) about himself. He explained to the person that he was from Jilan and that he was in Baghdad to attain knowledge. The person then said that he was also from Jilan and asked if he knew a person by the name of Abdul Qadir Jilani. Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) answered by saying, "My name is Abdul Qadir Jilani."

When the man heard this, with tears in his eyes, he stood before Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) and said, "Please forgive me for I have misused that which was given to me in trust." He then said, "When I was leaving Jilan, I met an old woman, who gave me eight dirhams in trust that I should give it to her son, Abdul Qadir, who is studying in Baghdad. O Abdul Qadir! The food that I was eating was from the eight dirhams that your mother had given for you. I had been searching for you but could not find you and due to this, my stay in Baghdad was extended. This caused my money to run out and out of extreme hunger I used some of your money to purchase this food that we ate. O Abdul Qadir! It is not I that fed you, but it is you that fed me. Please forgive me for abusing that which was given to me in trust."

Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) with great gentleness and affection held the stranger to his heart and praised him for his honesty and his sincerity. He then gave the remainder of the food and a portion of the eight dirhams to the stranger and bid him farewell.

This incident indicates in clear terms that Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) was concerned more with the needs of others than with those of his own. Notwithstanding his dire need in the circumstances, he remained sensitive to the plight of this stranger. This act of selflessness alone is a lesson in the behaviour that one should adopt.

After all the hardships, Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) qualified from Jamia Nizamia, excelling in every subject that he studied. During this period, there was no Aalim present on the earth who was more knowledgeable and pious than Huzoor Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh).

May Allah Ta'ala grant us true love for Sarkaar-e-Ghaus-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) and the Taufeeq to follow in his footsteps, Ameen.