An Appreciation by Siddiq Osman Noormuhammad

(Please recite Subhanahu wa Ta‘ala after the Name of Allah. Please recite Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa Sallam after the name of Prophet Muhammad, and ‘Alayhissalam after the name of any other Prophet. Please recite Rady Allahu ‘Anhu, or Rahmatullahi ‘alayh after the names of the other great and nobles personalities as appropriate).

1. THE MOST WELL-KNOWN SALAWAAT OF GAWTH U’L-A‘ZAM

Gawth u’l-A‘zam Muhyuddeen Shaykh ‘Abdul Qadir al-Jilani (470-561 A.H / 1077-1166 C.E) traces his descent to the Holy Prophet. He was born in Jilan, Persia and his shrine is in Baghdad, Iraq. His father, As-Sayyid Abu Salih was a descendant of Imam al-Hasan ibn ‘Ali. His mother, Ummu’l-Khayr Fatima was the daughter of Shaykh ‘Abdullah Sawma‘i who was a descendant of Imam al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali. Thus Shaykh ‘Abdul Qadir al-Jilani is both Hasani and Husayni. He is a descendant of the Ahl u’l-Bayt (The Prophet’s Household) about whom Allah says in the Holy Qur’an Kareem:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُهْدِيۡبَ عَنْ صَبْرِكُمْ أَرْجَسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَ كُرْمٗا تَظِهِّرًا

Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you,
O people of the House,
and to purify you a thorough purification. (33:33)

Shaykh ‘Abdul Qadir al-Jilani is famous for converting thousands of people to Islam, among whom were Christians and Jews. He is also famous for his salawaat (invocation of blessings), his awraad and azkaar (regular voluntary invocations); his qasaaid (religious poems), his khutubaat (sermons) and his nasiha (advice) which have been compiled and handed down through centuries as classics of Muslim spirituality.
As we recite these masterpieces, we are struck by the fact that his style of expression is different from that of any other Shaykh (spiritual master), ‘alim (learned scholar), or wali (saint). He is so saturated with the spiritual power of Tawheed (pure Islamic monotheism) and brimming with the realisation that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is his ancestor, that his exposition and its flow has a spiritually confident personality all its own. Anyone who reads his khutubaat and recites his salawaat, awraad and azkaar, spontaneously admits that he is the muhyuddeen (reviver of Faith), the qutb u’l-aqtaab (the spiritual authority of all spiritual authorities), the Shaykh u’l-mashaayikh (the spiritual master of all spiritual masters), the Gawth u’l-A’zam (the greatest spiritual helper) and much more..... a Shaykh who epitomises both mujaddidiyyah (Faith revival) and wilayah (sainthood).

This chapter is about his salawaat (invocation of blessings).

Shaykh ‘Abdul Qadir al-Jilani was so profuse in “reciting” salawaat on our beloved Prophet Sayyidina wa Mawlana Muhammad al-Mustafa that their compilation could easily fill a volume. The word “reciting” has been used here advisedly rather than the word “writing” because what he said or recited was recorded by the scribes. Most of these salawaat are contained in Fuyudaat u’r Rabbaniyyah (Overflowing Abundance from The Lord), compiled by al-Hajj Isma’il ibn as-Sayyi’d Muhammad Sa’eed al-Qadiri.

Three salawaat of the Shaykh (spiritual master), who is lovingly referred to by millions across the world as the Gawth u’l-A’zam (the greatest spiritual helper), are well-documented. These are:

1. As-Salaat u’l-Gawthiyyah, also known as As-Salaatu’s-Sughra or the “small salaat”. This salaat, although short in length, is so famous that it has lovingly been named after him as As-Salaat u’l-Gawthiyyah (Durood Gawthiyyah in Urdu).

2. Kibriti’l-Ahmar, also known as As-Salaat u’l-Wusta or the "median salaat". This is a spiritual combination of five salawaat, one of which interestingly, is As-Salaat u’l-Gawthiyyah itself. Kibriti’l-Ahmar means red sulphur. It also means “the Philosopher’s Stone”, or something that is rare to come by.

3. As-Salaat u’l-Kubra or the “big salaat. This is a spiritual combination of 33 salawaat, 25 verses of the Holy Qur’an Kareem, and du'a (supplication to Allah) covering about 20 pages.

We will now study each of these salawaat in a little more detail.
2. AS-SALAAT U’L-GAWTHIYYAH

This salaat of the Gawth u’l-A’zam is so famous that many mashaayikh (spiritual masters) choose to include it in their kutub (books) as part of the awraad and azkaar (regular voluntary invocations). Some of the kutub that contain this salaat are:

1. Dalaail u’l-Khairaat (Proofs of Good Deeds) of Imam Muhammad bi’n Sulayman al-Jazuli, 
2. Hizb u’l-A’zam (The Great Supplication) of Hadrat Mulla ‘Ali al-Qaari, 
3. Majmu’ah Salawaat u’r-Rasul (Compendium of Blessings On The Prophetic Messenger) of Hadrat Khwaja Shaykh Abdur-Rahman Chohravi, 
4. Afdal u’s-Salawaat (The Best Blessings) of Imam Yusuf ibn Isma’il an-Nabahaani, 
5. Awraad u’l-Qaadiriyyah (Regular Voluntary Invocations of the Qaadiriyyah), compiled by Muhammad Salim Bawwaab, 
6. Durood Shareef (Noble Blessings) (in Urdu) by Khwaja Nisar (Nithaar) Ahmad, and 

Here then is As-Salaatu’l-Gawthiyyah, shining as distinctly as the north-star.

O Allah! Bless our master Sayyidina Muhammad whose light was created first, and whose appearance is a mercy for all the worlds, as many times as the number of Your creations past and yet to come of those that are blessed and those that are unfortunate; (which means: as many times as the number of all your creations),
such a blessing that submerges all counting (is uncountable), is unlimited and unbounded, a blessing that is endless, never finishing; a blessing that is permanent with Your Everlastingness, and (blessing as well) on his Family and Companions, and in the same manner complete salutations as well.

In this salaat, Shaykh ‘Abdul Qadir al-Jilani clearly declares his ‘aqeeda (belief) that before Allah created anything else, He created Nur Muhammadi, the Nur (light) of Sayyidina Muhammad.

SubhanAllah! (Glorified is Allah!)

3. KIBRITI’L-AHMAR

Kibriti’l-Ahmar which means red sulphur is also included in many kutub some of which are:

1. Fuyudaat u’r-Rabbbaniyyah, compiled by al-Hajj Isma’il ibn as-Sayyid Muhammad Sa’eed al-Qadiri,
2. Awraad u’l-Qadiriyah Rahmaniyyah, compiled by Hadrat al-‘Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Tayyib Shah,
3. Awraad u’l-Qadiriyah, compiled by Muhammad Salim Bawwab,
4. Mishkaat u’s-Salawaat (A Niche of Lit-Up Blessings) of Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas Burney,
5. Majmu’ah Wazaaiif ma’ Dalaail u’l-Khayraat (Compilation of Regular Voluntary Invocations together with Dalaail u’l-Khayraat), translated into Urdu and compiled by Pir Muhammad Karam Shah.

Kibriti’l-Ahmar is truly magnificent. It weaves verses of the Holy Qur’an Kareem together with Asma u’n-Nabi (his attributive names of praise), du’a (supplication to Allah), and five salawaat, three of which are famous. These are:

(a) As-Salaatu Kanzi’l-A’zam, the salaat with which Kibriti’l-Ahmar begins and which will be observed in more detail later,

(b) As-Salaatu’l-Gawthiyyah, which we have already looked at, and
(c) As-Salaatu’l-In‘aam, which is now presented.

As-Salaatu’l-In‘aam

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلَّمْ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى الِّي وَعَلَى مُسْلِمَيْنِ اْلْلَّهُ وَفَضَّالِيْهَا

O Allah! Bless and bestow peace on him and on his Family, as many times as Allah’s bounties and His Grace.

Kibriti’l-Ahmar ends with the following verses of the Holy Qur’an Kareem.

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّي وَرَبِّ الْعَرَاءِ عَظَمًا يَصُفُّورْتُ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى الْمُرْسِلِينَ وَأَحْمَدْ يَلَهَ رَبّ

الْعَلَّامِيْرِ

Glory is to your Lord, the Lord of Honour and Power (He is free) from what they ascribe to Him. And peace be on the Prophetic Messengers. And all praise is for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. (37:180-182)

4. AS-SALAAT U’L-KUBRA

As-Salaat u’l-Kubra or the “big salaat”, is a spiritual mosaic of 33 salawaat, 25 verses of the Holy Qur’an Kareem and du’a (supplication to Allah) interspersed among the salawaat. It is included in books already mentioned such as Fuyudaat u’r-Rabaniyyah, Awraad u’l-Qaadiriyyah Rahmaniyyah, Awraad u’l-Qaadiriyyah, and Afdal u’s-Salawaat.

The very first of its 20 pages gives us a flavour of this spiritual masterpiece.

يَسْتَرْحَمَ اللَّهُ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّجِيبِ

لَقَدْ جَاءَ كَمُ رَسُولٌ مِّنَ الْخَلْقِ مَعْيٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عُيِّنَتْ حَرِيضَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَفُؤُودٍ رَجِيبٍ أَعْمَلُ الْلَّهُ بِهِ وَلَا أَشْرَكْ بِهِ شَيْئًا الْلَّهُ إِلَيْهِ أَطَمَّعُ بِإِشَاعَاتِ الْقُرْآنِ…”
In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful.
Certainly, there has come to you a Prophetic Messenger from among yourselves, grievous to him is your suffering, full of concern for you, to the believers, (he is) compassionate, merciful. (9:128)

I worship Allah, Who is my Lord and I do not ascribe any partner to Him. O Allah! I ask of You for the sake of Your Most Beautiful Names.

None is to be worshipped except You, Glorified are You. (21:87)

(O Allah) Bless Sayyidina Muhammad and the Family of Sayyidina Muhammad as You blessed Sayyidina Ibrahim and the Family of Sayyidina Ibrahim. Surely, You are Praiseworthy, Glorious.

O Allah! Bless and bestow complete peace on Sayyidina Muhammad, the Prophet not taught by any human (but directly by You, O Allah) and on his Family and Companions. And may Allah’s blessing be on Sayyidina Muhammad and on the Family of Sayyidina Muhammad, such a blessing which he deserves.

O Allah! O Lord of Sayyidina Muhammad and the Family of Sayyidina Muhammad, bless Sayyidina Muhammad and the Family of Sayyidina Muhammad and bestow a reward on Sayyidina Muhammad (Allah's blessings and peace be on him) which he deserves.

O Allah! Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Great Throne, our Lord and the Lord of everything, and the One Who sent the Tawraat, the Injeel, the Zabur and the Great Qur’an. O Allah! You are The First so there is nothing that came before You,
and You are The Last so there is nothing that comes after You,
and You are The Manifest with nothing above You,
and You are The Hidden with nothing below You.
All praise belongs to You.

None is to be worshipped but You.
Glorified are You; surely, I have been one of the unjust. (21:87)

Whatever Allah wished, happened.
Whatever He does not wish, does not happen.
There is no strength except with Allah.

O Allah! Bless Sayyidina Muhammad,
Your Ultimate Devotee, and the Prophet sent by You, and Your Prophetic Messenger,
a favourable, agreeable blessing,
as You have ordered us to invoke blessing on him
and grant him complete peace.

We notice that As-Salaatu’l-Kubra begins with verse number 128 from Surah at-Tawba, then
invokes Allah with his Most Beautiful Names, follows this up with As-Salaatu Ibrahimiyyah and two other salaat, after which there is du‘a, verse number 87 from Surah al-Anbiyaa, praise of Allah, and more salawaat, and so it continues. As-Salaatu’l-Kubra ends with this verse of the Holy Qur’an Kareem.

Their prayer therein will be: “Sanctity to You, O Allah”,
and their greeting therein will be: “Peace”,
and the end of their prayer will be:
“All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds”. (10:10)

As Shaykh ‘Abdul Qadir al-Jilani was a Hafiz u’l-Qur’an, we should intend to become Hafiz u’l-Qur’an, and/or make our children/grand-children huffaz u’l-Qur’an. As he was so profuse in reciting the Qur’an, we should have the good habit of reciting at least one juz of the Qur’an every day. Since he has included the Asma’ al-Husna (the Most Beautiful Names of Allah) in his salawaat, we should memorize the Asma’ al-Husna. As he was so profuse in reciting salawaat, we should recite salat ala’n-Nabi at least a hundred times a day. Since he has included the Kalim at-Tawhid (The Declaration of Muslim Faith) with the salawaat, we should recite the Kalima at-Tawhid at least a hundred times every day.

Laa ilaha Illallah Muhammad u’r-Rasulullah
None is to be worshipped but Allah. Muhammad is the Prophetic Messenger of Allah.

In total, there are 25 verses of the Holy Qur’an Kareem in As-Salaatu’l-Kubra. Some of these verses in which Allah Himself praises and honours the Holy Prophet are:

١٣٧٤ يُضْعَفَ وَالْقُرْآنُ أَحْكَمُ ١٣٧٥ إِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ١٣٧٦ عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

Yaa Seen.
By the Qur’an full of Wisdom.
Most surely, you are one of the Prophetic Messengers, on a straight way. (36:1-4)

١٣٨١ لْقَدْ مَنَىَ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوُّ أَنفُسَهُمْ قَالُواْ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْخَبِيرُ

١٣٨٢ وَيَعْلَمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ إِنَّ كَانَواْ مِنْ قَبْلٍ لَّيْفَ خُلّالٌ مُّبِينٌ

Certainly, Allah conferred a great favour on the Muslim believers when He sent among them a Prophetic Messenger from among themselves, who recites to them His revelations, and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom, although before that they were surely in manifest error. (3:164)

١٣٨٣ وَإِذْ أَحَدَ اللَّهُ مِيْشَقَ الْيَوْمِ الْاَنْفُسِ الْمُكَّفَّرَاتِ لَمْ أُنْدِمْ أَنَاَ الْيَوْمُ إِلَى تَجْزَاءِ رُسُلٍ مَّسْأَلُونَ

١٣٨٤ لَمْ أَمْعَلَ مَعَكُمْ مَعْمُوكَانِ بَيْنَنَا وَلَتَنْصُرَانِ فَأَقْرَرْنَا فَأَقْرَرُواْ قَالَ فَأَقْسَهُوْناْ وَأَنَاْ مَعَ مَعْمَكَ مِنْ الْشَّهِيدِينَ

And when Allah took the Covenant of the Prophets, (He said): (Behold) what I have given you of the Book and Wisdom. Afterward, there will come to you a Prophetic Messenger confirming what is with you; you shall believe in him and you shall help him.
He said: do you agree and take this My Covenant as binding on you? They said: We agree.
He said: Then bear witness. And I am with you among the witnesses. (3:81)
And We sent you not but as a mercy for all the worlds. (21:107)

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاهُ إلَّا رَحْمَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ

And great is the Grace of Allah upon you (O Prophet). (4:113)

وَلَسَّوْفَ يُعْطِيْكَ رَبَّكَ فَتْرَصُّي

And your Lord will give you (all good) that you will be well-pleased.(93:5)

The Shaykh goes on to give a tafsir (explanation) of this verse. He quotes part of the Hadith Qudsi (Sacred Saying) from which we learn that on the Day of Judgement, the Beloved Prophet ﷺ shall go into sajda (prostration) before Allah ﷻ to seek intercession. He will be told: “Speak and you shall be heard, and ask and you shall be given, and intercede and your intercession will be accepted.” All that the Holy Prophet ﷺ wanted was the forgiveness of his Ummah. May Allah ﷻ forgive us, Aameen.

These verses and their tafsir in some instances are interspersed in an intricate pattern among the salawaat (invocation of blessings) and duʿa (supplication to Allah ﷻ), with duʿa following one or more salawaat, as in this instance.

O Allah! Bestow blessing and peace on Your Ultimate Devotee, the Prophet sent by You, and Your Prophetic Messenger, our master, our Prophet Muhammad, who was not taught by any human
(but directly by You, O Allah),
the Arabian Prophetic Messenger,
and on his Family and Companions
and his blessed wives, and offspring and his blessed household;
such a blessing that may please You, and be a reward for him and fulfil his rights,
and (O Allah), give him the Wasila (means of intercession)
and distinction, and nobility, and the highest exalted position,
and raise him to the highest Praised Station
which You have promised him,
O The Most Merciful of those who show mercy.

O Allah! Indeed, You are our only Means
and we beg of You and we turn our faces towards You
with Your exalted Book
and through the means of the noble Prophet sent by You,
our master Sayyidina Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace),
and through the means of his glorious nobility,
and through the means of his forefathers
Sayyidina Ibrahim and Sayyidina Isma‘il,
and through the means of his Companions,
Sayyidina Abu Bakr and Sayyidina ‘Umar,
and the Possessor of the Two Lights, Sayyidina ‘Uthman,
and his family members Sayyidatina Fatima and Sayyidina ‘Ali,
and their sons Sayyidina al-Hasan and Sayyidina al-Husayn,
and his uncles Sayyidina Hamza and Sayyidina ‘Abbas,
and his blessed wives Sayyidatina Khadija and Sayyidatina ‘Aisha.

In this salaat and the du‘a following it, Gawth u'l-A'zam Shaykh ‘Abdul Qadir al-Jilani not only shows his deep love for Allah , and for the blessed Prophet Muhammad , but also for the Prophets (‘Alayhimussalam) who came before him, as well as for the ahlul bayt (the blessed Household of the Prophet) and his glorious sahaba (Companions). In the salaat, he includes the du‘a that is recited after the adhan. We notice that this entire du‘a is in honour and praise of the beloved Prophet . In the du‘a that follows, he invokes Allah using the wasila (means), of Allah Himself, of the Holy Qur’an Kareem, the noble Prophet , Nabi Ibrahim and Nabi Isma‘il, the Khulafa ar-Rashidin (the Rightly-Guided Khulafa), and the ahlul bayt and the sahaba.

May Allah bestow on us the love of all of them. Aameen.

When we complete the recitation of As-Salatu'l-Kubra, we realize that interspersed in it are all the Arkan al-Iman (Pillars of Muslim Faith). These are: Belief in Allah as the One and Only God to be worshipped, belief in His angels, in His Revealed Books (Scriptures), in His Prophetic
Messengers, in the Last Day (of Judgement), in the Pre-Ordainment by Allah of good and bad, and the Resurrection after death (on the Day of Judgement). So, when we are reciting As-Salatu’l-Kubra, we are declaring our ‘aqida (tenets of Faith) as well.

Al-Hamdu Lillah. (All Praise if for Allah!)

We will do well to conclude this section by reciting these verses of du’a (supplication to Allah) in As-Salat u’l-Kubra.

ربنا تقبل صلاتنا إنك أنت الحسيب الحليم

Our Lord! Accept this (service) from us. Indeed, You, only You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. (2:127)

وَنُبِّئُ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنتَ الذِّوَابُ الْرَّحِيمُ

And relent towards us. Indeed, You, only You are the Most Relenting (One Who accepts repentance), The Merciful. (2:128)

وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِلَّهَ وَإِلَيْهِ تَوْكِلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أَلْبَـبُ

And my guidance is only from Allah. In Him I trust, and to Him I turn in repentance. (11:88)

أَنَّ مَعِيَّنًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالَّذِيَّة تَوَفَّي مُسْلِمًا وَالْحَقِّي بِالصَّلِيحِينَ

You are my Helper in this world and the Hereafter. Cause me to die as a Muslim and unite me with the righteous. (12:101)

وَأَنَّ أَعْمَلَ صَلِيحًا تَرْضَاهُ وأَصْلِحْ لِي فِي ذَرِيَّتِي إِنَّكَ لَيْكَ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

And that I may do good deeds which may please You, and make my off-spring righteous for me. Truly, I turn to You in repentance and truly, I am one of the Muslims. (46:15)

The teaching that is repeated in these verses is to turn to Allah in repentance. May Allah forgive us, Aameen.

5.AS-SALAATU KANZI’L-A’ZAM
One of the salawaat present in both Kibriti'l-Ahmar as well as in As-Salaatu'l-Kubra, is such a gem it is referred to as Kanzi'l-A'zam (The Great Treasure). Khwaja Shaykh Abdur-Rahman Chohravi naturally chose to include it in his Majmu'ah Salawaat u'r-Rasul and al-Hajj Isma'il ibn as-Sayyid Muhammad Sa’eed al-Qadiri had it printed separately in Fuyudaat u'r-Rabbanivyah, identifying it as Kanzi'l A'zam. In it, Shaykh 'Abdul Qadir al-Jilani pours his heart out in superlative praise of the Holy Prophet Sayyidina Muhammad al-Mustafa ﷺ.

O Allah! Confer for ever Your best blessings and ever increasing and never ending favours; and Your Purest, Gracious, and abundant salutations on him who is the most noble in the realm of the realities of the nature of humans and jinn, and is fully aware of all subtleties of Faith, and is the mountain of excellent manifestations and the place on which descend the mysteries of the All-Beneficent and who is a bridegroom in the Kingdom of the Lord, the centrally placed jewel in the chain of the Prophets, the first and the foremost in the army of the Prophetic Messengers, the leader of the caravan of the saints and the truthful, the best in all creation, the bearer of the flag of the highest honour, the owner of the keys to the shining gallery,
the beholder of the secrets of eternity,
the beholder of the first created lights,
the interpreter of the Divine Language,
the fountain-spring of knowledge, tolerance and wisdom,
the manifestation of the secret of the existence of the whole and its parts,
who is the cause of the existence of (everything) above and below,
the soul in the body of both the worlds (that keeps them alive),
the fountain of life of this world and the Hereafter,
the one who has achieved the high rank of servitude to Allah
and is created with the highest spiritual stations of morality,
the foremost among the friends of Allah
and His highly honoured beloved,
our master, our patron, our beloved,
Muhammad, son of ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abdul Muttalib,
may Allah bless him, his Family and Companions,
as many times as the number which is in Your Knowledge (O Allah)
and (as many times as) the amount of ink used to write Your Words,
whenever You are remembered and he is remembered
by those who remember
and whenever You are not remembered and he is not remembered
by the negligent,
(that is, not leaving out any one in the count)
and bestow on him abundant, never ending, complete salutations (as well).

For sure, Kanzi’l-A’zam is at such a high level in terms of ‘ulum and ‘irfan (direct spiritual knowledge) that it is breath-taking and awe-inspiring. One of its interesting features is that it is in rhyming prose. We notice that in this salaat, the following words rhyme:

(i) abadan, sarmadan, fadlan and ‘adadan;
(ii) insaaniyyah, jaanniyah, Imaniyyah, Ihsaaniyyah, Rahmaaniyyah and Rabbaaniyyah;
(iii) Nabiyyeena, Mursaleena, Siddiqeena, and ajma’eena;
(iv) a’laa and asnaa;
(v) azali, awwali, qidami, and hikami;
(vi) ‘ilmii and hilmi;
(vii) juz’iyyi, kulliyyi, ‘ulwiyyi and sufliyi;
(viii) kawnayni and daarayni;
(ix) ‘ubudiyyati and istifaaiyyati;
(x) A’zam and Akram;
(xi) Ma’lumaatika and Kalimaatika; and
(xii) zaakirun and ghaafilun.

There are twelve different rhymes in just one salaat.

ㅤAllahu Akbar! (Allah is Supremely Great)!
It must be remembered that this is not the only remarkable feature of this salaat. There are various other levels of ʿulum (knowledge) here, both manifest and hidden that call for more intensive study.

6. HURUF U’L-MUQATTA‘AT

An ancient tradition among the ʿulama (the learned) and the mashaayikh (spiritual masters) is to compose salawaat giving a meaning to each letter in the name of the beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. On earth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is called Muhammad and in the heavens, he is called Ahmad. The name Muhammad is composed of four letters: “Meem”, “Haa”, “Meem”, and “Daal”, while the name Ahmad is composed of “Alif”, “Haa”, “Meem” and “Daal”. The mashaayikh have composed salawaat with these letters. Shaykh ‘Abdul Qadir al-Jilani ﷺ went a step beyond this. He composed a salaat with these letters together with the Huruf u’l-Muqatta‘at.

The Huruf u’l-Muqatta‘at are the letters with which some of the surahs (chapters) of the Qur’an Kareem start. These are:

- Alif Laam Meem, (2:1), (3:1), (29:1), (30:1), (31:1), (32:1)
- Alif Laam Meem Saad, (7:1)
- Alif Laam Raa, (10:1), (11:1), (12:1), (14:1), (15:1)
- Alif Laam Meem Raa, (13:1)
- Kaaf Haa Yaa ‘Ain Saad, (19:1)
- Taa Haa, (20:1)
- Taa Seen Meem, (26:1), (28:1)
- Taa Seen, (27:1)
- Yaa Seen, (36:1)
- Saad, (38:1)
- Haa Meem, (40:1), (41:1), (42:1), (43:1), (44:1), (45:1), (46:1)
- Haa Meem ‘Ain Seen Qaaf, (42:1-2)
- Qaaf, (50:1) and Noon, (68:1)

Only Allah ﷻ knows the true meanings of these huruf u’l muqatta‘at, as well as those to whom He gives this knowledge, the foremost among them being our Holy Prophet Muhammad al-Mustafa ﷺ. The mashaayikh have explained that some of these huruf u’l-muqatta‘at refer to the sifaat (Noble Attributes) of Allah ﷻ and some refer to the sifaat (noble attributes) of the Prophet ﷺ. Many of them have also stated that Taa Haa and Yaa Seen are attributive names of praise of the blessed Prophet ﷺ. Some other mashaayikh have composed salawaat with the huruf u’l-muqatta‘at.
Shaykh ‘Abdul Qadir al-Jilani combined all this ‘ulum (knowledge) in a grand convocation in just one salaat. We find that in one of the salawaat given in Fuyudaat u’r-Rabaniyyah, the Gawth u’l-A’zam has used the letters in the blessed names Muhammad and Ahmad as well as the Huruf u’l-Muqatta’at without repeating any of the Huruf u’l-Muqatta’at! Who can beat such scholarship? As we appreciate this learning that is open, manifest and clear, we begin to understand the depth of his spiritual knowledge that was a secret and even more hidden.

Let us then approach this salaat after reciting Surah al-Fatiha. Al-Fatiha!

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful (1:1)

And there is no power nor strength except with Allah, The Most High, The Magnificent. None is worthy of worship except Allah, The Sovereign Lord, The Clear Truth.

Our Lord! We have believed in what You have Revealed, and we have followed the Prophetic Messenger, so record us among those who bear witness. (3:53)

O Allah! Bless and bestow peace and honour, and give nobility, glory and greatness; and have mercy on the one who is lofty in strength and high in grandeur, and is the high-aspiring light and the clear truth; the letter Meem (in the name Muhammad) is for the kingdom, Haa is for mercy, (the second) Meem is for knowledge, and Daal is for evidence (proof); the letter Alif (in the name Ahmad) is for might and power, Haa is for the realm of mercy,
Meem is for sovereignty, and Daal is for guidance; the letter Laam (in the Huruf u’l-Muqatta’at) is for hidden kindness, Raa is for hidden compassion, Noon is for perfect benevolence, ‘Ain is for providential care and concern, Kaaf is for sufficiency, Yaa is for headship and becoming master. Seen is for bliss, Qaa is for nearness, Taa is for the sultanate, Haa is for the tie or bond (of friendship), and Saad is for preservation (from wrong-doing); and (bless and bestow peace as well) on his Family, who are the bright noon-time of his esteemed knowledge, and on his Companions, through whom the religion was well protected in an impenetrable fortress.

This is just the opening portion of this momentous salaat which is only about a quarter of it. The remaining three quarters consists mostly of du‘a (supplication to Allah ﷺ).

This calls for a Fatiha. Al-Fatiha!

7. SALAAMS ON THE BELOVED PROPHET ﷺ

It is apt to conclude by presenting the salaams (salutations) of the Gawth u’l-A’zam on the Holy Prophet ﷺ as given in Mishkaat u’s-Salawaat (A Niche of Lit-Up Blessings) of Mawlana Muhammad Elyas Burney ﷺ.

الصلوةُ وَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ثَوَابُ اللَّهُ
الصلوةُ وَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا فَاتِقُ اللَّهُ
الصلوةُ وَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا سَفِيقُ اللَّهُ
الصلوةُ وَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا اخْلَیقُ اللَّهُ
الصلوةُ وَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا خَيْبَةُ اللَّهُ
الصلوةُ وَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا طَرَفَةُ اللَّهُ
الصلوةُ وَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا كَرَمَةُ اللَّهُ
الصلوةُ وَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا عَلِيمَةُ اللَّهُ
الصلوةُ وَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا رَبِّيَةُ اللَّهُ
Blessing and salutation to you, O Prophetic Messenger of Allah.
Blessing and salutation to you, O Prophet of Allah.
Blessing and salutation to you, O Sincere Friend of Allah.
Blessing and salutation to you, O the leader of the pious.
Blessing and salutation to you, O the one whom Allah has beautified.
Blessing and salutation to you, O the one whom Allah has exalted.
Blessing and salutation to you, O the one who Allah has honoured.
Blessing and salutation to you, O the one whom Allah has made noble.
Blessing and salutation to you, O the one taught by Allah.
Blessing and salutation to you, O the master of Prophetic Messengers.
Blessing and salutation to you, O the final in the line of the Prophets.
Blessing and salutation to you, O the leader of the pious.
Blessing and salutation to you, O the intercessor for sinners.
Blessing and salutation to you, O mercy for all the worlds.
Blessing and salutation to you, O the best of Allah’s creation.
Blessing and salutation to you, O the light of the Throne of Allah.

May blessings of Allah, and His angels, His Prophets and His Prophetic Messengers, and the bearers of His Throne, and all His creation, be on our master Sayyidina Muhammad, on his Family and all his Companions, till the Day of Judgement.

May Allah fill our hearts with the nur (spiritual light) of these salawaat and salaams. Ameen.

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