

Understanding Dawah:

Its Principles & Practices In History

Abu Ammar

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Practices in History**
By Abu Ammar

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Abu Ammar
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Preface

IN THE NAME of Allah, The Most High, The Most Benificent, The Most Merciful. All Praise is due to Allah, The Creator, The Sovereign, The Bestower of Peace, The Giver of Security, The Protector, The Esteemed one, The Exalted, and The Majestic. He is Alone, He is Independent, He has no Partners, and is in no need of any, No one is Equal to Him. He is Himself Alive and the Sustainer of Others, To Him Belongs whatever is in the Heavens and The Earth. He is the First, He is the Last, He is the Manifest, He is the Hidden and He is All-Knowing. He shows the straight path to whosoever He wishes, and whoever He chooses to bless, He makes them the best among the best.

Blessings and Peace be upon the Prophet Muhammad, who has been sent as a Mercy to all the worlds. He is the last and final Messenger; after him there are no Prophets to come

. He is the greatest Reformer, the Benefactor of mankind and the Saviour of humanity and the Invitor towards Allah. On the Day of Judgement when every indi

vidual will be present, our Prophet (May Allah bless him and grant him peace) will intercede on the behalf of the Muslims. Peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless him and grant him peace), his family and his companions, who passed on the knowledge gained directly from the Prophet to the coming generations. Blessings also be upon the Sufis who spent their lives in spreading the message of Islam throughout the world and all others who continue to serve Islam until the Day of Judgement.

The Means to Achieve Effective Da'wah

Definition of Da'wah

Da'wah in Arabic means to invite. Essentially, da'wah has two dimensions: external and internal. External da'wah is to invite non-Muslims to Islam and teach them about Islamic beliefs and practices. Internal da'wah is to teach Muslims about aspects of Islam: For instance,

The necessity of patience

Obedience to Allah

Love for the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace)

Understand the virtues of the Companions (Sahaba)

Examine the history of Islam

Learn what is required from one by Islamic Law (Shari'ah).

Importance of Da'wah

'Allamah Ghulam Rasool Sa'idi writes:

Da'wah is a fard kifiya (an obligation that rests upon the community, not the individual). If there are individuals within a community inviting people to da'wah, then others within the community are relieved of the obligation. If no-one in the community issues the invitation, the sin falls on every individual within that community. A person who performs da'wah is known as a da'i. Although their effectiveness will vary according to their ability, all da'i should be, at the very least, familiar with the basic teachings of Islam. (Tibyan al Qur'an, under verse 104, Surah Al-'Imran, 'Allamah Ghulam Rasool Sa'idi)

Allah Ta'ala speaks of Da'wah in several places in the Quran:

“We made you a middle nation to be witnesses over mankind.”

(Surah al-Baqara, 143)

“Let there be a community among you, who call to the good, enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. They are the ones who have success.”

(Surah Al-'Imran, verse 104)

“And warn your tribe and close ones.”

(Surah al-Shura, verse 214)

“Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair admonition. And argue with them in a way that is best.”

(Surah al-Nahl, verse 12)

In these verses Allah Ta'ala praises this ummah as being the guides of mankind. Whereas earlier ummah required their followers to extend guidance to their own kith, kin and nation, our ummah differs in that it is our duty to spread the Word of Allah Ta'ala to the whole of mankind. There is a duty upon this ummah to call towards good and forbid evil for the whole of mankind. It is necessary for everyone in the ummah to perform da'wah according to his or her ability.

A da'i should use wisdom and speak with softness. He should teach of the benefits of Islam in both this world and the next. As a last resort, and only if required, debating should be employed to remove any doubts. But this also should be performed in the best possible way. Da'wah should be given with the best of speech and in the most polite manner.

In his last sermon the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

“Convey what you have received from me, even if it is a verse.”
(Bukhari, Muslim chapter on Hajj)

This Hadeeth and the references from the Qur'an prove that da'wah is wajib and that every Muslim, according to their skill, and according to the opportunities Allah gives them, should engage in it.

Allamah Sa'idi writes:

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

“If one of you sees a wrong, let him change it with his hand, and if he is unable then with his tongue, and if he is unable then with his heart. And that is the weakest degree of faith.”

“Keep commanding good and forbidding the evil and if you do not, Allah will not accept your supplication (du'a).”

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, spoke about one of the communities of the Bani Isra'il that did many evil things. Their 'ulama tried to forbid them but the people did not stop. The 'ulama continued to keep company with these very people despite their wrong actions.

Then Allah Ta'ala hardened some of the 'ulamas' hearts as they continued to keep the company of these evil people without rectifying the evil that they saw. Later, the prophets such as Dawud and 'Isa, peace be upon them, cursed them for this.

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said if there were people committing sins and people who had the power to stop them but did not do so, then Allah Ta'ala would punish both parties before their death. The

Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, also said there would be people in his ummah who would not consider an evil doer an oppressor. He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, advised that when someone sees such people, he/she should keep away from them and not to sit in their company. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said that a person who did not command the good and forbid the evil was not of his company.

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said that Allah Ta'ala commanded Jibreel to destroy a city because of the evildoers therein. Jibreel said, "O Allah, there is a person in the city who has never disobeyed you." Allah said, "Destroy him as well, because he was not offended by their evildoing". These Hadeeth are mentioned in Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and Bahaiqi (Tafsir Tibyan al-Qur'an, under surah Ali Imran, verse 104 by 'Allamah Sa'idi)

Times and Places for performing Da'wah

There are no fixed times and places for da'wah. Whenever and wherever one has the opportunity, one should perform da'wah - even when walking, at college or university, at work, or visiting people whom one knows. All these areas should be viewed as opportunities for da'wah. When performing da'wah to non-Muslims, one must always remember that one's family, friends and those around us also have the right to our da'wah. It is not correct to leave your relatives and go elsewhere to perform da'wah, as our family has a right to benefit from our da'wah too:

"O you who believe, save yourselves and your families from the Fire."
(Surah al-Tahrim)

This verse commands us to direct our families to follow Islam correctly, so our family has more right on us since we are in a position of authority over them. Today, we see that many Muslims unfortunately neglect their families to concentrate their da'wah activities upon others. Those they leave at home, often in a non-islamic environment, may even fail to meet the very basic requisites and obligations of being a Muslim. This could result in their children marrying non-Muslims, thus taking their children, grandchildren and all subsequent generations to Hell. It really is no light matter. We seek the protection of Allah Ta'ala from this. Although da'wah is a fard kifaya it should always be balanced with one's other duties and obligations.

If a da'i recognises a need for da'wah in a place where none is being performed at all and makes hijrah to that place with the intention of performing da'wah, there is great reward from Allah Ta'ala. This is what the early Muslims used to do and, by the will of Allah Ta'ala, the message of Islam was spread over a huge area:

(Jordan)

(Syria
(Egypt
(India
(Turkey
(Malaysia
(Indonesia

Even in our time, some da'is choose a place abroad and move with their families to give da'wah. Many people embrace Islam as a result. For example, Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Murabit al-Sufi, a Scottish convert, appoints people to take the message of Islam to various countries. In 1996, he appointed a Spanish couple to go to the south of Mexico to take Islam to an indigenous Mayan community. Within four years, over 500 people had embraced Islam, al-HamduliLlah! Surely there is a great blessing from Allah Ta'ala for those people who choose to do hijrah just for the sake of conveying the message of Islam.

Necessary Qualities of a Da'i

The intention of the da'i should be to please Allah Ta'ala and not for any other reason e.g. riya (showing off).

The da 'i should have as broad a base of knowledge as possible. (S)he should read the Qur'an and the Hadeeth with commentary, also the Ihya 'Uloom ad-Din by Imam Hamid Muhammad Al-Ghazali (D 505 A.H). (S)he should understand not only why we should believe in Allah but also why Allah has sent prophets down. Comparative religion books are also of great benefit. These are just some pointers.

When the da'i begins da'wah(S), he should be constant in it. Results often take place only after some time, and so one should be aware of the stamina and efforts that are required.

The da'i should be aware that da'wah will test them with many situations that will demand patience, politeness and kindness.

When the da'i contacts the mad'u, (One who is invited), (S)he should keep up the contact. The power of supplication (du'a) should also never be underestimated. The da'i should persist in du'a, that Allah keeps the mad'u upon the Sirat al-Mustaqim and gives the mad'u strength to face all challenges during this period. The Muslims in general should always pray to Allah that non-believers will embrace Islam. The da'i should also be able to recognise the abilities and qualities of the mad'u. Praise of their abilities and qualities will soften the mad'u's heart and make them readier to listen.

The da'i needs to use wisdom and tact, for example, when informing someone not to continue in a prohibited act. This is not as easy as it seems, particularly today, when many people have come to regard some of the disliked or prohibited actions as simply ordinary so cannot understand any objection to them. Hikma (wisdom) is required to make people see the error of their ways. It also takes hikma to recognise who will want to or be able to stop immediately and who will need a more gradual approach.

When the da'i approaches the mad'u, (S)he should find out what their interests are and make conversation with them around that point. The conversation can be supported by the provision of appropriate pamphlets, books and videos.

Many people are very interested in sport - Islam can easily be introduced into the conversation since many sports personalities have embraced Islam, (such as Muhammad 'Ali, Mike Tyson), although few actually know that their sports heroes are Muslims!

If the da'i recognises that the person who they are talking to has a scientific mind, the da'i could refer to the writings of Maurice Bucaille and Harun Yahya who have done much service to Islam in this area.

If the da'i is speaking to people belonging to the Afro-Caribbean community, he can link his conversation to Islam by talking about Malcolm X.

If the mad'u is a woman, the da'i should provide them with the boklet 'Why British women are turning to Islam?'

If one reflects, there are many ways to begin a conversation before easing Islam into the discussion. The above are just a few examples for consideration not a fully comprehensive list.

The da'i should provide literature to the mad'u according to their interests:

A doctor could be given Maurice Bucaille's 'The Bible, the Qur'an and Science';
A lawyer could be given books on Islamic Law;
An interest in comparative religion could be met with the videos of Ahmed Deedat, Jamal Badawi, and Hamza Yusuf;
A spiritually minded ma'du could be given 'The Way of Muhammad' of Shaikh 'Abdal Qadir al-Sufi and the literature of Shaikh Nuh-Ha Mim Keller and their videos.

A number of organisations provide free literature on a wide variety of subjects, including those mentioned above. For example:

IPCI in Birmingham;

The IIC in Bristol;

A more complete list of books appears at the end of this booklet, after the glossary.

A da'i approaching a mad'u should have the intention to convey the message of Islam not the intention to debate/embarrass/insult the mad'u. It is not a matter of winning or losing since if it were, the mad'u would spend more time concentrating upon defending himself rather than listening to the message that is being conveyed. Sometimes a da'i can win the debate but lose the mad'u.

One day, Imam Abu Hanifah came across his son Hammad debating with someone. After he had finished, Imam Abu Hanifah approached his son and informed him that it was not permissible to debate. Hammad was very surprised and asked his father: "I see you every day debating with non-Muslims. If it is not allowed why do you do it?" His father replied: "There is a difference between the way I debate and the way you do. The way I debate is permissible because my intention is to please Allah and convey the true message, not to please myself. When I saw you debating, you were not delivering the message but were trying to win the argument. You were pleasing yourself and not Allah Ta'la. When I am debating, I do not make eye contact with the person, since if the person is struggling to provide answers to my questions, I do not want them to feel any shame as this might be a barrier to them taking in the message."

(Preface of The Hidayah, by Mulla Ali Qari)

When the da'i approaches the mad'u, he should correct misconceptions.

For example: when talking to a Christian, he could mention how the Qur'an makes numerous references to Mary and Jesus. Indeed there is a whole chapter on Mary in the Qur'an, the only woman who is mentioned with such a high status. This would make them curious and want to read the Qur'an to see for themselves what Allah has revealed concerning it. If necessary, he could talk about the points where there are disagreements between Islam and Christianity – such as the Bible being the word of God, the trinity, the crucifixion of Jesus, atonement etc. He should then provide literature that contains answers to these areas, such as the *Izhar al-Haq* of Maulana Rahmatullah Kairanvi (may Allah be pleased with him) or the videos or pamphlets of Sheikh Ahmad Deedat.

The da'i should be generous and hospitable, not miserly and reclusive. Hospitality is a very effective way of performing da'wah. If you have been very hospitable but the mad'u has not yet accepted Islam, the da'i should not become angry or disheartened because it is only Allah Ta'ala who has the power to change the hearts of people. It was the custom of Prophet Ibrahim to eat with a guest. One day, while sitting with a guest, he began talking about the oneness of Allah to

which the guest remarked that he did not believe in this. This made Ibrahim so upset, he asked him to leave – before they had eaten the meal. Soon after, the angel Jibreel came to him with a message from Allah Ta‘ala: “Ibrahim, why did you become upset, and prevent your guest from eating the food? I have been providing his food for 60 years and he has not listened to me but I am not upset.” At this Ibrahim went out to find the guest and reinvited him for a meal. The guest questioned his motives and Ibrahim recounted the visit of Jibreel. The guest returned for the meal and was so impressed that he embraced Islam.
(Qasas al-Anbiya’, chapter on Prophet Ibrahim)

The da‘i should talk to the mad‘u according to his intellect and understanding, without overloading the ma‘du with information but at the same time making steady progress.

The da‘i should be friendly and easily approachable so that the mad‘u feels at ease around him/her and not afraid to ask questions. The mad‘u should never feel under personal attack.

The da‘i should not be afraid to say, ‘I don’t know, but I will find out for you.’ No-one is expected to know everything.

If the mad‘u becomes a Muslim, it is the responsibility of the da‘i to teach him/her the basic teachings of Islam and to bring them into contact with other Muslims. In this way Allah Ta ‘ala ensures they are protected, in good company and guided on Islamic matters. If the da‘i approaches a mad‘u who accepts the invitation of Islam, there is a great reward from Allah Ta‘ala.

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, told ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, that if a non-believer becomes Muslim as a result of one person’s da‘wah, the reward for that da‘i is so great that it is better than the world and all it contains.

(Sirat al-Nabi, chapter on Khaybar, by Hafidh Ibn Kathir).

When Muslims are giving internal da‘wah, they should start by providing an example to others. They should be role models who embody the teachings of Islam, internally as well as externally. They should be soft and kind-hearted to their brothers and sisters and help in any way that they can.

Da‘wah performed as a Group or as an Individual

A da‘i can perform da‘wah as an individual or can join a group that performs da‘wah. Da‘i should join a group that gives da‘wah to non-Muslims or one that educates Muslims. It is not recommended to join the type of group(s) who accuse Muslims of being non-Muslims.

Reflections on the Da‘wah of the Salaf

The Salaf (early Muslims) used every opportunity to perform da‘wah. They approached people at fairs, visited the sick people, and won their hearts with the light of Islam. They would invite people to their homes and prepare food for them. This was found to be a particularly successful way of making da‘wah.

Evidence for the provision of food at Da‘wah meetings

Imam at-At-Tabari and Hafidh Ibn Kathir mention concerning the verse (ayah),

“Warn your nearest kinsmen,” that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, told his cousin, Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, slaughter a lamb and invite your kinsmen to the house in order to give them the good news of Islam and the warning of Hell fire. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, did as he was told and invited 40 people. Some of the people invited would normally have eaten a whole lamb by themselves. When the people arrived for the food, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, took a piece of meat from the food, put it in his mouth and then returned it to the cookpot. Everyone ate the food and nobody went short.

(Tafsir at-At-Tabari and Tafsir Ibn Kathir, under Surah 26, verse 214)

From this we can clearly see that this is a sunnah that the da‘i should adopt and not, as has been said by some, an innovation.

Today, some da‘is invite people for da‘wah, giving food and making du‘a. A du‘a is made before eating, for example:

“O Allah, accept this gathering, bless those present and make us live our lives according to Islam.”

It has been said that this is a bid‘ah (an innovation) as making du‘a should be made after not before eating. However, there were many events at the time of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, when a du‘a was made for barakah over food.

Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim write that during the days of the battle of the Ditch (Khandaq), Jabir, may Allah be pleased with him, felt that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was hungry. Jabir asked his wife if there was any food in the house, to which she replied that there was only a little. Despite this Jabir invited the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, asking him to bring a few people with him. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, however, called everyone to Jabir's house to eat. Jabir became worried as there was not enough food to provide for everyone. Yet when everyone came, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, made a du‘a upon

the food for barakah. Again everyone ate to their fill and there was still food left over.

On the expedition to Tabuk, people ran out of food and began to feel the pangs of starvation. So Sayyidina ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, asked the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, if they could slaughter their camels. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, refused him permission, but asked that whoever had any food left to bring it before him. So all the food was spread out on a piece of cloth and placed before the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. A du‘a was made over the food for barakah. Afterwards again, everyone ate and food was still left.

(Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, chapter on Mu‘jizat; chapter on al-Khandaq, Sirat al-Nabi, by Hafidh Ibn Kathir, chapter on Mu‘jizat)

Abu Talha, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that he saw the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, with signs of hunger on his face. He asked his wife whether there was any food and she replied that they had a little. So Abu Talha invited the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, to eat. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in return invited everyone in the mosque (nearly 80 people) to also come and eat. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said to Abu Talha, may Allah be pleased with him, to bring the food whereupon he made du‘a over it for the barakah. Everyone ate the food and there was still food left over.

(Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, chapter on Mu‘jizat, chapter on al-Khandaq; Sirat al-Nabi, by Hafidh Ibn Kathir, chapter on Mu‘jizat)

From these Ahadith we can see very clearly that it is permissible to make du‘a over food before people eat, and that it is not an innovation.

This means that it is permissible to make two du‘as at gatherings of da‘wah. The first du‘a can be for the blessing in the food and the second du‘a can be made as a sign of the end of the gathering.

Opportunity of Da‘wah through Khatm al-Qur’an

A da‘i should take the opportunity to complete the reading of the Qur'an and to invite his family and friends to make du‘a as well as providing food, if he can, and give da‘wah. This is all permissible in Islam.

Imam Tirmidhi mentions that ‘Abd Allah Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with both of them, reported that a person came to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and said,

“Ya Rasool Allah, teach me an act that I can practise which will bring me closer to Allah Ta‘ala.”

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, replied, “ Al-halu al-murtahil.”

(Fada'il al-Qur'an by Imam Tirmidhi)

Definition of al-Halu al-Murtahil

The Lisan al-'Arab, the most famous classical dictionary of the Arabic Language, mentions that 'al-halu murtahil' means the practice of the Sahaba whereby they used to recite the Qur'an from beginning to end and then, without delay, start the Qur'an again by reading al-Fatiha and the first 5 verses of Surah al-Baqarah.

Imam ad-Darimi, Imam al-Marwadi, Hafidh Ibn Kathir, Hafidh Ibn Athir write that Thana ibn Awfa reported that a person asked the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, to tell him an act that he could do to bring him closer to Allah Ta'ala. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, replied, “Al-halu al-murtahil.” The person asked what al-halu al-murtahil was, and the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, replied that it was reciting the Qur'an from al-Fatiha to an-Nas and then, without delay, starting the Qur'an again by reading al-Fatiha and the first 5 verses of Surah al-Baqarah.

(Fada'il al-Qur'an, ad-Darimi; an-Nihaya, Ibn Athir; Fada'il al-Qur'an, Hafidh Ibn Kathir, chapter on Fada'il al-Qur'an; Qiyam al-Layl, Imam al-Marwadi, chapter on Fada'il al-Qur'an)

These Ahadith prove that khatm al-Qur'an is a sunnah of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, that brings us closer to Allah Ta'ala.

Evidence for Holding Gatherings to Commemorate Khatm al-Qur'an

Imam Darimi and Imam Marwadi write: Abu Qalaba said when someone finishes the Qur'an it is a time of blessing.

If someone completes the Qur'an in the morning, Allah sends rahmah (blessings) until evening.

If someone completes it in the evening, then Allah sends rahmah until morning.

When Anas ibn Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, used to frequently recite the whole of the Qur'an, he used to gather his family and make du'a for them. A certain man used to recite the Qur'an to whoever was present in the Mosque of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. 'Abd Allah ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, appointed someone to let him know when the man had finished the complete recitation so that he could join in the du'a as it was a time of blessing.

(Fada'il al-Qur'an, ad-Darimi; Qiyam al-Layl, Imam al-Marwadi, chapter on Fada'il al-Qur'an; Majm'a al-Zuwaid, Ibn Abu Bakr al-Haythami, chapter on

Fada'il al-Qur'an)

From this we can see that the occasion of khatm al-Qur'an and the gathering of people is a blessing that the Sahaba used to do.

Hafidh Ibn Qayyim writes that the day of khatm al-Qur'an is a suitable day for making du'as. When the Sahaba used to complete the Qur'an, they used to gather people and make du'a. Imam Ibn Hanbal was questioned whether it was permissible in the Shari'ah for people to gather on the day of the khatm al-Qur'an. He replied,

“Yes, I have seen Mu'ammarr (the great scholar of Hadeeth) do this.’ Harab said Imam Ibn Hanbal recommended people gathering on the day of the khatm al-Qur'an. This was commonly done in the time of the Sahabas.

(Jilla al-Afham, Hafidh Ibn Qayyim, chapter on Du'a Aqeeb Khatm al-Qur'an; Kitab al-Adhkar, Imam An-Nawawi, chapter on Du'a Aqeeb Khatm al-Qur'an)

This is clear proof that the day of khatm al-Qur'an is a blessed day so it is acceptable and recommended to make du'a on that day as the companions did. The da'i should keep this tradition, and encourage other people to do the same. If possible, he/she should provide food and refreshment to attract people to join the gathering as well as making da'wah to them.

Nowadays, unfortunately, people hold gatherings for khatm al-Qur'an with food and refreshments but no da'wah is given. Although such a gathering is praiseworthy, without da'wah it is of less importance. It is important that when Muslims organise any gathering, they should make sure that time is provided for giving Da'wah. This is the true way of our pious predecessors and the way of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

A Da'wah Programme in Baghdad

'Allamah Sabir Hussain writes that Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani used to do a lot of da'wah work. He used to teach Hadeeth, tafsir and fiqh classes daily, but he set aside the 11th day of the Islamic month to hold a programme for people who were not students. People travelled long distances to attend. The sheikh would give lectures on general subjects that the people could relate to and would have a very successful question and answer session, after which everybody was fed. When his students went to different countries for da'wah, they followed their sheikh's practice. In the Asian Sub-continent, this day became known as Ghiyaarwin (Meeting of the 11th) and was known as a da'wah day.

(Biography of Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani by Sabir Hussain al-Naqshbandi)

This programme is still carried on but in some places only food is provided, and the work of da'wah seems to have disappeared. The da'is should try to restore it

and engage in the da'wah as Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani and his students did. A Da'I should set a particular day for Da'wah so people can gather on the day, For instance Monday or Thursday.

Monday Da'wah Programme

Da'is should gather people on Mondays and teach them about Islam. Monday is considered to be a blessed day in Islam

Imam Muslim writes that some one asked the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, about fasting on Mondays. He replied that he had been born on that day and that he had the first revelation from Allah on Monday as well.
(Sahih Muslim, chapter on Fasting)

Da'wah on Thursdays

Imam Bukhari narrates that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, left Madina for the expedition to Tabuk on a Thursday, and that he used to prefer to travel on Thursdays.
(Sahih Bukhari, chapter on the expedition of Tabuk)

Imam Bukhari mentions that 'Abdullah ibn Masood fixed Thursdays for teaching his students.
(Sahih Bukhari, chapter on Knowledge)

Thursday Evening Da'wah Programme

The people of tasawwuf hold gatherings every Thursday evening, laylat al-Jumu'ah, the eve of Jumu'ah (the Muslim day begins at maghrib). They have a circle in which they discuss Islamic topics. Then they recite adhkar congregationally - one person recites the du'a or dhikr out loud and the others follow him. They then have food/refreshments for hospitality.

Excellence of Laylat al-Jumu'ah

Imam Abu Hanifa reported that every Thursday night, Allah Ta'ala sends special blessings on all Muslims. Allah also forgives every Muslim who does not worship other than Allah and who asks for forgiveness on a Thursday night.
(Musnad Imam Abu Hanifah, chapter on Fada'il Laylat al-Jumu'ah)

Imam Tirmidhi narrates that one day

'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, said to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, that he had difficulty in memorising the Qur'an. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, told him to stand up in the third part of

the night and make supplication to Allah because the angels are present and du'as are accepted at that time. The Prophet Ya'qoob had said to his sons that he would ask Allah for forgiveness on the night of Jumu'ah.
(Tirmidhi, chapter on Supplications)

From these AAhadith, we can see that the eve of Jumu'ah is full of blessing. If a da'i has a gathering on Thursday night for da'wah, he has chosen a night of barakah. However, there is no fixed day or time for da'wah.

Daw'ah through Urs

The pious sufis invite people in the name of urs for the purpose of da'wah. Urs is a yearly gathering for a saint by his disciples (mureeds). They hold this urs in the mosque near the grave of the saint. They recite the Qur'an and various scholars give lectures on different topics of Islam. The audience are allowed to question the scholars on anything they wish. At the end, a du'a is said and the people are fed for the blessings.

Some people consider this as innovation (bid'ah) and say it is forbidden (haram).

They pose questions such as:

'Why visit the grave of a saint?'

and

'Why is it held once a year?'

Imam At-Tabari, Hafidh Ibn Kathir and Imam al-Qurtabi all mention how the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to go to the graves of the martyrs of Uhud once a year and recite the verse of the Holy Qur'an on the excellence of patience. The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to make du'a for them. When the beloved Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, passed away, the Khalifs, Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman and 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with all of them, used to do the same thing.

(Tafsir At-Tabari, Tafsir Ibn-Kathir and Tafsir Qurtabi, commentary on Surah al-Ra'd, verse 20)

From this we can conclude that going to the grave of a saint once a year is permissible and not an innovation (bid'ah). Also to lecture in a gathering is one method of performing da'wah

Da'wah through E-sal-e-Thawab

When a person dies another person's heart softens no matter how far he is from the Deen. Our Salaf took this opportunity for da'wah and whenever someone died, they would gather the deceased person's family, friends and relatives and ask them

to make du'a for the deceased person. After that they would tell the people gathered about Aqaid, A`amaal and how to live according to the Sunnah. As a result of this both the deceased and the people gathered benefit.

Proof of e Sale Thawaab

Hafidh Ibn Taymiyyah writes:

The authentic AAhadith provide evidence that the deceased person will gain rewards from all the good deeds carried out on his behalf by others. Some people raise the objection that a person can only gain reward from their own deeds, and refer to the Qur'an for evidence. This is not correct.

A Muslim receives the reward of those deeds that he has never done himself. For example:

As Allah says in the Qur'an the Angels of the Throne of Allah, glorify Allah Ta'ala and ask for forgiveness on behalf of all Muslims. It is also evident from the Qur'an: Allah Ta'ala ordered the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, to pray for his ummah, since his du'a is the peace of mind for the ummah. In the same way the du'a is offered in the funeral prayer, when visiting the grave; and offering du'a for the deceased.

We know that Allah Ta'ala rewards us through the deeds that other people carry out on our behalf. An example is where the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said

“Whenever a Muslim prays for other Muslims, Allah Ta'ala appoints an Angel to say Amin.”

Sometimes Allah Ta'ala blesses the participants of the funeral prayer in response to the prayer from the deceased and vice versa.

(Majmu'a al-Fatawa, vol. 7 & vol. 24, Hafidh IbnTaymiyyah)

Da'wah through Mehfil of-Dhikr

Many da'is hold a programme once a week in which they gather their friends and families to make Da'wah. They begin with recitation of the Holy Qur'an, then read something on Excellency of Adhkar and Dua's through Ayahs of the Qur'an and Ahadith. The Adhkar mentioned in the Qur'an and Sunnah are recited together. In this way the audience can improve their recitation of the Qur'an and correct their errors. They receive blessings of Allah.

Evidence for Mehfil e-Dhikr

Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim write that Ibn Abbas said that it was the tradition of the Prophet's, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, for people to recite dhikr loudly after Fard Salat.

(Bukhari and Muslim Kitab as-Salat)

Hafidh Al-Asqalani writes in the commentary of this Hadeeth that this proves that it is permissible to do dhikr loudly after Fard Salat.

(Fathul Bar Bab us Salat)

Imam Nawawi writes:

'Allamah Ibn Hazam has said that to recite dhikr loudly after Fard Salat is mustahab.

(Sharah Saheeh Muslim Bab us Salat by Imam Nawawi and Umda tul Qari Bab us Salat 'Allamah Aeyne)

Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim write that there are special Angels who are always searching for dhikr gatherings. In any gathering where La ilaha ill-Allah, Subhan-Allah, Alhamdulillah and Allah-u-Akbar are being recited the Angels shade the gathering with their wings.

(Bukhari Bab Dawaat and Muslim Bab Dhikr)

This Hadeeth proves that to do dhikr is permissible and wherever these meetings are held Angels shade the meetings with their wings. There is no doubt that reciting the Qur`an, circles of Hadeeth study, and Salat are all dhikr. In the above Hadeeth the mentioned dhikr is of La ilha Ilallah, Subhan Allah, Alhamdulillah and Allah-u-Akbar.

Imam Bukhari writes that Allah Ta`ala says:

"When my servant does dhikr in his heart, I do his dhikr in My heart. When he does My dhikr in a meeting, I do his dhikr in a better meeting."

(Bukhari Bab at Tawheed)

Hafidh Al-Asqalani writes that the better meeting mentioned in this Hadeeth means Angels, prophets, martyrs and pious spirits.

(Fath al-Bari Bab Ut Tawheed y Hafidh Al-Asqalani)

Is loud Dikr permissible?

Some people say there is a narration about Abdullah ibn Masood who was told about some people in Masjid al Nabawi, who were sitting and doing dhikr together. Abdullah ibn Masood went to the mosque and asked them to leave for making an innovation.

In the chapter on bid'ah, Imam Darmee, writes that one of the reporters of this narration is Umar ibn Yahya.

Hafidh Al-Asqalani writes that the scholars of Hadeeth reject Umar ibn Yahya since Imam Shubah has said that Umar ibn Yahya has fabricated narrations. Imam Dar Qutni also said Umar ibn Yahya is a weak narrator and not reliable since narrations he attributed to Imam Malik are both untrue and weak.

(Lisaan ul Mizaan biography of 'Umar ibn Yahya by Hafidh Al-Asqalani)

Hafidh Jalal ad-Din As-Suyuti says that this narration is against the Authentic Hadeeth that proves doing dhikr loudly is permissible. If, one compares the action of a companion against an authentic narration from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, the action of the companion will be rejected in favour of the Authentic Hadeeth. I (Hafidh as-Suyuti) have found a narration in the kitab uz Zuhad written by Imam Ahmed Ibn Hanbal, that Abu wa'il said that Abdullah ibn Masood stops people from doing dhikr loudly yet in each of his meetings I have been to they themselves have done dhikr (loudly). This narration shows that 'Umar ibn Yahya's narration is false.

(Al hawi lil fatawah vol 1 pg 394 by Hafidh Jalal ad-Din As-Suyuti)

After the clarification of Hafidh As-Suyuti we conclude that this narration cannot be used as evidence because the narrator of this narration is not reliable. Also, it is against the authentic Ahadith mentioned above.

Da'wah Programmes throughout the Year

Da'wah programmes start with the beginning of the Islamic month called Muharram. Da'is gather people together to tell them about the details and blessings attached to different Holy days:

* Muharram: the month in which the Noble Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, migrated in the way of Allah from Makkah to Madinah.

* The 10th of Muharram: the sad but great sacrifice of Imam Hussain and his brothers and nephews in the way of Allah

* Milad dun-Nabiyy, the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: the blessed life history of the Noble Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, encouraging people to lead their lives in the same way.

* The deaths of the first four rightly guided khalifs, their courage and justice (Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with all of them)

* Miraj un-Nabi, the journey to the heavens of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: from where he was shown some of the great signs by his Lord. He saw things that no eye has seen and no man can imagine between Makkah and Masjid Al Aqsa, before moving on to the seven heavens, to

paradise and hell.

* Midnight of Sha'aban: the secret blessings and forgiveness of sins on the Holy night of Sha'ban (Shab e baraat).

* The blessed month of Ramadan: the excellence and rulings of Ramadan.

* The death of the wives of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: the reasons behind the eleven wives – the merit of each, her love and respect for him, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. The patience and simplicity of their lives; the respect between husband and wife; the respect due each to the other; how to raise children.

* Famous battles: how Allah gave success to those small poorly equipped Muslim armies who fought against greater forces, armed only with their great trust in Allah's help.

In this way the da'is make Muslims realise the best way to achieve great success in their lives. These gatherings increase knowledge about Islam amongst all Muslims and help them to strengthen their faith.

These are some of the very important occasions for da'is to share their knowledge with people.

A clarification

Some people argue that these meetings were not held during the time of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, or in the time of the companions, so therefore it is bid'ah and haram to hold such gatherings. The answer to this doubt is: the reason for these meetings is da'wah. It is easy to invite people on these occasions and this encourages people to know more about the day and its importance.

The above examples from the Sunnah show their origin and authenticity, thus proving that such meetings are acceptable.

Bid'ah is an act which has no origin from the Qur'an or Sunnah. There are two kinds of bid'ah:

Bid'ah sayyi'ah: means that it is against the Qur'an and Sunnah

Bid'ah hasanah: means that it has its origin in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

The scholars who support these categories of bid'ah are:

Imam Shafi'i in 'Kitab ul Umm',

Imam Nawai in 'Tahzeeb ul Asmaa al Lughaat' under the word Bid'ah,

Hafidh Al-Asqalani in 'Fath al-Bari' in the chapter on Tarawi,

Qadi Ash-Shawkani in 'Nayl al Owtar' in the chapter on Tarawi.

Bid'ah will be discussed in depth/detail in a further article that, Insha' allah, will

be published shortly.

The proof of celebrating the days of Allah

Allah Ta`ala says in the Qur`an:

‘Remind them of the days of Allah’
(Surah Ibrahim ayah no.6)

In the Tafsir of this Ayah Imam At-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, Imam Al-Qurtabi and Qadi Ash-Shawkani, write that in this Ayah the meaning of ‘the days of Allah’ is:
“The different days on which Allah rewarded various people, for example, as he rewarded bani Isra’il by freeing them from the Pharaoh’s slavery.”

Giving da‘wah at these times softens their hearts towards Allah Ta’ala.
(Tafsir At-Tabari by Imam At-Tabari, Ibn Kathir by Ibn Kathir Tafsir al-Qurtabi by Imam Qurtabi and Fath al-Qadir by Qadi Ash-Shawkani under surah Ibrahim, verse 6)

This shows that to give da‘wah on days that resemble the days of Allah is permissible, so a da‘i should use such days for da‘wah, to educate people regarding the Sunnah and how to live their lives according to the Sunnah.

The days mentioned above like Milad an-Nabi and military expeditions like the days of Badr, Uhd, victory of Makkah, Tabuk and Hunayn are the days when Allah blessed the Muslims, giving them victory over the Kuffar in their military expeditions. The greatest blessing on mankind was the birth of our beloved Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. This is the reason for the importance of the days of Allah. Giving da‘wah on these days is obeying the orders of Allah so cannot be called bid’ah (innovation).

Sufism and the Spread of Islam

There are some pious people who have dedicated their lives towards giving da‘wah. They sacrifice their wealth, homes and family just to please Allah Ta`ala, inviting non-Muslims to Islam and educating Muslims about Islam. If one reads the history of Islam one comes to acknowledge how these pious people conveyed the message of Islam to many non-Muslim lands with many people accepting Islam because of them. They became known as Sufis. Their students also devoted themselves to Islam and making da‘wah.

Unfortunately there are those who do not value the Sufis’ work, not only calling them innovators but also making false accusations against them. The service of the Sufis to Islam places a duty on us to explain their excellence, refute the false

accusations against them and explain how Sufism began, its rules, principles and curriculum.

The Origins of Sufism

The introduction of the Monarchy into Muslim countries caused people to stray from Islamic living. As a result there was a need to teach each of the sciences of Islam. Some specialised in Hadeeth, categorising them into sections for example Salah, Zakah, Sawm, Hajj, Ilm, Nikah etc. These scholars were known as Muhadditheen. Among the most prominent were:

Imam Shubah ibn Hajaj Wasti (D.160 AH)
Yahya ibn Mueen (D.233 AH)
Imam Abdur Razzaq (D.211 AH)
Imam Ibn Sheabah (D.235 AH)
Abu Dawud Tayyalsi (D.203 AH)
Imam Bukhari (D.256 AH)
Imam Muslim (D.261 AH)

Some specialised in the science of Qur`anic explanation (Tafsir) and recorded narrations concerning Tafsir from the Prophet, Allah bless him and give him peace, the Companions, Tabi`een and Tabi tab`ieen. This group of scholars were known as Mufasssireen (Historians). Among the most prominent were:

Muhammad ibn Ka`ab al Qurzi (D.118AH)
Zaid ibn Aslam (D.132 AH)
Qattada (D.117 AH)
Imam At-Tabari (D.311 AH)
Imam Ibn Hatim Al Raz (D.327AH)

Some scholars recorded narrations relating to the life of the Prophet, Allah bless him and give him peace, the battles at the time of the Prophet, Allah bless him and give him peace, the Companions, the Tabi`een, and their students. They also documented accounts of the Islamic leaders and their work.

This group of scholars were known as Mu`arrikheen (Historians). Among the most prominent were:

Imam At-Tabari (D.311 AH)
Imam Ibn Sa`ad (D.230 AH)
Imam Blizuri (D.279AH)
Imam Waqdi (D.207AH)

Some only did work on the life of the Prophet, Allah bless him and give him peace, these were known as Ahl al-Sayyar. Among the most prominent were:

Musa ibn Uqbah (D.141AH)
Muhammad ibn Ishaq (D.150 AH)

Some scholars studied the Qur`an and Sunnah, putting the Sunnahs in order and categorising them into sections and sub-sections. For example, Salah, Zakah and Hajj. These were known as Fuqahaa (jurists). Among the most prominent were:

Imam Abu Hanifa (D.150AH)
Imam Malik (D.179AH)
Imam Shafi`ee (D.199AH)
Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (D.241AH)

Those who studied the narrators of the Hadeeth, establishing which of them were reliable/unreliable etc. were referred to as the Imams of al-Jarh wal-Ta`dil. Amongst the most prominent were:

Imam Yahya ibn Mueen (D.233AH)
Imam Bukhari (D.356 AH)
Imam Ibn Hatim Arrazi (D.327AH)
Imam Ibn Habban Basti (D.352AH)
Imam Adh-Dhahabi (D.728AH)
Hafidh Al-Asqalani (D.852 AH)

Some scholars researched into Islamic beliefs from the Qur`an and Sunnah in order to define what was required to be a Sunni Muslim. This was necessary because many mislead sects had emerged for example the Khawarij, Nawasib, Mu`tazilah. These scholars were known as Mutakallimeen. Amongst the most prominent were:

Imam Abu alHasan Ash`ari(D.330AH)
Imam Abu Mansoor Matoridi(D.333AH)
Allamah Abu Bakr Bakilani (D.403 AH)
'Allamah Taftazani (D. 791 AH)

There was a critical need to address the aforementioned Islamic Sciences. No single scholar could gain expertise in all of them, so this division of labour was a necessity. For the ordinary Muslim it is impossible to find the evidence for each and every action – his needs are not the same as those of the scholar. Only those who wished to gain a deeper level of understanding Islam were obliged to know the evidence and references in their field of study.

Furthermore, the majority of Muslims with limited understanding of the deen were in need of something to help them live properly on a daily basis:

Ibaada
Aqaaid
Salah
Qur'anic recitation
Commanding the good and forbidding the evil
Patience
Showing thanks to Allah Ta'ala, particularly the Du'as to be made on awakening and before sleeping
Fear of retribution for wrong doing
Reliance upon Allah Ta'ala
Love of Allah Ta'ala and the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace
Halal
Haram
Rights
Good manners etc.

The Sufis taught all this and more. Amongst the most prominent were:

Imam Hasan Al Basri (D.110 AH)
Imam Baqir (D.115 AH)
Ibrahim ibn Adham (D.162 AH)
Abdullah ibn Mubarak (D.181 AH)
Fudial ibn Ayyaz (D.187 AH)
Ali ibn Musa (D.203 AH)
Zunnoon Misree (D.247 AH)
Sirry Saqty (D.254 AH)
Abu Yazid Bastami (D.261 AH)
Bishr Hafi (D.227 AH)

Amongst the most prominent women sufi's were:

Syyeda Shuwanah (D.175 AH)
Afeera Aabida (D.180 AH)
Syyeda Rabia Al Addawiyya (D.185 AH)
Syyeda Nafeesa (D.207 AH)

(All the names listed are taken from Tareekh Ibn Kathir biography of the above names)

Famous sufi silsalahs (chain) and their da'wah programme

There were many chains or brotherhoods amongst the Sufis. The Naqshbandi, Soharwardi, Chisti and Qadri chains were the most prominent. They were known as Sufis because their tradition of Islamic learning can be traced back to the Ashab al-Suffah, the people who used to study in a particular corner in the mosque of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. The early Sufis used to wear

woolen clothing.

The names of some Sufi chains were derived from the name of their Sheikh such as the Qadris from Abdul Qadir Jilani. Others derived their names from the birth place of their Sheikh such as the Chishty order from the town of Chist. Sometimes the Sheikh would be famous for his profession like Naqshband (clothes printer) whose followers are called Naqshbandi. The Sufi brotherhoods resided all over the Muslim and non- Muslim lands. Their objective was to educate and purify the hearts of their Muslim brethren and to invite the non-Muslim to Islam.

The curriculum of the sufis

Sufis taught their students not to involve themselves in matters of differing opinions amongst the ulema (scholars) but to follow one Mujtahid Imam in matters of fiqh. They instructed their students to acquire basic Islamic knowledge as required in their daily life. However, if a student had the ability and desire to carry out research and thus acquire a deeper level of knowledge, the Sufi Sheikhs would not prevent him/her. The Sufi sheikhs would typically teach basic matters, which were called 'The Curriculum of Sufis.' This is based on famous Sufi books such as:

Qoot ul Quloob by Abu Talib Makki (D386AH),
Al Ahya ul Uloom by Imam Ghazzali (D.50 AH).

THE CURRICULUM OF THE SUFIS

Aqaid

Aqaid

Articles of faith

Five pillars of Islam

Jihad

Recitation of holy Qur`an with Qiraat

Excellency of Salat ul Tahajjud

Details of Halal and Haraam

Adhkar Du'as (prayers) of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace,

Life of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace,

Biography of famous Sihaba, Tabi`een, Taba Tabi`een, Famous Sufis and scholars of Hadeeth

Basic knowledge of science of Hadeeth, Tafsir, Tareekh, Tasawwuf (purification of heart)

Excellent Manners

Sincerity
Patience
Being Grateful to Allah (Shukr)
Good manners
Truth of the heart
Generosity
Chastity
Honesty
Humility
Modesty
Kindness
Justice
Fulfilling a promise
Helpfulness
Forgiveness
Toleration
Speaking with good manners
Sacrifice
Moderation
Speaking the truth
Relying only on Allah Ta'ala

Bad Manners

Lying
Making false oaths
Breaking promises
Breach of trust
Treachery
Deception
Blaming others
Backbiting
Being twofaced
Boastfulness
Miserliness
Stealing and theft
Cheating when weighing
Bribery
Usury
Drinking alcohol
Proudness
Showing-off

Manners

Manners of eating
Manners of gathering
Manners of meeting one another
Manners of being cheerful
Manners of travelling
Manners of dreaming
Manners of clothing
Manners on happy occasions
Manners of mourning

Rights

Rights of parents
Rights of wives
Rights of relatives
Rights of neighbours
Rights of widows
Rights of the needy
Rights of the sick
Rights of guests
Rights of humanity
Rights of animals
Rights of women

Zawiyah / Khanqa / Dai'ra

Zawiyah/Khanqa/Dai'ra is an oratory or small mosque used as a place of religious retreat, in particular, for prayer and the invocation of the Name of God. The Sufis built many Zawiyahs as centres where their students, the 'Mureedin', could study. These centres were not only built by Sufis but some scholars of ahdith, for instance, Imam Ibn Habban, also built a Khanqa in his time. (See biography of Imam Ibn Habbaan and Abdul Rahman As-sulaami in *Lisaan ul Mizaan* by Hafidh Al-Asqalani and *Tazkira-tul Huffadh* by Imam Dhabbi). Hafidh Ibn Kathir in *Tarikh Ibn Kathir* has also mentioned a large number of Zawiyahs/Khanqas built in the third and fourth centuries.

The Mureedin stay at the Zawiyah/Khanqa/Dai'ra for 2 or 3 or 6 months. During which they learn the above curriculum and how to make da'wah. The Zawiyah also creates an opportunity for the Mureed to meet with other da'is and learn from their experiences.

How to join the sufis

If one wishes to join a da'wah programme of the Sufis one must first take the pledge of allegiance from the Sheikh. The Sheikh teaches the basics of Islam with particular emphasis on following certain matters such as, conveying their Sheikh's teachings to fellow Muslim bretheren, never indulging in futile talk, eating less, sleeping less and performing much Zhikr.

Pledge of Allegiance (How to join with Naqshbandi, Soharwardi, Chisti, Qadri)

When giving allegiance to a Sheikh, one has to make a sincere commitment such as:

I will repent for my previous sins

I will live my life according to the Qur`an and Sunnah

I will have love for the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace

I will punctually recite the Qur`an

These are just some of the promises made when pledging allegiance. The one who has taken allegiance is called a Mureed.

The contract between the Sheikh and the Mureed is similar to completing a membership application for a group or organisation. The contract must be kept to achieve the best service from the group/organisation. In the same way, if the Mureed wants the best in this life and the hereafter the contract with the Sheikh must be adhered to.

Proof of Allegiance from the Qur`an

To say that Allegiance does not exist in Islam is not correct as Allah Ta'ala clearly says in the Qur`an:

“O prophet! When women who have Iman come to you pledging allegiance to you on the ground that they will not associate anything with Allah, steal, fornicate, kill their children, give a false accusation of paternity, make up lies about their bodies, or disobey you in respect of anything right, then accept their pledge and ask forgiveness for them. Allah is ever forgiving, most merciful.”

[Surah Al Mumtahana verse 12]

“Those who swear allegiance to you, swear allegiance to Allah. The Hand of Allah is over their hands; so whoever breaks their oath, breaks it to their own loss, and whosoever fulfils the covenant made with Allah, then Allah shall soon give them a great reward.”

[Surah al Fath verse 10]

These two verses stress that to give the pledge of allegiance for repentance and obedience is permissible and has indeed been praised by Allah Ta`ala. It also indicates that the pledge of Allegiance can be done 'hand in hand'.

Proof of Allegiance from Haddeth

Hafidh Ibn Kathir writes:

Before the migration to Madina, In the days of Hajj some people went from Madina to Makkah and met the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, at Mina. By hearing the sermon of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, they embraced Islam and pledged allegiance to the prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

(Seerat un Nabi chap Bai`at al Aqaba by Hafidh Ibn Kathir)

Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab Najdee and allegiance

Sheikh Muhammad writes that when Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab Najdee began his Wahhabbi movement in Jazeera tul Arab (Saudi Arabia), he went to Dareyyah, met Ameer Saud and asked him to join his movement. Ameer Saud agreed, and was told to take allegiance of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab. In the Allegiance Ameer Saud made these promises:

I will support the religion of righteousness and will obey every order you give me.
(Tareekh Saudia Arabia chapter Biography of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab by Sheikh Muhammad)

This indicates that Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab Najdee used Allegiance and he was given Allegiance by people who joined his movement.

The above illustrates that Allegiance is a permissible act and not an innovation. In turn, Sheikhs that take allegiance from their Mureeds (disciples) are not committing any kind of sin. The allegiance given to a Sheikhs is a sign of repentance by the Mureed for his/her previous sins.

A Suspicion

Some people say that there is no need to take allegiance to Sheikhs since we can, ourselves, repent for our previous sins and begin our own Da'wah programmes. This is limitedly true for the ordinary Muslims who can increase their knowledge, serve Islam collectively and keep company with pious people to achieve an element of their Da'wah programme. However, it is also true that every subject can have a teacher. The sheikh is just such a teacher who teaches and guides the person how to spend his/her life according to the Qur`an and Sunnah.

However, to assert that self study is adequate for advanced learning is comparable to suggesting that anyone wishing to become a qualified medical Doctor can do so merely with self-study. In the same way allegiance to and study with a Sheikh is essential for a Mureed to achieve satisfactory spiritual qualifications.

A clarification

Insha'allah, we will answer the false accusations that some people make against the Sufis. There have been objections to statements by some of the Sufis. But objections are subjective and dependent on the interpretation made by the readers/objectors. Sufis were humanbeings, which led them to occasionally make statements that may be objectionable to some readers. Later Sufis have been able to refute some of the objectionable statements by earlier Sufis. Our great sheikh Ahmad Sarhandi farooqi Al Maroof Al Mujadid Al Afthani, may Allah bless Him, wrote 'Maktoobaat Imam Rabbani'. In this he refuted many Sufi narrations that had previously been regarded as objectionable. Similarly with Tafsir, Hadeeth, Tareekh, Fiqh, later scholars have been able to both clarify and refute earlier misunderstandings of these texts.

Many scholars of Ahadeeth included fabricated Ahadith in their books - which was pointed out by later Muhaddith. Further information regarding this can be found in the books of Mawduaat (collection of fabricated Hadeeth) by Ibn al Jawzi, Hafidh Jalal udeen As-Suyuti and Mulla Ali Qari.

Objection

Some people say that the Sufis claim that they have a secret hidden knowledge, which no one else knows.

This is a confusion. The fact is that individuals do not have any secret knowledge which they follow rather than the Qur'an and Sunnah. In addition to following the Qur'an and Sunnah, sometimes Sufis are blessed by Allah giving them knowledge hidden to others. This is called Karamah.

For example: if a sick person comes to a Sufi who cures him by reciting a verse of the Qur'an and blowing over him. By experimenting with this verse on others with the same disease they find out that this particular verse is a good cure for this illness. They inform their special students of this verse and the cure it gives. Sometimes these verses are passed from generation to generation to cure snakebites and scorpion bites. The companions of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, also researched and came to know which verse cured which disease. Not all companions had the same knowledge. An ordinary person finding this out might assume this to be a secret knowledge. Allah Ta'ala informs

his beloved servant about invisible things, this is proven from the Qur`an and Sunnah.

Allah Ta`ala says in the Qur`an about Khidr, peace be upon him,

“We had also given knowledge direct from us.”
(Surah al Khaf verse 65)

Imam At-Tabari and Qadi Ash-Shawkani write that the knowledge mentioned about Khidar in this verse is the knowledge of (the) unseen (ilm al Ghaib).
(Tafsir At-Tabari under Surah al Khaf verse 65 by Imam At-Tabari and Fath al-Qadir under verse Surah al Khaf verse 65 by Qaz Ash-Shawkani)

Allah Ta`ala says in the Qur`an about Musa’s mother:
“We revealed to Moses’ mother: Suckle him and then when you fear for him cast him into the sea. Do not fear or grieve, we will return him to you and make him one of the messengers.”
(Surah al Qasas verse 67)

Allah Ta`ala spoke to his servant, even though she was not a prophet, giving her knowledge of the future. This kind of knowledge is hidden to most people, but given by Allah to those servants that are chosen.

Hidden Knowledge Proven By Hadeeth

Imam Bukhari writes that Abu Hurairah reported
‘I have learned two kinds of knowledge from the Prophet. I have already told one but if I tell the other my head will be taken off.’
(Bukhari Kitab Ul Ilm)

This Hadeeth is clearly evidence that Hidden knowledge exists for special servants chosen by Allah.

Some scholars say the untold knowledge of Abu Hurairah was the names of future rulers. Abu Hurairah said that the two containers of knowledge were equal, but the told knowledge was a lot, not equal to just names. From this, clearly the untold knowledge must be more than merely names; perhaps it could be some knowledge concerning future events.

Hafidh Ibn Kathir and Hafidh Al-Asqalani write that the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, told Huzaira, a companion of the prophet, of all of the hypocrites Munaqiks in Madeena. He was the only person who knew of all the Munafiqs of Madeena. When someone died in Madeenah Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, would wait to see if Huzaira was attending the funeral. If

he did not this meant that the dead person was a Munafiq. If he was at the funeral this meant that the dead was not a Munafiq.

(Tafsir Ibn Kathir under verse 86 surah Taubah by Ibn Kathir and Fath al-Bari under tafsir Surah Taubah verse 86 by Hafidh Al-Asqalani)

This Hadeeth indicates that a single companion had hidden knowledge that others were unaware of. Obviously the knowledge of Abu Hurairah and Huzaifah was not the knowledge of Halal, Haraam, creed of Islam or worship since this knowledge could have been shared with other companions.

Imam Muslim writes that Jabir reported that a person of the tribe of Banu Aamir had some sort of knowledge that if he recited particular words and blew on a snake-bitten person, he/she would be cured. Another woman of the same tribe knew similar words and cures for scorpion bites. The Prophet asked them to recite their words and allowed them to continue if they could help their brothers/sisters. The prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, checked to see that the recitation contained nothing against the oneness of Allah and the teachings of Islam.

(Sahih Muslim Kitab us Salaam by Imam Muslim)

This Hadeeth is a clear evidence that some companions alone knew the words involved, although these were not words in the Qur`an and Sunnah.

Hafidh Ibn Taymiyya and Hafidh Ibn Kathir write that the famous companion Ulah ibn Hadharami used to pray to Allah by reciting the words Ya Aleem, Ya Halim, Ya All`iyy, Ya Azeem. Whenever he used these words his dua was accepted. Once in a desert when there was no water Hadharami prayed to Allah using the above words and it began to rain. On another occasion a Muslim army that had no boats, wished to cross a very deep river. In some places it was so deep as to be called a sea. Hadharami did duah and told the army to mount on their horses go into the river. When the army had crossed none of the soldiers had a single trace of even a drop of water on them.

(Majmmoh al Fatawah chap Karamah vol 11 by Hafidh Ibn Taymiyyah Tareekh Ibn Kathir chap Maujzaat by Hafidh Ibn Kathir)

This Hadeeth proves that Hadharami was the only companion who knew the words that could help with crossing a river without boats – the other companions in the army did not have this knowledge.

Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim write that once some companions were on a journey, they had stopped in a village whose chief had been bitten by a snake. The villagers asked the companions for a cure. One of the companions cured the chief by reciting surah al Fatihah and blowing on the bite. The chief gave the companion thirty goats, but the other companions said it was not permissible to

take them. When they returned to Madinah they told this encounter to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, smiled and asked the companion who had cured the chief, 'How he had known this?'

(Bukhari and Muslim chapter Tibb by Imam Bukhari and Muslim)

This Hadeeth indicates that the companion had not been told by the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, but had come to know of it from his own experience. In the same way some Sufis had similar experiences after experimenting with different verses. Usually they do not tell others what has been recited so that an ordinary person seeing this will think that the Sufis have secret knowledge. The enemies of Sufis take this out of context and accuse Sufis of following hidden knowledge not from the Qur`an and Sunnah. Not all Sufis have this knowledge and they do not encourage every Sufi to have it. Since few Sufis have this knowledge, it is rare for ordinary people to get the impression that all Sufis have this knowledge.

Objection

Some people accuse Sufis of saying that it is not important to pray salah, recite and act upon the Qur`an, and fast during the month of Ramadan, but it is important just to follow the Sufis.

This is a false accusation: Sufis guide people to the right path, showing them how to live their life according to the Qur`an and Sunnah. Anyone coming to them will be asked to repent for their previous sins and promise to live their lives according to shariah. Prayer, fasting or recitation of the Qur`an is not optional very much emphasised.

Objection

Some people say that the Sufis have introduced new terminologies like: Qutb, Abdaal, Awtaad, Abaraar etc which are not proven from the Qur`an or Sunnah. However, even scholars of Hadeeth have introduced new terminologies not proven in the Qur`an and Sunnah like: Muallal, Shaad, Maqloob, Aziz, Hasan, Ghareeb, Munkar etc. Such new terminologies are introduced to help the reader's understanding. This applies equally to the new terminologies introduced by the Sufis. Some of the new terminology is found in the sunnah of the prophet.

Proof of the Abdaal Terminologies

In Sufism an Abdaal is a very holy person, who conducts his life according to the Qur`an and Sunnah. He maintain a distance from the materialistic world and are nomadic.

Hafidh Ibn Kathir writes that the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

‘Among my ummah there will always be thirty Abdaals due to which my ummah will always be given provisions such as food and rain and the ummah will always receive assistance from Allah. According to one narrator of this Hadeeth, Qattada (a famous Tabi`ee) Sayyiduna Hasan al Basri was among one of the Abdaals. (Tafsir Ibn Kathir under verse 251 Surah al Baqarah)

Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal has also mentioned the above Hadeeth written by Hafiiz Ibn Kathir in the narration of Ali, may Allah be pleased with him. Imam Qurtabi has also mentioned this Hadeeth under verse 251 of Surah al Baqarah. Ibn Asaqir and Imam Tibarani mentioned this Hadeeth but has added that there are 40 Abdaal and when one passes away another one replaces the deceased one.

Imam Adh-Dhahabi and Hafidh Ibn Hajr Al-Asqalani produced a list of some of the scholars of Hadeeth who were also Abdaals:

Imam Ibn Abu Hatim D 327 AH.

Imam Ibn Abu Hatim. He was a Zahid, so is mentioned with the Abdaal.

Rib`ee ibn Harrash D 101 AH. He was living when there were many Abdaal, Ubbaad and Aqtaab.

Imam Yahya ibn Saleem Quraish Taifee D 195 AH. Imam Shafi`ee considered him to be amongst the Abdaal.

Imam Hussain ibn Ali Ju`fee D 103 AH.

Imam Ishaq ibn Qais D 241 AH. He was commonly known to be an Abdaal.

Imam Rabeeh ibn Nafeh Jalbee D 241 AH. He was an Abdaal and usually walked bare footed.

Imam Hammad ibn Salma ibn Dinar al-Basri D 205 AH. He was an Abdaal and Allah accepted his supplications.

(Tazkirah tul Huffaz biography of the above mentioned names by Imam Adh-Dhahabi and Tahzeeb al Tahzeeb under biography of the mentioned names above by Hafidh Ibn Hajr Al-Asqalani)

The sign of an Abdaal

Although an Abdaal may marry and engage in the usual conjugal activities, he does not have children.

Imam Adh-Dhahabi and Hafidh Ibn Hajr Al-Asqalani write of Iman Hammad ibn Salma ibn Dinar al-Basri who, although married 70 times, was without children. This is the sign of an Abdaal.
(Mizaan al Eiadal and Tahzeeb al Tahzeeb biography of Hammad ibn Salma)

Zahideen and Zuhd

The meaning of Zuhd is to prevent oneself from engaging in harmful worldly matters and to concentrate on the hereafter. It also means to prefer the life of the hereafter rather than the life in this world and to sacrifice everything in the way of Allah.

We are now going to list some of those named Zahideen by Muhadetheen. They have been mentioned by Imam Adh-Dhahabi and Hafidh Ibn Hajr Al-Asqalani.

Imam Adh-Dhahabi and Hafidh Ibn Hajr Al-Asqalani write:

Imam Muhammad ibn Abdur Rahman Abi Ze`ub D 159 AH
He fasted on a daily basis and spent his nights in the worship of Allah. He led a very simple life and wore only one shirt and a robe throughout both summer and winter seasons.

Imam Yahya ibn Saeed Qattan al-Basri D 198 AH
Ibn Mueen relates that for 20 years he completed the recitation of the entire Qur`an every night and from Fajr till noon he stayed in the mosque.

Imam Wukay ibn Jarrah Rawwasi D 197 AH
He kept a fast everyday and also recited a full Qur`an everyday.

Imam Bishr ibn Mufawaddal Basri D 187 AH
Everyday he performed 400 Rakats of prayers and kept a fast every other day.

Imam Yazid ibn Haroon Wasti D 206 AH
For 40 years he performed the Fajr prayer with the wadu of Isha.

Imam Muhammad ibn Abdullah D 202 AH
Always used to keep a fast.

Imam Abu Bakr ibn Ziyaad Naishapuri D324 AH

He used to spend all night in worship of Allah. For 40 years he performed the Fajr prayer with the wadu of Isha. He used to eat only 5 mouthfuls of food everyday.

Imam Qattan Qazweeni D 345 AH

He was a Zahid and kept fasting for 40 years. He would open his fast with water or Salt.

Imam Muhammad ibn Ahmad Assaal Naishapuri D 349 AH

He was a great Muhaddith and would not touch a book without wadu. He would sometimes finish the whole Qur`an in one Rakat.

Imam Muhammad ibn Ahmad Alhaddad Ginani D 343 AH

He was a great Muhaddith and would finish the whole Qur`an everyday.

Imam Muhammad ibn Ahmad Jaroodi D 413 AH

He was a Zahid and thus removed himself from futile worldly matters. Those who had the pleasure of seeing by the holy Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in their dreams were requested to visit the grave of Imam Jaroodi, as he was a friend of Allah.

Yahya ibn Sharf an-Nawawi D 676 AH

He was a Zahid who stopped eating all sweet and tasty foods.

Khalid ibn Madan D 104 AH

Would recite 70,000 Tasbeeh on a daily basis.

Imam Memoon ibn Mehran D 117 AH

In seventy days he performed 70,000 Rakats of prayer.

Wahb ibn Munabbih D 114 AH

He was a Tabi`ee, Mufassir and Muhaddith. For a period of 20 years he performed the Fajr prayer with the wadu of Isha. He used to stay awake all night praying to Allah.

Imam Amr ibn Dinaar D 126 AH

He would divide his nights into 3 parts: One part was for rest; the second part for revising a Hadeeth that he had learnt or had been taught; the third part exclusively for remembrance of Allah.

Imam Bakir Muhammad ibn Ali D 115 AH

He used to perform 150 Rakats of prayer on a daily basis.

Imam Sabit Bannani D 127 AH

He would continuously fast and recite the entire Qur`an in a day.

Imam Abu Ayyub ibn Tameemah D 131 AH

Upon hearing a Hadeeth, tears would pour from his eyes. He tried his utmost to keep his Zuhd a secret. He would pretend to rest and when he awoke, it seemed as if he had just woken up.

Imam Safwan ibn Saleem D 132 AH

For 30 years he worshiped Allah without lying down. When he died he was seated. People who confirm his worship are Imam Malik and Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal. Imam Malik writes that Imam Safwan would perform Salah indoors during the summer and outside during the winter season, so as not to feel the need for sleep. Imam Malik also writes: Imam Safwan has such a status in the sight of Allah that when his name is being mentioned rain (blessings) would descend from the sky.

Imam Dawud ibn Abu Hind al-Basri D 140 AH

He fasted continuously for 40 years. The people of his household did not realise the extent of his fasting. He was always busy in the Zhikr of Allah.

Imam Sulaiman ibn Tarkhan Tamimi al-Basri D 143 AH

He performed the Fajr prayer with the wadu of Isha and kept a fast every other day.

Imam ash-Shafi`i D 204

He would complete the recitation of 60 Qur`ans in the month of Ramadan

Imam Hanaad ibn Sirri D 243 AH

He was engaged in the remembrance of Allah Ta'ala for 70 years.

(Tazkirat al-Huffaz, Tahzeeb at-Tahzeeb under biography of the above names by Imam Adh-Dhahabi and Hafidh Ibn Hajr Al-Asqalani)

Imam Bukhari D 256 AH

He would complete reading the entire Qur`an every night in Ramadan.

(Tareekh Ibn Kathir, Fath al Bari biography of Imam Bukhari by Hafidh Ibn Kathir & Hafidh Al-Asqalani)

The Zahideen mentioned above included many famous Muhadditheen in addition to the Sufis. They were careful not to indulge in harmful worldly matters and were actively engaged in the pursuit of knowledge and the remembrance of Allah. They fasted regularly and spent their nights in the worship of Allah.

Unfortunately, many Muslims at present regard themselves as scholars after attending Islamic study circles and reading a few Islamic text books. They do not perform either the Sunnah or Nafil prayers. However, the great Muhadditheen increased their worship to Allah as they increased in knowledge, even though they

knew that praying nawafil is voluntary.

Objection

Some claim that by requesting Muslims to be extreme in their worship, reciting the holy Qur`an, Adhkar, fasting, and performing many voluntary prayers, the Sufis are acting against the Qur`an and Sunnah. However, this regular and plentiful worship is referred to as Zuhd and was practised by the Prophets, Sihabah, Tabi`een Taba Tabi`een and scholars of Hadeeth.

There are many great scholarly works to support this, such as:

Kitab ul Zuhd by Abdullah ibn Mubarak;

Kitab Al Zuhd by Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal;

Imam Muslim, Ibn Majah, Imam Bahaiqi have also written chapters on Zuhd;

Hafidh Ibn Kathir has written a chapter on Zuhd in his Tareekh and Seerat al Nabi.

Objection

Some claim that Sufis are committing bid`ah by reciting the name of Allah on a string of beads (Tasbeeh). The following Ahadeeth clearly shows that such an action is not, bid`ah.

Imam Abu Dawud writes that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, once visited a woman who was praying using beads and small stones in front of her.

(Abu Dawud chap Dua)

Imam Dhahabi writes Abu Naeem narrated that his grandfather Abu Hurairah had a stretch of string that had 2000 knots in it. Before sleeping he would perform zhikr using it.

(Tazkara tul Huffaz biography of Abu Hurairah)

Imam Adh-Dhahabi writes Khalid ibn Madan used to recite 70,000 Tasbeeh daily using a string of beads.

(Tazkarah tul Huffaz biography of Khalid ibn Madan)

The aforementioned evidence highlights the permissibility of reciting Allah's names on a string of beads. Many Muslims in the Kabah or Masjid al Nabawi and the majority of Ummah recite Allah's names on a string of beads – they cannot be misled in this through falsely claiming it as bid`ah.

Objection

Some claim that many Sufi sheikhs have written books incorporating numerous weak and fabricated Ahadith. Some Muhadditheen also claim that some Sufis have

fabricated Ahadith.

Non-Sufi books of Hadeeth also contain both weak and fabricated narrations. Many Muhaddithin have also been criticised for fabricating Ahadith. In the tafsir there are many Jewish narrations referred to as Isra'iliaat. If the Sufi books are rejected because of the weak or Isra'iliaat narrations within them, then so too should the books of Muhaddithin, Hadeeth and Tafsir containing similarly weak or Isra'iliaat narrations. This does not apply.

Example 1

Hafidh ibn Tamimah writes:

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said any man who comes to a resting place and sends salutations on me then I listen to him myself. If someone sends salutations from far then the angels deliver it to me.

(Iqtidaa Siraat ul Mustaqeem chap Kaifa Yadau alan nabi)

The narrator of this Hadeeth is Muhammad ibn Marwan as Suddi.

Imam Adh-Dhahabi and Hafidh Ibn Hajr Al-Al-Asqalani identified Muhammad ibn Marwan as a student of Kalbi who was much criticised by scholars of Hadeeth. Imam Bukhari said that his narrations should not be used. Jareer claimed he was a liar. Ibn Mueen said he was unreliable. Yaqub and Saleh said he was weak and used to fabricate Hadeeth. Abu Hatim said he was not trustworthy. Imam Ahmad said he was proud and narrated unknown Hadeeth. Ibn Addi said he was weak and his narrations should not be used. Imam at-Tabari writes that his Hadeeth should not be used as evidence.

(Mizaan ul Itidaal, Tahzeeb al Tahzeeb biography of Muhammad ibn Marwan Suddi)

It may be claimed that the use of this narration by Hafidh Ibn Taymiyyah proves its authenticity. But, Ibn Taymiyyah himself has said that this narration is false, because its narrator is Muhammad ibn Marwan Suddi.

(Kutab Al Raddu ala Alakhni`ee chap Tahiyya al salaam)

This clarification clearly shows that even an accepted scholar such as Hafidh Ibn Taymiyyah has used fabricated narrations in his books.

Example 2

Hafidh ibn Qayyim writes:

The Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said my Ummah (followers) will be divided into more than 72 sects. The worse sect will be that which makes Halal (that has been made lawful by Allah) into Haraam and Haraam (which has been forbidden by Allah) into Halal by using his personal

opinion (Qaiyas).

(Zad ul Ma`aad chap Qai`aas by Hafidh Ibn Al-Qayyim)

Imam Yahya ibn mu`een has cited the original author of this narration as Naeem ibn Hammad, who was known by Imam Dar Qutni and Imam Abu Dawud to fabricate Ahadith.

(Mizaan ul Itidaal and Tahzeeb al Tahzeeb biography of Naeem ibn Hammad by Imam Adh-Dhahabi and Hafidh Al-Al-Asqalani)

Example 3

Qadhi Ash-Shawkani writes that surah al Maidah - verse 55, was revealed when sayyedna Ali gave his ring to a beggar whilst reading salah.

(Tafsir Fath al-Qadir under verse 55 surah Maidah by Qadi Ash-Shawkani)

However, Hafidh Ibn Kathir claims that this narration is false.

(Tafsir Ibn Kathir under verse 55 surah Maidah by Ibn Kathir also Tareekh ibn Kather chap Fazaile Ali by Ibn Kathir)

Clearly false narrations have been used in many scholarly non-Sufi works that are otherwise very reliable and regarded by many as acceptable evidence. Many Muslims still follow these scholars, read their books, and take their references. So, in the same way we should not stop reading the books of the Sufis merely because they contain a few weak or fabricated Ahadith. If weak or fabricated Ahadith were the basis for rejection of a book, then books written by Hafidh Ibn Taymiyyah, Qadi Ash-Shawkani and Ibn al-Qayyim should also be rejected.

Objection

There are some people who say that Sufi'ism is unacceptable as it leads towards blasphemy which can be found in Sufi books.

There is no proof that any Sufi exists who has committed blasphemy, merely that blasphemy is attributed towards the Sufis. Scholars differ as to what constitutes an act of blasphemy. There are those who accept any scholar claiming that a particular sufi has used blasphemous writings, irrespective of other scholars having the opposite opinion. If this is the case then, according to the view of many scholars, Hafidh Ibn Taymiyya made statements of blasphemy. The book 'Al Wafir Ibn Taymiyya Al Kafir' by Allamah Ibn Nasir' explains that many of his statements were considered to be 'points of blasphemy', but are they actually blasphemous?

Example 1

It is known that Sheikh Abu Yazid Al-Bistami said:
'I am a glorifying god' (Subhani)

If it were true, it would be blasphemy. However, scholars state that this was only attributed to him and there is no proof that he actually made such a statement. Even if it was said, it is very possible that the person listening may have misunderstood the meaning he himself intended when saying these words.

Imam Adh-Dhahabi, Hafidh Ibn Kathir and Hafidh Ibn Hajr-Asqalani write that Abu Yazid Al-Bistami's real name was 'Tayfoor Ibn Essa Ibn Ali' and he died in 161 AH. He was a great and very pious Sufi. His sisters were also known for their piety. He had stated that, even if you view someone flying in the sky and he performs other miracles do not consider him to be a 'Wali' (saint) unless he is obedient to the Qur'an and Sunnah. There is no proof that he actually stated the above-mentioned words. Even if he had made such statements he must have been in a state of ecstasy, producing speech not understandable by others. Other scholars have given other varying justifications.

(Mizaan Al Etidaal, Tareekh Ibn e Kathir and Lissaan Al Mizaan, biography of Abu Yazid Al-Bistami by Imam Adh-Dhahabi & Hafidh Ibn Kathir and Hafidh Ibn Hajr Al-Asqalani)

Hafidh Ibn Taymiyya writes himself that it is the belief of Muslims all over the world that, Allah Ta'ala is independant and does not incarnate himself to anything. Those who claim that some Sufis attribute to Allah Ta'ala incarnation within his creation are liars.

(Fatawa Ibn e Taymiyya, bab Qasm Al Tasawwaf, volume 11 page 74)

Sheikh Abu Nasr As-Siraj, who died in 378 AH, writes that he went to Bastaam where he met with the family and followers of Shaikh Abu Yazid Al Al-Bistami, but there seemed to be no one who could prove that he had made a statement, 'I am a glorifying god' (Subhani). Then Shaikh Abu Nasr As-Siraj, says that it seems that the narrator of this statement had not fully understood what was being said and it is possible that Shaikh Abu Yazid Al-Bistami meant: 'Allah says that, I (Allah Ta'ala Himself) am a glorifying god'.

(Kittaab Al Lama'a, Chapter Shti Haat by Abu Nasr As-Siraj)

These examples clearly show the charge of blasphemy as not proven. We have given the example of Abu Yazid because there are many refutations against him. If one sincerely researches the accusations against other Sufis they will, in the same way, be found to be false.

Miracles (Karamah)

Many miracles happen under the hands of Sufis with the blessing of Allah. Some Muslims when hearing about these miracles claim that they are fabricated stories. Insh'allah, we will prove that these miracles really did/do occur. There is proof in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Miracles have also been attributed to the Sihaba, Tabi`een, Taba Tabi`een and scholars of Hadeeth as well as the Sufi.

Karamah (Miracles) proven from the Qur'an

Allah Ta`ala says in the Qur'an:

“Whenever Zakariyah went to Mary’s place of prayer, he found new provision with her. He said: O Mary! Whence came this to you? She spoke, That is from Allah.”

(Surah Al Imran verse 37)

Imam At-Tabari writes in the commentary of this verse, that Maryam was given fruit from a different season.

(Tafsir Tabar under verse 37 surah Al Imran)

This was a karamah of Maram mentioned in the Qur'an. Another karamah is mentioned in surah Maryam verse 24. Mary was a very pious women not a prophet and two of her karamah are mentioned in the Qur'an. This proves Allah Ta`ala blesses the pious with extraordinary abilities.

Karamah Proved from Hadeeth

Imam Bukhari writes that Zainab reported when Khubaib (a sihab) was imprisoned and tied with chains, she saw fresh grapes by his side that had been provided by Allah. To have fresh grapes at that time of the year was strange as it was not the season for grapes in Makkah.

(Bukhari bab Jihaad bab Maghazai)

Hafidh Ibn Hajr Al-Asqalani writes that the grapes provided by Allah was a karamah of Khubaib.

(Fath Ul Bar chap Maghazia by Hafidh Ibn Hajr Al-Asqalani)

Imam Adh-Dhahabi and Hafidh Ibn Hajr Al-Asqalani write that Ghilaan ibn Sabreer said that once somebody made false allegations against Mutarrif ibn Abdullah Harshi Aasiri (D 95 AH). Mutarrif prayed to Allah that if the allegations were false the liar would die - and the liar died.

Imam Ayyub ibn Abu Tamimah D 131 AH

He was going to Hajj with a group of people who were troubled due to the

shortage of water. There was no sign of water anywhere. Imam Ayyub said I will get water but you must promise not to tell anyone. The people agreed. Imam Ayyub made a circle in the ground and prayed to Allah. At once a fountain sprung from the circle, the people drank and gave water to their animals. When everyone finished drinking the circle became dry as before. Another similar miracle was performed at the hands of Imam Ayyub.

Imam Haiwah ibn Shurai D 158 AH

He would regularly weep for fear of Allah and was known to be very poor. One day Imam Haiwah was performing Du'a, when a man came and said to him that if you do Duah for yourself to rid you of poverty maybe your days will change. Imam Haiwah picked a rock from the ground and threw it towards the man. When the man looked at it, it had turned into gold. He then said I praise Allah in my every situation. The man asked what should he do with the gold, Imam Haiwah said take it, spend it and fulfil your needs.

There was a pious man who lived in Yemen. Once while he was travelling on the way his donkey died. The man read salah and prayed to Allah: O Allah it is my faith that you alone can give life to the dead. O Allah give my donkey life again. As the man finished the prayer, his donkey was alive again.

(Tazkarah Tul Huffaz by Imam Adh-Dhahabi. Some of these karamah are mentioned in Tahzeeb At Tahzeeb by Hafidh Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani and Tareekh Ibn Kathir by Hafidh Ibn Kathir – see under the biography of the above names)

Scholars of Hadeeth have written these Karamah in their books, thus authenticating them. Since these are the same Karamah mentioned in the Sufi books, no one can accuse the Sufis of fabrication. It has also been proven from Qur`an and Sunnah.

Hafidh Ibn Taymiyyah has written an entire chapter on karamah in his fatawah vol 11, where he has gathered the karamah of Sihaba, Tabi`een, Taba Tabi`een. It is worth reading that particular chapter.