

Sufi terminology, connotations and directions (The Saintess and the karamah as example)

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Abstract:

Every art is characterized by a set of terms that its scholars have agreed upon and distinguishes it from others, and the science of Sufism, like all other sciences, has its own vocabulary that distinguishes it, as dictionaries have been devoted to it and books written about it.

Among the terms closely related to this science are the terms (Saint and karamah), as Sufis considered the second to be a sign of the first, so every Saint must contain a set of karamah; However, what we wanted to explain in this research is to point out some of the deviations into which the Sufis fell in their interpretation of these two terms, such as leniency in using the word Saint, as well as equating the karamah with a miracle, and the resulting effects on the Sufi heritage in general.

Keywords: Sufism, Saint, karamah, the sheikh, the miracle.

Introduction

Every science and art has its terms and vocabulary that distinguish it from others, and which existed and developed through the stages it went through. Whoever reads the books of a science without knowing its terminology or being familiar with its symbols and indications, he will interpret what he has read in a way that is different from what its scholars intended, and contradictory to what the writers want, and he will be lost and misguided.

The science of Sufism did not deviate from this rule, as Sufis have their own terminology that expresses their perceptions and existences. When language was unable to do that, and while jurists relied on the apparent meaning of the text, theologians relied on hypothetical argument, and philosophers relied on reason, logic, or deductive proof, the Sufis relied on taste, intuition, conscience, and the heart, which means that their language is a deep language that denies mediation, rejects sensuality, and goes beyond the scope of sense and reason, to reach what is metaphysical, emotional, and tasteful. Language is deficient in translating the Sufi experience, so they resort to symbolic terms that have special contexts. These terms are many and difficult to enumerate, derived from many fields, and books have been written about them, the most important of which are: Getting to know the doctrine of the people of Sufism by Abu Bakr Al-Kalabadhi; Sufi terminology by Abd Erazzak Al-kachani; A Dictionary of Sufi Words by Ahmad Al-Nakchbandi Al-Khalidi; The Sufi Dictionary, by Souad Al-Hakim; Dictionary of Sufi Words by Hassan Al-Charkawi; Sufi terminology between experience and interpretation by Mohamed Al-Mustapha Azzam..

In this research, I would like to address two terms that are closely related to each other, namely karamah and saintless. What does karamah mean? What are the doctrines of jurists regarding it? What does saintless mean and what are its conditions? Does karamah mean saintless? What are the limits of the relationship between the sheikh and the disciple? Is Sufism consistent in embodying the correct meaning of karamah and saintless? What impact did this have on Sufi thought and Islamic society in general?

The concept of Sufi thought:

By Sufi thought, we mean the huge heritage that Sufism has recorded throughout successive ages, regardless of whether it was original, produced by the Sufis themselves, or whether it was an imported thought that they borrowed from the civilizations of ancient nations¹.

The Saint (friend of God): In legal jurisprudential terminology, the Saint is one who knows Allah and His attributes, who is consistent in obedience, who avoids sins, and who turns away from preoccupation with pleasures and sins².

¹Mohamed Ahmad Louh, The Sanctification of Persons in Sufi Thought - Presentation and Analysis in the Light of the Qur'an and Sunnah, Ibn al-kayim house, Ibn Affan house, 1st edition, 1422 AH-2002 AD, p. 45.

It is stated in the Dictionary of Sufi Terms by Al-Kashani that the Saint is: one whose affairs Allah has taken care of, who has protected him from disobedience, and who does not indulge his soul's desire to be let down, until he reaches in perfection the level of great men³.

Through the definition, we can deduce some of the conditions for guardianship in the Sharia, which are faith and piety, which is what was told in the noble verse:

(Unquestionably, [for] the allies of Allāh there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve) -

Surah Yunus 62-63

It does not mean at all that they are infallible from mistakes, as they may commit insults and minor errors, but soon their consciences will be cleared and they will return to their consciences.

The infallibility of the saint: Sufis see the infallibility of the saints by analogy with the prophets. Al-Qushayri, for example, sees that the saint is someone who receives Allah's benevolence and bounty upon him, and who is protected in most of his circumstances from adversity (and the most severe adversity is the commission of sins), so Allah will always protect him from missteps.

Just as the Prophet can only be infallible, so the Saint can only be protected. The difference between the protected and the infallible is that the infallible is never guilty of a sin, while the protected may have faults and may rarely have slips, but he does not insist on them⁴.

He confirmed this in Al-Qushayriyyah's message when he said: "And know that the sake of the karamahs that Saints have is the continuity of success in obedience, and infallibility from sins and transgressions"⁵.

Sufis consider the karamah to be evidence of the saintless, and they consider saintless to be the belief of infallibility. Whenever karamah appeared at the hands of a sheikh, they considered that an indication of infallibility (although here they used infallibility instead of preservation), then they built on that the obligation to follow the sheikh, the obligation to consult him in everything, and the obligation to adhere to everything he said, as they take the fatwa and behavior from him in every matter, Despite the negative consequences that sometimes result from that⁶.

The Sufis went further than that when some of them said that the saints were superior to the prophets, and the first to say that was the wise man Al-Tirmidhi, which was the reason for his persecution and his contemporaries accusing him of heresy and claiming prophethood, as he used to say that the saints have a seal like the prophets⁷.

He defines the Saint by saying: "The Saint is the one upon whom Allah has bestowed knowledge, then fear, then love, then prestige and gentleness, then he is raised to the level of exclusivity, which is the level of great kinship. Then the Almighty placed him in His hands, purified him with His light, opened for him the path to his oneness, and informed him of the beginning of the matter from Allah Almighty said (the apparent and the hidden), and Allah used it, so He speaks of Allah and is reasoned by it, then He described it as the Saints, for it is the security of the people of the earth and the view of the people of heaven"⁸.

Al-Tirmidhi is the first to outline wider and more comprehensive doctrinal dimensions for saintless, which will justify the position that the book (The Seal of Saintless) will have due to the rooting of the idea in Ibn Arabi⁹.

Ibn Arabi says: "I know that the saintless is the general surroundings and it is the great circle. Among its rulings is that Allah takes charge of whomever He wishes of His servants with prophethood, and it is one of the rulings of the saintless and He may appoint him as a messenger, and it is also one of the rulings of the saintless. Every messenger must be a prophet, and every prophet He must be a Saint, every messenger must be a Saint"¹⁰.

²Saad Eddine Al-Taftazani, Explanation of the Nasfi Doctrines, Madinah Library for Printing and Publishing, Karachi (Pakistan), 02nd edition, 1433 AH-2012 AD, p. 317.

³Abd Erazzak Al-Kachani, Dictionary of Sufi Terms, edited, presented and commented by Dr. Abd Al-ghali Shaheen, 01st edition, 1413 AH - 1992 AD, p. 79.

⁴Tafsir Al-Qushayri, Lataif Al-Isharat, Commentary by Abdul-Latif Hassan Abdul-Rahman, Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyya house, 02nd edition, 1428 AH - 2007 AD, vol. 2, p. 22.

⁵Al-Qushayri, Al-Risala Al-Qushayri 299.

⁶Saeed Hawwa, Our Spiritual Education in Islam, p. 219.

⁷Ibid., p. 367.

⁸Ibid., pp. 405-406.

⁹Michel Chodkiewicz, The Saintless, translated by Ahmed Al-Tayeb, p. 47.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 405-406.

Using Aristotelian logic¹¹, every messenger becomes a saint. The message is specific to the saintless based on the prophecy that mediates between each of them, so the saintless is absorbed by prophecy and guardianship because it mediates them¹².

And he also says: Just as Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was an argument for the prophets, so this saint becomes an argument for the saints¹³.

They also said about the Qutbiya (The Pole)¹⁴, as it was stated on the tongue of Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili, "The Qutb has fifteen signs, so whoever claims them or something of it, let him emerge with the extensions of mercy, infallibility, caliphate, and representation, and the extensions of the bearers of the great throne, and the truth of the Self and the encompassing of attributes will be revealed to him, and he will be honored with judgment and separation between the two existences, and the separation of the first from the first; and what is separated from it until its end, and what is established in it, and the ruling of what comes before and the ruling of what comes after, and what is neither before nor after, and the knowledge of the beginning, which is the knowledge surrounding all knowledge and every known thing and what one seeks refuge in.

Then he explains these signs, the second of which concerns us, that he be extended the means of infallibility, which is divine preservation and divine infallibility, as it was inherited by the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, however, in the Prophets it is obligatory and in the Saints it is permissible, and it is called preservation, so one does not exceed a limit or break a covenant.

The third is caliphate, which is to be Allah's successor on earth, and trustworthy to His servants through the prophetic caliphate, as souls have pledged allegiance to Him and ghosts have been saved to Him"¹⁵.

From this it can be said that some Sufis exaggerated the concept of the Saint and attributed to him qualities superior to those of the Prophet. Is this meaning the same among the general public?

The Saint among the public: By extrapolating the meaning of the term in the general environment, we find that the majority of people are lenient in calling him the Saint, as it was anyone they saw in him as attractive, ascetic, an understanding of the Qur'an or Islamic jurisprudence, rich, dignified, of a social position, or a good child, or he claimed to be honorable; All of these people have a dome made for them after their death and are prayed for¹⁶.

Sheikh Mubarak Al-Mili referred to this when he said: "As for the saintless among people today, he is the one who stands up to announce the orders of tariqa, even if he is ignorant, or is famous for soothsaying, and they call him, according to their terminology, a Marabout even he openly abandons prayer, and a drinker of alcohol....."¹⁷

The path of saintless: Sufis believe that the path of saintless is blocked except by the sheikh who leads it, and the only way to achieve it is to serve the sheikh and meet his needs. Ibn Ajina confirms this, saying that Sheikh Al-Ghazali, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Wazzani, and other saints did not achieve the rank of saintless and perfect righteousness except by serving their sheikhs¹⁸.

Many of the Zawiya people took advantage of the colonial situation and made the Zawiya people their servants. Among the living testimonies is what was narrated by Muhammad Al-Saleh bin Ateeq about some of the angles he learned in his youth, where he said: "We became workers in the Sheikh's house without pay, and the students would get up early in the morning and go to the fields and cut the harmful weeds from the crops, and collect the dry ones to be fodder for the animals of the Sheikh.

As for learning and reading, it is during the short periods of time free from work, and they do not realize that this is a loss for the student, as the hanging painting is better than the used painting, and this is the doctrine of the Zawiya and their disciples; What they mean by this is that the reading board left hanging on the wall -

¹¹ Every messenger is a prophet, and every saint is a prophet. Therefore, every saint is a messenger.

¹² The concept of the saintless according to Ibn Arabi, Academy for Social and Human Studies, Department of Arts and Philosophy, issue June 12. 2014, p. 25.

¹³ The concept of the saintless according to Ibn Arabi, *ibid.*, p. 421.

¹⁴The the Qutb (Pole): which is the relief - considering the one who yearns for it - is the One who is the subject of God's gaze from the world at all times, and it is on the heart of Israfil, peace be upon him. Dr. Rafik Al-Ajam, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Sufism Terms*, p. 761.

¹⁵Ahmed Bin Ajina, *The Ascension of Attention to the Realities of Attention*, presented by Abdelmajid Khayali, Moroccan Cultural Heritage Center, (Casablanca), p. 83.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹⁷ Mubarak Al-Mili, *The Message of Polytheism and Its Manifestations*. p.180

¹⁸ Ahmed Bin Ajina, *Ibid.*, p. 55.

because its owner is busy working for the sheikh- is better than the student who reads from the board and does not work for the sheikh's benefit.

The Sheikh adds: I spent about a year in the corner, and Al-Sadr became fed up with its system and its function, which they call "the embassy," which is permanent work and constant forced labor. Students must be prepared at all times for the never-ending demands of the Sheikh's house.¹⁹

Karamah:

It is something extraordinary. What is not coupled with faith and good deeds is a lure, and what is coupled with the claim of prophethood is a miracle. It is something that appears contrary to what is usual at the hands of those who claim prophethood when challenging deniers, in a way that deniers are unable to do the like of²⁰.

In the literature of Sufi thought, they are called several names. They may be called karamahs, the lives of the Saints, virtues, splendors, miracles, miracles, miracles, blessings, and sometimes miracles....

The occurrence of karamah after death:

Karamah does not cease after death, in the view of many investigators, but rather continues after death, so it is permissible for it to occur to saints in life and after death, as the majority of Sunnis hold it, and none of the four schools of thought say that it is denied after death, but rather its appearance at that time is better because the soul is then pure. From despicable people, as it is said that whoever does not have karamah as it was in his life is not honest²¹.

Sheikh Mubarak Al-Mili affirmed the life of souls, as they are fixed, whether the souls of believers or unbelievers, and he added to that a large group of texts: (And do not say about those who are killed in the way of Allāh, "They are dead». Rather, they are alive, but you perceive [it] not). (Al-Baqarah 154)

But he said about it that it is an unseen life that is not similar to our worldly life, as there is no transaction between us and it through selling, renting, or marriage, and it does not involve any obligation to perform acts of worship, and the prayer of the prophets in their graves is a spiritual pleasure²².

Among the evidence that proves what was mentioned:

Rational evidence:

Karamah after time is permissible to occur, since if we did not say that it is permissible to occur, it would be necessary to give preference to one of the two sides of the possible without being likely, which is impossible. Also, if we say that it is not permissible for it to occur even though it is created by Allah and is empowered by Him, since it is the totality of possible things, and His Almighty power is related to all possible things as a whole²³.

Narrative evidence:

There is much evidence proving that karamah occurs after death, including:

A. From the Holy Book (the Qur'an):

Allah Almighty said in the story of Mary, peace be upon her: (So her Lord accepted her with good acceptance and caused her to grow in a good manner and put her in the care of Zechariah. Every time Zechariah entered upon her in the prayer chamber, he was found with her provision. He said, "O Mary, from where is this [coming] to you?" She said, "It is from Allāh. Indeed, Allāh provides for whom He wills without account") Aal Imran 37.

Al-Saadi said: Whenever Zechariah entered the shrine to her, he found with her sustenance: that is, without gain or effort, but rather sustenance that Allah brought to her. And Allah honored her with karamah, and Zechariah said to her, "How did you get this?" She said, "It is from Allah as a bounty and goodness." Allah provides for whomever He wills without reckoning, that is: without any consideration on the part of the

¹⁹ Fawzia Loussif, Al-Zawayat in Algeria between the legacy of colonial history and the necessity of reform and renewal, Journal of Prince Abdelkader University, Volume 28, Issue 01, pp. 408-409.

²⁰ Ibid. opct.

²¹ Al-Bijouri, Sharh Jawharat al-Tawhid, p. 252.

²² Mubarak Al-Mili, op. cit., p. 350.

²³ Nafhat of closeness and communication by proving the conduct of the Saint of God Almighty after the transition, by Sheikh al-Islam Shihab al-Din Ahmad al-Hamwi al-Hasani, presented, verified and commented by Dr. Muhammad Sultan Abd Errahim, published by Jawaami' al-Kalam house (Cairo), Egypt, p. 59.

servant or gain. Allah Almighty said: (And whoever fears Allah, He will make for him a way out and provide for him from where he does not expect).

This verse contains evidence of the extraordinary karamahs of the Saints, as there have been reports of that, contrary to those who denied it.

B. From the Sunnah:

On the authority of Ibn Abbas, may God be pleased with them both, he said: The Messenger of God, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, said: "When I was taken on captivity, a pleasant smell passed me, and I said: What is this smell?" They said: Whoever combs the daughter of Pharaoh and her children, her comb fell from her hand, so she said, "In the name of God." So she said. Pharaoh's daughter: My father? She said: My God is your God and the God of your father. She said: Do you have a god other than my father? She said yes. So Pharaoh called her: Do you have a god other than me? She said: Yes, my God and your god is Allah. So he ordered a copper cow to be heated in the fire. Then he ordered. By throwing her and her children into it, they threw them one by one until they reached her baby, and the baby said: Be steadfast, mother, and do not hesitate, for you are upon the truth. He said: Four children spoke when they were young: this, the witness with Joseph, the companion of Jarih, and Jesus, son of Mary²⁴

In the hadith, there is also evidence that karamah occurs after death, as the Prophet Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, smelled the scent of the brush of the daughter of Pharaoh.

As for the statements that were reported denying the existence of karamahs after death, they are not based on evidence. An example of this is the statement of the chief judge "Al-Awshi Al-Hanafi" in his system on the doctrines called Bada' Al-Amali, where he said:

The karamahs of the Saints in this life have existence, they are worthy.

This is not evidence of the cessation of karamahs with death and their specificity to life, because what is meant by this world in his view is what comes before the afterlife, including the life of the barzakh (death). Hence, Ibn al-Kayyim narrated on the authority of Abu Ya'la that the torment of the grave is part of this world, because it ceases before resurrection with annihilation, and Al-Jalal supported him in Sharh al-Sadur and in al-Mawahib al-Ludaniyyah with a chain of transmission from Ikrimah, the client of Ibn Abbas, that he was asked: Is the Day of Resurrection in this world or in the hereafter? So he replied: The first half, in which the separation and reckoning from this world occurs, while the other half, in which the departure to Hell and Paradise occurs, is from the afterlife²⁵.

Opinions of scholars on karamah:

Scholars have three opinions regarding karamah:

The first opinion: He believes that the karamah does not reach the level of the supernatural, and Imam al-San'ani leaned towards this opinion, in his message "Fairness in the Reality of the Saints and Their Karamahs and Kindness"; Among what was stated in it: "And know that giving the believer the karamahs of God answering his supplications, facilitating requests and difficulties, and relieving hardships is a matter of truth about which there is no doubt, and no believer will disagree with it, as every believer has had the experience of answering supplications and facilitating requests is a matter about which there is no doubt, but this is not specific to a sect, certainly, it is achieved by believers if they have sincere intentions and turn to God with sincerity, stability, and trustworthiness²⁶.

Therefore, the scholars denounced him and considered him to have made a major mistake, and in his opinion, it is a false statement that contradicts the clear evidence in the Qur'an and Sunnah, and contradicts the established sayings transmitted from the predecessors of the nation. Rather, it was taken from the Mu'tazilites and those influenced by them, such as Abu Ishaq Al-Isfarini²⁷ and others.²⁸

²⁴ Narrated by Abu Ya'la in Musnad No. (2517), pp. 394-395.

See: Al-Hafiz Muhammad bin Al-Fadl Al-Tamimi, Musnad Abi Ya'la Al-Mawsili, verification and graduation of hadiths, Hussein Salim Asad, Arab Culture House (Beirut), 02nd edition, 1413 AH - 1992 AD.

²⁵ Ahmed Al-Hamawi, op. cit., p. 63.

²⁶ Imam al-San'ani, in his treatise: "Fairness in the Truth of Saints and Their Karamahs and Kindness," edited by Abd Erazzak bin Abd Al-Muhsin Al-Badr, 01st edition, 1421 AH, Islamic University of Medina, ed., d.d., p. 64.

²⁷ since it was evidence of his being a scholar, was not found except by one who is knowledgeable." He also used to say: Saints have karamahs as an answer to supplications, while miracles Prophets, no."

Al-Risala Al-Qushayri by Al-Qushayri, p. 108.

²⁸ Imam Al-Sanani, op. cit., p. 25.

The second opinion: They proved karamahs and that they are permissible in violation of customs, but they distinguished between karamahs and miracles, because in their view karamahs are less than miracles, and therefore they invalidated the freedom of the Saints to act in the universe. Judge Iyadh went to this, saying that karamahs are carried out at the hands of the Saints in violation of customs in our nation and elsewhere, contrary to those of our sheikhs who said that they are not valid in our nation, including those that violate customs and upset notables, but are valid in such cases as answering supplications.

This is what Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah went to, who believes that there is a difference between the saint and the prophet, as well as the miracle and karamah, and he says: “The saints are inferior to the prophets and messengers, so no one’s karamah will ever reach the level of the miracles of the messengers, just as they do not reach their levels in virtue and reward, but they may participate with them in some of them, just as they may participate with them in some of their deeds. The karamahs of the righteous saints of God indicate the validity of the religion that the Prophet Muhammad brought, and do not indicate that the Saint is infallible, nor that he must be obeyed in everything he says²⁹.”

Sheikh Mubarak Al-Mili also leaned towards this opinion in his treatise (polytheism and its manifestations), “We affirm the karamahs of the saints, and we do not restrict God’s power with any kind of them, but rather we restrict them through the Sharia to other than what God has taught us is among the properties of divinity, so that we do not go to extremes in it, ends us into polytheism³⁰”.

Sheikh Muhammad Rashid Reda supported him: “A miracle may occur with all the miracles of customs, and karamah is specific to some of them, and this is correct³¹.”

The third opinion: They did not differentiate between a karamah and a miracle, so what was permissible for a miracle to be for a prophet could be a karamah for a saint, which is what Al-Juwayni favored, as it was reported from him that he said: “What is satisfactory to us is the permissibility of a set of supernatural customs in exhibitions of karamahs³²”. This is what many Sufis tended to, who believe in the freedom of the Saints to act in the universe, and also permit seeking supplication and seeking blessings from them as an inevitable result of their position on karamah. The jurists of the third opinion, for whom miracles and karamahs are equal, permitted begging and blessings through the saints, while others forbade it, for whom karamahs did not rise to the level of miracles. Sheikh Al-Hamawi removes the existing problem that the behavior of the Saints after their death is considered polytheism to God.

Al-Hamwi explains this by saying: “The behavior of the Saints during their lives and after their death is by God’s permission and will, and He has no partner in that in creation and creation, with which God has honored them and rewarded them at their hands, and because of them in violation of custom, sometimes through inspiration, sometimes through a dream, sometimes through their supplication, and sometimes through their supplications, and sometimes through their supplication”. By their actions and choices, sometimes without choice, intention, or feeling on their part, and sometimes by pleading with God for them during their lives and after their death, which is possible in divine power. People do not intend to ask them and pray to them before and after death to attribute them to creation, existence, and independence in actions, for this is not what the Muslim intends, and it does not occur to any of them. Rather, saying that is a matter of confusion in the religion and confusion among the common Muslims³³.”

Then he investigates the statement about unseen news through revelation, and says³⁴: “Among the karamahs is the information about some of the unseen and revealing them, which are degrees that go beyond

²⁹ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Prophecies*, reviewed and verified by Sheikh Abu Abdullah Mustafa bin Al-Adawi, Fayyad Library for Trade and Distribution, ed., ed., p. 17.

³⁰ Sheikh Mohamed Rashid Reda, *The Muhammadan Revelation*, Al-Kutub House (Algeria), 03rd edition, 1352 AH, p. 213.

³¹ Sheikh Muhammad Rashid Reda, *The Muhammadan Revelation*, Al-Kutub House (Algeria), 03rd edition, 1352 AH, p. 213.

³² Al-Juwayni, *Al-Irchad*, p. 317.

³³ Ahmed Al-Hamwi, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

³⁴ Revealing: clarifying what is hidden from the understanding and revealing it to the servant as if it were an eye view. Among them is what is rational, meaning that the mind perceives it in its absolute essence, free from the limitations of thought and mood. Some of them are psychological, which emerges in imaginative souls freed from their emotional constraints during times of exercise and struggle, and among them are divine, through the path of manifestation or ascension.

the limit of limitation, and that exists now and is not contradicted by the saying of God Almighty ([He is] Knower of the unseen, and He does not disclose His [knowledge of the] unseen to anyone) Surat Al-Jinn 26-27, because we do not know the generality of the unseen, so it is permissible for it to be specific to the state of resurrection based on the context, and it is also not opposed by the Almighty's saying: (Say, "None in the heavens and earth knows the unseen except Allāh, and they do not perceive when they will be." resurrected) ants 65...

The reason for not opposing is that the knowledge of the saints is only through God informing them, and our knowledge of that is only through their informing us, and this differs from the knowledge of God Almighty, which is unique to Him, and it is one of His eternal and permanent attributes, free of change, and attributes of occurrence, deficiency, participation, and division.

God's knowledge is not shared by anyone, so no one knows the unseen except Him, and if anyone other than Him knows specifics of the unseen, it is by God's knowledge of them, and then it cannot be said of them that they know the unseen, and their knowledge is afflicted with the characteristics of occurrence, deficiency, participation, and division³⁵...

Ibn Khaldun agreed with him in this, who affirmed that the Saints' knowledge of the unseen is due to God's knowledge of them, and as for the talk about informing the people and informing them of the unseen and their freedom to dispose of things, this is a correct and undeniable matter. If some scholars tend to deny that, that is not the truth³⁶, and what Abu Ishaq Al-Isfarayini (one of the Ash'arite imams) used as evidence to deny it because it was confused with a miracle is according to what he stated, as they said: Then its occurrence according to the claim of the liar is not filthy, because the indication of the miracle is Honesty from a mental standpoint. The same attribute is belief, so if it happened with a liar, the same attribute would be changed, and it is impossible, despite the fact that existence is evidence of the occurrence of many of these karamahs and denying them is a kind of arrogance, and much of this happened to the companions of the Prophet and the great predecessors, and it is well-known³⁷.

Discussion and weighting:

Through the third opinions related to the miracle and karamah, we can give weight to the second opinion that differentiates between the miracle and karamah.

We based the distinction between miracle and karamah on the following evidence:

1. The difference between the status of the Prophet and the status of the Saint:

One of the clearest pieces of evidence that we can infer about the difference between miracle and karamah and that the former is superior to the latter in terms of its degree, is that the Prophet was inspired and infallible, unlike the Saint, who attains this degree by earning it.

One of the most widespread karamahs is the response to supplication, as Imam Al-Nawawi³⁸ pointed out when explaining the sacred hadith agreed upon by Al-Bukhari, from the hadith of Abu Hurairah that the Messenger Muhammad, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, said: Allah said: "Whoever is hostile to one of the righteous saints, I have given him permission to wage war."Hadith, "And if he asks Me, I will give him, and if he seeks My refuge, I will give him permission³⁹".

This is what Imam Al-Shaarani explained to him by saying: "The end of saintless will never join the beginning of prophecy, and if a saint were to advance to the source from which the prophets were taken, he would be burned. The purpose of the matter of the saints is that they worship according to the Islamic law revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace).

If they deviate from the law of Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, they will be destroyed and their provision will be cut off, so they will never be able to independently receive from God⁴⁰".

Dr. Rafiq Al-Ajam, Encyclopedia of Islamic Sufism Terms, Lebanon Publishers Library, 01st edition 1999 AD, p. 790-791.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 90.

See: Mubarak Al-Mili, Ibid., pp. 419-420

³⁶ The previous position of Sheikhs Mubarak Al-Mili and Mohamed Rashid Reda.

³⁷ Ibn Khaldun, Introduction, p. 404.

³⁸ Ibn Daqiq Al-Eid, Explanation of Al-Arba'in Al-Nawawi, Al-Faisaliah Library, Mecca, p. 102.

³⁹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari, "The Book of Punishments, Chapter on Humility No. (2502) p. 1617.

⁴⁰ Rubies and Jewels in Explaining the Doctrine of the Greatest, Abdul Wahab Al-Shaarani. Elkebrit Elahmar fi Bayan Ulum al-Sheikh al-Akbar, by Lamhi al-Din Ibn Arabi, Ihya al-Tarat al-Arabi House, Beirut (Lebanon), p. 435.

Ibn Taymiyyah explained it by saying: “The prophets must be believed in, and in everything, they tell about God, and they must be obeyed in what they command, unlike the Saints, for they are not obligated to be obeyed in everything they command, nor to believe in everything they tell, rather, their command and information are presented to the Qur’an and the Sunnah. Whatever their sayings agree with the Qur’an and the Sunnah must be accepted, and whatever contradicts the Qur’an and the Sunnah will be rejected⁴¹”.

2.. The miracle is for a challenge, and there is no challenge in karamah:

One of the fundamental differences between a miracle and karamah is that the former is for a challenge and must be shown, as it is natural for it to be unlimited in its degree to refute and invalidate every challenge, unlike karamah which must be hidden and covered because the Saint does not need to show it, so it is In fact, it is due to a hidden matter that only God knows.

Sheikh Mubarak Al-Mili limited its rules to three points: (correct faith - pure work for God - and agreement with the Sunnah)⁴².

Ali Harazem, may God have mercy on him, was asked about the meaning of their saying (Knowing the Saint is more difficult than knowing God), and he replied by saying: As for the questioner’s statement: Knowing the Saint is more difficult than knowing God, this is explained by the saying of Al-Morsi, may God be pleased with him, when he said: If the truth of the Saint was revealed to a human being, The reality of the Saint is that he is robbed of all human qualities and possesses divine morals, both outwardly and inwardly.

The questioner’s statement that knowing the Saint is more difficult than knowing God also means that God is known for His perfect attributes, different from all of His creation in all of His attributes, which are clear, as for the Saint’s knowledge of the qualities by which he is a Saint, they are hidden in him and cannot be known because his outward appearance is equal to that of other than the Saints in eating, drinking, marrying, and pursuing worldly matters, like the case of the heedless people other than the Saints, what is difficult for us to know is that he is a saint.

God’s attributes are distinct from those of His creation, and the Saint was not distinguished from others of his kind, as he shared with them all their movements, their rest, and all their conditions, so it is difficult to distinguish him from his kind, the meaning of his statement is that if the truth of the Saint was revealed to a human being because his characteristics are among the characteristics of his God, because he is stripped of all human characteristics just as a sheep sheds its skin, and he is characterized by divine morals⁴³.

3. The greatest karamah is righteousness:

One of the greatest karamahs of the Saints is righteousness in God’s method. The occurrence of the supernatural is not necessary for the Saint, as the truthful Saints (of the Companions and those after them) did not have supernatural things, and this is what is indicated by the noble verse that clarifies the conditions for eligibility for saintless, where Muhammad Rashid Reda says in the interpretation of God’s saying: (Unquestionably, [for] the allies of Allāh there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve). Yunus 62.

He says: They are the ones who combine true belief in God, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day, and piety for God Almighty, and the work it requires. He expressed their faith in the past verb to show that it was complete with certainty, it was not shaken by doubt, and it did not happen gradually, and their piety was expressed in the verb that indicates the situation and the reception because piety is always renewed according to its related things: gain, war, lust, and anger. The comprehensive meaning of it is that it is to avoid everything that does not please God Almighty, such as abandoning what is obligatory and recommended, doing what is forbidden and what is disliked, and avoiding violating God’s laws in His creation, which are among the reasons for health, strength, victory, pride, and sovereignty of the nation⁴⁴.

4. Blocking the way for charlatans and fraudsters:

The incorrect use of the concept of saintless by many Sufis, as well as the status enjoyed by sheiks, has led many opportunists and fraudsters to falsely and slanderously claim saintless to obtain material gains, which has made many scholars confront them.

⁴¹ Ibn Taymiyyah, The Criterion between the Guardians of God and the Guardians of Satan, Al-Ma’arif Library (Riyadh), new edition 1402 AH - 1982 AD, p. 31.

⁴² Mubarak Lamili, Polytheism and its Manifestations, p. 189

⁴³ سيدي علي حرازم ابن العربي برادة، جواهر المعاني وبلوغ الأمان في فيض سيدي احمد التيجاني، ضبط وتصحيح عبد اللطيف عبد الرحمن ، دار الكتب العلمية بيروت (لبنان) ج 01 ص 279.

⁴⁴ تفسير القرآن الحكيم، الشيخ محمد رشيد رضا ، مطبعة المنار بمصر ط 01، د.ت ج 11 ص 415

The scholar Abd al-Karim al-Fakun wrote his famous book (Manshur al-Hidaya for those who claim knowledge and the saintless), in which he exposes many charlatans and fraudsters... He says: "..., I did not want to alienate both sects and warn against them at all times and from all righteous brothers." Until I felt that their tongues started saying something that was not appropriate to mention, so God comforted me to refrain from pointing out their mistakes and exposing their secrets⁴⁵". Then he explains some of their assertions and says:

"One of the ways of those who claim to be saintless to seize people's livelihoods is that if a man sees or hears that someone has a horse that he likes or a very beautiful mule, he goes to him and says to him: It is mine, so beware of selling it or taking it out to someone else, then he puts his hand on it so that its owner is not able to sell or give it, even if he is extremely necessary and needed until the saint comes to it and takes it either for free or at a low price⁴⁶...

5- Exposing Orientalist claims:

the French colonial authorities took advantage of the public's attachment to the Saints and created some misconceptions in them: One of the famous things about the French occupation of Kairouan in Tunisia is that a French man converted to Islam and called himself Sayed Ahmed Al-Hadi, he worked hard to acquire jurisprudential knowledge until he reached a high level and was appointed imam of a large mosque in Kairouan, when the French soldiers approached the city, its people prepared to defend it, and they came to ask him to consult for them the shrine of a sheikh in the mosque in whom they believed. So Sayed Ahmed entered the shrine and then went out to inform them of the misfortunes that would befall them, he told them that the Sheikh advised you to surrender because the fall of the country had become inevitable, so the simple people followed his words, and did not defend their city, so the French entered it safely on October 26, 1881 AD⁴⁷.

This is what we understand from the opinion of Dr. Abdel-Razzaq Qassoum, who believes that many of the karamahs were the creation of Orientalists, and among their causes were the disturbances that prevailed in the 14th century AD and after, which were manifested in the tribal wars taking place between the parts of the Maghreb, in addition to manifestations of civilizational, social and cultural backwardness. Society in that era was awash in a sea of superstitions, which left deep traces on the Maghreb person, which was evident in the reaction represented by fleeing to Sufism and its people, and to believing in Karamahs and miracles and believing in the Saints, especially those who claimed the honor of lineage, such as Al-Tha'alabi and Abu Madyan Al-Tilmisani (d. 594 AH) before him, and Sheikh Ahmed bin Youssef Al-Hawari (d. 927 AH), the leader of the Yusufiya order, which spread significantly in Morocco during the ninth century AH.

Biographies have recorded various karamahs attributed to the Saints of this era and its Sufis, which sheds more light on the social situation that prevailed. Al-Tha'alabi had extremely strange karamahs attributed to him, including the earth swallow men who cursed him because of his supplication against them, and the same thing applies to the leader of the Yusufiya order, Ahmed bin Yusuf Al-Miliani⁴⁸.

According to his opinion, one should not believe in the validity of such myths, because the artificiality in them is apparent, as they were created to achieve one purpose, which is to justify the French occupation and present it to the people as a solution to an answered call from God to the Saints, and it is also a punishment that befell the Muslims because of their disobedience to the Saints... and all of this allegations cannot be believed based on the facts⁴⁹.

The history of the Saints is full of positions of outright hostility towards rulers, even Muslims, so what about them if they were infidels? Therefore, one must beware of some myths fabricated by Orientalists to confuse the correct Islamic doctrine⁵⁰.

6. Preserving Sufi traditions in general and purifying the Islamic religion from what is attached to it:

⁴⁵Abdul Karim Al-Fakun, Manshur Al-Hidaya - The Condition of the One Who Claims Knowledge and the Saintless, presented, investigated and commented by Dr. Abu Al-Qasim Saadallah, Al-Gharb house Al-Islami, Beirut Lebanon, 01st edition, 1408 AD - 1987 AD, p. 32.

⁴⁶ Abdul Karim Al-Fakun, Manshur Al-Hidaya, pp. 120-121.

⁴⁷ Muhammad Fahr Shafqa, Sufism between Truth and Creation, p. 211.

⁴⁸ Dr. Abd Erazzak Qassoum, Abd Erahman al-Tha'alabi and Sufism, presented by Muhammad al-Hadi al-Hasani, World of Ideas Foundation for Publishing and Distribution (Algeria), 01st edition, pp. 21-22.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 23.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 24.

Islam has a number of characteristics that have enabled it to perpetuate and spread throughout all times, the most important of which is realism, as its rulings and legislation are accepted by reason and supported by logic and science. However, exaggeration in karamah and equating it with miracles that are challenged violates universal laws and contradicts the character of realism, which is what the books of Sufis are full of, and it distorts the Islamic religion in general, and gives the opportunity to the hateful orientalist and their henchmen to challenge the Islamic religion and cast doubt on it.

7- Acknowledging this type of karamahs violates universal laws:

Sufism expanded the meaning of subjugation and their freedom to act in the universe, and they spoke extensively about it - we can hardly find a saint to whom this supernatural power was not attributed or the legends did not mention the existence of this power to him -, as they spoke about subjugation and acting with intention and speech and using names and letters, especially the greatest name of God, which is One of their greatest secrets.

It seems that all of this is related to some of the Mazdak opinions that were widespread in Khorasan, and was transferred to Sufi circles such as Al-Tirmidhi and Al-Hallaj, and perhaps it was also connected to late Neoplatonic philosophy, which was transferred from this source to the Egyptian Sufism by Dhul-Nun, who was famous for the science of secrets⁵¹.

Conclusion:

Through this research we conclude the following:

- To infer their doctrine of karamah, the Sufis relied on the story of Al-Khidr and the boy that was mentioned in the Qur'an, but the majority of Qur'an interpreters say that Al-Khidr is a prophet, whose actions and actions cannot be measured by an ordinary human being.
- The expansion of the concept of karamah and equating it with a miracle had negative repercussions on the Sufi heritage in general, as it encouraged its opponents to criticize and refute it, as happened to some of the works of Al-Chaarani and Ibn Arabi.
- The focus on the supernatural and its requirement to judge a person as saintless, took this term out of its legal characteristic and became a common term in folklore, and was associated with myths, stories, and anecdotes.
- Mediation and moderation are considered the dominant characteristic of the Islamic religion, and the tendency of Sufism towards extremism in their sheikhs had negative repercussions on the Sufi heritage in general, as some of their beliefs were based on weak reports and hadiths, which made it easier for enemies to penetrate it, and even domesticate it and direct it in a direction that contradicts its highest purpose.

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⁵¹ Al-Alaa Afifi, Sufism, The Spiritual Revolution in Islam, p. 187.

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