

The Holders of the Supreme Hierarchy of Awliya in Light of Prophetic Ahadits

Introduction

One of the fundamental teachings in sufism lies in its recognition on the existence of the so called hierarchy of *awliyâ'*. It is for the sufis as real as our hand. This is so because, according to Ibn 'Arabî, one of the greatest contributors in the systematization of this notion, God will always appoint certain people from time to time to occupy specific post in the office of *walâyah* in order for them to accomplish certain tasks in either the world of the unseen (*'alam al-ghayb*) or that of the witnessing (*'alam al-syahâdah*).¹

Despite of its long lasting position in the kernel of sufi teachings, one should bear in mind that since especially the thirteen century onward there are criticisms and oppositions toward sufis' idea of the hierarchy of *awliyâ'*. The relentless campaigns against this doctrine by the celebrated famous Hanbalite jurist, Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1328), is a perfect example in this regard. His writings, which inspire others to follow his track, have been used from generation to generation up to our time to condemn it. One of the critiques centers around its illegitimate foundation, i.e., the fancy, wild imagination of the sufis which bears no legitimation from either the Qur'an and prophetic *ahâdîts*.

In what follows an attempts will be made to analyze the sufis' hierarchy of *awliyâ'* in light of prophetic *ahâdîts*. The idea is simply to figure out as many statements/reports as possible about this hierarchy in

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Salah satu doktrin tasawuf yang terkenal adalah ajarannya tentang hirarki para wali yang dipercayakan Allah SWT kepada sejumlah awliyâ' seperti Qutb, Imâm, Abdâl, Nujabâ' dan Nuqabâ'. Dalam sejarahnya diketahui, bahwa doktrin ini telah disanggah berulang kali oleh para muhadditsûn dan fuqahâ' dari satu generasi ke generasi berikutnya karena pertimbangan bahwa doktrin ini tidak memiliki dasar yang kuat dalam Islam, salah satunya dalam hadits. Kalaupun ada, maka kebanyakan dari hadits-hadits tersebut bersifat lemah dan bahkan palsu. Tulisan ini bertujuan melacak kebenaran pertimbangan ini. Dari kajian yang telah dilakukan didapati, bahwa selain dari banyaknya hadits-hadits Nabi s.a.w. yang bisa dipakai sebagai sandaran doktrin ini, para ulama hadits yang mu'tabar pun banyak yang menerima doktrin ini sebagai suatu kepastian yang tidak bisa diabaikan.

Keyword: tasawuf/sufi, hirarki awliyâ', qutb, imâm, abdâl, nujabâ' dan nuqabâ', akbyâr, 'alâ qalb, dan ulama hadits.

the scattered sayings of the prophet. By turning our attention to these *ahâdîts*, it is hope that we are able to seize the foundation of this sufi doctrine and to measure its validity in so far as Islamic teachings are concerned.

Apart from the concluding remarks, this paper will be divided into three sub-topics, namely a review over the doctrine of the hierarchy of *awliyá'*, the status of prophetic *ahádíts* used by the sufis to support their idea on this subject, and some underlying reasons which drive them to keep holding the idea underconcerned.

The Hierarchy of Awliya at Glance

Hierarchy means stratum or level. In relation to the *awliyá'*, the terms generally signifies a descending structure of this traditionally believed spiritual champions in the office of *waláyah*. It perhaps looks like a board of an organization with all its departments and operational units.

The doctrine on the hierarchy of *awliyá'* is not a new teaching in sufism. Our investigation on a number of specific terms like *al-qutb*, *al-akhyár*, *al-abdál*, *al-nujabá'*, *al-nuqabá'*, *al-mubadditsún* etc. from the works of the earlier sufis,² which are used by the sufis in their discussion on this hierarchy, demonstrate that this notion has been on the air ever since the time of Hasan al-Basrí,

one of the prominent figures in the history of the spiritual path. However, we have to satisfy ourselves with the fact that not until the coming of Ibn 'Arabí, these sufis never come with a conclusive structure of the hierarchy of *awliyá'*.

Being the first in formulating the idea of the hierarchy of *awliyá'* in the history of sufism, Ibn 'Arabí provided a special place in his famous *Futúhát* to elucidate the notion of the hierarchy of *awliyá'*.³ His presentation is of three main divisions. Firstly, a general exposition of the thirty-eight groups of the folks of *awliyá'*, ranging from the prophets (*al-anbiyá'*) up to the praiseworthy people (*al-keuramá'*).⁴ Secondly, the elects from the first division, which comprise of fourteen groups, started from the people of the blame (*al-malámiyyah*), the poors (*al-fuqará'*), the sufis (*al-súfiyyah*), and ended up with the heirs (*al-waratsah*).⁵ Finally, the elects of these elects whose numbers are fixed at any given epoch. This group consists of sixteen groups, like the poles (*al-aqtáb*), the two leaders (*al-imámayn*), and the pillars (*al-awtád*).⁶ In a descending order, each division can be seen in the following tables:

Table 1:
The Folks of the *Awliyá'*

NO	THE GROUPS	NO	THE GROUPS	NO	THE GROUPS
1	<i>al-Anbiyá'</i>	14	<i>al-Háfizün /át</i>	27	<i>al-Akhyár</i>
2	<i>al-Rusul</i>	15	<i>al-Dzákirün/át</i>	28	<i>al-Awwábün</i>
3	<i>al-Siddiqün</i>	16	<i>al-Tā'ibün</i>	29	<i>al-Mukhbitün</i>
4	<i>al-Syuhadā'</i>	17	<i>al-Mutatahhirün</i>	30	<i>al-Munibün</i>
5	<i>al-Sālihün</i>	18	<i>al-Hāmidün</i>	31	<i>al-Musbirün</i>
6	<i>al-Muslimün/ át</i>	19	<i>al-Sā'ihün</i>	32	<i>al-Muhājirün</i>
7	<i>al-Mu'minün/át</i>	20	<i>al-Rākī'ün</i>	33	<i>al-Musyfiqün</i>
8	<i>al-Qānitün/ át</i>	21	<i>al-Sājidün</i>	34	<i>al-Mawfün bi 'ahd Allāh</i>
9	<i>al-Sādiqün/ át</i>	22	<i>al-Ōmirün bi al-ma'rūf</i>	35	<i>al-Wāsilün</i>
10	<i>al-Sābirün/ át</i>	23	<i>al-Nāhün 'an al-munkar</i>	36	<i>al-Khā'ifün</i>
11	<i>al-Khāsyi'ün/ át</i>	24	<i>al-Hulamā'</i>	37	<i>al-Mu'ridün</i>
12	<i>al-Mutaşaddiqün/át</i>	25	<i>al-Awwāhün</i>	38	<i>al-Kuramā'</i>
13	<i>al-Sā'imün/át</i>	26	<i>al-Ajnād al-ilāhiyün</i>		

Table 2:
The Elects from Among the Folks of *Awliyá'*

NO	THE GROUPS	NO	THE GROUPS
1	<i>al-Malāmiyyah</i> ⁷	8	<i>al-Umanā'</i> ⁸
2	<i>al-Fuqarā'</i>	9	<i>al-Qurrā'</i> ⁹

Table 2:
Continued

NO	THE GROUPS	NO	THE GROUPS
3	<i>al-Ṣūfiyyah</i> ¹⁰	10	<i>al-Aḥbāb</i>
4	<i>al-'Ibād</i> ¹¹	11	<i>al-Muḥadditsūn</i>
5	<i>al-Zuhhād</i> ¹²	12	<i>al-Akhillā'</i>
6	<i>Rijāl al-mā'</i> ¹³	13	<i>al-Samrā'</i>
7	<i>al-Afrād</i> ¹⁴	14	<i>al-Waratsah</i>

Table 3:
The Elects from Among the Elects of the Folks of *Awliyá'*

NO	THE GROUPS		NO	THE GROUPS	
	NAMES	NUMBER AT ANY GIVEN APOCH		NAMES	NUMBER AT ANY GIVEN APOCH
1	<i>Aqṭāb</i> ¹⁵	1	9	<i>Khatm</i>	2
2	<i>A'immaḥ</i> ¹⁶	2	10	<i>'Alā qalb Ādam</i>	300
3	<i>Awṭād</i> ¹⁷	4	11	<i>'Alā qalb Nūḥ</i>	40
4	<i>Abdāl</i>	5	12	<i>'Alā qalb Ibrāhīm</i>	7
5	<i>Nuqabā'</i>	12	13	<i>'Alā qalb Jibrīl</i>	5
6	<i>Nujabā'</i>	8	14	<i>'Alā qalb Mikā'il</i>	3
7	<i>*awāriyyūn</i>	1	15	<i>'Alā qalb Isrāfīl</i> ¹⁸	1
8	<i>Rajbiyyūn</i>	40	16	<i>'Alā qalb Dāwūd</i>	153

Table 4:
The Divisions of *Awliyá'* 'alā *Qalb Dāwūd* and Their Number at Any Given Epoch

NO	THE GROUPS	NUMBER OF AWLIYĀ' AT ANY GIVEN EPOCH
1	<i>Rijāl al-ghayb</i>	10
2	<i>Zāhirūn 'alā amr Allāh 'an amr Allāh</i>	18
3	<i>Rijāl al-quwwah al-ilāhiyyah</i> ¹⁹	8
4	<i>Rijāl al-hannān wa al-'atf al-ilāhī</i>	15
5	<i>Rijāl al-haybah wa al-jalāl</i>	4
6	<i>Rijāl al-faṭḥ</i>	24
7	<i>Rijāl al-'alī'</i> ²⁰	7
8	<i>Rijāl ma'a al-nafas al-rahmānī</i>	21
9	<i>Rijāl taḥt al-asfal</i>	21
10	<i>Rijāl al-imdād al-ilāhī wa al-kawnī</i>	3
11	<i>al-Ilāhiyyūn wa al-rahmāniyyūn</i>	3
12	<i>al-Qāhir fawqa 'ibād Allāh</i>	1
13	<i>Rajul al-barzakh</i>	1
14	<i>Syakhs gharīb al-maqām</i>	1
15	<i>Saqīt al-raḥraf bin sāqit al-'arasy</i> ²¹	1
16	<i>Rijāl al-ghinā bi Allāh</i>	2
17	<i>Rajul yatakarraru taqallubuhu fī kulli nafs</i>	1
18	<i>Rijāl 'ayn al-taḥkīm wa al-zawā'id</i>	10
19	<i>al-budalā'</i>	12
20	<i>Rijāl al-isytiyāq / Rijāl salawāt al-khams</i>	5
21	<i>Rijāl al-ayyām al-sittah</i>	6

The Hierarchy of Awliya' in Light of The Prophetic a Hadits

Observing the above list of the hierarchy of *awliyá'*, one might post a question of whether the prophetic *ahádíts* have something to say about it or not. In the following, our investigation on this matter will be focused on as many prophetic *ahádíts* as possible which mention the group names of *awliyá'*, specifically those that have long been known in the sufi hierarchy of *awliyá'*. By doing so it is hope that we can see religious justification for such a hierarchy of the *awliyá'*.

However, before that, let we see first what the prophet Muhammad said about the religiosity of *awliyá'*, the divine favors bestowed upon them and their position in front of the prophets and martyrs. We will start from the prophetic words cited by al-Sulamí in his *Kitáb al-arba'in fí al-tasawwuf*, pricisely *hádíts* 36 entitled “*Báb Istijláb mahabbat Alláh ta'âlâ bi al-mudâwamah 'alâ khidmatih*” (Chapter on Gaining the Love of Allah the Most Hight by Serving Him Continuously):

I will love My servant as long as he keeps coming to Me with supererogatory prayers (*nawâfil*). If I love him, I shall become his hearing with which he hears, and his sight with which he sees, and his tongue with which he speaks, and his heart with which he thinks. [In such a condition], I will answer him if he calls Me, and I will give him if he asks Me.²²

A similar *hadíts* is also cited by Abû Nu'aym al-Isfahânî in his famous *Hilyat al-awliyá'*. However, this time it appears longer than the one cited by al-Sulamí:

I declare war against him who shows hostility to My walî. My servant cannot come closer to Me with something

better than what I have ordained upon him; and I will love him if keeps coming to Me [added] with supererogatory prayers. If I love him, I shall become his hearing with which he hears, and his sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks; and I will give him if he asks Me and will protect him if he asks My protection. I do not hesitate to do anything as I hesitate to take the soul of the believer: he hates death and I hate to disappoint him.²³

Both *ahádíts* compliment one another. While the first indicates that the favors of God are bestowed upon those who come closer to Him with supererogatory deeds (*nawâfil*), the second conveys that these deeds are not just any kind of good acts/works. Rather, they must be done by those who sincerely commit themselves in performing the ordained acts (*farídah*). Here the dependency of supererogatory deeds upon the ordained acts is established, signifying that without the later, the former fails to please God and, as such, will not result in any divine favors.

In addition, the second *hadíts* includes in itself a serious thread from God that He will wage a war against anybody who hurts a *walî* (*man âdza li walîyyan*) or, as mentioned in another *hadíts*, who makes enmity to the *awliyá'* of God (*man 'âda awliyá' Alláh*).²⁴ This has a sound reason for in Islam the act of hurting people or enmity is considered blasphemous, not to mention if it is addressed to the friend of God, *walî Alláh*. Therefore, once this act is addressed to the later, it is regarded as provoking war against God for that person, to use the phrase from a *hadíts al-qudsî* narrated by the beloved wife of the Prophet, 'Â'isyah, “has allowed My war [against him]” (*faqad istaballa mubârabatî*).²⁵

The *awliyá'* have special position in the side of God through which they receive divine privileges that make them higher than the rest of human beings. This is really special for it is envied even by the prophets and martyrs. So, said the prophet in the following *hadīts* narrated by 'Umar bin al-Khattâb:

“There are, indeed, among the servants of Allah people who are not prophets nor martyrs whose place in the side of Allah the Most Exalted and Sublime envied by the prophets and martyrs in the Day of Resurrection.” A man said: “Who are they and what are their deeds, so that we can hopefully love them?” [The prophet] said: “[They are] people who love each other because of Allah the Most Exalted and Sublime, not because of their kinship nor wealth which they give to one another. I swear to God, that their face is really like light and they, indeed, on the pulpit of light. They do not fear nor grieve when others do.” Then [the Prophet] read [the Qur’anic verse]: “Behold! Verily on the *awliyá'* of Allah there is no fear, nor shall they grieve.”²⁶

The prophetic *abâdīts* also come with specific group names of *awliyá'* that we encountered in the above list of hierarchy of *awliyá'* and their numbers.²⁷ The first is the *hadīts* about the People of Excellence (*al-akhyâr*) and the Substitutes (*al-abdâl*):

The People of Excellence (*akhyâr*) of my followers in every century are five-hundred persons and the Substitutes (*abdâl*) are forty. Neither one of them which go less than this number. If one dies [from the forty Substitutes], God replaces his place with the one from the five-hundred. The companions said: “O the prophet, tell us their deeds.” The

prophet said: “They forgive anyone who does injustice to them, do a good turn to he who does evil to them, and share with others what God Almighty and Most Sublime (*'azza wa jalla*) has given them.”²⁸

In the consecutive four *abâdīts* we find the prophet telling about the group names of *awliyá'* called the People of Trustworthy (*al-umanâ*), the Nobles (*al-nujabâ*), the Pillars (*al-awtâd*), the Pole (*qutb*) and, again, the People of Excellence (*al-akhyâr*) as well as the Substitutes (*al-abdâl*):

Indeed, Allah has the people of trustworthy (*al-umanâ*).²⁹

The Nobles (*al-nujabâ*) are in Egypt, the People of Excellence (*al-akhyâr*) are from the people of Irak, the Pole (*qutb*) is in Yemen, and the Substitutes (*al-abdâl*) are in Syria and they are little [in number].³⁰

Know that the Pillars (*al-awtâd*) are from the people of Kûfah and the Substitutes (*al-abdâl*) are from the people of Syria.³¹

The Substitutes (*al-abdâl*) are in Syria and the Nobels (*al-nujabâ*) are in Kufah.³²

Apart from the *abdâl*, there are also group name of *awliyá'* called *al-budalâ'* (also translated as the Substitutes):

The substitues (*budalâ'*) of my people are forty men: twenty two of them are in Syria and eighteen in Irak. Every time one of them dies, Allah substitutes him with another. They will die if the Hereafter comes.³³

In addition to the above *abâdīts*, the following *hadīts* tells us about the group names of *awliyá'* called the Leaders (*al-*

nuqabâ'), the Pillars (*al-'umud* or *al-antâd*), the Helper (*al-ghawts*) and, again, the Nobles (*al-nujabâ*) as well as the People of Excellence (*al-akhyâr*):

The Leaders (*al-nuqabâ*) are three-hundreds, the Nobles (*al-nujabâ*) are seventy, the Substitutes (*al-budalâ*) are forty, the People of Excellence (*al-akhyâr*) are seven, the Pillars (*al-'umud*) are four, and the Helper (*al-ghawts*) is one. The residence of the leaders is in Meghreb, the Nobles in Egypt, the Substitutes in Syria, the People of Excellence are travellers nomads (*sayyâ'în*) on earth, the Pillars are in the corners of the world, and the Helper is in Mecca. If there is a public need, all the Leaders, the Nobles, the Substitutes, the People of Excellence and the Pillars will make a prayer. If the prayer of one group or all the groups are answered, so that is its share. Otherwise, the Helper will make a supplication, for there will be no problem which is not stteled with his supplication.³⁴

Our reading on *hadîts* literatures also finds out that there are *abâdîts* which mention about the group names of *awliyâ'* whose hearts are on those of the prophets and the angels. So, for example, there are *awliyâ'* on the heart of the prophet Âdam, Mûsâ, and Ibrâhîm consecutively, or *awliyâ'* on the heart of the angel Jibrîl, Mikâ'îl and Isrâfîl respectively. Thus, said the prophet Muhammad:

God Almighty and Most Sublime (*'azza wa jalla*) has among His creatures three-hundred person whose hearts are on the heart of Âdam peace be upon him; forty whose hearts are on the heart of Mûsâ peace be upon him; seven whose hearts are on the heart of Ibrâhîm; five whose hearts are on the heart of Jibrîl peace be upon him; three whose hearts are on

the heart of Mikâ'îl; and one whose heart is on the heart of Isrâfîl peace be upon him. If this one dies, God replaces his place with one of the three; if one of the later dies, God replaces his position with one of the five; if one of the later dies, God replaces his position with one of the seven; if one of the later dies, God replaces his place with one of the forty; if one of the later dies, God replaces his place with one of the three-hundred; if one of the later dies, God replaces his place with one of the common people (*al-'ammah*). It is through them that God gives and takes life, causes rain, grows plants and drives away tribulation. It is said to 'Abd Allâh bin Mas'ûd: "How does God give and take life through them?" He said: "This is so because if they ask God to increase the number of people, their number will be increased; if the pray [to break the tyrants], they will be broken; if they ask for rain, it will fall; if they ask [God to grow the earth], the earth will grow for them; and if they pray [to remove the tribulation], God will remove through them all kinds of tribulation."³⁵

The news about the *awliyâ'* on the heart of the prophet Ibrâhîm is further fortified by the following *hadîts*:

The earth will never be empty of forty men [whose characteristics] resemble those of the Friend of the Most Merciful (i.e., the prophet Ibrâhîm). It is through them that God sends rain and helps the people. No one dies among them unless God replaces his place with others.³⁶

Concludng Remarks

All the prophetic *abâdîts* cited above mention no less than fifteen group names

of *awliyá'*. From the sufi perspective, this means that their formulation of the hierarchy of *awliyá'* has some kind of religious justification that legitimates its use in especially sufi circles. Those names are shown below:

Table 5:
The Group Names of *Awliyá'* Mentioned in the Cited Prophetic *Abádīts*

NO	GROUPS	NO	GROUPS	NO	GROUPS
1	<i>Khiyār</i>	6	<i>al-Umanā'</i>	11	' <i>Alā qalb Mūsā</i>
2	<i>Awtād</i>	7	<i>al-Budalā'</i>	12	' <i>Alā qalb Ibrāhīm</i>
3	<i>Abdāl</i>	8	<i>al-Ghawts</i>	13	' <i>Alā qalb Jibrīl</i>
4	<i>al-Nujabā'</i>	9	<i>al-'Umud (awtād ?)</i>	14	' <i>Alā qalb Mikā'il</i>
5	<i>al-Nuqabā'</i>	10	' <i>Alā qalb Adam</i>	15	' <i>Alā qalb Isrāfīl</i>

Be that as it may, however, one cannot ignore the fact that there exists differences between the prophetic *abádīts* and Ibn 'Arabī's list with regard to the number of *awliyá'* of the same group as shown in the table below:

Table 6:
The Group Names of *Awliyá'* Mentioned in the Cited Prophetic *Abádīts*

NO	THE GROUPS	NUMBER OF AWLIYÁ' AT ANY GIVEN EPOCH	
		Prophetic <i>Abádīts</i>	Ibn 'Arabī's List
1	<i>al-Ghawts (al-aqṭāb)</i>	1	1
2	<i>A'immaḥ</i>	Number is not mentioned	2
3	<i>Awtād</i>	4	4
4	<i>Abdāl</i>	40	5
5	<i>Nuqabā'</i>	300	12
6	<i>Nujabā'</i>	70	8
7	<i>Ḥawāriyyūn</i>	Group name is not mentioned	1
8	<i>Rajbiyyūn</i>	Group name is not mentioned	40
9	<i>Khatm</i>	Group name is not mentioned	2
10	' <i>Alā qalb Adam</i>	300	300
11	' <i>Alā qalb Nūḥ</i>	Group name is not mentioned	40
11	' <i>Alā qalb Mūsā</i>	40	40
12	' <i>Alā qalb Ibrāhīm</i>	7	7
13	' <i>Alā qalb Jibrīl</i>	5	5
14	' <i>Alā qalb Mikā'il</i>	3	3
15	' <i>Alā qalb Isrāfīl</i>	1	1
16	' <i>Alā qalb Dāwūd</i>	Group name is not mentioned	153

This study also reveals that one of the cited prophetic *abádīts* does not reach the degree of authentic *abádīts*, precisely that which deals with the 40 persons of *abdāl*. This, according to Ibn 'Asākir, is discontinued (*munqati'*) because Syurayh and 'Alī have never met one another.³⁷ However, according to al-Suyûtī, those *abádīts* in general are reliable.

Catatan Akhir

- ¹ Ibn 'Arabî, *al-Futûbât al-makkiyyah*, ed. Muhammad 'Abd al-Rahmân al-Mur'asyilî (Beirut: Dâr Ihyâ' al-Turâts al-'Arabî, 1998/1418), II: 18.
- ² See, for example, the works of al-Hakîm al-Tirmidzî, *Khatm al-awliyâ'*, ed. 'Abd al-Wârith Mahmûd 'Alî (Beirut: Dâr al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1965); al-Sulamî, *Tabaqât al-súfiyyah* together with *Dzîker al-niswah al-muta'abbidât al-súfiyyât*, ed. Mustafâ 'Abd al-Qâdir 'Atâ (Beirut: Dâr al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2nd edition, 1424/2003), *al-Muqaddimah fî al-tasanwuf wa haqîqatih*, ed. Yûsuf Zaydân (Iskandariyyah: Maktabah al-Kulliyyât al-Azhariyyah, 1986); Abû Nu'aym al-Isfahânî, *Hilyat al-awliyâ' wa tabaqât al-asfijyâ'*, ed. (Beirut: Dâr al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1st edition, 1409/1988); Abû Nasr al-Sarrâj al-Tûsî, *al-Luma'*, eds. 'Abd al-Halîm Mahmûd and Tâha 'Abd al-Bâqî Surûr (Egypt: Dâr al-Kutub al-Hadîtsah and Baghdad: Maktabah al-Matsnâ, 1380/1960).
- ³ For details please see chapter 73 of Ibn 'Arabî's *Futûbât*, II: 5-41.
- ⁴ Ibid., 25-41.
- ⁵ Ibid., 18-25.
- ⁶ Ibid., 9-18.
- ⁷ Ibn 'Arabî stated that they are the lords and leaders of those in the spiritual path. Another term ascribed to this group of people is *al-malâmatiyyah* but, said the Syaykh, it is weak. Ibid., 19.
- ⁸ According to Ibn 'Arabî, this group is not only one of the *malâmiyyah*, but also their dignities and elects. The prophet Khidr is also one of the *umanâ'*. Ibid., 22.
- ⁹ They are the people of God (*ahl Allâh*) and their elects. They are appointed this position because they memorize the Qur'an word by word and put its content into practice. Both Abû Yazîd al-Bistâmî and Sahl al-Tustarî were among this group of *awliyâ'*. Ibid.
- ¹⁰ They are the people of noble characteristics (*ahl makârim al-akhlâq*). It is this group of *awliyâ'* who can perform miraculous acts (*kibarq al-'awâ'id*) at their choice (*'an ikhti'yâr minbum*). Ibid., 19.
- ¹¹ This group of *awliyâ'* never performs religious rituals except the obligatory one. Among them are those known as travelers (*al-sayyâh*), those who concern only with themselves and make their homes places for communal prayer (*salât al-jamâ'âh*), those known as the people of causality (*sâhib sabab*) and without causality (*târik sabab*). They are, said Ibn 'Arabî, protected (*ma'sûm*) from committing any hatred (*al-ghill*), envy (*al-basad*),

- greed (*al-hirs*) and blameworthy self-indulgence (*al-syarab al-madzâmûm*) by way of turning these characteristics into praiseworthy directions (*al-jihâd al-mahmûdah*). Ibid., 20.
- ¹² Namely those who leave the worldly life by choice (*tarakû al-dunyâ 'an qudratih*). Ibid.
 - ¹³ They are a number of *awliyâ'* who worship God at the bottom of the seas and rivers.. Ibid., 21.
 - ¹⁴ Ibn 'Arabî mentioned that this group of *awliyâ'* is not among the pole. Khidr was one of them, so was the prophet Muhammad before his appointed the prophet and messenger of God. The station of this group is that which stands between the station of *siddîqiyyah* and legislative prophethood (*al-nubunwah al-syarî'ah*). Ibid.
 - ¹⁵ The *qutb* will always be one at every given epoch. He is the Helper (*al-ghawts*) and is among those who are brought close (*al-muqarrabûn*). His name from among the Beautiful Names of God is *'Abd Allâh*. Mention should be made here that the head of all *aqtâb* according to Ibn 'Arabî is the prophet Idrîs, whom Allah keeps alive till the end of time, spiritually and physically. However, his rank is below the real *qutb*, a position held by the prophet Muhammad himself. Ibid., 8-9.
 - ¹⁶ *A'immah* (leaders) will always be two at every given epoch, the one called *'Abd al-Rabb* and the other *'Abd al-Mâlik*. It is worth noting that the real *a'immah* according to Ibn 'Arabî are the prophets 'Îsâ and Ilyâs. Just like the prophet Idrîs, both are also kept alive by God till the end of time. Both are also the deputies of the prophet Idrîs, the *qutb*. Posited as such, their representatives from among the rest of *awliyâ'* also follow this scheme. So, if one *qutb* dies, one of the two *a'immah* will replace his palce as *qutb*. Ibid.
 - ¹⁷ *Wata'd* (pl. *awtâd*) means pillar, and this position is held by the Green Prophet, Khidr, who is also kept alive by God till the end of time. Apart from their own status, the four prophets, namely Idrîs, 'Îsâ, Ilyâs and Khidr, form the *awtâd* and headed by the later. Their representatives from among the *awliyâ'* will replace the *a'immah* after his death. Ibid., 9.
 - ¹⁸ Among the prophets who fall under this category, said Ibn 'Arabî, is the prophet 'Îsâ, whereas among the sufis is Abû Yazîd al-Bistâmî. Therefore, the 'Îsâwiyyûn, i.e., the *awliyâ'* who walk on the footstep of the prophet 'Îsâ also walk on the footstep of the angel Isrâfîl. Ibid., 13.
 - ¹⁹ According to Ibn 'Arabî, they are also called *rijâl al-quwwah*, and there are five persons who walk on their footsteps. Ibid., 14-15.

- ²⁰ They are the *rijāl al-ma'ārij al-'alī*, and are the highest among the people in the *'alam al-anfas*. Ibid.
- ²¹ He is also called *Sāhib inkisār wa dzu'll*. Ibid., 17.
- ²² al-Sulamī, *Kitāb al-arba'īn fī al-tasanwuf*, 2nd edition (Heydarab: Matba'ah Majlis Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-'Utsmāniyyah, 1401/1981), 14.
- ²³ Abū Nu'aym, *Hilyat al-awliyā'*, I: 4-5.
- ²⁴ Ibid., I: 5. This *hadīts* was narrated by Ibn 'Umar who heard it from his father, 'Umar bin al-Khattāb, who heard it from Mu'ādz bin Jabal.
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ Thanks to Ibn 'Ābidīn, most of the *ahādīts* cited below can also be found in his *Ijābat al-ghawts bi bayān hāl al-nuqabā' wa al-nujabā' wa al-abdāl wa al-awtād wa al-ghawts*, ed. Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāh (Cairo: al-Maktabat al-Qāhirah, 1427/2006), 45-53.
- ²⁸ Abū Nu'aym, *Hilyat al-awliyā'*, I: 8.
- ²⁹ Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūhāt*, II: 22.
- ³⁰ al-Suyūṭī, *al-Hāwī li al-fatāwā*, II: 244.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ al-Sulamī, *Kitāb al-arba'īn*, 9. The status of this *Īdīts* has been analyzed by al-al-Sakhāwī in his *Takhrīj al-arba'īn al-sulamīyyah fī al-tasanwuf*, ed. 'Alī Hasan 'Alī 'Abd al-Hamīd (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1408/1988), 102-103.
- ³⁴ al-Suyūṭī, *al-Hāwī*, 250.
- ³⁵ Abū Nu'aym, *Hilyat al-awliyā'*, I: 8-9.
- ³⁶ al-Suyūṭī, *Jāmi' al-ahādīts*, V: 366 (*hadīts* no. 17494).
- ³⁷ Ibn 'Asākir as cited by Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāh in his annotation to Ibn 'Ābidīn's *Ijābat al-ghawts*, 47n. 1.

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