

## **The Idrisi and Ja'fari Litanies**

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My dear brothers and sons of the tariqa,

Regarding the subject of the Idrisi and Ja'fari litanies, those of us in the Ja'fariyya tariqa have no connection to the Idrisi litanies - in this day and age. The Ja'fariyya tariqa is a widespread and well-known tariqa, and contains all the elements of the established Sufi orders.

As for reading the litanies of Sidi Ahmad b. Idris (may Allah be pleased with him) this is more of a philosophical matter than a spiritual one that is important for the murid to know, who is traversing the Ja'fariyya tariqa, meaning the one who takes this [Ja'fariyya] tariqa and acts upon the methodology and practices of it. In the beginning of the matter there were no published litanies, and immediately after the passing of our master Shaykh Salih al-Ja'fari, the sons of the Ja'fariyya tariqa used to read the Idrisi litanies.

At that time (after the passing of Shaykh Salih), the sons of the Ja'fariyya tariqa or rather the sons of Sayyidi Shaykh Salih al-Ja'fari, did not know that the Ja'fariyya tariqa exists. This is because Sayyidi Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghani b. Salih al-Ja'fari did not announce what his father told him outwardly and inwardly previously (in the lifetime of Shaykh Salih), and that is the existence of the Ja'fariyya tariqa - which is indeed something great and profound! And this Ja'fariyya tariqa is an established, clear and authentic tariqa and we do not accept any doubt or sceptical remarks regarding it, nor do we accept any opinion against it. And its proofs are many and are present in manuscripts, in qasa'id, in the books of many authors around the world, and in every work (the legacy) of my master, Shaykh Salih al-Ja'fari (may Allah be pleased with him).

Even he himself (may Allah be pleased with him) spoke about his litanies when he mentioned and said, "The Messenger of Allah brings me a litany as a gift, sometimes in my sleep and [other times] in a wakeful vision" - meaning that the litanies which we read (the Ja'fari litanies), were received by Sayyidi Shaykh Salih al-Ja'fari directly from our Liege and Master, the Messenger of Allah (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam), just as he informed us.

When our Shaykh said, "My path is the Quran, knowledge and taqwa [and praise of the Messenger of Allah, which is the eraser of misguidance]," these important facets are the subjects that Sayyidi Shaykh Salih al-Ja'fari spoke most about in his legacy (library of works and his lessons), in regards to *his* tariqa. And in that time, he never intended to say his tariqa is *Ahmadi* but rather he meant that his tariqa is *Ja'fari* - his tariqa for which he received authorisation from Sayyida Fatima al-Zahra, and from our Liege and Master Imam al-Husayn, and from our Master, the Messenger of Allah (salla Allahu alayhi wa alihi wa sahbihi wa sallam).

The senior sons [in age] of Shaykh Salih who were his contemporaries and first-generation students at the noble Azhar, supported Sayyidi Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghani, in the shift from the Idrisi tariqa to the Ja'fari tariqa, and indeed this was a magnificent and important work, placed with sovereignty on the shoulders of Shaykh Abd al-Ghani.

After the official proclamation of the Ja'fari tariqa through the consultation and registration via the Supreme Council of al-Turuq al-Sufiyya, Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghani authorised the sons of the tariqa in the reading of the Idrisi litanies, with a view to gradually migrate to the Ja'fari litanies. Why did the sons of the tariqa read the Idrisi litanies? Because after the passing of Shaykh Salih, my father and I found the handwritten manuscripts of the Awrad al-Ja'fariyya, the Salawat al-Ja'fariyya and indeed the ahzab, which he presented to the Supreme Council to recognise the tariqa of Shaykh Salih - which they did with great happiness. It took some time for Sayyidi Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghani to have these manuscripts published



in the book form that you see today and in the meantime, he gave the authorisation for the brothers to read the Idrisi litanies (which many of them read in the lifetime of Shaykh Salih). During this period, some of the sons of the Idrisiyya tariqa complained that the Ja'fari tariqa does not exist and that it is using the Idrisi litanies – despite the Ja'fariyya being officiated and recognised as a legitimate tariqa by the Supreme Council of Turuq Sufiyya. It should be noted that the Idrisiyya tariqa was not recognised by the Supreme Council. Even till today, it is referred to as the Bayt al-Ahmadi and as is well known, it is a magnificent house! The house of Sayyidi Ahmad b. Idris. And they have had a different shaykh [of tariqa] in different times (Translator's note: there has not been consensus on routes of succession nor the General Shaykh of the Idrisiyya). We do not wish to speak about this or go into the subject of the Ahmadiyya tariqa and Idrisiyya tariqa. Rather, we wish to speak about our tariqa and our litanies. Our Tariqa is composed of the Qur'an which the Lord, Mighty and Majestic is He, revealed to His beloved Prophet, and Chosen One (salla Allahu alayhi wa alaihi wa sahbihi wa sallam). Also, our tariqa is composed or the pure Muhammadan Sunna, and knowledge, and taqwa, which our Mashayekh commanded us to adopt and embody - that is to fear Allah and be conscious of Him, in our homes and on our travels (when we are away from home). And the tariqa of our master and shaykh, Sayyidi Salih al-Ja'fari, is built on being consistent, and striving in obtaining a large portion of religious knowledge, and following the methodology of the tariqa with diligence, and in praising the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam).

The Ja'fari path and methodology consists of reading the litanies (al-Awrad al-Ja'fariyya), the Salawat al-Ja'fariyya and the Kanz al-Nafahat. We read the Kanz al-Sa'ada for blessings (tabarruk) and not out of obligation. And these words are important! We read the Idrisi litanies sometimes, from time-to-time, just for blessings and not from obligation. So there is no obligation upon us regarding the Idrisi litanies because we have no connection with the Idrisi tariqa, except that it used to be the tariqa which our Shaykh (may Allah be pleased with him) traversed. Just as we have no connection with the tariqa of Sidi 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Tazi nor with the tariqa of Sidi 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Dabbaagh, and other than them from the pure chain - which is established and accepted, and recorded and written down in the pure chain of al-Tariqa al-Ja'fariyya. As we know from the fundamentals of tasawwuf, my respected brother, there is no shaykh except for the shaykh the murid has taken from, and this is something that is well-known, and mass transmitted and conveyed to all people.

Many of our sons, especially in the West, namely Europe and America, and some other places (Malaysia), ask about the permissibility of reading the litanies of Sidi Ahmad b. Idris. The Ja'fariyya tariqa is an independent tariqa and has its own litanies. There is immense goodness in its litanies, by Allah if only the sons knew! This matter requires purification of the ego (nafs). The litanies of Sayyidi Shaykh Salih al-Ja'fari are tremendous, including his ahzab and the salawat. There is no shaykh from the shaykhs of the noble turuq who has salawaat like the Salawat al-Ja'fariyya.

We have no obligation to focus upon the Idrisi litanies and we do not read them. We have al-Istighfar al-Kabir and al-Salaat al-'Azimiyya [and the Idrisi Tahlil], they are present in our litanies and that is enough for us, and that is what our Shaykh, Sayyidi Salih al-Ja'fari (may Allah be pleased with him) authorised us with. So learn this matter well dear sons!

This matter is only mentioned as a part of history and how the Ja'fariyya Tariqa originated, and this is indeed an important matter. The fundamental thing right now is that we are distancing ourselves from the litanies and ahzab of Sidi Ahmad b. Idris. We have our own litanies and we read our litanies. We read Kanz al-Nafahat which is the Kanz al-Salawat al-Arba'eeniyya (40 Salawat of Shaykh Salih), and we read the Fawa'id al-Ja'fariyya. The legacy of the Shaykh is abundant - it is plenteous, bountiful and overflowing!

It should be stated that our shaykh is Shaykh Salih al-Ja'fari. It is incorrect to believe that the erudite scholar, Sidi Shaykh Ahmad b. Idris is our shaykh as well. No, we do not know a shaykh - I, Muhammad Salih, do not know any shaykh except for Sayyidi Salih al-Ja'fari. And I do not know Sayyidi Salih al-Ja'fari



except through Sayyidi Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ghani (may Allah be pleased with them both), without looking at the fact that he is my father, and Shaykh Salih is my grandfather. I did not sit with Sayyidi Salih al-Ja’fari and take knowledge from him as I was very young. However, just as many learnt, and many like me [in my position of young age in the time of Shaykh Salih], we sat with Sayyidi Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ghani (may Allah be pleased with them), from whom we inherited and learnt the legacy of Shaykh Salih. The one to whom his father gave all the secrets, all spiritual gifts and breezes, and all blessings, which in turn he transmitted and explained to us. So he became an exemplar and was ready to disseminate the legacy (turath) of his father, and there is nothing for us to do except to drink from the fountain of these blessings.

So please do not invest your time in these kind of matters. I know the sons of the Shaykh have many questions but they should know that our tariqa is a simple tariqa. We do not exceed what has been decided for us. One will find that the Ja’fariyya tariqa does not exceed what the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) used to do, what he observed and what he taught his companions (may Allah be pleased with them and please them).

As for his (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) special worship, it is between him and the Lord (Mighty and Majestic is He), nobody knows its scope except for our Lord (Glorified and Exalted is He). And nobody is able to do it (what he did) or tread on that path except him (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam). The proof of that is his statement, “If I said yes, it would become obligatory, and you would not be able to do it.”

He used silence as an answer [in regards to others adopting his personal worship] when he (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) used to be asked questions by his companions, due to the lack of their capability in comparison to him, so he did not say, “Yes,” rather he would remain silent. In the matter that he would be silent on, he used to leave it open for striving in it. If you were to do this matter, for you is the reward and if you were not to do it, you have not sinned. And this is a simple matter, O Murid!

It is also like that in his actions. When our Master, the Messenger of Allah (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) used to prostrate, Sayyida ‘A’isha (may Allah be pleased with her) said, “I used to worry for the Messenger of Allah while he was prostrating, to the extent that sometimes I thought he had died.” This is to say: the Lord (Glorified and Exalted is He) had chosen to take him to Him while he was prostrating. But Sayyida ‘A’isha saw him get up and prostrate, and prostrate again until he had finished with his standing in tahajjud and prayer. Who, from us in this time, does such a thing? Only a few, O Murid, and this matter is well-known.

So, his actions (salla Allahu alayhi wa alihi wa sallam) and his worship are a matter particular to him (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam). However, the Messenger of Allah (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) told us a very simple instruction: “Pray as you see me pray.” This is an order for all Muslims to pray as we saw our master, the Messenger of Allah (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) pray, in amount and method – the number of prayers that he prayed, and the method of the prayer (how it was prayed) - how did he pray Dhuhr, how did he pray ‘Asr, etc.

We, the Ja’fariyya tariqa, are an independent tariqa. A tariqa which stands by itself. We have our litanies, we have our ahzab and we have vast knowledge preserved in the works of Shaykh Salih and the recorded sermons of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ghani. This is what we have inherited from our Mashayekh and this is what we wish to teach the future generations. So please, let us leave this topic of the litanies of Sidi Ahmad b. Idris, delving into them and their recitation. We read them from time to time for blessings only, O Murid! Nothing more or nothing less than that.

I ask the Lord (Glorious and Exalted is He) that He benefit us by our Mashayekh and by their honour. Try your best to distance yourself on speaking a lot about Sidi Ahmad b. Idris, and let us speak about our master, Sayyidi Shaykh Salih – for there is immense goodness in this for the murid. Even if we were to produce a commentary on one of the books of Sidi Ahmad b. Idris, our master Sayyidi Shaykh Salih al-



Ja'fari has already explained, added to and adorned these books with what Allah inspired him and given to him, and this is the knowledge that has reached us and is sufficient for us!

Do not worry, this whole affair as our master Sayyidi Shaykh Salih al-Ja'fari (may Allah be pleased with him) used to speak of and mention - this whole affair of the officiation of the Ja'fariyya tariqa has been authorised by the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa alaihi wa sahabihi wa sallam) and authorised by my Master, Sayyidi al-Imam al-Husayn, and this is something clear and manifest, alhamdulillah.

We ask Allah (Glorious and Exalted is He) to benefit us by our Mashayekh, and I send my heartfelt greetings and salam to all our sons and daughters in the west and around the world. May Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He, bless all of you, and may He aid us and make us of the successful ones by the virtue of our Mashayekh, inshaAllah. May Allah reward you all with every goodness.

May Allah bestow blessings upon our Master Muhammad, and upon his family and companions, and grant them peace. May the peace, mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you all.

