



Dātā Ganj Bakhsh

# Sayyid 'Alī al-Hujwīrī

AN INTRODUCTORY BIOGRAPHY



Translated by Shahid Hussain



SAYYID 'ALĪ  
AL-HUJWĪRĪ

*An Introductory Biography*

*Translated by*

SHAHID HUSSAIN

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**Sayyid ‘Alī al-Hujwīrī — An Introductory Biography**

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## TRANSLITERATION KEY

ء	' (A distinctive glottal stop made at the bottom of the throat.)	ع	' (A distinctive Semitic sound made in the middle of the throat, sounding to a Western ear more like a vowel than a consonant.)
ا	<i>a, a</i>	غ	<i>gh</i> (A guttural sound made at the top of the throat, resembling the untrilled German and French <i>r</i> .)
ب	<i>b</i>	ف	<i>f</i>
ت	<i>t</i>	ق	<i>q</i> (A guttural <i>k</i> sound produced at the back of the palate.)
ث	<i>th</i> (Pronounced like the <i>th</i> in think.)	ك	<i>k</i>
ج	<i>j</i>	ل	<i>l</i>
ح	<i>h</i> (Hard <i>h</i> sound made at the Adam's apple in the middle of the throat.)	م	<i>m</i>
خ	<i>kh</i> (Pronounced like the <i>ch</i> in Scottish loch.)	ن	<i>n</i>
د	<i>d</i>	ه	<i>h</i>
ذ	<i>dh</i> (Pronounced like the <i>th</i> in this.)	و	<i>w, u, ū</i>
ر	<i>r</i>	ي	<i>y, i, ī</i>
ز	<i>z</i>		
س	<i>s</i>		
ش	<i>sh</i>		
ص	ʃ (An emphatic <i>s</i> pronounced behind the upper front teeth.)		
ض	ḍ (An emphatic <i>d</i> -like sound made by pressing the entire tongue against the upper palate.)		
ط	ṭ (An emphatic <i>t</i> pronounced behind the front teeth.)		
ظ	ẓ (An emphatic <i>th</i> , like the <i>th</i> in this, made behind the front teeth.)		

## Foreword

**A**LL PRAISE IS FOR ALLAH, THE LORD OF THE WORLDS. Salutations and blessings upon the Imam of all prophets and messengers, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his family and Companions.

When Allah Most High sent Prophet Muhammad ﷺ the blessed chain of *nabuwwa* ended. No prophet or messenger will appear after him ﷺ, the Seal of all Prophets. He is our source of guidance and inspiration till the Day of Judgement.

However, Allah has and will continue to send pious servants in this Ummah, whose task it is to remind their respective communities of the Qur'an and Sunna. Via their piety, character and sincerity, Muslims will be reconnected to the Straight Path of Islam. Following the footsteps of the Şahāba and Ahl al-Bayt, One such group of Muslims are the *awliyā'*, or *saints* (singular, *walī*), who warrant a special mention in the Holy Qur'an. These are the devoted servants of Allah Most High who live and die for His sake alone. Every act of theirs mirrors the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Because they are so engrossed in Islam, Allah Most High has granted them a special status; that they are marked with no worries about the past, they have no fear regarding the future, they are servants who show *taqwā* (God-consciousness) continuously and they are provided with glad tidings from their Lord in this world and the hereafter (10:62-64).

This small booklet is an introduction to a very famous saint of Allah, Shaykh 'Alī ibn 'Uthmān al-Hujwīrī, who is affectionately known as *Dātā Ganj Bakhsh*. Through his teachings, piety and saintly miracles, this revered

individual enlightened the entire Indian Subcontinent with the light of Islam. A thousand years have passed, but Muslims continue to benefit from him, especially thanks to his literary masterpiece, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*.

This work is the English rendition of a booklet published by the Punjab Awqāf, Pakistan. On one of my frequent visits to his shrine in Lahore, I was given an Urdu pamphlet as I sat in the beautiful mosque, Dātā Darbār Sharīf. Impressed with how the pamphlet explained the life, legacy and teachings of *Dātā Ganj Bakhsh* in an excellent manner, I made the intention to translate the work into English, thus ensuring it reaches a wider audience.

I would like to thank Muftī Muḥammad Ramaḍān al-Siālvi, who is the Imam and Khaṭīb of the Masjid at Dātā Darbār Sharīf, and Dr. Ather Hussain al-Azharī for their contribution and support in the completion of this project. My thanks also extends to Sidi Maksūd Yūsuf and Faisal Noorī Hussain, for their selfless support in this publication.

I pray that after reading this book, Muslims will appreciate the elated status of *Dātā Ganj Bakhsh*, a man of Allah Most High who was an inspiration and guidance for many *awliyāʿ* that appeared after him. I sincerely pray to Allāh that this booklet is accepted in His court and is a means for readers — young and old — to truly appreciate the lives and legacies of such radiant characters in Islam’s rich history, *āmin*.

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### ***Name and Family***

His name is ‘Alī, *kunyah* (teknonym) is Abū al-Ḥasan and his father’s name is ‘Uthmān b. ‘Alī or Bū ‘Alī. He is *al-Jullābī thum al-Hujwīrī*. Jullāb and Hujwayr are two districts in Ghazni, in modern day Afghanistan.

### ***His Noble Lineage***

He is a direct descendant of our master Imam al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī عليه السلام. His genealogical chain goes back eight generations to our master ‘Alī عليه السلام. The title *sayyid* is given to those who descend from the noble prophetic lineage.

1. Sayyid ‘Alī
2. Sayyid ‘Uthmān
3. Sayyid ‘Alī
4. Sayyid ‘Abd al-Raḥmān
5. Sayyid ‘Abd Allah (Shujā’ Shah)
6. Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī
7. Sayyid Ḥusayn Aṣghar
8. Sayyid Zayd
9. Our master Imam al-Ḥasan عليه السلام
10. Our master ‘Alī al-Murtaḍā عليه السلام


### ***His Birth***


Most historians are of the opinion that he was born at the start of the fifth Islamic century. His birth took place in the year 400 AH/1010 CE.

### ***His Place of Birth***

His father was from Jullāb and his mother from Hujwayr. When his father passed away he then moved to Hujwayr, his mother's home town hence why he is known as *Jullābī thum al-Hujwīrī*. His father is buried next to his maternal uncle *Tāj al-Awliyāʾ*, may Allah have mercy on him. His family was well known for its asceticism and piety. His parents and his uncles grave can be found today in Ghazni.

### ***His Spiritual Path***

His *murshid* or spiritual guide was Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Khuttalī. His chain reaches our master ʿAlī  through nine distinguished personalities. They are:

1. Sayyid ʿAlī al-Hujwīrī
2. Shaykh Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Khuttalī
3. Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm Ḥuṣrī
4. Shaykh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī (d. 334 A.H.)
5. Shaykh Junayd al-Baghdādī (d. 298 A.H.)
6. Shaykh Sarī (al-Sirrī) al-Saqāṭī (d. 251 A.H.)
7. Shaykh Maʿrūf al-Karkhī (d. 200/201 A.H.)
8. Shaykh Dāʾwūd Tāʾī (d. 165 A.H.)
9. Shaykh Ḥabīb al-Ajamī (d. 120 A.H.)
10. Shaykh Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110 A.H.)
11. Our master ʿAlī 

Al-Khuttalī's spiritual chain or *silsila* was the *Junaydiyyah* (i.e. it is connected with Shaykh Junayd al-Baghdādī) and Sayyid ʿAlī took pride in belonging to this chain. Professor Zhokovski writes that the *Junaydiyyah* chain's school of thought is that of sobriety (*sakr*) as is in opposition to that of Shaykh Bayazid Bistāmī's position of intoxication (*sahv*).

Sayyid ‘Alī al-Hujwīrī wrote the following about his *murshid*: “In *ṭarīqah*, he is my guide and model of imitation. He is a great scholar of the sciences of *tafsīr* and ḥadīth and in *ṭarīqah* followed the way of Shaykh Junayd. Shaykh Abū ‘Amr al-Qazwīnī and Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan were his contemporaries. Shaykh Abū al-Faḍl al-Khuttalī spent sixty years in hermitage hence he had become anonymous to the world. He did not adopt Sufi clothing or practices and was vehemently opposed to it. I have not seen a man of Allah more awe inspiring than him. He said, “*al-dunyā yawm walanā fihi sawm*” i.e. “The life in this world is a day and we are fasting [that day].”

Shaykh Abū al-Faḍl al-Khuttalī’s death took place in 460 A.H. at *Bayt al-Jinn* which is a place between Damascus and Banyār. At the time of death his head was in the lap of his *murīd* and disciple Sayyid ‘Alī al-Hujwīrī.

Other prominent authorities that Sayyid ‘Alī benefited from, include:

1. Shaykh Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd-Allāh b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allah Gurgān (d. 450 A.H.)
2. Shaykh Abū Sa‘īd Abū al-Khayr
3. Shaykh Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzin al-Qushayrī (d. 465 A.H.), the author of *al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah*
4. Imam Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ashqānī

### ***Title — Dātā Ganj Bakhsh***

Sayyid ‘Alī al-Hujwīrī is famously known as *Dātā Ganj Bakhsh*, or the ‘bestower of spiritual treasures.’ Some are of the opinion that this title was given to him five centuries after his demise i.e. in the 9th century *hijri*. While others have commented that this title became popular during his lifetime. The truth of the matter is that with his arrival in Lahore he was already well-known and acquainted with the title of *Dātā Ganj Bakhsh* and this remains true till this very day; even centuries after his passing away from this mortal world. The words of Khawāja Gharīb Nawāz Moinuddin Chishtī (1141-1230CE) which is known throughout the world professes to this title—

گنج بخش فیض عالم مظهر نور خدا  
ناقصان را پیر کامل، کمالان را راهنما

*ganj Bakhsh fayz i ʿālam mazhar i nūr i khudā  
nākisā rā pīr i kāmīl kāmīlā rā rahnumā*

*The ‘bestower of spiritual treasures’, whose blessing is all over the  
world, is a manifestation of the Light of Allah*

*He is the Perfect Master for the spiritually destitute; the Guide of  
the Perfect!*

Khawāja Muʿin al-Dīn Chishtī on his way to Ajmer from the Hijaz stopped by in Lahore and spent forty days at his shrine. As he was leaving he said these words. His place of *ʾItikāf* (seclusion) is a prominent feature of the *Darbār* till this very day.

### ***His Journeys, Education, Spiritual Training and Upbringing***

He gained knowledge and spiritual training from the following luminaries:

- Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Khuttalī
- Abū al-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzin al-Qushayrī
- Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ashqānī
- Abū Saʿīd al-Khayr
- Abū Aḥmad al-Muzaffar b. Aḥmad b. Hamdān
- Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Qassāb
- Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. al-Miṣbāḥ al-Saydalānī
- Abū ʿAbd-Allāh Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Dāstānī
- Abū al-Qāsim ibn ʿAlī b. ʿAbd-Allāh Gurgān

He spent most of his life journeying in pursuit of knowledge and spiritual enhancement. He travelled extensively and his journeying is mentioned in his masterpiece *Kashf al-Mahjūb* (“The Revelation of the Veiled”). The places he visited include modern day Iraq, Syria, Iran, Azerbaijan, the Holy Hijaz and many of the current central Asian states. In Khurasan alone he met three hundred shaykhs. He was particularly influenced by Shaykh Abū

al-Ḥasan ibn Saliba, Shaykh Abū Ishāq Shahriyār, Khawāja Aḥmad Hamādī Sarkisī and Shaykh Aḥmad Najjār. He engaged in intense *mujāhadah* and *riyāḍa* (see *Kashf al-Mahjūb*). Not only that, but he was a great scholar in his own right by keeping company of the men of knowledge of his time. He has also been referred to as *Imam* and *Makhdūm*. ‘Allāmah Muḥammad Iqbāl refers to him as *Makhdūm*:

سیدِ ہجویرِ مخدومِ اُمم  
مرقدِ اُو پیرِ سنجرِ را حرم  
خاکِ پنجابِ از دمِ اُو زنده گشت  
صبحِ ما از مہرِ اُو تابندہ گشت

*sayyid hujwayr makhdūm umam*  
*marqada o pīr sanjira haram*  
*khaak e punjab azdam e zinda gasht*  
*ṣubḥa ma az mehar e tabiinda gasht*

### ***Sayyid ‘Alī al-Hujwīrī’s Arrival to Lahore***

The famous and oldest account of his arrival into Lahore concerns his connection with Shaykh Mirān Ḥusayn Zanjānī. This famous narration about *Dātā* ‘Alī al-Hujwīrī reaching Lahore and seeing the funeral procession of his spiritual brother is oft-repeated but research shows that this was not the case as the two personalities never met. Research has shown that *Dātā* ‘Alī al-Hujwīrī arrived in Lahore 431 AH and remained there for thirty-four years till his passing.

### ***The Political Climate during the Times of Sayyid ‘Alī al-Hujwīrī***

The Abbasid Caliphate was ruling from Baghdad during the time of Sayyid *Dātā* ‘Alī al-Hujwīrī.

The leaders were as follows:

- Aḥmad al-Qādir Billāh (d. 381-422 A.H. / 991-1031CE)
- Abū Ja‘far al-Qā‘im Ba‘amrillāh (422-467 A.H. /1031-1075CE)

- Abū al-Qāsim al-Muqtadī Billāh (467-487 A.H. / 1075-1094CE)
- Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Mustazhir Billāh (487-512 A.H. /1094-1118 CE)

The Fatamids were ruling Egypt during the reign of al-Qādir Billāh and in Iraq the Buwayid (a Shia sect) were ruling. During the reign of Qāʿim Baʿamrillāh, Sultan Tugrul Saljouki (d. 455 A.H.) established the Seljuk dynasty by disposing the Buwayid regime. The Seljuk's were from the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah* and strengthened Islam immensely.

The Seljuk rulers from 400-500 A.H. were:

- Tugrul Beg (429-455 A.H. / 1037-1063 CE)
- Alp Arslān (455-465 A.H. / 1063-1072 CE)
- Jalāl al-Dawlah Mālik Shāh (465-485 A.H. / 1072-1092 CE)
- Nāsir Dīn Maḥmūd (485-487 A.H. / 1092-1093 CE)
- Rukn al-Dīn Barkiyaruk (488-498 A.H. / 1093-1104 CE)
- Muʿiz al-Dīn Mālik Shah II (498-511 A.H. / 1104-1117 CE)

The Prime Minister of Alp Arslan, al-Mālik Tūsī (d. 485 A.H.) established in 458 A.H. the famous Madrassa Nizamia in Baghdad. Abū Ishāq al-Shirāzī and Imam al-Ghazālī were chairs of this famous institution of learning. It was in these times that Ḥasan ibn Sabah, leader of the *Bāṭiniyyah* sect, was active. The famous Sufis and Gnostics of this time and region included Khawāja Abū al-Ḥasan al-Kirkānī, Shaykh Abū al-Qāsim b. ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd-Allah al-Gurgānī, Shaykh Abū al-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Hawāzin al-Qushayrī, Khawāja ʿAbd Allah al-Anṣārī and Shaykh Abū Saʿīd Abū al-Khayr. This was a time of relevant political and spiritual calm despite the presence of the Buwayids, Fatamids and Karamtas. As we have seen this was a time of spiritual renewal and Dātā Ganj Bakhsh in Khurasan alone met three hundred Shaykhs.

Closer to the Subcontinent, Sultan Maḥmūd Ghaznawī raided India several times from Afghanistan through Lahore but never included it within his empire. In 412 A.H. (1021 CE), Lahore's Raja Inderpal was defeated and Sultan Maḥmūd included the city within his realm and gave

the city a governor. The rulers of the Ghaznawi Empire during the lifetime of Dātā Ganj Bakhsh were as follows:

- Sultan Maḥmūd Ghaznawī (reign 971-1030 CE)
- Sultan Muhammad ibn Maḥmūd (r. 1030 CE)
- Sultan Mas‘ūd I (r. 1030-1041 CE)
- Sultan Muhammad ibn Maḥmūd (second reign. 1041 CE)
- Shihāb al-Dawlah Mawdūd (r. 1041-1048 CE)
- Mas‘ūd II (r. 1048 CE)
- Baḥā al-Dawlah ‘Alī (r. 1048-49 CE)
- ‘Izz al-Dawlah ‘Abd al-Rashīd (r. 1049-1052 CE)
- Qiwwam al-Dawlah Abū Sa‘īd Toghrul (r. 1052-53 CE)
- Jamāl al-Dawlah Abū Shujā’ Fārukh-Zad (r. 1053-59 CE)
- Sultan Ibrāhīm Zahir al-Dawlah (r. 1059-1099 CE)

### ***His Propagation of Islam***

Prior to his arrival, Shaykh Ismā‘īl of Bukhara (d. 448 A.H.) was spreading the Islamic faith to the people of Lahore but the personality that spread the message of Islam to the whole of the Indian Subcontinent from Lahore was without doubt *Dātā Ganj Bakhsh*. He settled in Lahore where we now find his resting place and with his own money brought the adjoining land to build a masjid. From there he would teach people and propagate the Islamic faith to the people of Punjab. He kept himself busy in teaching the Qur’an and Hadith to his disciples and followers. His propagation was helped by his kindness and humanity to everyone that came to see him. As a result many people converted to Islam. Thousands of ignorant people became scholars and morally corrupt people became beacons of light and humanity within their own right. Rai Raju (the Governor of Lahore when *Dātā Ganj Bakhsh* first appeared in Lahore) eventually became a Muslim at his blessed hands and devoted the remainder of his life at his footsteps. He was given the title of Shaykh Hindī. It is said that at the *Mazār* of *Dātā Ganj Bakhsh* the *mujawirīn* (constant attendees of a shrine) are Shaykh Hindī’s descendants. The message of *Dātā Ganj Bakhsh* reached far and wide initially from Lahore to the rest of the Punjab and to the Indian subcontinent

as a whole. The truth of the matter is that his shrine is the biggest and most significant *Mazār* in the whole of the Indian Subcontinent (i.e. Afghanistan, Pakistan India and Bangladesh). This is so because some of the leading and well known *Awliyā’* of his time and thereafter have paid homage and due respect to him. These personalities include no other than Khawāja Moinuddin Chishtī, *Baba Farīd al-Dīn Mas‘ūd Ganj Shakar* and *Mujaddid Alf Thānī* Shaykh Aḥmad al-Sirhindī. If Lahore is known today, it is thanks to him; the city is famously known as ‘*dātā kī nagri*’.

### ***His Marriage***

The historians disagree about his marital status. Some say that he married twice but this is not the case, He married once and from her had a son named Ḥasan but he died in infancy. One of his titles was Abū al-Ḥasan. He remained single for eleven years after her demise. Then in his mind were thoughts of remarrying but after a year or so such thoughts left his mind and he continued on his spiritual path as a single person. In *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, the sections about his marriage and separation are very brief so it is hard to ascertain how his personal life was spent.

### ***His Passing***

Historians have also differed on the issue of Dātā Ganj Bakhsh’s year of passing. Dates vary from as early as 454 A.H. to as late as 500 A.H. but the majority opinion is 465 A.H. He passed away on the 9th of Muḥarram. This date is marked by the washing ceremony of the shrine with rose water. But his ‘*Urs* is marked forty days later on 19th Safar every year in Lahore with great devotion from people not only from Pakistan, but across the world.

### ***The Mazār Sharīf of Dātā Ganj Bakhsh***

He passed away in Lahore and is buried where he spent his entire time there in the propagation of Islam. His *Mazār Sharīf* is found on the western side of the old fortified part of this historic city. The Ghaznawī ruler Sultan Ibrāhīm b. Mas‘ūd Ghaznawī (d. 451-492 A.H.; 1059- 1099CE) first built a shrine over his grave. Since then countless changes, renovations and extensions have taken place on his blessed resting place and the adjoining



*Masjid*. In recent times the *awqāf* of the Punjab Government have taken steps to renovate and beautify even further this holy site. As a result of the Dātā Darbār Complex Phase II the Masjid and *Mazār Sharīf* perimeters reach till the Lower Mall. The complex is adorned and decorated in rich calligraphy of Allah's Holy names, the names of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and many other verses and sayings. The Dātā Darbār Complex can accommodate over fifty-thousand worshippers at a time. The complex is now well equipped to meet the needs of worshippers and visitors with ample space and facilities.

The Markaz Ma'ārif Awliyā' and Jām'iah al-Hujwiriyyah are part of the Dātā Darbār Complex where various religious, spiritual and moral activities take place in various forms including seminars which take place in a purpose built hall. The University of Punjab have established an "Ali Hujwīrī Chair" in honour of his teachings and works.

There is a university in Lahore called Hajvery University and a Data Darbar Hospital with two hundred beds; specialising in Gynaecology and eye treatments and is well established.

### ***His Khulafā' (Successors)***

He was a scholar and expert of *taṣawwuf* not a person of *silsila* per se hence why he did not initiate his own *silsila*-chain. In *Kashf al-Mahjūb* when he talks about wrong and misguided Sufi groups, he says that he would not like for people after him to do wrong things and attach and associate it with him and thus blame him, a clear reason why his *silsila* is not in existence today. Shaykh Hindī and his companions Abū Sa'īd Hujwīrī and Ḥammād Sarksarī are his successors and *Khalīfas*. Great shaykhs like Khawāja Moinuddin Chishtī, *Baba Farīd al-Dīn Mas'ūd Ganj Shakar* by virtue of their visitations and presence at grave made them his successors and such is the spiritual presence of *Dātā Ganj Bakhsh* that the true applies even today.

### ***His Works***

*Dātā Ganj Bakhsh* was a great writer and poet. His works include: (1) *Kashf al-Mahjūb* (2) *Dīwān* (3) *Asrār al-Khiraq wa al-ma'ūnāt* (4) *Kitāb al-Bayān*

li ahl al-‘ayyān (5) *Baḥr al-Qulūb* (6) *al-Ri‘āyah bi ḥuqūq Allah* (7) *Kitāb Fanā’ wa baqā’* (8) *Sharḥ Kalām Manṣūr ḥallāj* (9) *Īmān*.

Sadly, it is only *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* that is available today.

### The ‘*Kashf al-Maḥjūb*’

Many treatises and books on the subject of *taṣawwuf* had been written prior to and after Dātā ‘Alī Hujwīrī’s masterpiece *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*. *Al-Ri‘āyah bi ḥuqūq Allāh*; *Kitāb al-Ma‘a al-taḥrīf al-madhab ahl al-taṣawwuf*, *Qūt al-qulūb*, *al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah*, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyyah*, were written before *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* while *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, *Futūḥ al-Ghayb*, *Ṣifah al-Ṣafwah*, *Tadhkirah al-Awliyā’*, ‘*Awārif al-Ma‘ārif*, *Gulshan Rāz*, *al-Mathnawī*, *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* and *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* were written afterwards. *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* stands out amongst this corpus of work on the subject and is the first treatise in the Farsi language on the subject. *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* is methodical, comprehensive and thorough in its approach to the issues at hand.

*Kashf al-Maḥjūb* is the oldest book in the Persian language dealing with the subject of *tasawwuf*. It is often said that the book is a *murshid kāmīl* – complete guide, and the like of this book in Persian has not been attained. This book is the most famous and reliable source in this science of *tasawwuf*. Khawāja Moinuddin Chishtī said of *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, ‘If someone cannot find a spiritual guide (i.e. *pīr*), they should consult this book and treat it as your guide.’

The elders of the Chishtī *silsila* in the subcontinent consult and refer to *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* and ‘*Awārif al-Ma‘ārif* for teachings and guidance with the former having more significance and importance. Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā’ gave it the title *Murshid bar ḥaq* – a guide by right. Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār referred to *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* widely in his book *Tadhkirah al-Awliyā’*. Khawāja Muḥammad Parsa and Khawāja Ya‘qūb Chirkī corroborated and strengthened their works by referring to Dātā ‘Alī Hujwīrī’s work. *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* has an elegant methodological writing style that is easy to understand which is full of admonition and after the passing of almost a millennium has relevance in today’s world.

Shaykh Tāj al-Dīn al-Sanbalī did the first Arabic translation of *Kashf al-Mahjūb* in the reign of Jehangir. The second and most recent attempt was done by Doctor Asmā ‘Abd al-Hādī Kandhel and was published in 1974. In the English language, the most famous and widely available translation was completed by the English Orientalist Dr. Reynold A. Nicholson (Cambridge) first done in 1911 and has had twenty editions since. Muhammad Ḥusayn Tasbiḥī of Iran completed a doctorate in 1985 on *Kashf al-Mahjūb* from Punjab University (Department of Farsi). The Punjab *Awqāf* has since established an “Ali Hujwiri” chair at the University of Punjab.

More recently the current Imam and *khaṭīb* of the Dātā Darbār Masjid, Muftī Muḥammad Ramaḍān Siālvī alongside ‘*Allāmah* Muḥammad Shahzād al-Mujaddidi have started a detailed *dars* programme about *Kashf al-Mahjūb* on ARY QTV channel from their Lahore studios. This has made this masterpiece more accessible to a global audience as they explain chapter by chapter the intricacies of this vast ocean of knowledge.

#### THE CONTENT OF KASHF AL-MAḤJŪB

Chapter	Title
1	On the Affirmation of Knowledge
2	On Poverty
3	On Sufism
4	On the Wearing of Patched Frocks
5	The Different Opinions held Concerning Poverty and Purity
6	On Blame ( <i>malāmat</i> )
7	Concerning their Imams Who Belonged to the Companions
8	Concerning their Imams Who Belonged to the House of Prophet ﷺ
9	Concerning the People of Veranda ( <i>Ahl al-Ṣuffah</i> )
10	Concerning their Imam who Belonged to the Followers ( <i>al-Tābi‘ūn</i> )
11	Concerning their Imams who lived subsequently to the Followers down to our Day

12	Concerning the Principal Sufis of Recent Times
13	A Brief Account of Modern Sufis in Different Countries
14	Concerning the Doctrine held by the Different Sets of Sufis
15	The Uncovering of the First Veil: Concerning the Gnosis of God ( <i>maʿrifah Allah</i> )
16	The Uncovering of the Second Veil: Concerning Unification ( <i>tawhīd</i> )
17	The Uncovering of the Third Veil: Concerning Faith
18	The Uncovering of the Fourth Veil: Concerning Purification from Foulness
19	The Uncovering of the Fifth Veil: Concerning Prayer ( <i>al-ṣalāh</i> )
20	The Uncovering of the Sixth Veil: Concerning Alms ( <i>zakāh</i> )
21	The Uncovering of the Seventh Veil: On Fasting ( <i>al-ṣawm</i> )
22	The Uncovering of the Eighth Veil: Concerning the Pilgrimage
23	The Uncovering of the Ninth Veil: Concerning Companionship, Together With Its Rules And Principles
24	The uncovering of the Tenth Veil: Explaining their Phraseology and the Definitions of their Terms and the Verities of the Ideas which are Signified
25	The Uncovering of The Eleventh Veil: Concerning Audition ( <i>samāʿ</i> )

### ***The Teachings of Dātā Ganj Bakhsh***

*Dātā Ganj Bakhsh* holds a superior rank in the field of Islamic knowledge ʿ*ilm* and *faḍl*. He is a possessor of a reputable rank in the field of Sufism and *taṣawwuf*. His name without doubt ranks along with those of Imam al-Qushayrī, Imam ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Sulamī, Imam al-Ghazālī and Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jilānī, may Allah be well-pleased with them all. In this field and his masterpiece *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* holds a significant place in the field of *taṣawwuf* along with al-Qushayrī’s *Risālah* and al-Ghazālī’s *Iḥyāʾ*. *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* in short is a comprehensive yet concise encyclopaedia in the field of *taṣawwuf*.

We conclude with some of his sayings drawn mainly from *Kashf al-Mahjūb*.

1. The *nafs* (ego, self) is like a stray dog. It needs to be beaten severely and flayed until it is cleansed.
2. Struggle against the *nafs* is the *aṣl* (essence) of all worship and the *kamāl* of the *mujāhid*.
3. The greatness, lofty rank and eminence of the Prophets of Allah are attained not only through the miracles they possess but through their defence and protection from sins.
4. An *‘arif* is also an *‘ālim* but it is not necessarily true that an *‘ālim* be an *‘arif*.
5. The most difficult matter for man is the recognition of Allah.
6. The elderly should be inclined towards and take admonition from the young on account of their youth and fewer sins, and the youth should take heed from the elderly on account of their longer time and devotion spent in Allah’s worship.
7. There is no better way of attaining *faqr* and *ma’rifah* (i.e. knowledge and Gnosticism) by travelling the earth.
8. The companions of the *dunyā* (i.e. the hands, feet and eyes) appear to be our friends but are in actual fact our foes.
9. Ten things consume ten other things: (i) repentance eats up sins, (ii) lying eats up your *rizq* (sustenance), (iii) backbiting/slandering eats up your good actions, (iv) grief eats up age, (v) charity removes calamities, (vi) anger eats up intellect, (vii) regret eats up generosity i.e. regretting giving money in charity and then regretting it, (viii) pride eats up knowledge, (ix) goodness eats up evil, (x) justice eats up injustice.
10. Love for wealth should be considered a punishment and it should be given towards the poor and needy instead. Do this before the day the bugs of the grave will eat and devour your rotting body.





Dātā Ganj Bakhsh

# Sayyid ‘Alī al-Hujwīrī

AN INTRODUCTORY BIOGRAPHY



THIS SMALL BOOKLET IS AN INTRODUCTION to a very famous saint of Allah, Sayyid ‘Alī b. ‘Uthmān al-Hujwīrī, who is affectionately known as *Dātā Ganj Bakhsh*. Through his teachings, piety and saintly miracles, this revered individual enlightened the entire Indian Subcontinent with the light of Islam. A thousand years have passed, but Muslims continue to benefit from him, especially thanks to his literary masterpiece, *Kashf al-Mahjūb* (“The Revelation of the Veiled”).

گنج بخش فیض عالم مظہر نور خدا  
ناقصان را پیر کامل کمال را رہنما  
کاشف الہی عن الہی  
نور عالمات را کاشف

*The ‘Bestower of Spiritual Treasures’, whose blessing is all over the world,  
is a manifestation of the Light of Allah*

*He is the Perfect Master for the spiritually destitute;  
the Guide of the Perfect!*

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