



Understanding Of Sokoto Jihād Leaders On Some Major Sūfi Concepts And Their Impact On The Society

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ABSTRACT: Like every other Islamic sciences, Tasawwuf has been distinguished with certain technical terminologies that are peculiar to its studies and practices. It is therefore inconceivable to discuss Tasawwuf and its doctrines without placing in proper perspective the concepts of Wilāyah and Karāmah. Along this line the Sokoto Jihād leaders also followed suit and these concepts were part of the many aspects of Tasawwuf they received to which they contributed to their development. This paper thus examines the belief and understanding of the Sokoto Jihād leaders about these concepts as evident in some of their literary contributions. A general review approach was adopted to provide a critical understanding of the terms and as understood by the Jihād leaders. This is also to enable a fair assessment of the impact of these concepts on the society. The paper concludes that it will be no exaggeration to say that Shaykh 'Uthmān bn Foduye and some of his associates as well as students and children were identified as Awliyā' whose Wilāyah was by the grace of Allah. This afforded them the performance of Karāmāt and, by their status in the Jihād process, impacted significantly on the life of his community which accounted for several successes they had been able to achieve.

KEY WORDS: Wilāyah, Karāmah, Sokoto Jihād, Sūfi concepts

Received 15 September, 2018; Accepted 01 October, 2018 © The author(s) 2018. Published with open access at www.questjournals.org

I. INTRODUCTION

Tasawwuf refers to the means through which the soul finds tranquility in the worship of Allah (SWT). It is keeping away from the evils of the self and lowering the attributes of the soul. Similarly it is clinging to the knowledge of the Reality and doing what is good, fulfilling of all promises and covenants from Allah and following the footsteps of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).¹ Tasawwuf, according to this definition, is nothing more than checking the excesses of the carnal soul. Its aim is the Reality² and its objective is serving humanity and the medium of achieving them is following the foot-steps of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

However, a common definition adopted from the prophetic tradition portraying Tasawwuf as Ihsan has now been accepted as the meaning of Tasawwuf. From whatever perspective that Tasawwuf is assessed, it is linked to consciousness of the Reality in mundane and spiritual activities which is the real meaning of Ihsan as explained by the Prophet (SAW) in his famous Hadith.³

The Sufis recognized Wilāyah and Karāmah as having their basis in Islam and they received favorable treatment from Sūfi writers from the early period. Specifically, one of the aspirations of a Sūfi is to attain, at least, the rank of Wilāyah.

Some contributions made by Jihad leaders are found in the area of Wilāyah (sainthood), Karāmah (charisma), Shafā'ah (intercession) and Ighāthah (succor). They displayed their wealth of experience which they acquired through association with Sūfi masters and study of different Sūfi works.⁴ However, this study will be limited to Wilāyah and Karāmah only.

¹ A.T. Iyad, *Al-Tasawwuf al-Islam*, Angilo al-Misriyyah, Cairo, 1970, p. 62.

² This in the realm of *Tasawwuf* and in this context refers to Allah (SWT).

³ Sayyid Hossein Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1975, p. 134. *Ihsan* is to adore Allah as thou didst see Him, and if thou don't see Him, He nonetheless sees thee. *Sahih Bukhari*, Book 6 :: Volume 60 :: Hadith 300.

⁴ Works of celebrated Sufis like al-Ghazali, al-Jili and Ibn al-Arabi were in circulation during the time.

To them Wilāyah does not mean piety and holiness, but it as well, means acting according to the wishes and commands of Allah. They identified two types of saints; the saint who acquires his Wilāyah through his own efforts and the saint whose Wilāyah was a gift from Allah. Karāmah, as perceived by the Jihadists, is a token of benevolence of Allah on His servants and could be bestowed by Allah (SWT) upon any chosen Muslim at any given time. However, it seems that they did not give much weight to practical aspect of Karāmah. In any case this paper concentrates on the understanding of Sokoto Jihad leaders on Wilāyah and Karāmah as well as their impact on the society.

II. CONCEPTUAL PURVIEW

2.1 Wilāyah (Sainthood)

The concept of Wilāyah which developed in the early period of Tasawwuf was associated with Ma'rifah⁵ by some Sūfis like Muhy al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabi. There is no significant distinction between an 'Arif billah and Walīyullāh since according to Ibn al-'Arabi both concepts signified perfection of man in relation to the Reality. He therefore considered a perfect man to be both an 'Arif and a Walī.⁶ A Walī is therefore an 'Arif who possess mystical knowledge and sometimes Karāmāt as privileges from Allah (SWT). **Such knowledge affords him the power to unite with Him thereby annihilating his human characteristics and adopting the attributes of the Reality.**⁷ However, scholars like Ibn Taymiyyah maintained that a Walī is a believing and pious Muslim who abides by the commands and prohibitions of Allah (SWT) that is; strict adherence to Shari'ah.⁸

The term Wilāyah has been used in both Qur'an and Hadith in which the Sūfi construed it to mean a class of people who loved and are being loved by Allah (SWT). For instance, Allah says in the Glorious Qur'an: God is the Protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light.⁹ The Sūfis asserted that the name was originally for Allah since it is one of His attributes. Therefore, when it is used in respect of His servants it denotes Muslims, who have faith in Allah and strictly follow His guidance as a result of which they realize their essential oneness with Him.¹⁰

In another verse, the term Awliyā' has been referred to as the friend of Allah.¹¹ Even though the verse is general in its assertion, the Sūfis found in it a reference to Karāmāt which are believed to be the reciprocal gesture of Allah (SWT) to His friends, Awliyā'.

The genesis of those terms Wilāyah and Awliyā' could be traced to both al-Hadith al-Qudsi (Holy Hadith) and al-Hadith al-Nabawi (prophetic Hadith). Allah (SWT) describes Awliyā' as His saints, but Known to Him alone¹². However, Allah in an unequivocal term referred to Awliyā' of Tasawwuf in another Hadith al-Qudsi which the Sūfis often quote to back-up the concept of Wilāyah thus:

Whoever shows enmity to my saints I declare on him my hostility.¹³

In this Hadith also, the readiness of Allah to protect and help His Awliyā' is evident. Perhaps, this is the basis for Sūfis' believe that a Walī is always in the protection of Allah. Meanwhile, enmity against them could be avenged by Allah either in this world or postponed to the Day of Judgment.

While calling upon his followers to associate themselves with Awliyā', Bello referred to a Hadith of the Prophet (SAW) to prove the importance attached to Awliyā' by the Prophet (SAW).¹⁴ This Hadith is believed to refer to

⁵ This signifies Gnosis; knowledge of the 'Reality', referred to in Sūfi circle as the knowledge of Allah.

⁶ A. E. Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyid Din Ibnul Arabi*, S. H. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1979, P. 93.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 94.

⁸ A. I. Qasim, *Fatawa ibn Taymiyyah*, p.62

⁹ A. Y. Ali, *The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary*, the Islamic Foundation, London, 1975, Q 2:257

¹⁰ M. I. 'Arabi, *Fusus al-Hikmah*, edited by Abul-Ala Affifi, Cairo, 1946, p. 51.

¹¹ Qur'an 10:62

¹² Annemarie Schemmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 203

¹³ M. Bukhari, (nd). *Sahih al-Bukhari*, transl. by Muhammad, M. K. Lebanon: Dar al-Arab Publishers. The same *Hadith* has been quoted by the *Jihad* leaders in support of the recognition accorded the Sufis by the Prophetic traditions.

¹⁴ *Musnad Imam Ahmad bn Hambal*, no. 785, also quoted by Y. A. Qadiri, "A critical edition and translation of Muhammad Bello's *Raf' al-Ishtibah fi al-Ta'alluq bi Allah wa bi Ahl Allah*", upp. M. A. Dissertation, University of Ibadan, 1978, p. 114

Awliyā', who are the friends of Muslims since they are the friends of Allah. Similar Ahadith have also been used by the Sūfis to justify the concept of Wilāyah in Tasawwuf.¹⁵

Ibn Taimiyyah observed that the Walī of Allah (is he who) draws near Him through conforming with and accepting what Allah loves. The Walī also approaches Allah with what He commands.¹⁶ According to this definition, Wilāyah does not only mean holiness or piety, rather it shows the determination of not only a Sūfi but also a believer in accomplishing the commands and prohibitions of Allah. He argues further that holiness and piety should be major qualities of a man designated as Walī. It is as well necessary to see in him strict adherence to Sharī'ah. This may be the reason behind disagreement between the Sūfi Shaykhs and those who considered themselves as orthodox Muslims on the definition of a Walī. However, the difference could be that the orthodox Muslims consider the Walī to be a believing and pious Muslim who abides by the commands and prohibitions of Allah while the Sūfis see him as just a special friend of Allah in whom he finds solace by living in Him.¹⁷ A pantheistic approach of the Sūfis indicates that a Walī is a Gnostic who attains the knowledge of the Reality. In other words, Wilāyah is here made synonymous with Ma'rifah in the sense that it is only the knowledge of Allah attained by a Sūfi that could make him a Walī.

Similar conception was upheld by Jurjan who describes a Walī as he who possesses mystical knowledge. Such a Walī has the power to bind and unbind as part of his Karāmah resulting from his Ma'rifah.¹⁸ However, scholars like Ibn Taymiyyah refuted the concept of Karāmāt as exclusive power of the Walī. According to him Karāmāt are not bestowed only on a Walī but also on aduwullah (foe of Allah) like pagans, people of the book and unbelievers generally. Here, Ibn Taymiyyah seems to equate magic with Karāmāt. While Mu'jizat of Prophets and Karāmāt of Awliyā' came from the same source (Allah), magic is normally linked to associates of Shaytān who in most cases are pagans and unbelievers.

2.2 Karāmah (charisma)

Karāmah is inevitably discussed when dealing with Wilāyah. Karāmāt¹⁹ which, in the early days of Islam, is referred to as Āyāt were synonymous with Mu'jizāt. However later generations have made distinction between the two terms. They ascribed Mu'jizāt (miracles) to Prophets and Karāmāt (charisma) to Awliyā'. But both terms have common characteristic which is defying the natural custom of events.²⁰ The major difference between them is that the Prophets in addition to their followers, believed that Mu'jizāt are from Allah, and believing in them by both the Prophets and their followers is obligatory. On the other hand, Karāmāt should necessarily emanate from Allah as magic comes from Shaytān, for the latter at times takes the form of the former in a Muslim. Therefore it is not obligatory upon a Muslim to believe in Karāmāt until they are found to be within the precinct of Sharī'ah.²¹

In the early period of Tasawwuf certain Sūfi Personalities performed what was considered as Karāmāt. A comprehensive survey was compiled by Aṭṭar in his famous book Tadhkirah al-Awliyā'. Such stories about Karāmāt of Awliyā' include those of Hasan al-Basrī, Rabī'ah al-Adawiyyah, Ibrāhim bn Adhama, Malik bn Dīnār and Habīb al-'Ajmi. Hasan al-Basrī for example was said to have converted a Jew to Islam by thrusting his hands into burning fire without being burnt.²² As for Malik bn Dīnār, he was reported to have been rescued by a fish from being thrown overboard in a ship when it held two golden coins in its mouth for him to pay its fare.²³

Another Karāmah attributed to Awliyā' generally is the belief that they are servants of Allah through whom He sends down His blessings to the universe. Through them it rains from its sky, and plants spring up in the places touched by their feet, and victories are won by Muslims at battle fields through their help.²⁴ In addition Awliyā' are believed to be governors of the universe, whose daily routine is that: Every night the Awtād must go round the whole universe, and if there is a place on which their eyes have not fallen, next day some imperfection will appear in that place, and they must inform the Qutb in order that he may fix his attention on the weak spot and that by his blessing the imperfection may be removed.²⁵

¹⁵ Y. A. Qadiri, *ibid*, p.115.

¹⁶ A. R. Ibn Qasim, *Fatawi Ibn Taymiyyah, op cit*, p.62.

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¹⁸ H. A.R. Gibb & Co., *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, Op cit., p.629.

¹⁹ Plural of *Karāmah*

²⁰ A. R. Ibn Qasim, *Fatawi Ibn Taymiyyah, op cit*, Pp. 311-312.

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 65.

²² A. J. Arberry, (trns.), *Muslim Saints and Mystics, Op cit*, p.24.

²³ *Ibid*, Pp. 26-27

²⁴ Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Op cit., p.203.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 203.

With the penetration of Tasawwuf into Africa, the concepts of Wilāyah and Karāmah permeated the circle of the Sūfis. For instance, the North African Sūfis developed the concept of Wilāyah and turned the tombs of great Awliyā' in towns and cities into visiting places. The most important and most revered ones are the tombs of Sidi Abu Madyan in Algeria and that of Al-'Arabi al-Darqawi, the founder of Darqawiyay Sūfi Order in Fas²⁶; just to mention a few.

III. AWLIYĀ' IN THE SOKOTO CALIPHATE

There is no doubt that the leaders of 19th century Jihad in Hausaland were revivalists. They were determined to revive Islam and stamp out innovations. In line with this, they sought to revive Islam in general and Tasawwuf in particular. Regarding Tasawwuf, they dealt with the concept of Wilāyah, Karāmah, Shafā'ah and Ighāthah in such a way that these concepts became admirable elements of Tasawwuf in their time. Their views on them are in line with what obtained, more especially in Qadiriyah in particular and Tasawwuf in general. In their definition of Wilāyah and Walī, they confined themselves to the precinct of definitions provided by early Sufi Shaykhs. They defined a Walī as an 'Arif bi Allah (the man who possesses mystical knowledge of Allah) in relation to perseverance in obedience to Allah, observing His commands and abstaining from prohibitions and the acts of engrossing in sensual delight and carnal appetite.²⁷

Even though Ma'rifah featured in the definition, the concluding aspect of the definition does not portray them as pantheists. For they replaced in the definition of Ma'rifah, the annihilation of human characteristics and adopting Divine attributes, with the obedience to command and abstinence from prohibitions of Allah. This is reflected in the definition 'Abdulqādir b. Gidādo gave of Wilāyah, which he defined: as light that Allāh casts in the mind of a believing servant as a result of which he finds pleasure in the worship of Allah at all times.²⁸

It is understandable that the perseverance of a Walī so described is not limited to only the observance of the obligatory duties, it also includes supererogatory deeds. Thus the servant abstains from indulging in pleasures and lusts thereby shunning both the major and minor sins.²⁹

The Jihād leaders might have the Wilāyah al-'Āmmah (general Sainthood) in mind while defining Wilāyah and Walī. This provides the ground to assume that Shaykh 'Uthmān, for that purpose, took the pains to disabuse the mind of his followers who attribute certain Karāmāt to him. The Jihadists classified Awliyā' among categories of specialized scholars who could commit mistakes even though they are protected by Allah. They further explained that the difference between a Prophet and a Walī is that the former is infallible while the latter is only protected by Allah. However, protection from Allah does not preclude committing mistake.³⁰

Therefore, it is part of pre-requisites for Wilāyah that a believing servant should persevere in the worship of Allah (SWT). A Walī never thinks that his attainment of Wilāyah could waive the obligatory duties placed on him by Allah (SWT). Such a notion is described by Shaykh 'Uthmān as a forbidden innovation.³¹ Since Wilāyah in part is attainable through piety and virtuous deeds, it then follows that a servant should, after attaining Wilāyah, continue to observe his spiritual exercises. 'Abdullāh has, in his Ḍiya' al-Qawā'id, provided the procedural ways of acquiring Wilāyah. He argues that a novice should observe his spiritual activities meticulously. He should also repent and seek Allah's forgiveness whenever he commits a sin.³²

These procedural ways of attaining Wilāyah indicate that total observance of Shari'ah and Tarīqah is indispensable. They stress the knowledge and practice of Shari'ah by a believer. Such a believer is then rewarded by Allah with the light of Wilāyah and protection which encompass his associates. This is in line with a prophetic tradition quoted by Muhammad Bello in which the Prophet (SAW) explained that the presence of such people of Allah in a village protects its inhabitants from the wrath of Allah.³³

The Jihād leaders did not only provide the prerequisites for Wilāyah, but also enumerated the characteristics of the Awliyā' which distinguish them from ordinary believers. In his Tariq al-Jannah, Shaykh 'Uthmān enumerated five characteristics with which a Walī could be distinguished. He also provided the characteristic of Ghāfil (an inattentive person) and Munāfiq (hypocrite) which markedly opposed the characteristics of Awliyā'. According to him:...the characteristics of people of Allah are five. (They are)

²⁶ H. A. R Gibb & co. *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, Op cit, p.630.

²⁷ A. I. Foduye, *Shukr al-Ihsān fi Minan al-Mannān*

²⁸ *Al-Lawani' al-Nuraniyyah*, ff. 10a and 11a.

²⁹ *Ibid*

³⁰ U. B. Foduye, Ta'dhir al-Ikhwan min Iddi'ai' al-Mahdiyyah, Op cit., ff. 9a and b.

³¹ U. B. Foduye, *Ihyā' al-Sunnah wa Ikhmād al-Bid'ah*, Op cit, p.235.

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³³ Y. A. Qadri, "A critical edition and translation of Muhammad Bello's *Raf' al Ishtibahah fi ta'alluq bi Allah wa bi ahl Allah*", Op cit., p.115.

quietness, remembrance (of Allah), thankfulness (on the bounty of Allah), abstinence (from worldly enjoyment) and increase in good deeds.³⁴

The opposite of these characteristics which are five also in respect of Ghāfil are inattentiveness, forgetfulness, laughter, taking pleasure in rest and slumber. The remaining five in the case of Munāfiq are love of pleasure, hatred of devotion, oath-breaking, cunning and hypocrisy.³⁵

From these characteristics elucidated by the Shaykh, it is clear that the five characteristics of the people of Allah could help in identifying the genuine Awliyā' as against imposters more especially in the contemporary Nigeria, where materialism and love of ease have been indiscriminately accepted as ways of life. They can also disabuse the minds of those who expect super natural deeds from a Sūfi before his Wilāyah is accepted as opined by the Shaykh.³⁶

IV. WILĀYAH AND KARĀMĀT IN THE CALIPHATE

Undoubtedly, the Jihād leaders were conversant with the ramifications of Wilāyah. This could result from their contact with various works on this aspect of Tasawwuf. It is evident from their works that they had read widely about eminent Awliyā' and their activities in both early and later periods of Islam. Some of these personalities whose names occur in the writings of the Jihadists include Hasan al-Basrī(d. 728), Junayd al-Baghdād (d. 910), Imam Muhammad Abu Hamid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), Shaykh 'Abdulqādir al-Jaylani (d.1166), Ahmad al-Rifa'i (d. 1178), Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 1140) and recently Shaykh Ahmad al-Tijānī (d. 1815). Their knowledge of Tasawwuf and practical involvement in it may be enough ground to assert that whoever the Jihadists described as a Sūfi or Walī should have merited the rank.

4.1 Shaykh 'Uthmān bn Foduye

Shaykh 'Uthmān bn Foduye occupied an exalted position in Wilāyah as well as Karāmah whenever anything on Tasawwuf in the Caliphate is to be discussed. His early life portrayed him as a prospective Walī of high degree. He occupied himself in learning and later in teaching and preaching when he attained the age of twenty.³⁷ His reform initiative marked him as a pious man, and his attack on the misdeeds of the venal scholars and corrupt rulers of Hausaland showed his concern for proper rule according to the dictates of Islam. But his refusal to accept the gift of Bawa Jan Gwarzo at Magamī is a credit that characterizes his ascetic life. Gidādo b. Laima has recorded a lot of such characteristics in his Raud al-Jinān.³⁸

Earlier, Shaykh Waldidah, a Bornu scholar and Walī, had foretold the emergence of Shaykh 'Uthmān as a Walī. Likewise, 'Ummu Hani foretold the advent of a Walī of Allah who was later identified as the Shaykh.³⁹ From this information, it will be no exaggeration to conclude that Shaykh 'Uthmān was among the first category of Awliyā' whose Wilāyah was by Grace of Allah. Muhammad Bello, in his *Infāq al-Maysūr*, dedicated a chapter to eulogize his father in which he enumerated his saintly virtues. Among such virtues were his strong determination and love of constant devotion, trustworthiness and leadership in scholarship and teaching. He was unrivaled in the characteristics of Wilāyah. He was so humble that he considered himself as inferior to insects. He was also described as the Qutb of his time.⁴⁰ According to Muhammad Bello:

(Allah) bestowed upon him perfection in Wilāyah and ability to overcome natural custom. (Also) Allah bestowed upon him the knowledge of the unseen and manifested through him wondrous things and Karāmāt...⁴¹ Of all the Awliyā' in the Sokoto Caliphate, Shaykh 'Uthmān b. Foduye is the only Walī whose Karāmāt had spread widely in the Caliphate. Almost all those who wrote on his personality ascribed one form of Karāmah or another to him. The Karāmāt ascribed to him were so numerous that his virtues were confused with his Karāmāt. Indeed, the Shaykh had refuted the performance of Karāmāt attributed to him like covering a distance in a short time, walking on water and flying in the air and power to manipulate the jinns to his advantage and use.⁴² According to him, all these are forbidden innovations.⁴³ However, his criticism was more on those who claim Karāmāt without attaining the status.

The most common identified characteristics of Awliyā' are found with the Shaykh. Nonetheless, some of the Awliyā' who knew themselves always, out of piety and humility, refused to be identified as such. Shaykh

³⁴ U. B. Foduye, *Tariq al-Jannah*, Op cit., f.7b.

³⁵ *Ibid*, f. 7b.

³⁶ U. B. Foduye, *Hisn al-Afhām*, n.p., n.d., p.71.

³⁷ M. Bello, *Infāq al-Maysur*, Op Cit., p. 30.

³⁸ The work has been locally printed and is available in the Centre for Islamic Studies, UDUS, Sokoto.

³⁹ M. Bello, *Infāq al-Maysur*, Op Cit., Pp. 11-12.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, Pp. 40-41

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 41.

⁴² U. B. Foduye, *Tahdir al-Ikhwan*, Op Cit., ff. 14b-15a.

⁴³ U. B. Foduye, *Ihya' al Sunnah wa Ikmat al-Bid'ah*, Op Cit., p. 234.

‘Uthmān along this line may have denied the Karāmāt ascribed to him. Possibly, out of humility and perhaps due to resultant effect of the praises associated with Karāmāt he did not see anything special in them. It cannot be ruled out that his own perception of Karāmāt was the strict and practical observance of the Shari’ah. Moreover, the Shaykh’s goal at the initial stage of his Jihad was revival of the Islamic spirit, then the establishment of an Islamic State which was successfully achieved. It is not out of place therefore to assume that he felt that the sentiment of people in respect of Karāmāt overshadowed their desire to see a proper Islamic State functioning, which he felt, may lead the people astray. This may be responsible for his criticism against the Karāmāt in order to reduce the importance attached to them.

In the light of above, it is reasonable to assert that the Shaykh had refuted the Karāmāt attributed to him for certain purposes, and may have really performed them as found in the written sources available to researchers. For the avoidance of doubt, some of his Karāmāt as reported by eye-witnesses of his daily activities could here be cited.

Muhammad Bello observed that:

...and the Shaykh had Karāmāt which could neither be counted nor could be written except in a separate treatise...⁴⁴

Since Bello could not relate those Karāmāt in *Infāq al-Maysūr*, he promised to compile a separate work to treat them. But then there has not been a report on an independent work on Karāmāt of the Shaykh from Bello. So, it can be assumed that he was not chanced to fulfill his promise. There is, however, such a compilation by Bello’s vizier, Gidādo b. Laima who may have compiled it with the consent of Bello. The work entitled *Raudh al-Jinān fī Dhikr ba’d Manāqib Shaykh ‘Uthmān* examines the Karāmāt performed by the Shaykh.

Gidādo b. Laima maintained that the Karāmāt of Shaykh ‘Uthmān started at a young age. He related an episode in which the Shaykh was sent by his father, who was in Degel, to Marnona to fetch a book for him.⁴⁵ The father was then going to the Mosque to observe Zuhr prayer when he sent the young ‘Uthmān. Upon the father’s return from the mosque, he found Shaykh ‘Uthmān at home with the book. When asked by the father whether he had sent jinns to fetch the book for him, the Shaykh replied that he tracked. When Shaykh ‘Uthmān’s mother was asked at Marnona, she confirmed that the Shaykh had actually gone to Marnona while she was performing ablution, in preparation for Zuhr prayers.⁴⁶ This act at a very young age, may serve as a pointer to karāmah of a Walī who was bestowed with Wilāyah as Grace from Allah.

It was reported by the Shaykh himself that Jinns used to appear to him when he was a boy and continued to do so even when he was old. He however cautioned that they did that out of their own wish and he had no power of bringing them into focus or manipulating them.⁴⁷ Based on the voluntary appearance of the Jinns, Gidādo b. Lema and others asserted that the Shaykh manipulated the Jinns to his advantage, whereas the Shaykh made it clear that they appeared to him out of their own desire and that he had no control over them. This suggests that, since he had no control over their appearance to him and could not as well manipulate them, the Shaykh had every reason to refute the Karāmāh ascribed to him.

There are however, two important instances relevant to this discussion. The first one was reported by Gidādo in which he claimed that some people requested the Shaykh to show them the Jinns. He took them to a mountain called Kwankwanbilo at sunset where he showed the Jinns in their true colour. The people were gripped with fear and they returned home perplexed.⁴⁸ The second occasion was in connection with the fall of Alkalāwa, the Gobir capital city. Bello said that when the city was captured and Yunfa, the king of Gobir killed, he dispatched a messenger to the Shaykh to inform him of the victory of the jihadists. Before the arrival of the messenger, the Shaykh had got information about the success from the Jinns.⁴⁹ These ideas are reports of eyewitnesses about the Karāmāt of the Shaykh.

Shaykh ‘Uthmān is said to have possessed supernatural power to “unmake” or “loose” natural occurrences like his mentor Shaykh ‘Abdulqādir al-Jaylāni. It was reported that Shaykh al-Jaylāni had once stopped a cloud from raining while he was preaching in order to retain his audience who might disperse when rain started.⁵⁰ An identical Karāmāh was attributed to Shaykh ‘Uthmān by Gidāda b. Lema. He asserted that

⁴⁴ M. Bello, *Infāq al-Maysur*, *Op Cit.*, p. 187.

⁴⁵ Marnona is perhaps a long distance from Degel which could not be expected to have been covered within a short period of time.

⁴⁶ M. Bello, *Infāq al-Maysur*, *Op Cit.*, p. 187.

⁴⁷ U. B. Foduye, *Tahdir al-Ikhwan*, *Op Cit.*, ff. 15a and b.

⁴⁸ G. B. Lema, *Raudh al Jinān*, *Op cit*, p. 3.

⁴⁹ M. Bello, M. Bello, *Infāq al-Maysūr*, *Op Cit.*, p. 116.

⁵⁰ M. Bello, *Fath al-Bāb fī Dhikr ba’d Khasā’is Shaykh ‘Abdulqādir*, *Op cit.*, pp. ff.6a and b.

Shaykh ‘Uthmān had one day gone out to preach to people at night when he saw a cloud gathering up. The Shaykh:

...said to the cloud, do you want to prevent me from preaching?⁵¹

When the Shaykh uttered this statement, the cloud dissolved and it was raining at both sides of the Shaykh’s venue of preaching.⁵² Thus the Shaykh completed his preaching without any disturbance and without any drop of rain at the venue. This Karāmah may be assumed to have taken place since there has been precedence in the past in respect of Shaykh ‘Abdulqādir al-Jaylānī, a Sūfi saint like Shaykh ‘Uthmān.

Some of the Karāmat reported about the Shaykh illustrate consequences inherent in defying the orders of Awliyā. For example, when Bawa consented to the Shaykh’s request to call people in Gobir territory to the true religion of Islam in lieu of Bawa’s offer, the king requested the Shaykh to pray for his success in his battle against Maradi. The Shaykh prayed for the success of king Bawa but quickly remarked that the king should not proceed beyond Maradi. However, when king Bawa captured, he jokingly exclaimed:

This is the work (Karāmah) of Shaykh, let us see the work (prowess) of our spears.⁵³

Due to his deviant attitude to the orders of a Walī, the king’s army was routed and the king, later, died as a result of injuries he sustained in the encounter at Dankeshe.⁵⁴

These and several other accounts may indicate the authenticity of the Karāmah even though it may, to an ordinary man, appear very impossible. They equally portrayed Shaykh ‘Uthmān as a Walī capable of performing Karāmāt. That could account for much reverence showed the Shaykh even though dead. His name was invoked by people who found themselves in perilous situation. Although the Jama’atu Izalatil Bid’ah wa Iqamatis Sunnah has been condemning such reverence accorded Awliyā and likened it to Shirk (polytheism), some Muslims invoke his name for assistance⁵⁵ for as little tribulation as stumbling. The Shaykh’s tomb attracts Muslims from the Northern parts of Nigeria. It is even considered by some Muslims as a prelude to Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah). Therefore intending pilgrims must visit the tomb and some tomb of his children and associates before going to the Holy land.⁵⁶

4.2 ‘Abdullāh bn Foduye

Shaykh ‘Abdullāh bn Foduye is also a noted Walī of high repute produced by the Sokoto Caliphate. He was the younger brother of Shaykh ‘Uthmān and his right hand man in the execution of the Jihād. ‘Abdullāh had written quite extensively in the area of Tasawwuf. One of such areas is his exposition of what constitute Karāmah. He maintained that the befitting Karāmah of a Walī is strict adherence to the Qur’an and Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) and the path of the forbearers of this ‘Ummah.⁵⁷ By this exposition, ‘Abdullāh might be referring to his own experience since he was known to have strictly adhered to the Qur’an, Sunnah of the Prophet and the path of forbearers. Like his brother, Abdullāh did not claim Karāmāh because a Walī:

... does not claim it (and when it occurs) he does not declare it (because) it could be a deception and stratagem.⁵⁸

He also believed that a Walī is free to discuss his Karāmah with people of his position and even those who are not Awliyā’ if he thinks that he can win their heart to obedience of Allāh. But if he could not, he should refrain from it.⁵⁹

This could possibly be the reason why his Karāmāt were not reported. There were however variety of Karāmāt discussed by ‘Abdullāh which could be attributed to only a Walī. Part of these Karāmāt include response to supplication of a Walī, appearance of food and water to a Walī in times of hunger and thirst as well as covering of a long distance in a short time. Others include deliverance from enemy and collecting a message from an invisible caller.⁶⁰ At least some of these Karāmāt are known to have manifested in the life of Shaykh ‘Abdullāh.

Sometimes, in the course of his preaching tours in Zamfara, Shaykh ‘Uthmān was invited by king Bawa to his court. There were in the company of Shaykh ‘Uthmān, ‘Abdullāh and ‘Umar al-Kammu. The king’s intention was to assassinate them. He therefore threw naphtha to burn them. They were however, miraculously

⁵¹ G. B. Lema, *Raudh al Jinān, Op cit*, p. 3.

⁵² *Ibid*, pp.26-27.

⁵³ *Ibid*, pp. 36-37

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 36-37

⁵⁵ This is called *Igatha* which will, hopefully, be part of subsequent publications.

⁵⁶ The places of visit include Sokoto, Wurno and Gwandu.

⁵⁷ A. B. Foduye, *Maṭīyyah al-Zād ilā al-Ma’ād*, n.p., n.d., p. 32

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 32.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 4.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 32-33.

rescued and the naphtha back-fired.⁶¹ This Karāmah was originally attributed to the Shaykh, of course, the two companions could not be denied of that Karāmah. The second episode shows ‘Abdullāh deserting the camp of the Jama’ah⁶² when he felt that the Jihad was becoming rowdy. He travelled east ward, accompanied by five of his close companions. He narrates:

...we spent three nights and could not see any body and not even the track of someone except the track of many elephants in that jungle, until Allah made us reach human habitation.⁶³

He had made the journey in the jungle that an ordinary man could not have dreamt of coming near let alone passing through it. This could be Karāmah bestowed upon him.⁶⁴

‘Abdullāh recollected, in his *Matiyyah al-Zād*,⁶⁵ certain Karāmāt of some chosen people of Allāh through ages. ‘Abdullāh has done this in order to demonstrate his reverence for Awliyā’ and that Karāmāt cut across religion and time. He enumerated Karāmāt like the provision of the physical and spiritual sustenance to Maryam, the mother of Prophet Isa (AS) in somewhat isolated temple.⁶⁶ The case of the People of the Cave was cited. The people, he said, slept for a long period and were awakened by Allāh. In the course of their stay in the cave, the Divine power kept turning them over to right and left, and were Divinely sustained throughout the duration of their sleep.⁶⁷ The miraculous event in the palace of Prophet Sulayman (A.S.) becomes another example of Karāmāt. He narrated the wonderful way in which the throne of Bilqis, the Queen of Sheba was transported from Saba’ (Sheba) to the court of Prophet Sulayman in the twinkling of an eye, by an adept scholar, who it was said possessed *Ism’Al-Ilah al-A’zam*.⁶⁸ ‘Abdullāh considered these Karāmāt as famous ones worthy of being contemplated upon.

In addition to these famous Karāmāt of the past, ‘Abdullāh observes in the work that there are other categories of Karāmāt which were performed in the past and could also be performed in the present time by a Walī. Some Karāmāt like walking on water by a Walī as if he is walking on the ground⁶⁹ or in the sky like a bird⁷⁰ and the provision of food and water to a hungry and thirsty man respectively could still be performed nowadays.⁷¹ Other Karāmāt include response to supplication, Divine help in times of need, communication with inanimate and disappearance from sight by a Walī when recognized by people.⁷²

4.3 Sultān Muhammad Bello bn ‘Uthmān bn Foduye

Muhammad Bello is another outstanding Walī of the Sokoto Caliphate. His career in Tasawwuf started when he was young under the care of his father the Shaykh, and his uncle ‘Abdullāh. According to Wazīr Junayd, Muhammad Bello was influenced by the Divine light (of Wilāyah) in the Shaykh. He was also covered by the grace and blessing of the Shaykh. He, as a result of these favours, became familiar with Divine secrets and intricate issues of life resulting from the Divine felicity he acquired and Sufi upbringing.⁷³ Bello was also gifted with understanding of the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) which is one of the characteristics of Awliyā’. According to Bello:

Surely the most High has opened my sense of understanding of His noble Book and bestowed upon me the ability to comprehend and become familiar with its meaning. He had also made me to comprehend the extraneous and substance of its meaning⁷⁴

⁶¹ A. B. Foduye, *Tazyīn al-Warakāt, Op Cit.*, p. 29.

⁶² This is a term referring to the community of *Shaykh* ‘Uthman and indeed, his followers.

⁶³ A. B. Foduye, *Tazyīn al-Warakāt, Op Cit.*, p. 45.

⁶⁴ The point here is that the journey was made simple for him, and the harmful wild animals were tamed from harming him and his companions.

⁶⁵ A. I. Foduye, *Matiyyah al-Zad, Op Cit.*, p. 33.

⁶⁶ Q3:37

⁶⁷ Q18:9-26

⁶⁸ Q27:22-40

⁶⁹ Such *Karāmāt* appeared with Malik Ibn Dinar an early *Sufi* and is also ascribed to Muhammad Sambo of the Sokoto Caliphate

⁷⁰ Both *Shaykh* ‘Uthman and his son Muhammad Sambo were said to have possessed this *Karāmah*

⁷¹ Umar al-Futl was alleged to have offered to provide water through miraculous means to thirsty striking army of Muhammad Bello in a desert on the condition that Bello accepts Tijaniyyah

⁷² Abdullahi bn Foduye, *Matiyyah al-Zad ila al-ma’ad, op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁷³ Wazir Junayd, *Urf al-Rihan, op .cit.*, p. 33.

⁷⁴ AlHajj, Malam Boyi, *Nubdh an Tarikh Amir al-Mu'minin Muhammad Bello*, Seminar on Life and Works of Muhammad Bello, C.I.S., University of Sokoto, April, 1985.

Wazīr Junayd in his book 'Urf al-Rihan reported that Bello was said to have attained the status of Gawth and had risen to the highest rank attained in Tasawwuf. This status was further said to have afforded him to perform Karāmāt which earned him the nick name "the sign of Allah in His universe".⁷⁵ Performance of Karāmāt by Bello could not out rightly be disputed since some of them were reported. But the attainment of Gawth status by Bello seems to be an exaggerated praise by those very close to him, because in all the available sources, it seems only this source had reported it.

Bello was reported to have performed a number of Karāmāt. 'AbdulQādir b. Gidādo had related three of such Karāmāt, out of which, Bello's search for Ism'Al-llah al-A'zam is first on the list. He was said to have spent seven years in search of the Greatest Name which he realized through the help of his father, the Shaykh.⁷⁶ It is alpha and omega of Karāmāt, since according to some; with it everything is possible for a Walī. This seems to suggest that any Walī in possession of that Name can perform any Karāmāh.

The second Karāmāh reported about Bello is in relation to a certain 'Alim in Sokoto who was reciting the Qur'an. He was however disgusted to observe that despite all his efforts in the service of the Our'ān, Sultān Bello did not know his place and would not, therefore, appreciate his efforts. But to the surprise of this 'Alim Bello visited him at that very hour and informed him that he had been told about him.⁷⁷ This confirms the Karāmāh attributed to him, that he could hear something that was said in a faraway place. It is a typical Karāmāh of his father whom he had said could hear anything said afar away.⁷⁸ Similarly, this had happened to Saria, a commander of the Muslim forces during the caliphate of 'Umar b. al-Khattāb while the latter was undertaking war against the Persians. 'Umar who was in Madīnah saw, through Kashf the maneuvers of the non-Muslim army to surprise Saria's army from behind. 'Umar ordered in a loud voice from Madīnah, to keep his own from a mountain. Saria heard and complied.⁷⁹

The third Karāmāh attributed to Bello by AbdulQādir b. Gidādo shows that the former could predict an event which in reality will happen precisely as he foretold. According to AbdulQādir: Among them (is) what he told my father: that every ear (person) would hear the fall of the fortress of Konni by the Grace of Almighty God. The event took place exactly as he had foretold.⁸⁰ This could be possible since it has earlier been asserted that Muhammad Bello had possessed the Great Name of Allah with which everything is possible.

Muhammad Bello's writings on Tasawwuf include the aspect of Wilāyah and Karāmāh. In his book Raf' al-Ishtibah, attention is focused on eminent Awliyā' and their Karāmāt, i.e. Abdul-Qadir al-Jaylani, Ahmad al-Badawi and Ahmad al-Tijani. His inclusion of Ahmad al-Tijanl in his discussion demonstrates Bello's acknowledgement of the Wilāyah of not only Qadiri Awliyā but also all Awliyā', who had been elevated by Allah to that status regardless of their Sufi affinity. He concluded his observation by saying: When Allah intends to acquaint you with a Walī from His Awliyā', He conceals his human nature from your eyes and allows you to see his special characteristics.⁸¹

However, Muhammad Bello reserved special attention for the Walī of his Sufi Order. His book "Al-Fath al-Bāb fī Dhikr Ba'd Khasā'is al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir" is a biographical work dealing specifically with historical, spiritual and Karāmāt of Shaykh Abdul-Qādir al-Jaylanl. In this work, Bello related the special characteristics of Abdul-Qādir and eulogized his saving powers of when alive or dead. The efforts of Bello in this respect had resulted in the production of a work that contains information about the Awliyā' in Hausaland before the advent of Shaykh Uthman. His book Infāq al-Maysūr is a mine of such information.

4.4 Muhammad Sambo

Among the notable Sufis of the Sokoto Caliphate identified as a Walī was Muhammad Sambo, the son of Shaykh 'Uthmān and elder brother to Muhammad Bello. Muhammad Sambo seemed to have not been saddled with administrative responsibility perhaps because of his unreserved attachment to Tasawwuf. He was known to have studied Insān al-Kāmil from the Shaykh,⁸² and was also among the Sufi students trained by the

⁷⁵ Wazir Junayd, *Urf al-Rihan, OP-Cit.*, p. 33

⁷⁶ S. U. Balogun, The works of Abdul-Qadir b. Gidado in the context of Nigerian History, *Op.Cit.*, pp. 169-170

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 170-171

⁷⁸ M. Bello, *Infāq al-Maysur, op.cit.*, p. 41.

⁷⁹ This could be one of the bases upon which the Sufis developed *Karāmāt* especially the *Karāmāh* of *Kashf*.

⁸⁰ S. U. Balogun, *The Works of Abdul-Qādir b. Gidādo in the context of Nigerian History, Op. Cit.*, p. 171

⁸¹ M. Bello, *Raf' al-Ishtibah, Op. Cit.*, f. 13a

⁸² M. Bello, *Infāq al-Maysur.*, *Op.Cit.*, p. 188

Shaykh.⁸³ He was described by Muhammad Bello as a Sufi who combined Sharī'ah and Haqīqah (reality) and a strict believer in 'Uzlah.⁸⁴

His practice of Zuhd and fear of Allah have been described in *Salwat al-Ahzān* as very deep of the highest rank. Most of his recollections were through vigil and hunger, and he preferred remembrance through the spirit to that of supererogatory and recitation of litanies.⁸⁵

He trained his students in his mysterious school comprising spirits and Jinns. It was in this school that Muhammad Sambo used to disclose to his students and companions what he wished. The presence of corporal body was not necessary in the school.⁸⁶ For a Walī who had attained his rank of spirituality, could be anywhere willingly or unwillingly. It may not be a surprise to him when he found himself in the presence of the Reality. Sambo's experience was facilitated by the light of Muhammad (S.A.W.). He had adopted a habit of fusing together Sharī'ah and Tariqah and concealing the Divine secrets revealed to him from the public who had not reached that stage.⁸⁷

One of the close students and companions of Muhammad Sambo was 'Abdul-Qādir bn al-Mustafa. He was very close to him that he molded his own way of thought according to the thought of his teacher and mentor. This was described by Kani as blind adoption of Muhammad Sambo's way of life.⁸⁸ Kani might have in mind the tributes paid by Abdul-Qādir to Sambo by describing him as the teacher in the school of mystery where the former meet and acquires knowledge and experience from the latter. In any case Abdul-Qādir's respect and reverence for his mentor may have some effect on his life-style. This influence does not portray Abdul-Qādir as a mere imitator. Because this could mean that his knowledge, wealth of experience in Tasawwuf were of no use to him. A special companion of Muhammad Sambo worthy of mention here is his brother Muhammad al-Bukhāri Ibn Shaykh 'Uthmān. He was also a student of Sambo in the latter's mysterious school.⁸⁹ Muhammad al-Bukhāri described Sambo as Qutb who got the light of Wilāyah from his father the Shaykh⁹⁰

When Muhammad Sambo died, Abdul-Qādir composed a eulogy in which he described the virtues of Sambo. He dwelt on the ascetic life of this great Walī who had forsaken power and material wealth. He also enumerated the peculiarities of Sambo like his knowledge and mystical vision, but lamented the loss of knowledge and Sūfī training as a result of the death of the great Walī.⁹¹ Muhammad Sambo's Karāmāt have, in Abdul-Qādir's works, been related as follows:

Allah has given him the Karāmāt of walking in the air and on water... he had also seen remainder of the white earth (clay from which Adam was created) ... also from the Karāmāt of this leader is that Allah has clothed him with secret...⁹²

4.5 Muhammad Al-Bukhari

Muhammad al-Bukhāri was comparatively a Walī who received instruction in Tasawwuf from Muhammad Sambo.⁹³ He was endowed with visions and ecstasy and was among the Awliyā possessed by Divine power. It was said that he used to see Khidr and talk with him in his sleep and state of trance. Abdul-Qādir bn al-Mustafa, who was a student of Bukhāri reported that the latter had told him wonderful things.⁹⁴

4.6 Other Awliyā in the Caliphate

Other Awliyā' in the Caliphate whose Wilāyah were recognized include Umar al-Kammu, the confident, friend and vizier of the Shaykh. He occupied an important position in the State and was known to be a Sūfī and student of the latter.⁹⁵ His piety and inclination to Tasawwuf might have been influenced by his

⁸³ *Raud al-Jinan, Op.Cit.*, p. 72

⁸⁴ M. Bello, *Infaq al-Maysur.*, op.cit., p. 188

⁸⁵ *Salwat al-Ahzan, Op.Cit.*, f. 2b

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, f. 3a.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, ff. 6° and 9a

⁸⁸ A. M. Kani, "*The Life and Time of Abdul-Qadir Ibn al-Mustafa*", op.cit., pp.123-121

⁸⁹ A. I. al-Mustafa" *Salwat al-Ahzan, op.cit.*, f. 5a.

⁹⁰ Wazir Junayd, *Urf al-Rihan, Op.Cit.* p. 80

⁹¹ A. I. al-Mustafa" *Salwat al-Ahzan, op.cit.* f. 3b

⁹² *Ibid*, f. 2b

⁹³ *Ibid*, f. 4b

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, f. 4b

⁹⁵ G. B. Lema, *Raud al-Jinan, Op.Cit.*, p. 72

close association with the Shaykh. He was in the company of the Shaykh when the latter performed some of his Karāmāt, when king Yunfa attempted his life⁹⁶ and when he went to Gonja.⁹⁷

The chief Imām, Muhammad Sambo, who was the Imām of the Shaykhs Mosque, was also regarded as a saint. He was described by Muhammad Bello as both a Walī and Companion of the Shaykh.⁹⁸

‘Ālim Muhammad Zangi and Muhammad Kwairanga were also reported to be Awliyā. The latter was described as Majdhūb (one who is in trance). He was said to have been serving as messenger between the Prophet (S.A.W.) and the Shaykh. It was said that he was the first person to bring solutions from the Prophet (SAW) to the Shaykh. He was also present when Shaykh ‘Uthmān met and talked to a visiting Walī from Baghdād.⁹⁹

From what has so far been discussed, it is evident that Sokoto Caliphate was not only endowed with Sūfis but also with accomplished Awliyā some of whom had performed Karāmāt and some had also contributed to the development of the concept of Wilāyah through their numerous writings. Since it will not be possible to mention all the Awliyā’ the few ones discussed here would illustrate the assumption that there were Awliyā’ in the Caliphate.

V. CONCLUSION

From writings of the Jihād leaders, it is evident that they believed in the concepts of Wilāyah and Karāmah. Infaq al-Maysūr, for example contains reference to saints in Hausa land and adjacent lands. Even among the Jihād leaders some had been identified as saints. Shaykh ‘Uthmān bn Foduye was a recognized saint to whom Karāmāt were attributed. Some of his students and associates were also reported to have performed Karāmāt. Their discussions on various aspects of the saving power possessed by saints and the ability to render help in this world (Ighāthah) give the impression that they believed in what could be called sainthood.

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⁹⁶ A. I. Foduye, *Tazyin al-Waraqāt, Op.Cit.*, p. 29.

⁹⁷ G. B. Lema, *Raud al-Jinan, Op.Cit.* pp.5-6

⁹⁸ M. Bello, *Infaq al-Maysur, Op. Cit.*, p. 189.

⁹⁹ One who is in trance is someone who has been pulled towards the Reality. Kwairanga referred to *Raud al-Jinan, Op.Cit.*, pp. 8 - 10.