

A Discourse on the Sufi Concept of Sainthood (*Al-Wilāyah*) with Reference to *Ḥadīth* Thirty-Eight (38) of An-Nawawī's Forty *Ḥadīth* Collection

Yusuph, Dauda Gambari, Ph.D

Abstract

Wilāyah is one of the major concepts in Sufism which has attracted a wide range of attention. The Sufis maintain parameters that are somewhat different from the propositions of other groups of Muslims, especially the *Salafiyyah*. The paper, therefore, examines the theory of *Wilāyah* as viewed by the Sufis vis-à-vis *ḥadīth* thirty-eight (38) of An-Nawawī's forty *Ḥadīth*. It discusses various issues that are not only central to dissecting the conception of sainthood in Islam but also critical to map-reading the minds of the Sufis on the subject matter. Adopting the exegetical method of research, it is discovered that both obligatory and non-obligatory acts are indispensable in the attainment of *wilāyah* and that no height of spirituality can exonerate one from *ʿibādah*. The paper also discovers that a saint can achieve a higher level of proximity to Allah than some prophets and it is established that abiding love engenders spiritual transformation as the main way for the manifestation of sainthood.

Keywords: *Wilāyah*, *Salafiyyah*, Transformation, Love, Spirituality, Manifestation

Introduction

In the first article written by the writer on forty *ḥadīth* of Imam An-Nawawī, entitled: *Sufism as Conceptualized in Forty Ḥadīth of An-Nawawī*, which was published in *Voyages: Journal of Religious Studies*, Gombe State University, Gombe, Nigeria, a wide range of discussions covering the biography of An-Nawawī himself and preamble to his forty *ḥadīth*, were made. Efforts were made to discuss the two major traditions of the Prophet (SAW) focusing on the origin and legitimacy of Sufism. Also discussed therein was the concept of *Zuhd* (asceticism) is a major practice in the early days of Islam which later metamorphosed to Sufism today. The two traditions that piloted the discussions were a *ḥadīth* two and thirty-one. While *ḥadīth* sixth, eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth were discussed along with them as necessitated by our discussions.

The major aim of this paper is to examine only *ḥadīth* thirty-eight of the same collection which focuses majorly on the concept of *Wilāyah* (Sainthood). Sainthood is one of the major doctrines in Sufism which has attracted a wide range of substantial attention from scholars across various groups that make up the Muslim Community. For this discourse to be all-inclusive, various issues that are related to Sainthood as conceived by the Sufis and non-Sufis will be discussed. As stated in

part one of these articles, the importance of these discourses is to enable the readers to understand the perspective of Imam An-Nawawī on Sufism and his disposition to sainthood in Islam.

- ***Al-Wilāyah (Sainthood)***

According to Al-Qāshānī (n.d. 54), a saint is conceived as a friend of Allah who enjoys a high level of proximity to Him through rigorous acts of 'Ibādah and love. *Wilāyah* is often translated as friendship, while 'adwah which means enmity is its opposite. Friendship stems from love and closeness while enmity stems from hatred (Al-Juwayr, n.d., 412). Ibn Hajar submits that *Al-Wilāyah* is to know Allah, be obedient to Him and worship Him sincerely (Al-Juwayr). *Al-Wilāyah* therefore is a status that brings to whoever it is bestowed, a unique capability and the ability to share the divine blessing with fellow men (Renard, 2009, 255). All of these definitions from different scholars engender similarity. This is because they make proximity between a saint and Allah a central point.

Similarly, *Al-Wilāyah* is one of the major discourses of Sufism that have provoked a wide range of discussions across various schools of thought and sects in Islam. It should be stated that *Salafiyyūn* and the Sufis have different perspectives on sainthood. Each gives different explanations on what is conceived as sainthood and its attainment based on their theological orientations. Basically, considering prophethood (*nubuwwah*) as the yardstick, the *Salafiyyūn* hold that the status of a saint, in terms of proximity to Allah (SWT) is below that of a Prophet (Yusuph, 2013, 53), while the Sufis hold tenaciously to a contrary view. They (Sufis) contend that a saint in Islam may enjoy proximity to Allah (SWT) better than some Prophets with exception of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) (Yusuph, 2018, 125). This is based on their understanding of some authentic *Aḥādith* of the Prophet (SAW) to be discussed at the appropriate place in this paper. *Ḥadīth* 38 of Imam An-Nawawī's collection which is one of *Aḥādith Qudsi* focuses on sainthood, and it will be discussed according to the Sufis' understanding of the doctrine.

- ***Ḥadīth Thirty-Eight (38)***

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال : قال رسول الله ﷺ : إن الله تعالى قال : من عادى لي وليا فقد آذنته بالحرب وما تقرب إلى عبدي بشئ أحب إلي مما افترضته عليه ولا يزال عبدي يتقرب إلي بالنوافل حتى أحبه فإذا أحببته كنت سمعه الذي يسمع به وبصره الذي يبصر به ويده التي يبطش بها ورجله التي يمشي بها ولئن سألني لأعطينه ولئن استعاذني لأعيذنه رواه البخاري

On the authority of Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, who said that the Messenger of Allah, may the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him said: Allah said: 'Whosoever acts in enmity

towards my saint, I will indeed declare a total war against him. Nothing makes my servant comes close to Me than doing what I have made obligatory upon him to do. And My servant continues to draw nearer to Me with supererogatory acts (*nawāfil*) till I love him. When I love him, I shall be his hearing with which he shall hear, his sight with which he shall see, his hands with which he shall grab, and his feet with which he shall walk. And if he asks (something) of Me, I shall surely give it to him, and if he takes refuge in Me, I shall certainly grant him it (Jamal, 2002).

Explaining the above *Ḥadīth*, Ibn Rajab (2001) submits that it is reported only by *Imam* Al-Bukhārī to the exclusion of other major compilers of *Ḥadīth*. He then proceeds to provide various versions of the hadith and examines their narrators. The chain of this *Ḥadīth* was however not the concern of this paper, so there is no need for dwelling much on them. This is based on the general principle that *Aḥādīth* reported by *Imam* Bukhārī are authentic.

This *Ḥadīth* opens discussion with the establishment of divine protection which a saint enjoys against human machination. It proceeds to show the criteria for the attainment of sainthood which qualifies one for divine protection. *Qurbah* (nearness or proximity) or *uns* (familiarity or intimacy) is identified as playing a major role in this regard. The criteria set for the attainment of sainthood are steadfastness in the observance of *Farā'id* (obligatory acts) and the imposition of *Nāwāfil* (non-obligatory acts) on oneself. The attainment of *Qurbah* enables unconditional *Hubb* (love) which triggers spiritual transformation. With this, living an angelic life becomes an abiding principle for the saint and his actions will be divinely guarded and guided.

This *Ḥadīth* could be strengthened with another two authentic reports from the Prophet (SAW), narrated by Anas (No.7536) and Abu-Hurayrah (No.7405) in *Ṣaḥīḥ 'l-Bukhārī*. The three reports are the same in principle, because each of them makes nearness to Allah the central theme while the difference between them lies in the fact that the first one (38) makes *Nawāfil* the subject of rapid nearness while the third one makes remembrance of Allah (*Dhikr*) the parameter for getting closer to Allah. The three reports, therefore, provide the basis for the concept of *Qurbah* and *uns* in Sufism, hence they are held in high esteem by the Sufis.

The main theme of *Ḥadīth* (38) which forms the discourse of this paper centres on *Al-Wilāyah* which is attained through *Qurbah* and divine love (*Hubb*). When these happen, they activate spiritual transformation and engender the consciousness of Allah at all times. *Nāflah* which plays a central role in this regard is a broad concept in the Islamic framework. It entails the prescriptions of the Prophet (SAW), the pious predecessors and the pious people. There used to be interchanged between *Nāflah* and *Ta'awuf* among the scholars, but both basically connote additional acts of worship after the obligatory ones.

The Naqshanbadiyyah Order is particularly noted for making a slight difference between the *Farā'id* and *Nawāfil* vis-à-vis sainthood. They have what they referred to as *Wilāyatu 'l-Farā'id* and *Wilāyatu 'n-Nawāfil* (Schimmel, 1975, 42). This division is equivalent to what Ibn Rajab describes as *Qurbatu 'l-Farā'id* and *Qurbatu 'n-Nawāfil* (Ibn Rajab, 335). They explain that *Al-Wilāyah* in first instance is that of the Prophets (AS) because it is bestowed on them by Allah while the second which is attained via *Nawāfil* is regarded as ordinary sainthood whose status is below that of the Prophets (RA) (Renard, 137). However, as could be inferred from this *Ḥadīth*, each of these actions, i.e. obligatory and non-obligatory, will engender mutual love between the servant and Allah (SWT), thus, leading to *Wilāyah*.

Sufi Concept of Sainthood (*Wilāyah*)

In defining the concept of *Wilāyah*, Al-Qushayrī (Knysh, 269) explains that sainthood has two broad meanings, each of which is central to man's proximity to Allah. Arising from Qur'an 7:196, he submits that *Waliy* refers to someone whose affairs are managed by Allah (SWT) due to His choice of him as His friend. This may be occasioned either by the rigorous act of worship or through bestowal by Allah (SWT). In other words, therefore, Allah (SWT) does not leave him to his affairs for a single moment; He takes charge by Himself and controls the affairs of such a servant or a saint. The second refers to someone who is vigorously engaged in acts of worship and obedience to Allah (SWT) to the extent that his deeds are tailored to suit the wills of Allah (SWT) without an element of disobedience. Attainment of sainthood, according to Al-Qushayrī is essentially on account of sincerity in obedience to Allah (SWT), steadfastness in carrying out His commands and complete detachment from sins and their cronies. In a detailed sense, At-Tirmidhī explains that such an individual will guard and guide seven parts of his body from unlawfulness. These are the eye, the mouth, the stomach, the hands, the legs, the sexual organ and the tongue. A saint will engage each according to Allah's dictates (At-Tirmidhī, n.d., 118). The above submissions resonated with that of Al-^CUthaymin (n.d. 377) in his explanation of this *Ḥadīth*.

Evidently, the Sufis believe that every sincere believer is a saint of Allah (SWT) as long as such an individual observes the rules of *Sharī'ah* (Sayid, 1990, 129). The sainthood at this level is however categorized by the Sufis as the generic (*‘ām*). It can be attained by all and sundry. It is this class of sainthood that the Qur'an refers to in many places. For instance, in Q.8:34 and Q.10:63, the glorious Book links faith (*īmān*) to piety (*Taqwa*) and sainthood (*Wilāyah*). It presupposes that every pious individual is a saint of Allah (SWT). All it requires is piety without excessive or rigorous acts of worship (*‘ibādah*). Hence, Ibn Taymiyyah (1418 A.H, 164) writes that sainthood can be attained by any Muslim at various strata of society, hence there can be saints among the scholars, jihadists, farmers, businessmen and women, manufacturers and a host of others, as long as they abide by the basic principles of *Sharī'ah*.

The Sufi's conception of sainthood however goes beyond these propositions from Ibn Taymiyyah. The concept in the Sufi circle does not only tie *Wilāyah* to rigorous acts of *'Ibādah* alone but also makes its attainment specific (*khāṣ*) and exclusive to them. At-Tirmidhī is specifically noted to have written a compendium on Sainthood which serves as a masterpiece to the Sufis of different generations. He is quoted by Al-Gheyoushi (1971, 19) in his article to have classified *Wilāyah* into two main categories. These are *Waliyullahi 'l-Ām* (general or common saint) and *Waliyullahi 'l-khāṣ* (specific saint). He explains that the former is also known as *Wilāyatu 'l-Tawhīd* which is exhibited by all believers due to their faith in Allah (SWT) and obedience to all His laws. The latter (*khāṣ*), however, is built on the former. In other words, after the attainment of *Al-Wilāyatu 'l-Tawhīd*, such an individual progresses to the status of *khāṣ* by further imposing certain spiritual acts (*nawāfil*) on himself and restraining from unnecessary lawful acts (Al-Gheyousi, 18).

It should be pointed out that this classification is common to many scholars who have discussed the concept of sainthood in Islam, including Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah and Ibn Al-ʿUthaymin among others. Also, the yardstick for that classification according to At-Tirmidhī tallies with the discussion of many scholars on the *Ḥadīth* under discussion. This is because it prescribes some self-imposed basic spiritual engagements after the steadfastness in the observance of the ones that are superimposed on one as a Muslim, hence the relevance of *Nawāfil*. It could therefore be understood that both are interwoven and interconnected. *Khāṣ* comes out of *Ām* and without the attainment of the latter, one cannot attain the former.

The Sufis, therefore, hold that saints, at the level of specific, are sinless and infallible (*Maʿṣūm*) since their actions are guarded and guided by divine Order (Knysh, 269). Also, the attainment of specific *Wilāyah* indicates the total suppression of desires which are largely responsible for the commission of sinful acts which constitute a serious barrier to the attainment of sainthood. This goes with the definition of sainthood as given by Al-Qushayrī and others above where he posited that a saint is under the protection of Allah. Sufis conclude that, though saints are sometimes troubled by the self-desires of their carnal soul, its total suppression marks the perfection of sainthood (Yusuph, 58). This takes us back to the *Ḥadīth* under discussion and explains the transformation that will take place at the height of spirituality and attainment of specific sainthood, hence, a saint at this level will do nothing except with divine guardianship and guidance. The eyes, the hands, and the legs are all guarded by Allah as could be understood from the latter part of the *Ḥadīth*, hence a saint lives an angelic life.

Saints, Worship and Observance of *Sharīʿah* Rules

The question of whether or not a saint can forsake the rules of *Sharīʿah* is relevant to the discourse on *Ḥadīth* 38 which is the basis of this discussion. This is because it has been one of the arguments among scholars that a saint can flout *Sharīʿah* at the

height of spirituality. Many *Sufi* writers have observed that many saints have forsaken the rules of *Sharī'ah* (Knysh, 230, 293). In the view of Ibn Taymiyyah (1985, 83), no level of spiritual attainment should make one forsake the divine commands. He opines that such an individual is nothing but an ally of Shaytan. He explains further that someone under the protection of Allah will not be led against His rules and wishes, but acts according to them. The saints of Shaytan according to him (Ibn Taymiyyah) exhibit characteristics like resistance to compliance with the principles of *Sharī'ah* like *Nifāq* (hypocrites), *Hasad* (envy) consumption of filth and *Harām* and a host of others. He states that no matter how highly placed one is spiritual, if one acts contrary to *Sharī'ah*, one becomes a friend of *Shaytān* (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1985, 83).

The Sufis, as could be drawn from the submission of Nicholson (1974, 127), hold different views on flouting the *Sharī'ah* rules by a saint. He observes that Sufis do not hold a common view on downplaying the divine Order under the pretence of attaining of the high level of spirituality. Often, those with the view, as posited by Nicholson used to buttress their position with the story of Prophet Musa and Khidir (AS), as contained in the glorious Qur'an where the latter carried out some acts, like killing among others, that appear somewhat contradictory to *Sharī'ah* rules but was later explained. Consequently, Musa (AS) discovered the limits of his intellectual capacities. In fact, the story was so alarming that the Prophet (SAW) exclaims that Musa (AS) should have exercised some patience for Khidir (RA) to reveal more esoteric knowledge (Al-Bukhārī, No. 122). The proponent, therefore, held that Khidir has jettisoned *Sharī'ah* for reasons that are not ordinarily obvious and was neither blamed nor condemned for it.

The Sufis opined that compliance with the dictates of *Sharī'ah* in all circumstances appears to be more correct due to the evidence as drawn from the Prophet (SAW). The Glorious Book in *Sūratu 'l-Fath* (48:2) exonerates the Prophet (SAW) from all forms of complexities relating to sin when Allah (SWT) declared all-inclusive forgiveness for the Prophet (SAW). Ibn 'Abbās (RA), among other commentators on that verse, in his *Tafsīr* explains that the forgiveness that was granted to the Prophet (SAW) according to this verse covers the sins committed by him before and after his Prophethood till death (Al-Fayruzabadi, n.d., 431). With the provision of this verse, the Prophet (SAW) would have chosen to forsake the commands of Allah (SWT), since he has been given a divine assurance that nothing would be recorded against him in his entire lifetime. But what was reported about the Prophet (SAW) was that he observed the rules of *Sharī'ah* throughout his life. In fact, Imām Al-Bukhārī (No. 4837) reports that 'Āisha (RA) approached him (Prophet, SAW) while engaging himself in the rigorous act of *'Ibādah*, cautioning him against over laboring himself, after all, he had the divine assurances which exonerated him from sin. He responded that he needed to be thankful to Allah. It, therefore, follows that no matter the height of spiritual attainment, *Sharī'ah* rules must not be forsaken.

The narration from the Prophet (SAW) about 'Āisha (RA) mentioned above, can even negate that of Musa and Khidr story which was used as the yardstick by some Sufis who held that a Saint could flout the *Sharī'ah* rules. This is because the era of Khidr predated the time of the Prophet (SAW) which means that the latter law has abrogated the former one. Also, ordinarily and contextually, the majority of Sufis, like Al-Qushayrī and Al-Ghazālī (n.d., vol.1, 51) discussed the story as more containing etiquettes of question-asking and what should be rules of engagement between the master (*Shaykh*) and the student (*Murid*), rather than taking it as an evidence to forsake *Sharī'ah* as exemplified by some Sufis. Lastly, as it could be inferred from the *Ḥadīth*, the ideal is to remain grateful to Allah by observing His rules throughout one's life no matter the level of spiritual attainment.

Furthermore, relevant to this discussion is the case of Rābi'atu Al-Adawīyyah (RA) whose expression of love has made her jettison *Sharī'ah* provision on marriage. She and some other Sufis, in principle, never doubted the veracity of marriage in Islam, but they viewed it, in a practical sense, as constituting a potential clog in the wheel of their spiritual advancement and progress. This has been condemned by many *Salafiyyah* scholars as counterproductive and a violation of many reports of the Prophet (SAW) that enjoin marriage, especially those of the three men as reported by Al-Bukhārī (No. 5063) on whom the Prophet (SAW) gave the verdict that whoever downplays marriage is not of him.

The Sufis are largely silent on the attitude of Rābi'ah to marriage. Yusuph (2018) explains that few Sufis think that Rābi'ah's case should not be seen as a violation of *Sharī'ah* or forsaking it. They subjected marriage to *Al-Ḥukm 't-Taklifi* (likeable), *Makruh* (detestable) and *Haram* (forbidden) applicable to it (Yusuph, 125). The implication of these is explained by various scholars is that marriage is *Mubah* and can only be *Wājib* for one who fears committing *Zina* and has the means to support family among other conditions. Also, there is no proof to establish that refusal to marry constitutes an act of *Kufr* which condemns one to hellfire directly. They equally submit that the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet (SAW) in which he disowned whoever refuses to marry should be understood as both *Targhīb* (encouragement) and *Tarhīb* (warning).

In addition, reference was made to the cases of many prominent scholars of Islam, including *Imam* An-Nawawī who did not marry under different pretences, like preoccupation with *Jihad* and writings among others. These excuses may however not be tenable in *Sharī'ah*. Others are Ibn Taymiyyah, Az-Zamakhsharī, Sayyid Quṭb, At-Tabarī among others. In fact, Abu-Ghudah identified about twenty prominent Islamic scholars and personalities who have never married throughout their lives (Abu-Ghudah, n.d., 5). They, therefore submitted that, regardless of their excuses, what applied to Rābi'ah should also apply to them.

***Khātim Al-Awliyā'* (Seal of Saints)**

This is a major concept among the Sufis in their discussions on sainthood which has generated polemics among scholars. *Sufi* theory of sainthood holds that there will be a seal of saints who will be superior to all the saints both before and after him (Yusuph, 59). The theory was first propounded by Al-Ḥākim 't-Tirmidhī (d.869CE) but was later built upon by Ibn Arabī (d.1240CE). It is fashioned after the concept of *Khatim 'l-Anbiya* (seal of the Prophets) as epitomized by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) who is described as such in the Glorious Qur'an (Q33:40). The concept depicts Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as the most superior to all Prophets (AS) before him, the seal to prophethood and that no one can attain that status after him (Yusuph). It therefore presupposes, in the views of the Sufis that there will be a saint who will be superior to other saints and there cannot be a superior one to him. The point of controversy between the *Sufi* and non-*Sufi* scholars lies in the superiority between the seal of Saints and Prophets (AS), apart from Prophet Muhammad (SAW) who was the seal of the Prophets (AS) before his demise.

Explaining this proposition, At-Tirmidhī brought many traditions of the Prophet (SAW) out of which the two most authentic according to the verifications of Al-Bānī are those of Abu Dawud (No.3527) and Al-Bukhārī (No. 3256). The two narrations revealed that some individuals will enjoy a higher level of proximity to Allah on the Day of Resurrection than anyone else, except Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The Prophet (SAW) revealed the identity of those people as mere servants of Allah (SWT) who are not Prophets (AS) from every indication, but chosen individuals with faith and exceptional righteousness. The two can be linked back to the verse of the glorious Qur'an cited earlier which makes faith and piety the criteria for sainthood.

Scholars, especially outside the parlance of Sufis, like Ibn Taymiyyah, have argued that saints can never be superior to the Prophets (AS). He itemized the level of proximity to Allah (SWT) and superiority as explained by Yusuph (53-54). This (hierarchy) serves as the criteria adopted by many *Salafiyyah* scholars after him to premise their arguments against the Sufis who propounded the theory of superiority or supported it, especially among the Sufis of later generations. The proponent of Sufism, as represented by At-Tirmidhī, however, did not argue the question of superiority with emphasis but with a tone that seems to downplay attempts to make any direct comparison between the saints and the Prophets (AS). To buttress this, when At-Tirmidhī was asked a direct question that borders on superiority between the Prophets (AS) and the saints, he replied in the negative stating that it berates anyone to subscribe to the proposition that saints are superior to Prophets (AS), but affirmed that some saints may be closer to Allah (SWT) than any other creature, including some Prophets (At-Tirmidhi, 394). This submission of At-Tirmidhi presupposes that Sufis demarcate between superiority (*Tafḍīl*) and proximity (*Qurbah*). It is therefore glaring that they are more particular about the latter than the former.

Further. At-Tirmidhī's submissions should be understood in line with Shirhindi's view on the same question of proximity which he differentiates between the saintly way (*Tarīq 'l-Wilāyat*) and prophetic way (*Tarīq 'n-Nubuwwa*). The former is characterized by *Fanā'* (annihilation) and *Baqā'* (continuance), while such are not available in the latter (Ansari, 1986, 63,211). He (Shirhindi) explains further that the prophetic way is easy, safe and sure, while that of the saint is difficult, dangerous and unsure. Allah (SWT) leads the Prophet (AS) to Himself while the *Sūfi* struggles to reach Him (Ansari). Also, as could be inferred from the last part of Qur'an 42:13, sainthood is attained through *Kasbu* (efforts), while the prophethood is through *Wahbah* (gift). Therefore, since their ways are different, stations must also be different but that does not mean that the seal of saints cannot enjoy higher proximity to Allah (SWT) than the Prophets (AS) except Prophet Muhammad (SAW) if the two reports (*Hadīth*) are something to go by.

Also, other instances can be drawn from the glorious Qur'an and *Hadīth* of the Prophet (SAW) which fall under the same discussion. The first instance was the encounter of Prophet Musa (AS) with Khidir (RA) who was qualified as a mere servant of Allah (SWT) in the glorious Qur'an (Q.18:65). It should as well be mentioned that scholars differ on the status of Khidir as to whether he was a Prophet or a saint. Some held that he was a prophet, saint or an angel (An-Nawawī, vol.15, 136). What is however not in disagreement is the status of Musa (AS) as both Prophet and Messenger of Allah (SWT). Also, Musa (AS) was among the Messengers of first-class status (*'Ulu 'l-^lAzm*, AS), while Khidir (RA) was not. But despite this, Prophet Musa (AS) was directed by Allah (SWT) to learn from Khidir. Given the circumstances that led to the adventure of Prophet Musa (AS) and considering the rules of engagement between the teacher and the student, the question of superiority is relevant. In other words, it suggests that Khidir (RA) is superior to Musa (AS), just as a master, in most cases, is superior to the student.

Also, addressing a similar instance of superiority between the companions of the Prophet (SAW) and the *Tābi'ūn* (successor, RA), it is reported by Imam Muslim that the Prophet (SAW) has directed the Companions that whoever among them meets Uways Al-Qarnī should approach him to seek Allah's forgiveness for him (Muslim, No.2542). Hence many of such narrations are considered as *Ṣaḥīḥ* (sound) by Al-Bānī in his *Silsilah* (1996, vol.3, 451). There are several other corroborating reports in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* by other reporters all linked to Umar (RA). Elsewhere, it is reported that Umar (RA) would always ask anyone from Yemen (Yemenite) whether or not he was Uways, or knew him. He (Umar) would state that the Prophet (SAW) directed him to seek intercession to Allah (SWT) through him for his (Umar) sins to be forgiven by Allah (SWT) (Muslim, No.2543). In fact, Uways has a separate sub-division like other Companions in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. The relevance of the case of the Prophet's directive to the Companions to seek intercession from a successor to the Companions, despite his declaration that no one can be better placed than his Companion, suggests superiority. Whereas in principle, the former

(Companions) are superior to the latter, this instance is an exemption to that rule. In other words, it implies superiority between them in an ordinary language.

Conclusion

Efforts have been made in this paper to examine *Hadīth* 38 of forty *Hadīth* of Imam An-Nawawī. The central theme of this *Hadīth* borders on the concept of *Wilāyah* (sainthood) in Islam in general and Sufism in particular. The discourse in this paper covers basic issues that are related to sainthood and Sufism. It is discovered that the concept of sainthood as understood in the *Sufi* circle is broader than its conception among the *Salafiyyah*. The status of sainthood is unique in Sufism and very few individuals can attain it. The yardsticks for its attainment as set out in this *Hadīth* are steadfastness in the observance of obligatory and non-obligatory acts. Love is the sign of attainment of sainthood which engendered spiritual transformation. There are tendencies that a seal of saints as propounded in Sufism can enjoy special proximity to Allah (SWT) than some Prophets (AS). This paper shows that there is no level of spiritual attainment by a saint that makes him abandon the *Sharī'ah* or any act of *ʿibādah* (worship).

References

- Al-Bānī, N. (1996), *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth 'ṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Al-Maktabat As-Shāmilah,
- Al-Fayruzabadi (n.d.), *Tanwir al-Miqbas fī Tafsīr Ibn Abbas*, Lebanon, Darul-Kutubul-Ilmiyyah
- Al-Geyoushi, M.B. (1971), "Al-Tirmidhi's theory of saints and sainthood" *The Islamic Quarterly*, vol.XV.NO 1
- A. Al-Ghazali, A. (n.d.), *Iḥyā' 'Ulūmī 'd-Dīn*, Al-Maktabat As-Shāmilah,
- Al-Qāshānī, K.A. (n.d.), *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfiyyah*, Beirut, Darul-Fikr
- Al-ʿUthaymīn, M.S., (n.d) *Sharḥ al-Arbaʿīn 'n-Nawawī*, Al-ʿUthaymīn, S. Muhammad, *Majmūʿ Fatāwā wa Rasāʾil*, Al-Maktabat As-Shāmilah
- An-Nawawī (1392 A.H), *Sharḥ 'n-Nawawī 'Alā Muslim*, Beirut, Darul-Ihyau 't-Turath 'l-Arabi
- Ansari, M.A.H. (1986), *Sufism and Shariah*, London, The Islamic Foundation
- At-Tirmidhī, A. (n.d.), *Kitāb Khatim al-Awliyā*, Beirut, Al-Kathulikiyyah
- Az-Zuhayli, W. (1995) *Al-Fiqh 'l-Islāmī Wa Adillatuhu*, Al-Maktabat As-Shāmilah
- Ibn Rajab (2001), *Jāmiʿ 'l-ʿUlūm wa 'l-Hikam*, Al-Maktabat As-Shāmilah
- Ibn Taymiyyah (n.d.), *Al-furqān-Bayna 'Al-Awliyā' Ar-Raḥmān Wa 'l-'Awliyā' Ash-Shayṭān*

- Ibn Taymiyyah (n.d.), *Al-Mustadrak 'Alā Majmū' 'l- Fatāwā*, Al-Maktabah Ash-Shāmilah, Al-Maktabah Ash-Shāmilah
- Jamal, A.B. (2002), *Commentary of Forty Hadith of An-Nawawī*, www.fortyhadith.com
- Kalabadhi, A. (n.d), *Al-Ta'aruf li Madhhabi Ahl 'l-Taṣawwuf*, Al-Maktabat As-Shāmilah
- Knysh, A.D.(2007),*Al-Qushauri's Epistle on Sufism*, UK, Garnet Publishing LTD
- M.A.A.Al-Juwayr, M.A.A. (n.d.), *Juhūdu 'Ulamā' 's-Salaf fi 'l-Qarni 's-Sādis 'l-Hijri fi Raddi Ala 's-Sufiyyah*, Riyadh, Maktabatu-Rushdi
- Nicholson, R.A. (1974), *The Mystics of Islam*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul
- Renard, J. (2009), *The A to Z of Sufism*, Toronto, The Scarecrow press inc
- Sayed, A.(1990), *Conspiracies Against the Quran*, Lahore, Khalid Publishers
- Schimmel,A.(1975), *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*,Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press
- Yusuph, D.G. (2013), *A Study of Sufism in the Thoughts of Ibn Taymiyyah*, An Unpublished M.A. Dissertation, Submitted to the Department of Religions, University of Ilorin
- Yusuph, D.G. (2017) "An Appraisal of Sufi Themes in Al-Ubudiyyah of Ibn Taymiyyah", *Al-Assalah International Journal*, Vol. 7, No 2
- Yusuph, D.G. (2018), *An Examination of the Selected Salafiyyah Scholars Discourse on Sufism*, An Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Ilorin