

Seifulla Rashydov

SHEIKH OF THE NAQSHBANDI AND SHAZILI TARIKATS SAID-AFANDI AL-CHIRKAVI

Said Abdurakhmanovich Atsaev, better known as Said-afandi of Chirkey and Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, was born in 1937 in the village of Chirkey of Buinaksky district of the Dagestan ASSR. After seven classes, he left school and worked as a shepherd with the goal of financial support of his family, and after serving in the Soviet Army, he worked at the Chirkey Hydroelectric Power Station.

Being a believer from childhood, Said-afandi began to study the tarikat at the age of thirty-two. Despite the fact that they write about him as «the greatest scientist of our time», he spoke of himself as a person with a small bag of knowledge: «I will say that I am not a great scholar in Islam» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2010]. In an interview, he admitted: «I only knew Avar. I don't speak Arabic. Not necessary. I did not need Arabic. Why do I need it now? I can't speak Arabic with anyone, it doesn't work. Although I can read, this is another matter» (M. Shevchenko). The first ustaz (spiritual mentor) of Said-afandi was Abdulhamid-afandi from Inho of the Gumbetovskiy district, and he received ijazah (permission to be a mentor) from his son, Meseyasul Muhammad-afandi from the village of Khuchada, Shamil district. Said-afandi hid the receipt of Ijazah for six years: «he did not want to become ustaz, they forced him» [Shevchenko, 2001]. Said-afandi himself, in turn, transferred the Ijazah to mufti of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Dagestan, Ahmad-Haji Abdullayev and Abdul-Jalil-Afandi. Sheikh saw his mission in a Muslim association led by a group on the true path and believed that he did everything in his power to reconcile and the Almighty, when he appears before Him for an answer, will not ask him the question «why did I sow discord» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2008].

According to the «Caucasian Knot» website, Said-afandi contributed to the signing in June 2012 of an agreement between the Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of Dagestan led by its murids and the Salafi organization Akhlu Sunna, opponents of Sufism which is against terrorism (Said-afandi of Chirkey). However, on August 28, 2012, Said-afandi al-Chirkavi was killed near his house in his native village of Chirkey as a result of the bombing of a suicide bomber – former actress of the Russian Drama Theater in Makhachkala and soloist of the break dance ensemble Aminat Kurbanova (before the adoption of Islam – Alla Saprykina). Up to 150 thousand people came to say goodbye to the deceased, according to the eyewitnesses, which testifies to the popularity of Said-afandi and the high mobilization potential of his supporters.

According to various estimates, Said-afandi murids were from several to hundreds of thousands of people (there are figures of 300 and 600 thousand) living in many regions of Dagestan, Russia and abroad. Said-afandi himself said that this was not true, he did not count the number of his followers, since he did not need to know this and assured that he was not able to influence the behavior of thousands of people. His followers are representatives of different nationalities: Avars, Dargins, Kumyks, Laks, Lezgins, Tabasarans, Rutuls, Aguls, Nogais, etc. There were also women among the Said-afandi murids. According to the sheikh, a large number of murids does not pose a threat to the state: «the followers of the tarikat are not inclined to contention and confusion, on the contrary, they prevent the spread of discord and hostility as much as possible. I constantly teach my murids so that they do not enter into disputes with the murids of other sheikhs and people in general» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2010].

Being a sheikh of the Shazilian and Naqshbandi tarikats, the Kadiriens gathered with him to perform zikr (mentioning the name of Allah). The influence of Sheikh Said-afandi on the spiritual and cultural life of Dagestan was enormous. For many years, his successor has led, and the students have controlled the Spiritual Administration of Muslims in Dagestan. In the article «What is worse than Wahhabism?» published in the Nezavisimaya Gazeta newspaper, Haji Magomedov writes: «A third of the deputy body of the Republican National Assembly is considered to be his murids. They are also present in the government, including ministers and some leaders of the republic» [Magomedov, 2001]. «The Treasury of Blessed Knowledge» is Said-afandi's most famous and first

book, translated into Russian. It «aroused great interest among readers, it was even a sales leader among religious books in Moscow» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2011].

One of the most important topics considered by the author in this work is the tarikat, as well as its relationship with Sharia. According to Said-afandi, the Naqshbandi tarikat as the path leading a person to the knowledge of Allah is the easiest and purest of innovations. Moreover, this is the shortest and fastest way to know God. The truth lies precisely in the Naqshbandi tarikat. The advantage of the Naqshbandi tarikat is that its followers do not retire to the wilderness, to cells to do ibadat, worship, as is customary in other tarikats. «In the Naqshbandi tarikat, you can do the same ibadat at the same time, doing worldly affairs. It is called halvat fiy jalvat, which can be translated as solitude with God, being with people» [Shevchenko, 2001].

Said Atsaev believes that in Dagestan «there are true and false tarikats». The true tarikat is taught by spiritual mentors, and the false one has no mentors. He is indignant at the fact that some sheikhs pass ijaz to their children. Also in the republic, according to Said-afandi, there are also false sheikhs. The fact that there are many branches of the tarikat «is the hidden wisdom of Allah». Despite the fact that there are many ways of tarikat, everyone has one goal – the knowledge of Allah. Everyone is free to choose one or another tarikat for himself. It is allowed to switch from one tarikat to another, but one cannot criticize the sheikh of the previous tarikat. Combining all in one tarikat is unrealistic, said Said Atsaev. However, «everyone, remaining on his chosen path, must unite for the sake of maintaining peace and brotherhood». The sheikh is confident that through his followers «the Naqshbandi tarikat will exist until the end of the world, and Imam Mahdi will be the final on this path» [Akayev, Mirzaev, 2018].

Said-afandi of Chirkey compares the tarikat with the ghazavat, a sacred struggle. The spread of the tarikat is the struggle against the nafs, which in Islam is called the great ghazavat. «Gazavat, which is conducted with the help of a saber, judging by its conditions, has an end. Gazavat, which is conducted against one's nafs («Mujahad» is the «internal» jihad of a person against his base passions), cannot have an end, because after every Muslim reaches adulthood, he is obliged to fight the nafs until the end of his days» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2011]. In Said Atsayev's «Treasury of Blessed Knowledge» we find the following definition of tarikat: «Tarikat is the road, a special path that is followed by one who seeks to know Allah. Tarikat – it is the fulfillment of good deeds and the constant work that is being done to bring the good qualities listed above together in a person» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2008]. The meaning of the tarikat is «cleansing the heart and body of everything negative in order to develop the best qualities that would correspond to the instructions of the Almighty. The tarikat is the basis and essence of religion, the soul of Islam: «the very emergence and beginning of Islam is based on the tasavuf» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2008].

Sheikh Said-afandi explains the necessity and importance of the tarikat by the presence of sins in a person, the need to cleanse the heart and nafs (ego, passion) of negative qualities: «The tarikat is also a medicine that appeared due to the emergence of diseases in the faith among Muslims» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2010]. And the more sins, the earlier he must decide on a spiritual mentor. A person who has not entered the tarikat will never understand what is riya (showing off), ujbu (complacency). Islam cannot be complete without tarikat; religion cannot be right. «If we talk about the difference between Sharia and the tarikat, then, truly, there is no difference between them as such» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2010]. A Muslim, «in order to keep true Islam, needs a fare. It's like a planer for a carpenter» [Shevchenko, 2001]. That is, Islam is «polished» by the tarikat. «The zikr read by one who has entered the tarikat will exceed by a thousand and thousand times the zikr of a person who has not entered the tarikat. You don't realize your essence, the truth of Islam, except by entering the tarikat» (the last interview of the Sheikh). Finding a worthy mentor is not easy and in «searching for a teacher you need to spend as much as is required for a hajj» [Shikhaliev, 2007]. A person who has entered the tarikat should be a moral model for those around him.

The spiritual genealogy of the tarikat begins from the Prophet to the last living sheikh of this teaching. Said-afandi claims that the tarikat originates from Allah (grace from Allah, respectively, the gracious knowledge is knowledge coming from Allah), goes to the Prophet through the angel Jabrail, and from the Prophet to companions (in the Naqshbandi tarikat to Abu Bakr, and in Shazili – Ali) and so on. Only as part of this chain, the sheikh has the right to teach the tarikat. In the «golden chain» of transmitters (silsilat az-zahab, meaning that the brotherhood is connected with the Prophet both spiritually and physically) of the Naqshbandi tarikat Said-afandi al-Chirkavi is forty-seventh.

The most important feature of Sufism is the institution of religious mentors (murshids) – holders of secret knowledge, transmitting them to their students (murids). Murshid is the spiritual leader of the Sufi tarikat, who has the right to mentor the Murids. There are certain conditions for joining the tarikat and initiating in murids: tauba (repentance), tawajjuh (creating a spiritual connection between murshid and murid to transfer knowledge from heart to heart), training and tasks – wird (special formulas specific to each individual Sufi brotherhood).

The conditions of repentance (tauba) are: regret for the committed sin, determination for the sake of Allah never to commit a sin again, immediate refusal of sinfulness, compensation for spiritual insults or material damage, appeal to Allah with a request for forgiveness for your sin aloud or to yourself.

When the tawajjuha is performed by the murid, «his heart will be filled with divine knowledge and secrets, just as they are carved on the heart of a sheikh-mentor». But the son of Said-afandi Abdullah Atsaev explains the tawajjuha mystical act: «In order to transfer knowledge to the murid, the sheikh mentally directs his eyes to the knowledge that he wants to transfer to the murid, focuses his full attention on transferring this knowledge to the heart of the murid. Then this knowledge passes into the heart of the murid in accordance with its willingness to accept it» [Atsaev, 2016].

An important place in the tarikat is occupied by the wird performed daily after the morning and evening prayers by the murids. «There is a special thing that we present – wird. He must fulfill the order to become a murid. ...It happens that it must be repeated a hundred times daily. A hundred times to repeat the praise of the Prophet, a hundred times to say «La ilaha illa-allah» («There is no Deity but Allah») [Shevchenko, 2001]. Murid should behave respectfully and meekly towards him. One of the manifestations of respect to ustaz by the murid and «rendering honor to him is kissing his hand». But «one cannot kiss someone who is not a theologian, a just ruler, or a very devout person» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2010].

The murid that has entered the path of the tarikat must consistently go through several stages of spiritual development. Said Atsaev adhered to a four-stage tarikat: the first is sharia (compliance with the norms enshrined in the Quran and Sunnah); the second is tarikat (taking the path leading to spiritual self-improvement of a person); the third is maarifat (intuitive knowledge of the Almighty); the fourth level – hakikat – comprehension of Truth (from hakk – truth; at the same time hakk – one of the names of Allah). The result of the hakikat is fana (dissolution in God). At the same time, Said-afandi admits that he does not know (has not reached the level of fana) and has not met such people: «I heard, of course, but did not meet them. Such people were in the past» [Shevchenko, 2001].

Said-afandi refers to those who «entered the path of the Tariqkat in order to know Allah» as murids and divides them into three types: those who go to the sheikh with the intention that the Almighty sends down the well-being and safety of their property or household; those who do this for the sake of praising being in the tarikat. «People in these two categories do not become true murids. The third type of murids includes those who come for the only purpose of knowing Allah. There are few of them. They derive all feasible benefits from the tariqkat and behave appropriately good» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2010].

Spiritual unity between murshid and murid is created by the concentration of murid consciousness on the image of murshid, communication with him and the dissolution of his personality (rabita) in him. Rabita in the tarikat means «maintaining contact with someone», «the desire to get help from him». One who has embarked on the path of knowing Allah is urgently required to perform a rabita in the murshid (sadikun), which has reached the appropriate level. The purpose of committing rabitas to ustaz and love them is to achieve knowledge of Allah and approach to Him. Love for the sheikhs means following them, because they direct their murids on the path to knowing Allah.

You can be close to truthful people in both spiritual and physical senses. Being in the spiritual sense next to the murshid is rabita. Rabita has a greater power of influence than the remembrance (zikr) of Allah, «if in it (rabita), all requirements are met, for the light (nur) of the «knowing Allah «(arif) appears on his face» [Muhammad ad-Dagestani, 2006].

Said-afandi agrees that having a spiritual connection and taking an example from those who are no longer alive is a difficult problem. Referring to the ayah of the Quran, where the Almighty says: «Oh you who believe, fear Allah and look for means and ways of approaching Him» (Meal: 35), Said-afandi says: «to approach Allah it is necessary to have a mediator (vasyt)» and «that such mediators are scholars and tarikat sheikhs» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2010].

The means approaching Allah are good deeds and worship. «They include love of the prophets, Avliya, the desire for mercy, visiting those who are loved by the Highest Allah – the prophets, Avliya, Sheikhs, scholars of Islam, regardless of whether they are alive or not. Moreover, «all this should be done without abstraction from Allah and with his pure remembrance (Khusur)». And «approaching Allah» does not mean in the physical sense, but an increase in knowledge of Allah. One who claims to be close to Allah in the physical sense «becomes unfaithful (kafir)». And «if a person's serving is full of purity and sincerity (ikhlas), awareness of the meaning of the names of Allah, his attributes, mercy and anger, then such a person is called approaching Allah» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2011]. Ustaz is the one who leads to such a serving.

Said-afandi recognizes the special role of the Sheikh as a mediator between a man and Allah. He believes that ustaz in the tarikat is obligatory and leads the Prophet's hadith: «He who greeted the hand with Alim greeted

the hand with me, and who maintains contact with Alim keeps in touch with me». To deny the sheikhs is to contradict the Quran and the Sunnah. And «whoever has no ustaz, that one has ustaz shaitan» said Said Atsaev [Shevchenko, 2001].

The sheikh is spiritually stronger than the shaitan, he does not allow his student to deviate from the right path and directs him to the path of comprehension of the truth. The majority, after all, does not follow the tarikat, because «the shaitan constantly misleads the person». If there is no teacher who knows the basics of the tarikat and its tasks (wird), then this way is not tariqi, but Sharia. Said-afandi is convinced that «a large number of sheikhs is a blessing: in order to go along an unfamiliar road, you must have a conductor who knows the road well» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2010].

Ustaz only knows firsthand about the miracles (karmatas) that the holy sheikhs are supposedly capable of. And he himself should not use karamat, since it is recommended to those who possess such abilities not to show miracles in theological books. Sheikh level does not depend on karamat. And they are not a «guarantee that people will come to the tarikat. This is the will of Allah. The Prophet Muhammad showed many miracles, but even this did not for many people prove the truth of Islam. We do not practice karamata or kashf (revealing the hidden)» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2011].

Said-afandi notes that there are three types of sheikhs in Dagestan: the first type is those who have achieved the level of knowledge of Allah thanks to the knowledge gained and the training of others, as well as good disposition, clean food, detachment from the world and due to their inherent positive qualities; the second type is those who do not have knowledge, but have reached the level of knowledge of Allah without a murshid. Such aulia are very few. Vali, whom Allah himself directed, is called majjub (staying in a state of ecstatic illumination); the third type of sheikhs – those who have no knowledge and no understanding of the tarikat, they are called false sheikhs (mutashihs). These are people who did not receive ijaz and teach people zikr without permission [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2010].

The transfer of Ijazah, according to Said-afandi, is as follows. By the will of the Almighty, «the teacher who appoints a successor, himself chooses the worthiest of all murid». In making a decision, a large role is played by a chain of people that comes from the Prophet: «The Sheikh who directly transmits this does not decide, others do it for him» [Shevchenko, 2001].

One of the means on the way to the ascent to the Almighty is the zikr, which is the pillar of the Sufi brotherhoods. Only a person who has permission to do zikr has the right to transfer it. Zikr covers all worship (ibad) of Allah: prayer, recitation of the Quran, praise of Allah. According to Said-afandi, the reading of the zikr «la ilyah illa allah» is a sign of the faithful person. Zikr is of two types: the learner (talim) and the suggested (talkin). Talim is a type of zikr that knowledgeable people teach unknowledgeable ones. Talkin – remembrance of the Almighty through transmission from heart to heart. This type of zikr, according to Sheikh Said-afandi, came to us from the Prophet Muhammad, who taught it to his associates (ashabs).

The Hadith says (Said-afandi almost never refers to the collections of Hadith) about two ways to perform zikr – collectively and individually. The method of performing zikr, in which the tongue and mouth are not involved, but only the heart and transmitted by the Prophet Abu Bakr, was called Naqshbandi. The zikr pronounced by the Prophet Ali is called Shazili. These two types of zikr are the basis of all tarikats. They were received by the angel Jabraail from Allah and inculcated (talkin) to the Prophet, who, in turn, inspired it to others [Alikberov, 2017]. «In the Nakshbandi tarikat, when making a zikr, all movements are strictly prohibited, except for the movement of the finger, which goes through the beads on rosary. In other tarikats, it is better for a murid to do as his spiritual mentor (ustaz) tells him... For the Shurili and Naqshbandi tarkat murid, it is forbidden to perform zikr with whirling and dancing. True sheikhs condemn this. The founder of the Kadiri tarikat Abdul-Kadir Gilani did not spin and did not dance, and «Kunta-haji did it only when he was enveloped in a state of immense love for Allah, in which he could not control himself» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2010].

An important place in the «Treasury of Blessed Knowledge» Said-afandi assigns the essence and ideology of Wahhabism (Salafism). For the sheikh, it is obvious that «since the onset of Wahhabism, diseases have increased and the need for medicines has increased». The author admits: «this collection of mine is also written as a medicine for those who are infected with the disease with a diagnosis of Wahhabism». And then the question is asked: «How can these people be called believers when they have departed from Islam and become unbelievers? How can we perform namaz after them?» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2011].

Said-afandi speaks of Wahhabism as follows in his «Motivation to Heed the Call of the Quran»: «For ten years after the collapse of the Soviet state, Wahhabis were given complete freedom, no one interfered with their activities. The Wahhabis, armed with machine guns, grenades, and columns, openly drove along the tracks, not a single traffic policeman spoke a word to them, they were not stopped at the posts» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2008].

What are the differences between Salafists and representatives of traditional Islam? Salafists (from the Arab – «ancestors, predecessors») believe that it is necessary to focus on the example of Muhammad, his associates and righteous ancestors. They reject innovations in Islam based on cultural and ethnic characteristics. One of the main ideologists of North Caucasian Salafism (Wahhabism) Bagautdin Kebedov in his book «The Face of Sufism» makes one hundred twenty-five differences «between the followers of Sufism and Ahlu-s-Sunna wa-l-Jama'a», such as: «mediation between Allah and a slave in handling prayer (du'a) and worship, knowledge of the innermost ('ilmu-l-gaib), turning to sheikhs with prayers (du'a), and asking for their help, knowledge of the affairs of murids, turning graves into places of worship, healing of the sick, holiness of the sheikhs' graves, jihad», etc. [Magomedov, 2001]. Bagautdin Kebedov states: «In Islam there are no words Wahhabism, Wahhabis. We are followers of the sunnah. Our motto is to follow the Quran and Hadith and not do what is contrary to them». The main and only way to resolve differences in Islam, according to the Salafis, is to «return» to the Quran and the Sunnah of Muhammad and the four righteous caliphs. In his video lectures, Kebedov tirelessly repeats: «We began to cleanse Islam from flaws, mistakes, errors and inconsistencies with Sharia. There are a lot of them and most of all in the tarikat», that is, among the Sufis». For example, the Salafis do not recognize the mentor (sheikh, ustaz) as an intermediary between God and a man and reject the Sufi tradition of worshiping «holy places» (ziyarat), as contrary to the fundamental foundations of Islam. In one of the video lectures posted on the Internet, the leader of the Salafis says: «I consider all tarikat followers to be pagans, all Sufis are pagans».

Bagautdin Kebedov reproaches the Dagestani Sufis for «turning people away from jihad and fighting enemies, downplaying its importance, and saying that it is not obligatory (wajib), and do not participate in it (except for a few of them)» [Magomedov, 2001]. On the issue of jihad, Said-afandi has a different opinion: «It is not worth following the call of the ghazavat and the overthrow of the political system and call for military action. Now is not the time for the ghazavat. If such a time comes, it will make itself felt». Wahhabism also existed in the days of the Soviet Union, it behaved quietly, «but when the Soviet Union collapsed and the people got the opportunity to do anything they want, the Wahhabis began to move». But in general, Wahhabism was not characteristic of Dagestan: it came from abroad [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2010].

If in the Salafi's view the tarikat is an innovation, then Said-afandi does not consider the tarikat as such, arguing that Allah «could not pass on knowledge and scriptures to his messengers». And on the other hand, «even if the tarikat was an innovation, how can it be condemned if it teaches the improvement of a person's lifestyle to a level close to the morals and lifestyle of the Prophet himself» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2010].

Said-afandi recommends that every Muslim read the book «Memoirs of an English Spy in an Islamic Country». And then no one «will have even a fraction of doubt that Ibn Abdul-Wahhab is a man bought by England, and that the spy's story is genuine, and there is not the slightest lie in it». According to Said-afandi, «the goal that the spy set for himself was to convince Ibn Abdul-Wahhab that a person cannot pray, not fast, just believe in Allah, on the day of judgment, have a good disposition, a pure heart, and then he will be the best among people». Said-afandi concludes that the Wahhabis are «people who help the enemies of Islam» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2008]. The Wahhabis «liken the sheikhs to idols», accuse the tarikat followers of disbelief and paganism». In fact, Said-afandi concludes, «only Allah knows which path is the most faithful. When we stand before Him, maybe we will find out this» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2010].

For Said-afandi, the main thing in ideology between Sufis and Salafists is the following: «we say that Sharia cannot be obtained without a tarikat, they say that a tarikat is not needed» [M. Shevchenko, 2001].

In the problem of mutual relations between the state and religion Said-afandi believed that religion should be the foundation of the state, and it was precisely «because of the absence of such a foundation when the Soviet Union collapsed». Bad rulers are the result of the people moving away from the true path, and returning to Sharia is a condition for God to rid the Muslims of worthless leaders.

In the Holy Quran, as Said-afandi emphasizes, two parties are mentioned: the first adheres to the path of Allah, and the second adheres to the path of shaitan. To assert that the Communist Party is the path of Allah means falling into kufr. A true Muslim must choose a party that adheres to the path of Allah. «If we affirm that the Islamic party leads along the path of Allah, then why cannot it be created?» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2008]. Thus, the Islamic party for Said-afandi is a community of people who adhere to Sharia norms.

Said-afandi expressed his attitude to the state and authorities in an interview: «I do not support the current government. I do not care who is in power. My business is to lead on the path of truth, but the rest does not interest me» [Atsaev, 2016]. Nevertheless, he considered it important to introduce Sharia norms into the constitution of Dagestan. «We have no problems with the state. Mosques are being built. Hajj is being performed. What problems? There used to be reasons to hate power, but now there are no problems with power. Officials come to me only before the elections, and ordinary people always come to me» [Atsaev, 2016]. And in the «Treasury of Blessed Knowledge», the sheikh speaks of the apoliticality of Sufi sheikhs and their main goal: «tarikat sheikhs

do not seek power, government of the state. Sheikhs do not tend to lead and be a ruler» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2008]. Therefore, Islam does not pose any threat to the state.

In another case, Said-afandi defends the principles of a secular state, in which the Spiritual Administration should not interfere in the political and economic issues of the state, and state structures – in issues that are the responsibility of the Spiritual Administration only. Since «a true Muslim has no time to engage in politics», the jurisdiction of the Spiritual Administration should include issues of the Hajj, Umrah, and religious education of young Dagestanis. But at the same time, the state and the Spiritual Administration must interact with each other and work together. The sheikh compares the relationship between the state and religion with the cart (arba) and the synchronous operation of its wheels. The spiritual administration of Muslims of Dagestan and the state are like two wheels of a cart. And for the cart to roll forward, both wheels must spin at the same time. And then «there is hope that peace, unity and brotherhood will continue to reign in Dagestan» [Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, 2010]. At the same time, according to the sheikh, «the biggest obstacle to the unity of the Muslims of Dagestan is ignorance and misunderstanding of the Islamic religion» [M. Shevchenko, 2001].

It should be noted that Said-afandi spoke positively about the law «On the prohibition of Wahhabi and other extremist activities in the Republic of Dagestan» adopted in Dagestan on September 22, 1999 [M. Shevchenko, 2001]. The result of opportunistic considerations of this law was the intensification of confrontation in the republic. The law appealed to the muftiate, but was harshly criticized by human rights activists. Under pressure from the public and because of the contradictions contained in the Constitution of Russia, the law was subsequently repealed.

Conclusion

The following points should be noted as conclusions.

Said-afandi al-Chirkavi was the largest figure in modern Russian Sufism and the most influential among the sheikhs of Dagestan, who had the right to transfer the tarikats of Naqshbandi and Shazili to their followers. According to various estimates, Said-afandi murids were from several to hundreds of thousands of people living in many regions of Dagestan, Russia and abroad. He has authored several books, the most famous of which is *The Treasury of Blessed Knowledge*.

In his works, Said-afandi equates tarikat and Sufism. Despite the fact that there are many ways of tarikat, everyone has one goal – the knowledge of Allah. According to Said-afandi, the Naqshbandi tarikat as the path leading a person to the knowledge of Allah is the easiest and purest of innovations. Nevertheless, everyone is free to choose one or another tarikat for himself. The tarikat is a special way that one who strives for the knowledge of Allah follows, it is the performance of good deeds and the constant work that is being done in order to bring the good qualities listed above together in a person. Without a tarikat, Said-afandi believes, Islam cannot be full, religion cannot be right.

Said-afandi of Chirkey compares the tarikat with the ghazavat, a holy struggle. The tarikat is the struggle against the nafs, which he calls the great ghazavat. Ghazavat – the «internal» jihad of a person against his base passions – cannot have an end, because after every Muslim reaches adulthood, he is obliged to fight the nafs until the end of his days. On the contrary, ghazavat as a warfare that has not yet arrived is always limited by time.

The tarikat, according to Said-afandi, originates from Allah (grace from Allah, respectively, gracious knowledge is knowledge coming from Allah), goes to the Prophet through the angel Jabrail, and from the Prophet to companions (in the Naqshbandi tarikat to Abu Bakr, and in Shazili – to Ali) and so on. Tarikats and wirts differ from each other in teaching Sufi practices: zikr, rabita and hutm. According to Said-afandi, the Naqshbandi tarikat as the path leading a person to the knowledge of Allah is the easiest and purest.

There are certain conditions for joining the tarikat: repentance (tauba), establishing a spiritual connection between the murshid and murid to transfer knowledge from heart to heart (tawajjuh), training and receiving a special task (wird). Said-afandi al-Chirkavi adhered to a four-stage level of tarikat: Sharia, tarikat, maarifat, hakikat. On the way to ascend to the Almighty, one of the means is the zikr, which is the pillar of the Sufi brotherhoods. The ultimate goal of the tarikat is to comprehend the Truth, that is, God. An important place in the «Treasury of Blessed Knowledge» Said-afandi assigns to Wahhabism (Salafism). He believes that the Wahhabis, who regard the tarikat as an innovation and advocate an armed struggle against infidels, have departed from Sharia and Islam, have become unbelievers. Said-afandi does not consider the tarikat to be an innovation, arguing that Allah «could not pass on knowledge and scriptures to his messengers».

Said-afandi defended the principles of a secular state, in which the Spiritual Administration should not interfere in the political and economic issues of the state, and state structures – in matters under the jurisdiction of only the Spiritual Administration. But at the same time, the state and the Spiritual Administration must interact with each other and work together. At the same time, he spoke of the need to introduce sharia provisions in the Constitution of Dagestan. Without claiming a final interpretation of the ideas of Said-afandi al-Chirkavi, we

set forth the main provisions of part of his theological works. Subsequent studies of the theological heritage of Said-afandi al-Chirkavi may be devoted to the study of his concept of the Shazili tarikat, the distinctive features of Naqshbandi and Shazili tarikats. The topic of interest is also the disciples and followers of Said-afandi, what is the role of the sheikh murids in the distribution of the tarikats of Naqshbandi and Shazili outside the republic and Russia. The issue of the followers and murids of Said-afandi al-Chirkavi is also important in terms of gender: how many women were his followers, what tarkat did they prefer and why? Further analysis also requires the study of the spiritual heritage of the Sheikh in Islamic educational institutions, as well as the hagiography of Said-afandi – a description of his path to comprehension of the Truth.

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Seifulla Rashydov

Sheikh of the Naqshbandi and Shazili tarikats Said-afandi al-Chirkavi

Said-afandi al-Chirkavi was the largest figure in Russian Sufism and the most famous and influential person among the sheikhs of Dagestan. Said-afandi al-Chirkavi adhered to a four-stage level of tarikat: Sharia, tarikat, maarifat, hakikat. Said-afandi believes that there are no fundamental differences between Sharia and tarikats, on the contrary, there is a close relationship between them – serving the Almighty. In order for the prayer to be made true, Sharia and Tarikat must merge in it. Said-afandi claims: without Sharia, there is no tarikat, even if sharia is possible without tarikat. The Sufi path for a Muslim, according to the Sheikh, is a must. And before embarking on the path of the tarikat, it is necessary to study Sharia, because, without having fundamental knowledge of Islam, it is impossible to accept the tarikat. Said-afandi believes that on this path, a man must necessarily need a mentor – a murshid who knows all the intricacies of the Sufi path.

Сайфулла Рашидов

Шейх Накибанді та Шазілі тарикат Саїд-Афанді аль-Чиркаві

Саїд-Афанді аль-Чиркаві був найбільшою фігурою в російському суфізмі, впливовою людиною серед шейхів Дагестану. Саїд-Афанді аль-Чиркаві дотримувався чотиріступінчастого рівня розуміння таріката: шаріат, тарікат, мааріфат, хакикат. Саїд-Афанді вважає, що між шаріатом і тарікат немає принципових відмінностей, навпаки, між ними існує тісний зв'язок – служіння Всевишньому. Щоб молитва була виконана, шаріат і тарікат повинні злитися в ній. Саїд-Афанді стверджує: без шаріату немає таріката, навіть якщо шаріат можливий без таріката. За словами шейха, суфійської шлях для мусульманина є обов'язковим. І перш ніж встати на шлях таріката, необхідно вивчити шаріат, тому що, не маючи фундаментальних знань про іслам, неможливо прийняти таріфат. Саїд-Афанді вважає, що на цьому шляху людині обов'язково потрібен наставник – Муриід, тобто той, який знає всі тонкощі суфійського шляху.

Rashydov Seifulla, Dr. Prof., Ismail State Pedagogical University, Ukraine
e-mail: seifulla.rashydov@gmail.com