

TWENTY-SEVEN

SHĀH JALĀL AL-DĪN THĀNĪSARĪ



Date of birth: 894 AH

Place of birth: Balkh

Date of death: 14th or 22nd or 25th Dhū 'l-Ḥijja 980 AH or 989 AH or 969 AH

Place of burial: Thānīsar

Shāh Jalāl al-Dīn Thānīsarī completed his study of Arabic and Sharī'a in Balkh and thereafter established a madrasa there. His madrasa gained much fame for teaching and learning, and also for the discipline of its students.

ARRIVAL OF SHĀH 'ABD AL-QUDDŪS GANGOHĪ

He was wholly engrossed in the teaching of Islamic sciences when once there was talk amongst students and teachers about the arrival of a saint. Shāh Jalāl al-Dīn Thānīsarī asked who this saint was, at which they informed him that it was Shāh 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī. Shāh Jalāl al-Dīn Thānīsarī had heard of him and how he was, but because he was more inclined to exoteric knowledge and had no affiliation with other fields, he asked the students, "Is it he who dances? Go to meet him and convey my salām to him."

However, the students conveyed everything of Shāh Jalāl al-Dīn Thānīsārī ؒ to Shāh ‘Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī ؒ, his salām and the mention of his dancing. Shāh ‘Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī ؒ responded to this instructing the students, “Go, convey my salām and inform him that he dances and makes others dance too.”

This is a separate topic in itself, and I will return to it in the end. Let me [first] relate his brief accounts. Thus, salāms and messages were conveyed from one to another and it finished there.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A SINGLE SIGHT OF  
SHĀH ‘ABD AL-QUDDŪS GANGOHĪ ؒ

Thereafter, on a second occasion, Shāh ‘Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī ؒ once turned up at the madrasa of Shāh Jalāl al-Dīn Thānīsārī ؒ without prior notice, and they both met in person. They exchanged salāms and, because it was the first time Shāh Jalāl al-Dīn Thānīsārī ؒ had met him, he asked, “Who are you?” Shāh ‘Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī ؒ replied, “The one regarding whom you asked if he dances, and I had it conveyed to you that he also makes others dance too.” It was this statement and the piercing sight of Shāh ‘Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī ؒ that transformed the world of Shāh Jalāl al-Dīn Thānīsārī ؒ.

Shāh Jalāl al-Dīn Thānīsārī ؒ was previously totally hostile to this field, considering it an innovation. Who knows what other thoughts he harboured regarding it? It resulted in something similar to Shaykh Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī ؒ setting out to debate Shaykh Muḥammad Thānawī ؒ but ending up pledging allegiance to Hāji Imdādullāh ؒ and staying with him for forty days, thereafter returning with [spiritual] fortunes. This was despite the fact he could not bear to miss lessons during his

student years, and it slipped out of his mouth, “Ok, Ḥājī has come and we will miss our lesson.”

In a similar manner, Shāh Jalāl al-Dīn Thānīsārī ؒ was privileged. He then pledged allegiance, began his dhikr along with other spiritual endeavours, and in a short while, reached heights people tend not to reach even after a number of years.

Later, Shāh Jalāl al-Dīn Thānīsārī ؒ became a shaykh of the same calibre. Someone once asked him, “Shaykh! I have heard regarding saints that on whomsoever they cast their gaze, their world transforms.” Shāh Jalāl al-Dīn Thānīsārī ؒ cast his gaze on the one who had enquired, and, unable to withstand a single gaze, he fell unconscious.

#### SHAYKH RAIPŪRĪ ؒ AND SHAYKH ZAKARIYYĀ ؒ

My shaykh, Shaykh Muḥammad Zakariyyā Muhājir Madanī ؒ was in Madīna Ṭayyiba with Shaykh Raipūrī ؒ when he received *khilāfa*.

Shaykh Raipūrī ؒ states that he noticed whenever Shaykh Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī ؒ gave any food or drink to Shaykh Zakariyyā ؒ, he would first gaze at it. He further said, “If only there was someone to feed me in this way!” What he meant was that Shaykh Khalīl Aḥmad ؒ would gaze carefully at the food or drink before feeding it to Shaykh Zakariyyā ؒ.

#### HE COULD NOT BEAR A SINGLE SIGHT

The man did not seem to be regaining consciousness; one day, two days, and on the third day he passed away. Thereafter, the Shaykh said, “I still needed to give him an answer to his question

that there are such people present right now.” However, he did not have the capacity to withstand a single gaze. The Shaykh has many well-known miracles.

#### AT THE FAIR OF THE HINDUS

The Hindus used to hold a fair in Thānīsār. People would perform various shows during this fair. They would have show-men bringing in snakes and monkeys, and others displaying themselves as magicians. One particular man who used to take part in the fair attracted thousands of people to it.

The magician would have everyone stood around an open flat ground and would ask them, “Do you see anything like stones, rocks or water, apart from plain ground, in the middle?” They would say no. Then, he would dive deep into the ground as if it was water. People would see him protrude from various places. This is what the magician displayed for many years.

Shāh Jalāl al-Dīn Thānīsārī رحمۃ اللہ علیہ once said they will also be going to the Hindu fair, shocking his attendants and making them think why the Shaykh would be attending a Hindu fair? He told them that they were going to see the famous Hindu faqīr who dived into the ground. But still, the attendants were astounded as to why the Shaykh would want to see him.

Upon reaching the fair, the Shaykh observed the people gathered around him as the Hindu faqīr made his announcements. He dived into the ground from one place and came out from another. When he dived in again, the Shaykh placed his foot on the ground where his head had popped up from after the previous dive. That was it now; he could not come out again. Everyone became distraught as they saw what had happened. The Shaykh only placed his foot there and the faqīr remained inside forever.

Initially, Shāh Jalāl al-Dīn Thānīsārī ﷺ objected to Shāh ‘Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī ﷺ for dancing, to which Shāh ‘Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī ﷺ replied telling him that he also makes others dance.

The topic was the issue of the simā’ of the Ṣufīs, especially the Chishtiyya order famed for their simā’.

#### A GATHERING OF SIMĀ’ AND THE RULING OF THE PROPHET ﷺ

Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā ﷺ also used to hold gatherings of simā’ which was subject to numerous objective edicts. He faced much opposition in this regard which led him to take it upon himself to silence these opposing scholars. The government had appointed an officer whose job was to administer the branch of enjoining good and forbidding evil in Delhi. Wherever anything contrary to the Sharī’a would be spotted, police would be lead there to make an arrest. The officer of Delhi in those days was Qāḍī Sanāmī ﷺ.

Qāḍī Nizām al-Dīn Sanāmī was the officer, and Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’ ﷺ used to hold the gathering of simā’. His critics would class these gatherings to be impermissible and an innovation in Islām.

Finally, when they both discussed this issue, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’ ﷺ said, “Look! Deciding is simple. What if the Prophet ﷺ decides, for otherwise we will continue debating senselessly, will you then object?” Qāḍī Nizām al-Dīn Sanāmī replied, “What can be better than that!”

So, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā’ ﷺ was sat in his gathering, meditating with his head lowered. After a short while, the upper-realm became manifest to Qāḍī Nizām al-Dīn Sanāmī, and the Noble Prophet ﷺ appeared before him.

Quite similar to how the Prophet ﷺ appeared before the officer who objected to Ḥājī Imdādullāh ؒ. The Prophet ﷺ appeared before Qāḍī Niẓām al-Dīn Sanāmī telling him to excuse Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' ؒ, for he was excused. He asked, “O Prophet of Allāh ﷺ, I understand he may be excused, but we are obliged to follow the apparent precepts of your Sharī'a.” The Prophet ﷺ remained silent.

After the vision had concluded, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' ؒ asked, “Have you heard what the Prophet ﷺ had to say?” Qāḍī Niẓām al-Dīn Sanāmī replied, saying, “Yes, and you heard what my reply was, that I am accountable to follow the apparent precepts of Sharī'a.” In other words, only that which is permitted by Sharī'a will be allowed.

#### MUTUAL RESPECT DESPITE DIFFERENCES

Despite the fact that their dispute apparently continued in this way, the mutual respect they had for each other in their hearts was such that when Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' ؒ heard Qāḍī Niẓām al-Dīn Sanāmī was on his deathbed, he went to visit him and sent a message informing Qāḍī Niẓām al-Dīn Sanāmī he had come to visit him. Qāḍī Niẓām al-Dīn Sanāmī replied that he did not wish to see the face of an innovator on his deathbed. Outright! What dedication to the apparent precepts of Sharī'a and what a harsh statement: “I do not want to see the face of an innovator on my deathbed.”

Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' ؒ replied saying that every sin is forgivable and “the innovator has come after repenting from his innovation.” When this statement was conveyed to Qāḍī Niẓām al-Dīn Sanāmī, he began crying and instructed for his turban to be taken off and laid out where Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā' ؒ

ﷺ would arrive from, as a token of honour. This was how they respected and honoured one another at heart.

#### CONDITIONS OF SIMĀ‘

Because this dispute [regarding simā‘] was ongoing, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā’ ﷺ set some conditions of simā‘ for the listener, the reciter and the content being recited [simā‘]. The listener could not be from the lustful and corrupt. It was permissible for the pious and God-fearing to listen. The condition pertaining to the reciter was that his appearance had to conform to the Sharī‘a. The condition regarding the content of simā‘ was that it should not be mischievous or potentially arousing the listener’s desires.

These were the conditions regarding the reciter, listener and the content of simā‘. The muftīs express these very conditions in varying words.

Such were the gatherings of simā‘ of Shāh ‘Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī ﷺ. *Irshād al-Ṭālibīn* is a written work of Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn Thānīsarī ﷺ. May Allāh Most High also grant us a portion of the spirituality of these saints.

اللهم صل على سيدنا ونبينا وشفيعنا وحبينا وسندنا ومولانا محمد وبارك  
وسلم، سبحن ربك رب العزة عما يصفون وسلام على المرسلين والحمد لله رب  
العلمين

