

VENERATING SHAYKH ABD AL-QADIR AL-JILANI IN INDONESIA AND TURKIYE

Imam Ghazali Said | UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya – Indonesia

Nyong Eka Teguh Iman Santosa | UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya – Indonesia

Genti Kruja | Beder University – Albania

Syafiq A. Mughni | UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya – Indonesia

Corresponding author: nyongeka@uinsa.ac.id

Abstract: Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani is a prominent figure in Muslim society. Compared to the influence of his intellectual works, the revered status he has earned is in large part because of his known outstanding spiritual qualities. He enjoys a place of honor that can hardly be equaled by other scholars and saints in Islam. The spread of this respect for him is not only a local phenomenon in Indonesia but also found in other countries. From the practice of venerating the shaykh in various places, it is known that the tradition has a global and a local dimension in the religious structure of Muslims. This issue is investigated through a comparative approach of textual and field studies in Indonesia and Turkiye. The study concludes that the preservation of the tradition of honoring the shaykh is possible because of the existence of supporting factors, such as the legacy of in the forms of books or institutions, the spread of documents or manuals that commemorate the figure, the development of communities that respect and practice his teachings, the emergence of rituals or activities associated with the figure on a regular basis. By those factors, the veneration becomes a popular and deep-rooted tradition.

Keywords: Jilani, saint, veneration tradition, Indonesia, Turkiye.

Introduction

Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (1077-1166 CE) was a prominent Islamic scholar, theologian, and mystic from Baghdad, Iraq, who founded the Qadiriyya sufi order. His teachings and spiritual practices

had a significant impact on the development of sufism in the Muslim world, including Java, Indonesia. Many previous researches have attempted at studying the narratives of al-Jilani in order to look at his life in historical biographical as well as in hagiographical mythical perspectives.¹ There are, on one side, studies that examine his intellectual legacies and spiritual teachings.² Some have explored the spiritual networks or communities ascribed to his name and influences,³ while others, on the other side, are interested in exploring social, religious, and spiritual ceremonies held by Muslim communities to venerate him or to seek his inspirations and blessing.⁴ However,

¹ A. Munip, "The Javanese Translation of Syaikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani's Hagiography: An Intertextuality Analysis of an-Nur al-Burhani," *Analisa* 4, 2 (2019), pp. 187-203, doi: 10.18784/analisa.v4i02.911; "The Role of al-Jailani's Hagiography Among Javanese Muslims in Yogyakarta," *El-Harakah* 20, 2 (2018), pp. 135-154, doi: 10.18860/el.v20i2.5344; A. Munjid, "A Pilgrimage Through the Mist of Legends: Reconstructing the Life and Works of Abd Al-Qadir Al-Jilani," *Afkaruna* 10, 1 (2014).

² M. A. Fuadi and R. Ibrahim, "Implementasi Tasawuf Syekh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani dalam Majelis Manakib Al Barokah Ponorogo," *Al-Adabiya* 15, 2 (2020), pp. 215-228, doi: 10.37680/adabiya.v15i02.576; H. Maryam and R. Maryam, "Abdul Qadir Gilani's Life and Works and to Evaluate and Comparing All Hagiographies Written About Him Until the Tenth Century AH," *Literary Text Research* 22, 75 (2018), pp. 7-39; A. Widodo, "The Spiritual Journey and the Unitive Experience: A Semantic Analysis on the Concept of Wusul in Six Kitab of Tariqah Qadiriyyah wa Naqshabandiyyah," *Ulumuna* 20, 2 (2016), pp. 231-262, doi: 10.20414/ujis.v20i2.811; D. R. Hidayat, "Analisis Bahasa Sufistik dalam Kitab Sirr Al-Asrar Karya As-Syeikh Abdul Qadir Al-Jailani," *Bahasa dan Seni* 44, 1 (2016); Masduqi, "Quranic Hermeneutics and Sufism of Syaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani," *Heritage of Nusantara* 4, 1 (2015), pp. 13-22, doi: 10.31291/hn.v4i1.59; A. Hakim, "Menimbang Metode Syaikh Abdul Qadir Al-Jilani dalam Memahami Sifat-sifat Allah," *Ulul Albab* (2013), doi: 10.18860/ua.v0i0.2322; I. Masduqi, "Questioning of Authentication and Epistemology in Tafsir al-Jilani," *Analisa* 19, 1 (2012).

³ Firdaus, "Tarekat Qadiriyyah wa Naqshabandiyah: Implikasinya Terhadap Kesalahan Sosial," *Al-Adyan* 12, 2 (2017), pp. 159-208, doi: 10.24042/ajsla.v12i2.2109; Baharudin and N. Latifah, "Peran Pendidikan Tarekat Qadiriyyah wa Naqshabandiyah," *Jurnal Tatsqif* 15, 2 (2017), pp. 223 - 241; M. Cholil, "Tarekat Qadiriyyah wa Naqshabandiyah dan Pengaruhnya atas Pondok Pesantren Manbaul 'Adhim Bagbogo Nganjuk," *Dialogia* 13, 2 (2015), pp. 253-266, doi: 10.21154/dialogia.v13i2.297; Danusiri, "Growing up the Religious Potential from Religious Community of Qadiriyyah wa Naqsyabandiyah Dawe Kudus," *Analisa* 19, 1 (2012), pp. 27-36, doi: 10.18784/analisa.v19i1.153.

⁴ S. A. Munandar, S. Susanto, and W. Nugroho, "Tarekat Qadiriyyah wa Naqshabandiyah Terhadap Kesalahan Sosial Masyarakat Dusun Gemutri Sukoharjo Sleman," *Jurnal Studi Agama dan Masyarakat* 16, 1 (2020), pp. 35-51, doi: 10.23971/jsam.v16i1.1833; Fuadi and Ibrahim, "Implementasi Tasawuf"; S. Mulyati, "Sufi Healing in Indonesia and Malaysia: An Updated Study of Rehabilitation Methods practiced by Qadiriyya

those studies have not taken up and explained the reasons, roots or causes behind the practice of exalting al-Jilani in traditional Javanese Muslim society. There is a lack of studies regarding contextual causes of the venerated status of al-Jilani within Muslim traditions in Indonesia, although there was efforts in the past by orthodoxy to combine sufism with more orthodox teaching of Islam as reflected by Saleh Darat's treatise.⁵ The question of whether this kind of privilege and exceptional honor is also found as a living tradition within Muslim societies in other countries has remained to be answered. It is worth observing that the lack understanding of the spread of this phenomenon and inadequacy of researches concerning similarities and differences of the traditions in various countries remains there, and therefore those issues need to be explored.

This article is taken on the basis of the argument that al-Jilani has a special position in the structure of Muslim traditions in Indonesia and Turkiye. His intellectual as well as spiritual legacy has been survived, preserved, and commemorated up to the present time by Muslims in Java. His privilege status definitely could not be achieved without reason. There must be rational causes that are viable to be understood and explained through scientific approach. Further, it assumes that similar traditions could exist in other Muslim countries that makes a systematic comparison methodologically possible to do. Here, Turkiye is taken purposively as a showcase and for interpretive juxtaposition. This research is framed as systematic combining.⁶ Its problems are qualitatively studied by integrating textual studies, field works, and

Naqshbandiyya Sufi Order," *Esoterik* 6, 1 (2020), pp. 1-32, doi: 10.21043/esoterik.v6i1.7085; A. Widiyanto, "Embodying Popular Piety: Code of Conduct and Death Anniversary in the Tariqah Qadiriyyah wa Naqshbandiyyah," *Ulumuna* 20, 2 (2016), pp. 263-292, doi: 10.20414/ujs.v20i2.979; M. A. Syukur and A. Muhaya, "Economic Movements Within Sufism in Java: A Case Study on Qadiriyyah and Naqsyabandiyah Sufi Orders," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 9, 2 (2015), pp. 229-256, doi: 10.15642/JIIS.2015.9.2.229-256.

⁵ Abdurrohman Kasdi, Umma Farida, Fauzan Adim, Al-Takâmul wa al-Tawfiq bayna al-Fiqh wa al-Tasawwuf: Wjihah Nazhar Kiyahî Muhammad Shâlih Darat al-Samarânî fi Taqaddum al-Fikr al-Dinî fi Indûnisiyâ, *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum dan Pranata Sosial* 18, 1 (2023)

⁶ A. Dubois and L. E. "Gadde, Systematic Combining: An Abductive Approach to Case Research," *Journal of Business Research* 55, 5 (2002), pp. 553-560.

comparative approach.⁷ Along with the field observations of rituals of venerating al-Jilani practiced among Muslims in Java, this study has obtained responses through questionnaires. Results of some interviews are also included here. While through textual studies, this research treats any relevant written documents or narratives related to al-Jilani and his privilege status within Muslim traditions in Java. All available works of al-Jilani are considered as primary sources along with the hagiographies (*kitab manaqib*) and prayer manuals (*kitab tawassul aw du'a*) in which the reverence for al-Jilani is contained that circulated and taken by Muslims in Java within their traditional activities. The venerating practices that have sparked controversy among Muslims.⁸

Departing from these standpoints, the study is expected to expand our knowledge and perspective in comprehending how the complexity of religious tradition develops and enroots. In particular, it analyzes reasons, roots, and causes behind the practice of venerating al-Jilani within Muslim communities in Java. It also explains similarities and differences between the practice of venerating al-Jilani in Indonesia and Turkiye. It then elucidates upon local and global characteristics of the practice of venerating al-Jilani in Indonesian and Turkish Muslim living traditions. This study's methodological approach is novel since it compares key components in order to examine the details of the tradition of reverence for al-Jilani in Indonesia. Additionally, the utilization of a range of hagiography sources from vernacular and colloquial types advances the research beyond the state-of-the-art of previous studies on related subjects. The combination of comparative analysis of structure and appearance, uniqueness and commonalities, locality and globality, and colloquial and vernacular makes this study important and worth paying attention to.

⁷ J. W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches (Fourth Edition)* (LA: Sage, 2014); W. M. Roth, *First-Person Methods: Toward an Empirical Phenomenology of Experience* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2012); S. Keegan, *Qualitative Research: Good Decision Making Through Understanding People, Culture and Markets* (London: Kogan Page, 2009).

⁸ A. M. Imron, *Kupas Tuntas Masalah Manaqib Syekh Abdul Qadir Jaelani* (Lamongan: Al-Fikar, 2005); *Kitab Manakib Syekh A. Qadir Jaelani Mersak Aqidah Islam* (Bangil: Al-Muslimun, 1977); I. Abu Amar, *Sebuah Jawaban bahwa Kitab Manakib (Syekh Abd. Qadir Jaelani) Tidak Mersak Aqidah Islamiyah* (Kudus: Menara Kudus, 1989).

The Place of al-Jilani

Based on the answers of questionnaire provided by 320 Indonesian and 20 Turkish informants, al-Jilani are almost known by every Muslim in Indonesia and Turkiye regardless of their affiliation with any Islamic organizations or schools of thought. This knowledge is also distributed across gender, age, education level, and regional origin. The data shows that it is almost difficult to find Muslims in Indonesia or Turkiye who do not know or have never heard of al-Jilani. However, when mentioning the name of al-Jilani in prayers, certain title of honor or praise is not always assigned to him. Some informants stated that they did not mention any special tribute to al-Jilani when his name was mentioned (5.3% Indonesian and 5% Turkish) and some said they did not know how to mention his name in their prayers (10.3% Indonesian). The two groups, one saying they do not know and the other mentioning this particular respect, come from various Islamic cultural background. While those who claim to pay special respects when the name al-Jilani is mentioned, the expressions could be, to mention some, “*Allahumma n-shur nafabat al-ridwan 'alayh*” (oh Allah, help blow please on him), “*Attirillahu qabrabu al-karim*” (may Allah scent his honorable tomb), “*Qaddasa sirrabu al-aziz*” (may Allah sanctify his dear soul), “*Radiyallahu 'anhu*” (may Allah be pleased with him), “*Rabimabullab*” (may Allah bestow mercy on him), or other honors, praises, or prayers. Some also expressed respect with several different designations. With regard to the actual status or position of al-Jilani, about 4.7% Indonesian and 10% Turkish informants stated that they did not know and 0.6% Indonesian informants stated that they did not specify his status or position, while the rest do mention a certain status or position of al-Jilani figure. The majority of informants refer to him as *Sultan al-Awliya* (the Sultan of Saints), *Wali Qutb* (the Pole of Saints), Founder of Tariqa, Teacher of Tariqa, *Imam Mujtabid* (The Thinking Leader), Islamic Scholar, or Sufi Scholar.

In the practice of prayer rituals either individually or collectively, the majority of Nahdlatul Ulama’ (NU) members, representing traditionalist Muslims, confess that they do *tawassul* (making intermediary) by mentioning the name of al-Jilani as the conveyor of their prayer to God. It is contrary to the members of Muhammadiyah, representing modernist Muslims, who do not practice the *tawassul*. While some other informants who are mostly members of NU said that they do the *tawassul* sometimes, while the others said not often or

not always. Among Turkish informants, the percentage shows 20% for each who always do *tawassul*, or frequently, or rarely, while 40% stated that they do not practice it. As for activities of *dhikr* (litany) gatherings (*tablilan*, *salawatan*, or *istighathah*), 13.4% Indonesian and 25% Turkish informants stated that they did not send Surah al-Fatihah (the first chapter of the Qur'an) to al-Jilani. While the rest are divided into groups that claim to do sometimes, often, or always. Of the existing proportions, the largest group represented by NU is the one that claims to do it often or always. Informants affiliated to Muhammadiyah all claimed not to have done this practice. The proportion who do not mention the name of al-Jilani increases when they are in the context of reciting prayers without sending al-Fatihah. By doing *tawassul* or sending al-Fatihah to al-Jilani, 12.8% Indonesian informants including all Muhammadiyah-affiliated and 20% Turkish informants expressed disbelief that it had *fadilah* (merit) and/or could help prayers granted by God. There were about 13.1% Indonesian and 25% Turkish informants who said they didn't understand the *tawassul*. While the rest expressed affirmation of confidence that it could help and facilitate the parchment of prayer. Related to the placement of al-Jilani's name if their *tawassul* is done either in prayer or when sending al-Fatihah, 8.1% Indonesian informants called his name before mentioning the names of companions after that of the prophet, while 100% Turkish informants put his name after the prophet and the companions. Among Indonesian informants, 22.5% stated that they did not know about it.

Of all the informants, when asked for an answer on whether they had ever attended the *manaqib* recitation (*manaqiban*) of al-Jilani, 27.2% of Indonesians stated never, 33.1% rarely, and the rest (39.7%) stated that they often attended those events. While among Turkish, 65% stated never, 30% rarely, and 5% frequently. Furthermore, as for the question whether the reading of the *manaqib* of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani has *fadilah* (merit or excellence) and/or *barakah* (blessings) for those who practice it, 10.6% Indonesians and 10% Turkish informants do not believe it. Among those who stated that they did not know the answer (13.1% Indonesians and 25% Turkish), the remaining believe that there is merit or blessing in the reading of *manaqib*. This data shows that the tradition of al-Jilani's *manaqib* reading is less popular in Turkiye, but the existence of the tradition is recognized well by Muslims in both countries.

From the map of the informants regarding whether they followed or practiced the teachings of a particular sufi order, then it is clear that 48.1% Indonesians and 40% Turkish said no, 39.7% Indonesians and 30% Turkish claimed to follow it actively, while the rest defined themselves to be inactive. Among those who follow or practice the sufi order, majority among Indonesian informants were affiliated to the Qadiriyyah wa Naqshabandiyah (TQN) order. Some others were affiliated to the Qadiriyyah, Qadiriyyah Khalwatiyyah, Naqshabandiyah, Tijaniyyah, Shadhiliyyah, Shattariyyah, Dusuqiyah Muhammadiyyah, or Alawiyah orders. Among Turkish informants, 67% did not provide any response, while the rest admitted to belong to Naksibendi (Naqshabandiyah) and Risale i Nur (attributed to Badi' al-Zaman Sa'id Nursi). Related to their attitude regarding the practice of *tawassul* (making intermediary) by al-Jilani in prayers or rituals, among Indonesians 10% expressed disapproval, 7.8% did not know, and the rest 82.2% agreed, while among Turkish 25% disagreed, 40% did not know, and the rest 35% agreed. Regarding the practice of reading al-Jilani's *manaqib* (*manaqiban*), among Indonesians 7.5% disagreed, 10.6% did not know, and the rest 81.9% agreed, while among Turkish 5% disagreed, 55% did not know, and the rest 40% agreed. On the practice of the sufi order, among Indonesians 7.2% disagreed, 13.4% did not know, and the rest 79.4% agreed, while among Turkish 10% disagreed, 35% did not know, and the rest 55% agreed. Based on the above data, it follows that the bigger proportion of Muslims in Indonesia and Turkiye are not affiliated to or following certain sufi orders, but the majority Muslims in both countries accepted the existence of sufi orders and tolerated their practices.

Differences in views, attitudes and practices of venerating al-Jilani have also been shown to have a correlation with religious cultural backgrounds or Islamic religious organization affiliations. As can be seen in Indonesia, the differences are found in the views and traditional practices between NU and Muhammadiyyah members. Even though the data shows that the members of these two Islamic organizations stated that they had a good and positive acquaintance with the figure of al-Jilani, in the practice of *tawassul* and *manaqiban*, NU members were actively practicing it, while Muhammadiyyah members are not. In brief, (1) al-Jilani is a famous figure and is widely known by Muslims in Indonesia or Turkiye. In fact, this figure is so popular that almost every Muslim in both countries knows him; (2) al-

Jilani as a Muslim figure has also received recognition from Muslims in Indonesia and Turkiye, with diverse Islamic religious cultural backgrounds. Even among tasawuf practitioners, al-Jilani is a person that is accepted across diverse tariqa traditions as shown by the affiliation of informants; (3) The form of respect for al-Jilani is evident not only through the practice of giving titles, ranks, or prayers but also through the practice of ritualistic traditions which are reflected in the form of doing *tawassul* with his name and in the form of the manaqiban tradition; (4) Whereas the practice of *tawassul* and also manaqiban which is attributed to al-Jilani remains an issue that has not completely covered the difference of views among Muslims, some do agree and practice it, but some others actually show the opposite opinion, namely they do not agree or at least do not practice it.

The Living Practices of Veneration

The veneration for al-Jilani takes not only one form of articulation such as the writing of hagiography and their derivative works, but can also be in the form of ritualistic traditions both individually and in groups. There are many forms of ritual traditions of venerating SAQJ that live among Muslims in Indonesia, especially in Java. They include the ritual of reading the book of *manaqib* (hagiography), doing *tawassul* (intermediary) with his name in the practice of prayer and remembrance (*dhikr*), and recalling titles and prayers whenever his name is read or mentioned.

Based on field observations regarding the practice of reading al-Jilani's *manaqib* in Java, it is found in general that there are two ritualistic patterns namely formal and informal patterns. As for the formal pattern of reciting al-Jilani's *manaqib*, it is usually carried out among tariqa followers, including the TQN, which has strong roots and networks in Java. Meanwhile, the informal pattern of reading the *manaqib* is usually carried out by the public outside the circle of *tariqa* adherents. If it is examined, the formal pattern seems to follow a standard operating procedure in practicing the reading of the *manaqib*. It is begun with the recitation of the Qur'an. Then subsequently, they do *tawassul* by attributing the recitation of al-Fatihah at least 25 to 100 times through the chains of the tariqa teachers, all of whom are honored with the title "Radiyahallahu 'anhu". They read surah of Yasin, *tablil*, and *istighatha*. The order of reading the *tablil* and *istighatha* can be interchangeable. The *istighatha* generally refers to the reading structure

developed by Kiai Romli Tamim of Rejoso and which was later used widely in NU circles. Followed by the reading of the *manaqib* using one of *manaqib* books. Afterward, it is continued with the reading of the *Shalawat* Hasyimi which is attributed to Kiai Hasyim Asyari. According to a folklore, this *shalawat* reading was obtained from the Prophet Khidr. Then finally they read the *Shalawat* Badr which also marks that the procession of reading *manaqib* has ended.

The interesting one that happens in most of the implementation of this *manaqib* reading is the solemnity of the participants who during the procession for a quite long duration of time are keeping awake. They seemed to be immersed in the joy of a series of activities filled with recitations of the Qur'an, *dhikr* to Allah, as well as *shalawat* and al-Jilani's *manaqib*. During the *manaqib* reading, the participants will respond by reciting al-Fatihah or saying "*radhiyallahu 'anhu*" whenever the name of al-Jilani is mentioned. If the story comes to the part of reviving the dead chicken that suddenly stated *shabadatayn*: "*Laa ilaaha illallah Mubammad rasul Allah*", the participants follow it by adding "*Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani Waliy Allah*". For making the ritual perfect, the procedure of the *manaqiban* should be taken by those who are in purity with ablution. It includes the people who are preparing the food for the feast after the ritual. Rice, chicken, and water are the menu that are usually served in the *manaqiban* or also known as the *dulqadiran* (referring to the name of the saint) ritual.⁹

In the practice of reading *manaqib* which is informal or outside the circle of *tariqa* practitioners, among the practices that are not carried out is *tawassul* to the lineage (*sanaad*) of the *tariqa* teachers.¹⁰ The only *tariqa* guide (*mursid*) who is mentioned during *tawassul* is al-Jilani. Even if the participants are Naqshabandi, the name of Naqsyabandi's shaykh is not mentioned in the *tawassul*. Doing *tawassul* through other than al-Jilani, namely other saints of Allah, is done in general without mentioning a specific name as it is done for al-Jilani. This general procedure can be found, among others, in the book *Majmu' Syarif*¹¹ or a collection of prayers that are widespread among Muslims in Java, including the Sundanese and Madurese. The main practice is *tawassul*

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ See F. Badaruddin and M. K. Mahyuddin, "The Authority of Chain of Transmission and Its Role in Sufism," *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 20 (2021), pp. 34-44, doi: 10.24035/ijit.20.2021.208.

¹¹ Ibnu Watiniyah, *Majmu' Syarif* (Jakarta: Kaysa Media, 2018).

by or sending al-Fatihah to al-Jilani, as well as in the practice of prayer. This practice is also included in the *tablil* and *istighatha* books. Out of the approximately 500 *tablil* and *istighatha* manuals owned by researchers, no less than 450 books include the practice of *tawassul* through al-Jilani in *tablil* and prayer. As for the few remaining, they did not specifically mention his name with the assumption that there was influence from the tradition of *tawassul* and prayer among the people of the Middle East. It means that the variation in implementing the *manaqib* is open. For example, the *manaqiban* practiced in Suryalaya, one of the centers of the Qadiriyya-Naqshabandiyya sufi order in Indonesia, has its own model of *manaqiban*. Here, after reading the *manaqib*, there is a religious lecture given to the participants before ending the ritual.¹²

Another form of respecting al-Jilani in Java is by doing the *tawassul* which is also performed in the ritual of visiting the graves. For example, this can be found in the guidelines for visiting the graves which are widespread in society, namely *Ziarah Tawassul Wali Allah* compiled by Kiai Nur Salim Abd al-Wahhab.¹³ In the guidelines and procedures for carrying out the pilgrimage to the graves of the saints, it will be found that the name of al-Jilani will be mentioned during the *tawassul* in several parts of the ritual. Among them is *tawassul* after reading Yasin, when sending al-Fatihah in the procession of reading the *tahlil*, and when reading the prayer after reading the *tahlil*. This fact is certainly an affirmation as well as clear evidence of how strong the status and influence of al-Jilani are in the religious structure of Muslim society in Java. This is what then encourages them to actively give such a high status and respect to this saint. A form of respect that is not enjoined even be the four imams of mazhabs among the Sunnis.

This study of veneration practices carried out by Muslims in Indonesia, especially in Java, provides information that the expressions are articulated in various forms. Among them: (1) giving titles and honorable status; (2) giving a recognition of the existence of special *kearamah* (extraordinary privilege) that made him a leading religious figure; (3) making an inclusion and mention of names in prayers or rituals; (4) acknowledging that his figure has helped in the acceptance

¹² See Kharisuddin Aqib, *Inabah: "Jalan Kembali" dari Narkoba, Stress & Kebampaan Jiwa* (Surabaya: PT. Bina Ilmu, 2012).

¹³ Kiai Nur Salim Abd al-Wahhab, *Ziyarah Tawassul Wali Allah* (Rembang: al-Haramayn, n.d.).

of prayers as well as the acquisition of desires or the realization of hopes; (5) writing *manaqib* or hagiographies; (6) creating rituals of *manaqiban* or veneration tradition; (7) using the *manaqib* as a practice of spiritual exercise or accessing mystical gains; and (8) transmitting the *manaqib* book more broadly through the certification tradition by the teacher to students or followers to practice it and at the same time guarantees that the blessings or luck from the book continue to anyone who accepts and practices it. For instance, *Manaqib al-Karamat* by Kiai As'ad Abd al-Karim obtained from Muhammad ibn Tahir Ba'abud's certification.¹⁴

The variations in format established in the practice of venerating al-Jilani also indicate that religious culture in Islamic society has internal dynamics. How their religious piety and identity grow over time and form a distinctive landscape of difference. Even in sufistic traditions that are familiar with the practice or ritual of honoring figures believed to be holy people or saints, this dynamic is also commonly found.¹⁵ The space for expression of piety which is usually more open and fluid in the sufi community seems to be the driving force that facilitates the birth of innovations and is not quite compatible with religious formalism.¹⁶ The structure of Islamic understanding certainly plays a role in influencing the emergence of this diversity and variation,¹⁷ as has also been shown in the practice of respecting al-Jilani.

¹⁴ Kiai As'ad Abd al-Karim, *Manaqib al-Karamat li al-Shaykh al-Aqtab Sayyidina al-Ghawth al-Thaqalayn Abd al-Qadir al-Jaylani* (Pasuruan: Ma'had Dar al-Karamah, 1970).

¹⁵ See Rubaidi, "The New Psuedo-Sufi Order of the Majelis *Shalawat* among Urban Muslims in East Java," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 14, 2 (2020), pp. 407-430.

¹⁶ See Mochamad Sodik & B. J. Sujibto, "Againts Religious Formalism: The Dynamics of Young Urban Sufism in Yogyakarta," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 17, 1 (2023), pp. 1-26; Julia Howell, "Sufism on the Screen: Indonesian Innovations in Islamic Televangelism," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 2, 2 (2008), pp. 225-239.

¹⁷ See Arif Zamhari, "Socio-Structural Innovations in Indonesia's Urban Sufism: The Case Study of the Majelis Dzikir and *Shalawat* Nurul Mustafa", *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 7, 1 (2013), pp. 119-144; Achmad Kemal Riza, "Contemporary Fatawa of Nahdlatul Ulama: Between Observing the madhhab and Adapting the Context", *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 5, 1 (2011), pp. 35-65.

The Power of Hagiography

Hagiography is commonly known as a category that refers to textual sources that represent the lives of saints. In short, it is “*writing about the saints and their miraculous powers*.”¹⁸ There are numerous hagiographies of al-Jilani circulated in Indonesia. One of the most popular is *Lujjayn al-Dani fi Manaqib al-Qutb al-Rabbani al-Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jaylani* authored by al-Barzanji.¹⁹ It does not mean that other hagiographies of al-Jilani are not recognized by Indonesian Muslims. There are well-known others such as *Tafrih al-Khatir*,²⁰ *Kbulasat al-Mafakhir*,²¹ *Qala'id al-Jawahir*,²² and *Bahjat al-Asrar*.²³ Instead, al-Barzanji's work could be considered as the most reference of many local translation or explanation including *Sharh al-Jani al-Dani*,²⁴ *al-Nur al-Burbani*,²⁵ *Jawahir al-Ma'ani*,²⁶ *Nayl al-Amani*,²⁷ and *Manaqib al-Karamat*.²⁸ Along with these types of hagiographies, there are also local

¹⁸ R. Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013).

¹⁹ Ja'far ibn Hasan al-Barzanji, *Lujjayn al-Dani fi Manaqib al-Qutb al-Rabbani al-Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jaylani* (Semarang: Maktabah al-'Alawiyah, n.d.).

²⁰ Abd al-Qadir ibn Muhy al-Din al-Arbali, *Tafrih al-Khatir Tarjamah al-Shaykh Abd al-Qadir* (Semarang: Taha Putra, 2008).

²¹ Abd Allah ibn As'ad al-Yafi'i, *Kbulasat al-Mafakhir fi Manaqib al-Shaykh Abd al-Qadir* (Beruwala: Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyah, 2006).

²² Muhammad ibn Yahya al-Tadafi, *Qala'id al-Jawahir fi Manaqib Taj al-Anliya' wa Ma'dan al-Asfiya' wa Sultan al-Anliya' al-Qutb al-Rabbani al-Shaykh Muhyi al-Din Abd al-Qadir al-Jaylani* (Qum: Abd al-Hamid Ahmad Hanafi, n.d.).

²³ Abu al-Hasan Nur al-Din 'Ali ibn Yusuf al-Shatnufi, *Bahjat al-Asrar wa Ma'dan al-Anwar fi Manaqib al-Baq' al-Ashbab al-Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Kaylani* (Fez: Al-Munazzamah al-Maghribiyah li al-Tarbiyah wal-Thaqafah wal-'Ulum, 2013).

²⁴ Muhammad Nawawi al-Bantani, *Sharh al-Jani al-Dani fi Dhikr Nubzah min Manaqib al-Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jaylani* (Yogyakarta: Maktabah Iskandariyah and Dar al-Irfan, 2021).

²⁵ Muslih Abd al-Rahman al-Maraghi, *Al-Nur al-Burbani fi Tarjamat al-Lujjayn al-Dani fi Dhikr Nubzah min Manaqib al-Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jaylani* (Semarang: Karya Taha Putra, 2001).

²⁶ Ahmad Jauhari Umar, *Jawahir al-Ma'ani fi Manaqib al-Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jaylani* (Pasuruan: Ponpes Dar al-Salam, n.d.).

²⁷ Muhammad Utsman al-Ishaqi, *Nayl al-Amani fi Kayfiyat Qira'at al-Lujjayn al-Dani* (Probolinggo: Al-Ma'had al-Salafi Rawdat al-Muttaqin, n.d.).

²⁸ Abd al-Karim, *Manaqib al-Karamat*.

versions like the *Hikayat Syekh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani*.²⁹ A manuscript of the story of al-Jilani written in Pegon (Javanese language with Arabic script). The *Hikayat* tells al-Jilani's journey to Java, where he encountered a group of people who were suffering from a drought. The shaykh performed a miraculous act by striking his staff on the ground, causing water to gush forth and end the drought. This divine intervention convinced the local people of his spiritual power and they became his disciples. Another popular local manuscript of al-Jilani's hagiography is *Wawacan Layang Syekh Abdul Qadir Jaelani*³⁰ which talked about his teachings on tasawwuf. It is originally written in Sundanese language and in the form of traditional poetry before being translated by the Department of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia into national language, Bahasa Indonesia.

These hagiographic sources regarding al-Jilani figure can be grouped into two major categories. There are colloquial references in the first group. This indicates that the source is well-known, easily obtainable, and frequently utilized as a guide and reference in ceremonies commemorating al-Jilani around the world. Among these colloquial type hagiographies is al-Barzanzi's *Lujjayn al-Dani*. In fact, this work is so popular that it seems to be the primary source for almost all *manaqib* works, especially those in Indonesia. All derivative works from original sources that fall under the vernacular category are included in the second category of hagiographic sources. These vernacular sources include local versions of *manaqib* in Indonesia, both in Arabic, Indonesian, Javanese, Sundanese and other languages. *Sharh al-Jani al-Dani* by Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani can be included in this category. A riveting finding from this research is that the practice of developing vernacular works can be said to be massive in Indonesia. The number of *manaqib* works and ritual manuals that promote veneration for al-Jilani as previously stated is numerous in this country. A phenomenon that has not been found in other countries, especially Turkiye.

²⁹ Perpustakaan Nasional, *Hikayat Syekh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani* (Jakarta: Perpustakaan Nasional, n.d.).

³⁰ N. Karlina et.al., *Wawacan Layang Syekh Abdul Qadir Jaelani* (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1990).

The reproducing of hagiography of al-Jilani as done by some Javanese Muslim religious scholars³¹ reflects the influence of his teachings and spiritual practices on the local Islamic tradition as well as is evidence that how we perceive and interpret such distinguished figure in history may evolve. It might help us to be more sensitive to the possibility that Orsi called as a “*double intellectual tragedy*.”³² It refers to the situation when the studied reality is domesticated and constrained by the scholar’s interpretive horizon for the sake of its own interest. At this context, Rondolino’s approach by applying hagiography as a heuristic tool to connect strategies and politics in diverse contexts is illuminating to gain comparative insights without falling into universalizing methods. The hagiographical accounts could then provide information for depicting al-Jilani as a historical figure.³³ Even they could reasonably be expected myths or legends surrounding al-Jilani might be useful in enriching how this man in history gaining reputations or receiving admirations among his disciples or those who follow his teachings.³⁴

The critical examination of al-Jilani’s hagiographies demonstrates the applicability of Orsi’s theory in understanding the phenomena of the growth of hagiographic vernacular works in Indonesia. The tendency to domesticate and adapt to local needs infiltrates these works. For example, in the work of *Manaqib al-Karamat*, the mention of various benefits that can be gained from the manaqib ritual using this manual can be seen as the practice in question. Even though the main content of the *manaqib* still quotes from al-Barzanzi’s colloquial work, it remains connected to the grand narrative about al-Jilani as a spiritually and intellectually superior historical character. At the epistemological level, narrative development is the product of a mode of reasoning that sometimes contains aspects, in Thomas Kuhn’s

³¹ M. A. Fuadi, “Comparative Study of Manakib Nurul Burhani Book with Jawahirul Maani and The Teachings of Sufism in the Book Hagiography,” *Ibda’* 19, 2 (2021), doi: 10.24090/ibda.v19i2.4789.

³² R. A. Orsi, *History and Presence* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016).

³³ M. A. Rondolino, “Some Foundational Considerations on Taxonomy: A Case for Hagiography,” *Religions* 10 (2019).

³⁴ See G. Mitchell, “Hagiography: Current and prospective contributions,” *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 25, 5 (2015), pp. 390-394.

terms, “*incommensurability*” and “*anomalies*” or even “*crisis*”.³⁵ Hagiography in its social function is proven to convey alternative narratives that may be questioned from a historical scientific perspective, but are able to meet the needs of its audience and gain acceptance. The strategy that Foucault calls “*discontinuity and displacement*” can at least be useful here.³⁶ That the idea of continuum historical development in the construction of knowledge is not universal. Interests and power relations also operate in the production of knowledge which allows the emergence of a break from previously existing modes of thinking. The presence of a new narrative can be a criticism of an existing narrative but does not meet expectations or is not compatible with the reasoning structure of some audiences.³⁷ At last, the production and consumption of hagiography among Muslims, especially in the context of hagiography, as shown by the hagiographies of al-Jilani, also confirms the thesis that “*knowledge is always situated within specific historical, cultural, and social contexts.*”³⁸

Locality and Globality of al-Jilani

Turkiye, similar to Indonesia, is a majority Muslim country. However, unlike Indonesia that is predominantly Shafii, Turkiye is a Hanafi majority country.³⁹ Al-Jilani himself is a Hanbali scholar eventhough he has a reputation to be a Shafii scholar. Based on observations and interviews in Turkiye, al-Jilani is not as popular within Turkish Muslim community as he is within Muslim communities in Indonesia, especially Java. Al-Jilani’s popularity in Turkiye seems to be surpassed by other prominent figures in sufism such as Jalal al-Din Rumi and Baha’ al-Din Naqshabandi. The Qadiriya order itself is also less popular than the Bektashi Order, the Khalawati-Jarrahi Order, the Mawlawi Order, and especially the Naqshabandiya Order, which can be considered as the most prominent sufi order in

³⁵ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

³⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1972).

³⁷ See Karl R. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1959).

³⁸ See Donna J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1991).

³⁹ US Department of State, *2018 Report on International Religious Freedom: Turkiye*, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-report-on-international-religious-freedom/Turkiye/>, accessed on March 16, 2023.

contemporary Turkiye.⁴⁰ Instead, Sufism is deeply rooted in Turkish soil and having an increasingly notice from the people in public sphere. The rise of and opposition from Islamist movements are unable to halt the sufi traditions to flourish.⁴¹ If we trace back to early period in which the government showed a harsh pressure upon religious leaders including sufis and then look at how sufism survives in the present, it is a solid evidence that sufi traditions are a part of Turkish religious and cultural life.⁴² Facing various hardship and danger that threaten their existence, the sufi communities in Turkiye are able to adapt as well as transform themselves to continue to exist⁴³ and actively to play roles within society.⁴⁴

The less profound influence of al-Jilani in Turkiye comparatively to Indonesia might be related to several reasons. First, there are major sufi figures who originally came from Turkiye in particular or Central Asia in general, and developed their teachings or orders in this country. Among those who stand out are known figures such as Rumi from the Mawlawiyya order and Yusuf Emre from the Bektashi order. Second, the network of the Qadiriya order in Turkiye does not have strong roots in the community when compared to other orders, such as the Naqshabandiya. Third, popular sufi religious traditions among the people, such as reading the manaqib of al-Jilani, doing *tawassul* through al-Jilani, and performing the istighatha rituals are not practiced widely

⁴⁰ See A. Yukleyen, "Sufism and Islamic groups in contemporary Turkey," R. Kasaba (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 381-387; S. Zubaida, "Turkish Islam and National Identity," *Middle East Report*, No. 199 (1996), pp. 10-15; S. Taji-Farouki, *Beshara and Ibn 'Arabi: A Movement of Sufi Spirituality in the Modern World* (Oxford: Anqa Publishing, 2007); B. Silverstein, "Sufism and Governmentality in the Late Ottoman Empire," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 29, 2 (2009), pp. 171-185; T. McElwain, "Sufism Bridging East and West: The case of the Bektashis," D. Westerlund (ed.), *Sufism in Europe and North America* (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 95-126; and J. Hammer, "Halveti-Jerrahi Order," E. E. Curtis (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Muslim American History* (New York: Facts on File, 2010), pp. 230-231.

⁴¹ N. Birch, "Sufism in Turkey: The Next Big Thing?" *Eurasianet* June 22 (2010), <https://eurasianet.org/sufism-in-turkey-the-next-big-thing>.

⁴² See J. C. Peuch, "Turkey: Religious Orders Still Key Element In Secular Life," *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, February 15, 2001, <https://www.rferl.org/a/1095745.html>.

⁴³ K. Shively, "Sufism in Modern Turkey," L. Ridgeon (ed.), *Routledge Handbook on Sufism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), pp.435-448.

⁴⁴ A. F. Ambrosio, "Sufi Orders and the Turkish Coup d'Etat," *Fondazione Oasis*, June 27 (2017), <https://www.oasiscenter.eu/en/sufi-orders-and-turkish-coup-detat>.

in Turkiye as these are in Indonesia, especially Java. Fourth, the adaptation of the local version of the *manaqib* of al-Jilani in Turkiye is not as massive as what happened in Indonesia. Fifth, the local religious-communities that focus on the practice and sustain the tradition of reading al-Jilani's *manaqib* are seemingly not flourishing in Turkiye. Sixth, Turkiye ever experienced the political repression and animosities towards religious traditions that might halt the development of religious expressions among people. That the respect or veneration for al-Jilani in Turkiye can indeed be said to be not as wide and high as that is found in Indonesian Muslims, is confirmed by some interviewees, such as Yudha,⁴⁵ an active member of the international branch of NU (PCINU), and Syafiq,⁴⁶ an active member of the international branch of Muhammadiyah (PCIM), both in Turkiye.

Accordingly, if one examines deeper why al-Jilani has such an honorable position in the structure of religious practices in Indonesian Muslim society, especially in Java, several reasons seem to be put forward. The first reason, the widespread practice of respecting saints cannot be separated from the factor of religious understanding. Among Muslims, there is indeed a strong religious understanding that not only allows but also justifies respect for saints. Among the arguments often put forward to justify this practice are (1) the belief that a saint with *karamah* has a special position in the eyes of Allah; (2) the belief that the *karamah* of the saints does not end with the death of the holder, but it can even become stronger after his death; (3) the belief that God specifically sends angels to help saints to facilitate the acceptance of the wishes of pilgrims who visit their tombs; (4) the belief that sometimes the saint himself will accept the wishes of the pilgrims who visit his grave; and (5) the belief that *tawassul* to the prophets or pious figures, whether living or dead, is permissible by religion.

The second reason, more than just a legal issue confirmed by some scholars as permissible, there is also a religious persuasion that encourages people to practice it as one of the rituals needed in their lives. One of them is the belief that their *tawassul* and pilgrimage to their tombs will help speed up the acceptance of their prayer and also

⁴⁵ Yudha, *Interview* (Istanbul, 9 December 2022).

⁴⁶ Syafiq, *Interview* (Ankara, 8 December 2022).

the realization of their wishes. The most popular example that can prove this belief is the explanation found in the *manaqib* books that are spread among Muslims in Java. Among them are *Lubab al-Ma'ani* by Abu Muhammad Salih Mustamar and *Jawahir al-Ma'ani* by Ahmad Jawhari Umar. The first work is a Javanese translation in the Pegon script from the book *al-Lujjayn al-Dani* by al-Barzanji. Meanwhile, the second work only presents the content of *al-Lujjayn al-Dani*'s, although it does not mention the name of the author, namely al-Barzanji. At the beginning and the end of the book the author added an explanation of the usefulness of the book. In *Lubab al-Ma'ani* it is mentioned, among other things, that anyone who regularly reads *manaqib* will receive the breadth of sustenance that can flow down to posterity. For those who accompany it with sincere charity, it is also stated that reality of their wishes can be granted in this world and the hereafter.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, *Jawahir al-Ma'ani*, in more detail, mentions the benefits that can be obtained by anyone who practices *manaqib* recitation by following certain procedures, numbers, and times. Among the benefits are: (1) widening of the sustenance so that he can immediately perform Hajj; (2) obtaining *laduni*-divine knowledge; (3) never short of money; (4) receiving *karamah*; (5) having many children or students; (6) getting the desired lover; (7) making auspicious oil or holy water; (8) making the products sold well; (9) becoming known or prominent in society; (9) being able to build a house; (10) being immune from sharp weapons; (11) being healed from all kinds of ailments; (12) obtaining the *saiji angin*, a mystical ability to cover distances in a short time; (13) successfully proposing women for marriage or applying for jobs; (14) having the power to destroy the enemy; (15) being able to immediately get a spouse; (16) never experiencing shortage of food, and the rice is blessed; (17) being able to get out of jail soon; (18) immediate promotion to rank or position; and (19) being able to get rich. Even by the author, this book is claimed to contain a good luck in the form: First, if the book *Jawahir al-Ma'ani* is placed in the house, thieves or burglars will not enter the house. Second, if the book is used as an amulet, it will be easy for those who carry it to get sustenance and have a prosperous life. The reason is that in this book, stated at the end of the book, the author includes the mystical code *ism al-a'dham*.⁴⁸ It

⁴⁷ Abu Muhammad Salih Mustamar, *Lubab al-Ma'ani fi Tarjamah Lujjayn al-Dani fi Manaqib Sayyidi al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jaylani* (Kudus: Menara Kudus, 1952).

⁴⁸ Umar, *Jawahir al-Ma'ani*.

seems that the promises that can fulfill various wishes or practical needs in life also help to attract some people's beliefs about the truth of the practice of venerating saints who have *karamah* and their *manaqib* recitations.

The third reason, there are communities and networks that maintain this religious practice so that it remains sustainable and entrenched. In Indonesia, the existence of *manaqiban* groups outside the circles of sufi orders are well-known. It is a phenomenon that might be not easily found in Turkiye. The fourth reason, the existence of charismatic figures who traditionally have influence and their religious practices are a mirror of exemplary for the community. In Indonesia, one of the major Muslim groups with a wide network at the grassroots, especially in Java, namely NU, is a group that has traditionally supported and practiced the tradition of *tawassul* and *manaqiban* in society. So that it can be said, this tradition of respecting al-Jilani is commonplace and easy to find in Indonesia. Then again, this kind of phenomenon may not be easily found in Turkiye.

From the practice of reciting *manaqib* and the practice of respecting SAQJ that occurs in Indonesia, especially Java, as well as in other countries, including Turkiye, Iraq, and Syria, it is known that there is a pattern of recitation and respect which gives rise to distinction and uniqueness. In the Muslim community in Java, it is found, among other things, that the reading of the *Shalawat* Hasyimi and *Shalawat* Badar are local characteristics and are not found in the *manaqib* reading practices in other countries. On the other hand, in several other countries, there are readings with a two-voice pattern. That is, apart from reciting the *manaqib* in a *jahr* voice or aloud, it is also accompanied by the recitation of *tablil* or *tambid* phrase by the participants as if they were in the background with the sound of *sirr* or in a low voice. Participants will make a loud sound when they hear the name of al-Jilani mentioned in their *manaqib* reading by saying "*radiyallahu 'anhu*" as a greeting and respect. Even though there are local peculiarities among al-Jilani's *manaqib* reading practices in several other countries, we can still find outlines of similarities. Among them, besides reciting *manaqib*, doing *tawassul* to Allah's saints is a practice that seems to be obligatory in this ritual. Another dimension is the touch of art in this ritualistic practice. Without exception, the practice of reciting *manaqib* everywhere always recites these various readings in a poetic hum that is able to create an atmosphere of solemnity and

persuade the *manaqiban* participants to feel at home, stay in place, enjoy the procession even until the entire series of readings is finished.

Conclusion

Indonesia and Turkiye are known as the country with rich and robust sufi traditions. They have become the cradle as well as the garden for various sufi orders which have made Indonesian and Turkish Muslims familiar with many great sufi teachers. Al-Jilani is considered as the sufi teacher who has gained the highest reputation and veneration among them. This respectable status was achieved because al-Jilani is a historical figure that has indeed left quite a strong legacy. It is not only the existence of his works that are still used as references to this day, but also the network of sufi orders that make him a central figure and reference of the Islamic spiritual tradition. Apart from that, there are also other factors that make the tradition of respecting al-Jilani maintained and preserved. In Indonesia, there are many publications in the form of books or guides on worship practices and rituals that list al-Jilani as a figure whose name needs to be mentioned and recited. This makes him a figure who is 'enshrined' through writings that are still referred to and read in many Muslim religious circles. Along with the existence of sufi orders (*tariqa*), institutionalized groups that specifically practice *manaqib* recitation as a ritual and tradition also make al-Jilani an ever-living figure. In Turkiye, the tradition of venerating al-Jilani is not as strong as in Indonesia, but recognition of this figure is almost evenly distributed among Muslims in both countries. Even though in terms of religious culture, the two countries are seen as following a different mazhab, the fact is that al-Jilani has a place and respect in Muslim religious practices in Turkiye as in Indonesia. This is evident in the practice of *tawassul* and sending al-Fatihah to al-Jilani in prayers and *dhikr*. The practice of reading *manaqib*, although not as eminent as in Indonesia, especially in tariqa circles, is also widely known in Turkiye.

Discovering the reality of the tradition of respecting al-Jilani in these two countries provides fresh knowledge that the practice of religious understanding and experiences among Muslims continues to develop. In tradition, one can find both dynamic and static aspects of the life of religious people. In history, depictions of saints can also expose variations that may not always be the same as actual facts. Al-Jilani's hagiography, with all mythical accessories in it, which for some

Muslims is believed to be a biography that is completely true, also deserves respect and appreciation as wisdom. It is through those various religious expressions that religious people may be able to find meaning in their lives. []

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