

Irrefutable Proof that the Hanabilah Were Sūfis

Prepared by Abū Layth ibn ‘Ata

Dr. George Makdisi in his masterpiece, Religion, Law and Learning in Classical Islam argues effectively that the major classical scholars of the Hanbalī Madh-hab were Sūfī. To many, this argument is insignificant. However, for myself, and those who have been spiritually castrated by the pseudo salafi cult, this needed information is heart warming and soul satisfying. The intent of this brief treatise is to spread the message that Ibn Qudāmah, Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Al Qayyim Al-Jawzīya, Ibn Rajab and others from amongst the Hanābilah are orthodox Sūfī.

In a brief article “L’isnad Initiatique Soufi de Muwaffaq Ad-Din Ibn Qudama” the Khirqah (the cloak of the Sūfī’s) of Ibn Qudāmah is shown. The following is a pictorial scan of that Khirqah. This manuscript can be found in the Thāhirīya Library in Damascus, Syria.

لبس خرقة النصرى المباركة

لبسنا من شيخنا الصالح جمال الدين يوسف بن محمد بن نصر بن قاسم
المعدني الهنباي ومن كان معي في الطبقتين المذكورتين في آخر الجزء ،

ولبسنا هو من يد الشيخ الإمام المقدمة قاضي القضاة شيخ الإسلام
شمس الدين أبي عبد الله محمد بن الشيخ المقدمة عماد الدين أبي إسحاق إبراهيم بن
عبد الواحد المقدسي — بَرَدَ اللهُ رُجْعَهُ ،

وهو لبسنا من يد الشيخ الإمام المقدمة شيخ الإسلام بقية السلف
أبي محمد عبد الله بن أحمد بن محمد بن قدامة المقدسي ،

وكان لبسنا من يد شيخنا شيخ الإسلام قطب الأقطاب محيي الدين
أبي محمد عبد القادر بن أبي صالح بن عبد الله الجيلي — رحمه الله ،

وكان لبسنا من يد الشيخ أبي سعد المبارك بن علي المقرمي ،

وكان المقرمي لبسنا من يد الشيخ أبي الحسن علي بن محمد بن يوسف
القرشي الهكاري ،

وكان لبسنا من يد الشيخ أبي الفتح الطرسوسي ،

وكان لبسنا من يد الشيخ أبي الفضل عبد الواحد التميمي ،

وكان التميمي لبسنا من يد والده الشيخ عبد العزيز التميمي ،

وكان لبسنا من يد الشيخ أبي بكر بن محمد بن خلف [دلف: marg.] بن
محمد الشبلي ،

وكان لبسنا من شيخ الطائفة أبي القاسم الجنيد ،

وكان لبسطا من يد الشيخ سري القطيبي ،
 وكان لبسطا من يد الشيخ معروف الكرخي ،
 وكان لبسطا من يد الشيخ داود الطائي ،
 وكان لبسطا من يد الشيخ حبيب العجمي ،
 وكان لبسطا من يد الحسن البصري ،
 وكان لبسطا من يد أمير المؤمنين علي بن أبي طالب - كرم الله وجهه ،
 وعلي بن أبي طالب أخذ من النبي - صلى الله عليه وسلم ،
 عن جبريل - عليه السلام ،
 عن الله - عز وجل .
 وأذن لهم الشيخ أن يلبسوا من شاءوا . وأجاز لهم جميع ما يجوز
 له روايته .

نقلنا من خط الشيخ شمس الدين محمد بن مكّي بن أبي الشفاء الديسري .
 وصح ذلك في يوم الجمعة سادس عشر رجب الفرد من سنة أربع وأربعين
 وسبعمائة . وكتب حمزة بن عمر بن أحمد الهكاري ، على ما ذكره ، فالله
 أعلم بذلك . والحمد لله وحده ، وصلى الله على النبي محمد وآله وصحبه .

You will notice after review that there are multiple Hanbalī scholars mentioned in this Khirqah.

- 1) Yūsuf ibn Muhammad ibn Nasr ibn Qāsim Al-Ma'dnī Al Hanbalī.
- 2) Abī Abdillah Muhammad ibn Shaykh Al-Allāmah 'īmādud-dīn Abī Is-hāq Ibrāhīm ibn Abdul Wāhid Al Maqdisī Al Hanbalī.
- 3) Abī Muhammad Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Qudāmah Al Maqdisī Al Hanbalī.
- 4) The master of the Sūfis and great Hanbalī, Abī Muhammad Abdul-Qādir ibn Abī Sālih ibn 'Abdillah Al-Jīlī (Jilānī).
- 5) Mukharrimī, who was also a Hanbalī

- 6) Abūl Fadhl Abdul Wāhid ibn Abdul-‘Azīz ibn Al Hārith ibn Asad At-Tamīmī Al-Hanbalī [died 410 in Baghdad]
- 7) Abūl Hasan Abdul-Azīz At-Tamīmī, the father of Abūl Fadhl previously mentioned, was also a well known Hanbalī of his time. He died in 371 A.H. in Dhul Qa’dah.

These are the seven well known Hanbalī’s who took the Khirqah from each others hands, labeling themselves from amongst the Sūfīs.

This Khirqah (cloak of Sufism) is a clear refutation of those amongst the orientalist and Muslim scholars who believe that the Islamic Hanbalī School was opposed to Sufism. It should be noted that ‘Abdul Qādir Al-Jīlī (Jīlānī), who was well known Hanbalī and author of the Hanbalī manual Al Ghunyah, is the eponym of the Qādiriyyah Sūfī Tarīqah.

Dr. G. Makdisi theorizes the following regarding Al-Ansārī Al Harawī Al Hanbalī and ‘Abdul Qādir Al Jīlī,

“With just these two facts, one would have thought that some notions would be changed. But nothing of the kinds happened. An explanation was offered, and remains to this day accepted, that these two Sūfīs were Hanbalīs merely because they were refugees from rationalist theology, or kalām; it just so happens, we were told, that the Hanbali School appealed to them because it, too, opposed kalām.” [Page 121]

The following are the scanned words of Dr. G. Makdisī regarding the Sufism of Ibn Taymiyyah. Pay careful attention to the manuscripts referenced.

by Ghazzālī (Ghazzālī), as always).

Some years ago, in Portugal, I read a paper to members of the IVth Congress of Arabic and Islamic Studies (1968), a paper which is still in the press. That paper is entitled “The Ḥanbalī School and Ṣūfism.” Its purpose was to show that the thesis of

Ḥanbali opposition to Šūfism was no longer tenable. The new evidence presented there was taken from manuscript sources which I have come across in recent years in some of the libraries of Europe and the Muslim East. Specifically, documents showing the Šūfi spiritual genealogy of a certain number of Ḥanbali doctors heretofore unknown as Šūfis. In other words, chains of Šūfi initiation, or *silsila*-s, in which were named Ḥanbalis who had been invested with the Šūfi cloak, the so-called *khirqā*, by the celebrated Ḥanbali Šūfi ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī. The dates of death involved extend from 561 H. to 795 H. Thus ‘Abd al-Qādir,²⁰ eponym of the Šūfi brotherhood, invested with the Šūfi cloak both Abū ‘Umar b. Qudāma (d. 607/1210)²¹ and his brother Muwaffaq ad-Dīn b. Qudāma (d. 620/1223).²² The son of the former, and therefore nephew of the latter, Ibn Abī ‘Umar b. Qudāma (d. 682/1283)²³ received the cloak directly from both his father and his uncle. It is this Ibn Qudāma who invested Ibn Taimīya with the Šūfi cloak. This spiritual genealogy continues, through Ibn Taimīya, with Ibn Qaiyim al-Jauziya (d. 751/1350),²⁴ author of a Šūfi work, *Madārij as-sālikīn*,²⁵ which is a commentary of the famous Šūfi work, *Manāzil as-sā’irīn* by the celebrated Ḥanbali Šūfi al-Anṣārī al-Harawī.²⁶ After Ibn Qaiyim al-Jauziya, the last name on this chain of Šūfi initiation is that of Ibn Rajab (d. 795/1393)²⁷, biographer of the Ḥanbali School.

Thus all seven names forming the links of this Šūfi chain belong to members of the Ḥanbali School whose lives span a period of three centuries, from the sixth/twelfth century to the eighth/fourteenth century.

²⁰ See *EI*, article “‘Abd al-Qādir al-Djīlī,” by W. Braune, and the bibliography cited there; also H. Laoust, “Le Hanbalisme sous le califat de Bagdad,” in *Revue des Études Islamiques (REI)* (1959), pp. 110-12.

²¹ See the biographical notice on him in Ibn Rajab, *Dhail ‘alā Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila*, 2 vols., ed., M. Ḥāmid al-Fiḳī (Cairo: as-Sunna al-Muḥammadiya Press, 1372/1952-53), vol. II, pp. 52-61.

²² See *EI*, article “Ibn Qudāma al-Makdisī” (by G. Makdisi) and the bibliography cited there.

²³ See *GAL*, vol. I, p. 399, Suppl. I, p. 691; also Ibn Rajab, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 304-10.

²⁴ See *GAL*, vol. II, pp. 105f., Suppl. II, pp. 126ff.; H. Laoust, “Le Hanbalisme sous les Mamlouks Bahrides,” in *REI* (1960), pp. 66-68.

²⁵ See *GAL*, Suppl. I, p. 774 (no. 6).

²⁶ See *EI*, s.v., by S. de Laugier de Beaurecueil.

²⁷ *EI*, s.v., by G. Makdisi.

This chain has been preserved for us in a work by the Ḥanbali Yūsuf b. ‘Abd al-Hādī entitled *Bad’ al-‘ulqa bi-lubs al-khirqa*, a work in manuscript, preserved in the Firestone Library of Princeton University, among other manuscripts still in process of being catalogued.

In another manuscript work, preserved in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, we find corroboration for this Ṣūfi genealogy of Ibn Taimiyya. The work in question is entitled *Targhīb al-mutaḥabbīn fī lubs khirqat al-mutamāyizīn*²⁸ by Jamāl ad-Dīn aṭ-Ṭalyānī, and it quotes Ibn Taimiyya’s own statement as follows: “I wore the blessed Ṣūfi Cloak of ‘Abd al-Qādir (al-Jīlī), there being between him and me two (Ṣūfi Shaikhs).”

Further corroboration comes from Nāṣir ad-Dīn’s *Itfā’ ḥurqāt al-ḥauba bi-ilibās khirqat at-tauba*, a lost work now preserved in parts in Yūsuf b. ‘Abd al-Hādī’s *Bad’ al-‘ulqa*. Ibn Taimiyya is quoted affirming his own Ṣūfi affiliation in more than one Ṣūfi order, and praising the Qādiriyya order as the greatest of them all. He is quoted as follows: “I have worn the Ṣūfi cloak of a number of Shaikhs belonging to various *ṭariqas* (or brotherhoods), among them the Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī whose *ṭariqa* is the greatest of the well-known ones.”

It will be remembered that when Ibn Taimiyya died he was buried in the Ṣūfi cemetery in Damascus where other members of his own family, also Ṣūfis, had been buried before him. Some writers, under the delusion that Ibn Taimiyya was the sworn enemy of Ṣūfism, have wanted to see in this fact an ironic twist of fate. But it was, of course, nothing of the kind; for there was nothing more natural for Ibn Taimiyya, a Ṣūfi, than that he should be buried among Ṣūfis.

The chain of Ṣūfi initiation just described is made up entirely of Ḥanbalis, and goes back to the great Ḥanbali Ṣūfi whose tomb has remained to this day a place of pilgrimage in Baghdad. We have known for some time the names which make up the links of the chain, in ascending order, going back from ‘Abd al-Qādir to al-Junaid. But what has not been generally known is that this chain includes Ḥanbalis who lived as early as the fourth/tenth century, two centuries before ‘Abd al-Qādir and one century before al-Anṣārī al-Harawī.

²⁸ Chester Beatty Arabic Ms. 3296 (8), folios 49a-70b.

The chain in question is fully studied in an article soon to appear in an issue of the Cahier de l'Herne in Paris devoted to the late Louis Massignon.²⁹ I will therefore confine myself to a brief description of the document and its contents.

The document is preserved in the Zāhiriya Library in Damascus, in a volume of miscellanea, and consists of one single page, giving the Šūfi pedigree of Shams ad-Dīn ad-Dunaisirī who died in 757/1356. The *silsila* was originally written by this Dunaisirī himself; the Zāhiriya document is a copy of the original, made in the lifetime of the author, in 744/1343, that is, thirteen years before the author's death. Dunaisirī, author of the document, is not a Ḥanbali; nor is the copyist whose name is Ḥamza . . . al-Ḥakkārī.

This chain of Šūfi initiation contains twenty-one links. It could not be more complete than it is, since it goes back to the Caliph 'Alī (no. 18), the Prophet, the Angel Gabriel, and finally God (no. 21). Numbers 13 to 17 in the chain belong to a familiar set of early Šūfis: Sarī as-Saqaṭī, Ma'rūf al-Karkhī, Dāwūd aṭ-Ṭa'ī, Ḥabīb al-'Ajamī and last but certainly not least, especially for Ḥanbalis who greatly admired him, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. Numbers 11 and 12 are Shiblī and Junaid respectively.

But what is of particular interest to us are the links of the chain, in ascending order, up to number 10. Of these ten Šūfis, seven are Ḥanbalis. The links are as follows: 1. Dunaisirī; 2. Ma'danī (Ḥanbali); 3. Shams ad-Dīn b. Qudāma (Ḥanbali); 4. Muwaḥfaq ad-Dīn b. Qudāma (Ḥanbali); 5. Abd al-Qādir al-Jilī (Ḥanbali); 6. Mukharrimī (Ḥanbali); 7. Hakkārī; 8. Ṭarsūsī; 9. 'Abd al-Wāḥid at-Tamīmī (Ḥanbali); 10. 'Abd al-'Azīz at-Tamīmī (Ḥanbali, who received his *khirqa* from Shiblī, the latter having received his from Junaid).³⁰

'Abd al-Qādir, eponym of the Qādiriya order, has a Šūfi master by the name of Hammād ad-Dabbās,³¹ who died in 525/1130. But it is not to this Šūfi master that he owes his Šūfi initiation

²⁹ See now G. Makdisi, "L'Isnad initiatique soufi de Muwaḥfaq ad-Dīn ibn Qudāma," in *Massignon* (Cahier de l'Herne, 1970), pp. 88-96.

³⁰ For the identification of each link in this chain, see G. Makdisi, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-92.

³¹ On this Šūfi, who was severely criticized by Ibn 'Aqīl, see G. Makdisi, *Ibn 'Aqīl et la résurgence de l'Islam traditionaliste au XIe siècle* (Damas, Institut Français de Damas, 1963), p. 376, n. 1 and p. 383, n. 1 (including biographical notices).

rather he owes it to his Ḥanbali teacher Abū Sa‘d al-Mukharrimī³²; a contemporary of our Ḥanbali Ibn ‘Aqīl, both of whom died in 513/1119, and both of whom had been ‘Abd al-Qādir’s teachers of Ḥanbali law. We also know that ‘Abd al-Qādir’s madrasa or college of law, was formerly that of his teacher al-Mukharrimī who invested him with the Ṣūfi cloak (*khirqat at-taṣawwuf*). ‘Abd al-Qādir enlarged this madrasa, and we find references in biographical literature to “‘Abd al-Qādir’s madrasa” and “‘Abd al-Qādir’s *ribāʿ*” suggesting that both were encompassed by the same architectural complex.

Between al-Mukharrimī and the next two Ḥanbalis there are two non-Ḥanbali Ṣūfis. The Ḥanbalis are of the Tamimī family, related to one another as father and son.

To the evidence just described briefly, we may now add a work by Ibn Taimiyya; namely, a commentary by him on the well-known Ṣūfi work of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī. Jīlī’s work, it will be remembered, was translated into German and studied by Professor Walther Braune in 1933.

In this commentary to the work by the eponym of the Ṣūfi brotherhood to which he belonged, Ibn Taimiyya quotes several key articles of Jīlī’s work and comments on them at length. It is here that he shows his unmistakable appreciation for the Ṣūfism of not only his famous fellow Ḥanbali and Ṣūfi master ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī, but also for the latter’s Ṣūfi master, the non-Ḥanbali Ḥammād ad-Dabbās. This is very significant in light of the fact that the famous Ḥanbali contemporary of Ḥammad ad-Dabbās, namely Ibn ‘Aqīl, had condemned this Ṣūfi for what he considered as unorthodox Ṣūfi practices. By contrast, Ibn Taimiyya has nothing but praise for Ḥammād ad-Dabbās whom he considered as an orthodox Ṣūfi master. Furthermore, in contrast to his praise for ‘Abd al-Qādir, the Ḥanbali Ṣūfi, and Ḥammad ad-Dabbās, the non-Ḥanbali Ṣūfi, Ibn Taimiyya censures his fellow Ḥanbali, the great Ṣūfi al-Anṣārī al-Harawī, and suspects him of duplicity.³³ This attitude of Ibn Taimiyya regarding al-Anṣārī al-Harawī, contrasts, in turn, with that of his disciple Ibn Qaiyim al-Jauziyya, who admired al-Anṣārī and wrote one of the most significant commentaries of the latter’s *Manāzil as-sā‘irīn*, as we have already mentioned.

³² See G. Makdisi, op. cit., index, s.v. “al-Mukharrimī” (esp. p. 256 and n. 3).

³³ See also Ibn Taimiyya, *Iḥijāj*, in *MRK*, vol. II, pp. 116, 117.

I shall limit myself to a brief description of this work of Ibn Taimīya and to a few comments on its contents. I came across this work in the Princeton collection of uncatalogued manuscripts.³⁴ It is one of several works by Ibn Taimīya, bound in one volume of miscellanea. The title page of the commentary carries the name of the author as simply "Shaikh al-Islam." But the first page of the work is more explicit in that it gives the name in more detail: Abū'l-'Abbās Aḥmad b. Taimīya. We also find that within the body of the text itself, the author refers to Abū'l-Barakāt as his grandfather (*jaddunā Abū'l-Barakāt*), who is indeed none other than Abū'l-Barakāt Majd ad-Dīn b. Taimīya who died in 652/1255. Furthermore, the contents of the work belong unmistakably to Ibn Taimīya both as to the style of the language and the doctrines discussed. Anyone familiar with Ibn Taimīya's writings will readily recognize the new work as belonging to the same line of works by him entitled *Marātib al-irāda*,³⁵ *al-Qadā' wa'l-qadar*,³⁶ and *al-Iḥtijāj bi'l-qadar*.³⁷ Thus there can be no question regarding the authorship of the work.

In the works just mentioned Ibn Taimīya is known to have censured al-Anṣārī al-Harawī and al-Hallāj and praised 'Abd al-Qādir and Ḥammād ad-Dabbās, censure and praise which are also found in the commentary in hand. Besides 'Abd al-Qādir and Ḥammad ad-Dabbās, several other Šūfis among the Ancients and Moderns are praised by Ibn Taimīya as "orthodox Šūfi Shaikhs" a term rendered variously by him as "*al-Mashāyikh*, *Ahl al-istiqāma*," or "*al-Mustaqīmūn mina's-sālikīn*," or "*Ahl al-istiqāma min Ahl al-'ibāda*." Among these Šūfis who meet with Ibn Taimīya's approval we find: al-Fuḍail b. 'Iyād, Ibrāhīm b. Adham, Abū Sulaimān ad-Dārānī, Ma'rūf al-Karkhī, Sarī as-Saqāṭī, and al-Junaid; these he cites as being in the ranks of the early orthodox Šūfis (*jumhūr mashāyikh as-salaf*). Of the later orthodox Šūfis he cites 'Abd al-Qādir, Ḥammād ad-Dabbās and Abū 'l-Bayān (d. 551/1156). Of these nine names, we find four in Ibn Taimīya's chain of Šūfi initiation cited previously: Ma'rūf al-Karkhī, Sarī as-Saqāṭī, Junaid and 'Abd al-Qādir

³⁴ Another manuscript of the same work is preserved in the Leipzig University Library, Arabic Ms. 223.

³⁵ See Ibn Taimīya, *Majmū'at ar-rasā'il al-kubrā* (MRK), 2 vols. (Cairo: ash-Sharafiya Press, 1323/1905), vol. II, pp. 64-79.

³⁶ Op. cit., pp. 80-86.

³⁷ Op. cit., pp. 87-145.

We have stopped here because we feel that the point has been made. G. Makdisi continues his assertion that Ibn Taymiyyah was a Sūfi because he used the language of

the Sūfis in discourse and when issuing fatāwā. We ask Allāh to benefit the Muslims with this brief article. Āmīn!