



BAĠDĀDĪ, KĀLED ŽĪĀ'-AL-DĪN

BAĠDĀDĪ, MAWLĀNĀ KĀLED ŽĪĀ'-AL-DĪN (1193-1242/1779-1827), the founder of a significant branch of the Naqšbandī Sufi order—named Kāledī after him—that has had a profound impact not only on his native Kurdistan but also on many other regions of the western Islamic world. Mawlānā Kāled apparently acquired the *nesba* Baġdādī through his repeated stays in Baghdad, for it was in the Kurdish town of Qarādāġ, about five miles distant from Solaymānīya, that he was born in 1193/1779. His father was a Sufi (probably of the Qāderī order), who was popularly known as Pīr Mīkā'īl Šeš-angošt, and his mother also came from a celebrated Sufi family of Kurdistan. For many years, however, Mawlānā Kāled's interests were focused exclusively on *'elm*, the formal traditions of religious learning, and his later, somewhat abrupt, turning to Sufism is highly reminiscent of the pattern found in many a classic Sufi biography.

His studies began in Qarādāġ, with the memorization of the Qur'ān, the assimilation of basic works of Shafe'ite *feqh*, and the learning of elementary logic. He then traveled to other centers of religious study in Kurdistan, concentrating on logic and *kalām*. Foremost among his teachers were two brothers, Shaikh 'Abd-al-Raḥīm and Shaikh 'Abd-al-Karīm Barzanjī. Next he came to Baghdad, where he astounded the established *'olamā'* with his learning and worsted them in debate on many topics (at least according to Kāledī hagiographical sources). Such was his precocious mastery of the traditional religious sciences that the governor of Bābān proposed him a post as *modarres*, but he modestly refused. However, when 'Abd-al-Karīm Barzanjī



died of the plague in 1213/1798-99, Mawlānā Kāled assumed responsibility for the *madrasa* in Solaymānīya he had founded. There Mawlānā Kāled remained for about seven years, distinguished as yet only by his great learning and a high degree of asceticism that caused him to shun the company of secular authority.

In 1220/1805, Mawlānā Kāled conceived a desire to perform the hajj, and the journey he undertook as a result turned his aspirations to Sufism. Traveling by way of Mosul, Diyarbakir, Aleppo, and Damascus, he stopped for a few days in Medina before continuing to Mecca. There he encountered an anonymous, saintly Yemeni, who prophetically warned not to condemn hastily anything he might see in Mecca apparently contradicting the *Šarī'a*. Once arrived in Mecca, Mawlānā Kāled went forthwith to the Ka'ba, where he saw a man sitting with his back to the sacred structure and facing him. Forgetting the admonition he had heard in Medina, Mawlānā Kāled inwardly reproved the man, who immediately divined his thoughts and said, "do you not know that the worth of the believer is greater in God's eyes than the worth of the Ka'ba?" Penitent and overwhelmed, Mawlānā Kāled asked for forgiveness and begged the stranger to accept him as disciple. He refused, telling Mawlānā Kāled that his master awaited him in India. After the hajj, he returned to Solaymānīya and his duties at the *madrasa* but was inwardly agitated by the desire to find his destined master. Finally, in 1224/1809, an Indian dervish by the name of Mīrzā Raḥīm-Allāh 'Aẓīmābādī chanced to visit Solaymānīya, and he recommended to Mawlānā Kāled that he travel to India and seek initiation from a Naqšbandī shaikh of Delhi, Shah 'Abd-Allāh (also known as Shah Ġolām-'Alī) Dehlavī. Mawlānā Kāled departed immediately.

He traveled overland to India, through Iran and Afghanistan. There are indications in Mawlānā Kāled's poetry that the journey was harsh and unpleasant, partly, no doubt, because of his insistence on doing vigorous sectarian debate with the various Shi'ite '*olamā*' he encountered, especially Shaikh Esmā'īl Kāšī, a *mojtahed* of Tehran. He reached Delhi about a year after leaving Solaymānīya, and was immediately initiated into the Naqšbandī order by Shah 'Abd-Allāh. It is said that in five months he completed all the stages of spiritual wayfaring laid down in the Naqšbandī order, and that in a year he attained the highest degree of sainthood (*al-welāya al-kobrā*). He was then sent back to Solaymānīya by Shah 'Abd-Allāh, with full authority to act as his *kalīfa* in western Asia and to grant initiation not only in the Naqšbandī but also in the Qāderī, Sohrawardī, Kobrawī, and Češtī orders.



The return journey—again punctuated by hostile debate with Shi‘ite ‘*olamā*’—took about fifty days and saw Mawlānā Kāled in Muscat, Yazd, Shiraz, Isfahan, Hamadān, and Sanandaj. Soon after his return, he came for a brief period to Baghdad, preaching the Naqšbandī way with considerable success. In Solaymāniya, however, rival shaikhs, of the Qāderī order, resented his popularity and tried to enlist the authority of the governor of the city against him. In 1228/1813, he therefore left prudently for another stay in Baghdad, where he took possession of a dilapidated *madrassa* and turned it into a Naqšbandī hospice and began recruiting numerous and often influential *morīds*. When one of his enemies from Solaymāniya sent a letter to Sa‘īd Pasha, the governor of Baghdad, accusing Mawlānā Kāled of heresy in the hope of destroying his success, the maneuver failed: Sa‘īd Pasha remained convinced of Mawlānā Kāled’s rectitude and had the celebrated Hanafite *faqīh*, Moḥammad Amīn b. ‘Ābedīn, compose a refutation of the charges raised against Mawlānā Kāled. He was thus able to make a triumphant return visit to Solaymāniya, where a *zāwīa* was built for him by Maḥmūd Pasha, governor of the city. He chose, however, to continue residing in Baghdad, and began to organize his ever-increasing following in the Ottoman lands by appointing *kalīfas* for different areas. Among those he sent out from Baghdad was Shaikh Aḥmad Kaṭīb Erbilī, his *kalīfa* for Damascus. Erbilī succeeded in recruiting the *moftī* of Damascus, Ḥosayn Efendi Morādī, into Mawlānā Kāled’s branch of the Naqšbandī order, and in 1238/1823 Morādī was able to persuade Mawlānā Kāled to move from Baghdad to Damascus.

He remained in Damascus for the remaining years of his life, leaving only to visit Jerusalem, where an impressive welcome was organized for him by his *kalīfa* for the city, Shaikh ‘Abd-Allāh Fardī, and to perform the hajj once again. In 1241/1826, the plague struck Damascus. He foresaw that he would die of the infection and after making meticulous provision for the place and manner of his burial, and appointing Shaikh Esmā‘īl Anārānī as his chief *kalīfa*, he died on 14 Du‘l-qa‘da 1242/8 June 1827 and was buried on one of the foothills of Jabal Qāsiyūn, on the edge of the Kurdish quarter of Damascus. Later a building was erected over the tomb, comprising a *zāwīa* and a library; it is still frequented.

Mawlānā Kāled established a new branch of an existing Sufī order; he did not originate a completely new one. Much of his significance lies, then, in his giving renewed emphasis to traditional tenets and practices of the Naqšbandī order, notably adherence to the *Šarī‘a* and the *sonna* and avoidance of vocal



for silent *dekr*. Nonetheless, there were elements in his teaching that were novel and controversial, even among other Naqšbandīs. Foremost among these was his interpretation of the practice known as *rābeṭa*—the linking, in the imagination, of the heart of the *morīd* with that of the preceptor. In the only formal treatise he wrote on Sufi matters, Mawlānā Kāled defined it in novel fashion as “an imaginary fixing of the form of the shaikh between the eyes of the *morīd*,” and he proclaimed that *rābeṭa* was to be practiced exclusively with reference to himself, even after his death (*Resālat al-rābeṭa*, contained in *Majmū'a 'azīma fī asrār al-ṭarīq*, Istanbul, n.d., p. 20).

Equally important for the identity of the Kāledī branch of the Naqšbandī order was its political orientation: a pronounced loyalty to the Ottoman state as focus of Muslim unity and strength, and a concomitant hostility to the imperialist powers of Europe. Almost everywhere the Kāledīya went, from Daghestan to Sumatra, its members stood out through their militant attitudes and activities.

The diffusion of his following was extremely wide, reaching from the Balkans and the Crimea to South-East Asia just one generation after his death. His principal following was, however, in the Islamic heartlands, the Arab, Turkish, and Kurdish provinces of the Ottoman state and the Kurdish-inhabited areas of Iran. He gained many followers among the Ottoman learned hierarchy; not only Ebn 'Ābedīn, but also Maḥmūd al-Alūsī, author of the important *tafsīr Rūḥ al-ma'ānī*, and Makkīzāda Moṣṭafā 'Aṣem Efendi, *ṣayḳ-al-eslām* under Maḥmūd II, were his *morīds*. Almost everywhere in Anatolia as well as in the capital itself, the Kāledī branch of the Naqšbandī order came to supersede branches of more ancient origin, and in Syria, Palestine, and Iraq, the Naqšbandīs assumed an important place in the ranks of the Sufis for the first time.

Mawlānā Kāled had a special impact on the religious life of his homeland, Kurdistan. For the Kurds, the practice of Islam had been traditionally connected with membership in a Sufi order, and the Qāderī order had predominated in most Kurdish-inhabited areas. With the emergence of the Kāledīya, matters were changed: the Qāderīya lost their preeminence to the Naqšbandīya, and many shaikhly families switched their allegiance from the former to the latter. Kurdish identity became to a degree associated with the Kāledī branch of the Naqšbandī order, and this fact, together with the hereditary form that the leadership of the order assumed in Kurdistan, accounts for the prominence of various Naqšbandī families in Kurdistan down to the present.



It is also worth remarking that Mawlānā Kāled harbored a distinct enmity to the Shi'ites; he concludes his treatise on the *rābeṭa*, for example, with an imprecation against “the apostate Persians” as well as “the cursed Christians.” His spiritual descendants in Kurdistan fully assimilated these attitudes, so that the revolt of the Naqšbandī Shaikh ‘Obayd-Allāh in the Orūmīa (Urmia) region in 1880 was not only a rebellion against Iranian rule but also a war against Shi'ism.

Mawlānā Kāled influenced his contemporaries mostly by means of his teaching, and posterity by means of the many lines of descent that go forth from him; he is certainly not among the most prolific of Sufi writers. Nonetheless, he left behind a number of writings in both poetry and prose. His *Dīvān* (first published at Būlāq in 1260/1844) consists of poems written in Persian, Arabic, and Gūrānī Kurdish, mostly the first. Some of the Persian *gāzals*—all written under the influence of Indo-Persian masters such as Bīdel and Mīr Dard—show delicacy and imagination, but the general level of his verse is mediocre, and its chief interest lies in the biographical information that can be culled from it. His letters, in both Arabic and Persian, were collected and published after his death, and they attest to the widespread influence he enjoyed. Finally, there are the treatise he composed on the *rābeṭa*, and other brief pieces relating to various theological questions.

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